FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING CONGRESS REPORT

Kaizer Makole

Introduction

This comprehensive report will address the following topics and make recommendations on:

- The Roadmap for Higher Education and Training
- The IPEC Lekgotla on Examinations and Assessment and its Implications on SADTU
- COSATU Skills Development Committee
- COSATU-National Education Forum
- The National Summit on Workers Education organized by Ditsela
- The 1Goal:Education for All Campaign
- Further Education and Training Summit processes
- Discussion Document on National Curriculum Vocation (NCV) and its challenges
- Discussion Document on Collaboration between Higher Education and Further Education and Training Sector

The Roadmap for Higher Education and Training

The Department of Higher Education and Training invited stakeholders who included SADTU and COSATU to the information session about the proposed Roadmap for Higher Education and Training. The purpose of session was to interrogate what stakeholders in education need to do improve higher and further education system in South Africa. The intention was also to look at key issues that need to be addressed in higher and further education and training in preparation for the Higher Education and Training Summit.

The proposed Roadmap process was to address the four key issues which are:

- Phase 1: Diagnose the status of the post-school education and training.
- Phase 2: Identify reasons for the current post-school education and training outcomes.
- Phase 3: Consolidate findings to make recommendations around short-term interventions.
- Phase 4: Facilitate the implementation of the recommendations.

The goals of the Roadmap for Higher Education and Training process in the short term were to diagnose current status and future challenges and to propose interventions, particularly to improve on what already exists. In the long term, it is to support process of implementation and create social dialogue on relevant systems design interventions. It was also highlighted that the necessity of this roadmap is based on the fact that previous education roadmap process focused on intervention for basic education only. The Roadmap on Higher Education and Training was to inform structural integration of education and skills development which are being created within

macro-organisation of the state and the new Ministry of Higher Education and Training. These interventions will be proposed one year into the 2009/14 term of government and must articulate with the Medium Term Strategic Framework and the government's programme of action.

Way forward

At the conclusion of the briefing process the following decision were arrived at:

- A commitment was made that the views of the information session will be communicated to the ANC-subcommittee on Education and Health.
- A proposal was made for a follow-up meeting amongst the Alliance partners who will debate issues amongst themselves and reach common ground before the process unfolds.
- It was also hinted that there should be an Alliance Summit on Education aiming to clarify issues and develop a common approach that will influence decisions at the Higher Education and Training Summit.

Recommendation for SADTU

This process was seen as an important process in the sense that the alliance partners of the ANC who play a major role in education and skills development are consulted at the planning process. However, the challenge amongst members of the alliance was that such an important milestone in education and skills development should be facilitated by the DBSA based on its ideological learnings.

Based on these assumptions, it was recommended that:

- SADTU should consult with COSATU and propose to the ANC to convene an Alliance Summit on Education that will be a forerunner to the Higher Education and Training Summit.
- SADTU to reject the notion of DBSA facilitating the process based on the experience learned from the Roadmap for Basic Education.
- SADTU should ensure that the Roadmap process lead to the implementation of Polokwane resolutions on education and skills development in higher and further education and training.

The IPEC Lekgotla on Examinations and Assessment and its implication on SADTU

The aim of the IPEC Lekgotla on Examination and Assessment was to review the examination and assessment management process for 2009 and to develop a five year management plan. IPEC is a sub-committee of the Heads of Department Committee (HEDCOM), comprising provincial heads of examinations from both public and private examination bodies, together with other role players such as HESA, Umalusi, SAQA, IEB and Teacher Unions tasked to coordinate and manage the national examination system in South Africa on behalf of Department of Basic

Education and supported by nine provincial education departments. IPEC supports the DoBE in the administration and management of public examination by implementing national norms and standards set by DoBE.

At the IPEC Lekgotla, the following challenges with regard to examination and assessment and their impact on SADTU membership were identified.

- **School Based Assessment (SBA)**
  In view of the changes mandated by the Minister of basic Education with regard to the requirement of portfolios for SBA, a directive has been forwarded to PEDs to distribute in schools on the review of the curriculum. This processes need to be well managed because there are contradictory directives such as that teachers must continue to use existing subject guidelines that do not take into consideration changes proposed by the curriculum review. As a result, this leaves loopholes for interpretation by officials and schools which may lead to different implementation in provinces.

  Implications for SADTU
  As an important stakeholder, SADTU need to monitor that this directive is well implemented. It should be noted that the SBA is a curriculum instrument in the consolidation of result for learners since it consists of 25% of the final mark. If not properly managed and monitored through policies and regulations it can lead to high failure rate.

  Recommendations
  We recommend that:
    - There should be a clear directive based on coherence on the management of school based assessment.
    - The Department of Basic Education should provide leadership in implementing Quality Teaching and Learning Campaign, of which assessment is a pivotal part that provide necessary support for learners and teachers.
    - SADTU should through its provincial structures monitor the kind of support given to teachers in the management of the school based assessment.

- **Marking**
  The DBE constantly flouts the regulations on selection of markers. This is demonstrated by some provinces that use learner attainment as selection criteria without taking into consideration historical context in our schools. Consequently, this disadvantage the majority of SADTU members.

Recommendations

- SADTU ensure that there is a national policy on selection of markers that will be based on collective agreement between the employer and employee representatives.

- **Standardization**

The examination process in every country culminates in the standardization of results. In South Africa, this is done by Umalusi in collaboration with the Department of Basic Education. Standardization is conducted in order to evaluate the credibility and reliability of the examination scores produced. The process is based on the principles of equivalence of standards from year to year. Umalusi establish a norm for each subject based on the performance over a period of five year. If learners' marks increase beyond the norm, the department must qualify the increase by giving evidence of what cause the leap.

Our understanding is that the purpose of standardization is to improve teaching and learning through quality assessment. However, we are of the view that standardization process in South Africa maintain past standards and not improve on them. This is problematic based on our understanding of a developmental state. We expect gradual improvement in the implementation of the curriculum that will lead to the improvement of the results. When the results are not improved teachers are scapegoats whereas the system tries to maintain standards.

Recommendations

- SADTU to seek audience with Umalusi on issues relating to standardization.
- SADTU should seek clarity from Umalusi as to how the process of standardization impact on matric results.
- SADTU seek clarity about the composition of the standardization committee which excludes important stakeholders in the assessment who are teacher representation.

COSATU Skills Development Committee

The purpose was to adopt a program for the federation to respond to its congress resolution in its quest to respond to key challenges of development and responsiveness to servicing membership in the context of Human Resource Development initiatives including reflection and alignment of strategies. Furthermore there was a need to conceptualize the approach in relation to current dispensation and the processes relationship to it, such as the relationship between COSATU and its affiliates to newly reconfigured Ministry of Higher Education and Training.

The Relationship with the reconfigured Ministry of Higher Education and Training

The Minister of Higher Education and Training invited specific delegates to a strategic information session whereby the purpose was to share information on the new "home' of the National Skills Authority which is the Ministry of Higher Education and Training. The primary focus was on issues related to the mission of the DHET, policy framework, the integration of education and training, collaboration and coherence of governance and advisory structures.

The National Skills Fund was transferred to the DHET following a Presidential Proclamation. As a result of the transfer, the NSF will lose some of the delivery capacity in the Department of Labour's provincial offices. Over and above this, the NSF needs to upgrade its systems to meet compliance requirements as a result of a change in its accounting framework. These administrative costs exceed the previous 2% level the NSF used to fund its administration costs. The recommendation was that the NSA receives and comments on the draft regulation for the limit on the administration of the NSF.

The Chairperson of the Skills Development Committee

It was reported that the COSATU Skills Development Committee use to have a chairperson to liaise with the secretariat and Head of Department of Education about issues pertaining to skills development for the federation. As a result of the deployment of Comrade Pinky Mcube to the NCOP, the SDC need to appoint a new chairperson.

Recommendations

- SADTU to endorse the processes of skills development in COSATU as an affiliate of the federation.
- SADTU to participate meaningfully and constructively in COSATU skills development activities.

COSATU National Education Forum

The COSATU-National Education Forum is a forum to process decision and recommendations from NEDCOM and to oversee the implementation of the agreed Education programme. The core elements of the 2010 education programme are:

- **Mass Education and the link to the Chris Hani Brigades and Socialist Forums**

The importance of mass education initiatives is to build alternative consciousness to fight mainstream capitalist orthodoxy and promote the importance of building socialist alternative. The WWMP and COSATU seek to combine their strengths, projects and organizational experience to effectively bolster their efforts to strengthen and build the working class and labour movements. This will entail empowering workers and people in working class communities in the form of a mass education and information projects.

- **Marxist-Leninist Toolbox**

As part of the 2010 education programme, a programme for developing socialist cadres schooled in Marxist-Leninsm will focus on developing a Marxist-Leninist series of education material for the basis of producing a toolbox for use by the Chris Hani Brigade (CHB) and for empowering affiliates in running their own political education.

- **Education on the National Health Insurance**

The National Health Insurance (NHI) will help us to:

- Deepen our understanding of the role of the state and the agenda for transformation.
- Develop a critical understanding of the current South African healthcare system.
- Understand the political economy of health care.
- Develop a deeper understanding of the National Health Insurance; and
- Actively work towards popularizing and campaigning for the NHI.

- **Education and Skills Conference and immediate issues on SETAs coordination**

In achieving the strategies for Education and Skills Development based on the resolutions of Education and Skills Conference, we must:

- Ensure that we are able to sustain working class interest and influence education, training and skills development. This must include galvanizing mass-based support and campaigns to support objectives of democratic education and training.
- Ensure that COSATU leads a clear, less fragmented and more coordinated approach that centres on a clear working class bias. This must examine the federation's internal infrastructure in order to ensure that it supports our engagements at different levels, and particular support its affiliates.
- Focus on effective participation and capacity building that inform engagement in education and training transformation in the country.
- Mobilize resources in support of our activities in education, training and skills development.
- Develop common cause with communities and social movements in order to ensure public understanding, support and building of class solidarity.
- Ensure that we have the full support of political leadership for this strategy and that we ourselves who developed this declaration and conference outcomes commit ourselves to its realization.

- **Finding for trade union education**

During 2009 a task team was set up to look into the funding of trade union education. Their work is not concluded. The National Education Forum was asked to take this work forward. The task team was also strengthened by member affiliates. This is important in the context of ensuring that we increase the pot funding for trade union education.

Recommendations

- SADTU to work closely with COSATU to strengthen its political education and actively participate in COSATU Education programmes.
- SADTU to structure and align its education programmes to meet the objectives of the COSATU education programmes.

The National Summit on Workers' Education

The Ditsela Workers' Education Summit theme was "Education from a Working Class Perspective". The Summit was being held against the backdrop of the world's worst economic crisis since the 1930s, marking the end of ideological domination of neo-liberalism over the last thirty years. The aim of the summit was to argue for a return to workers' education that is based on a class perspective as part of challenging the dominant discourse in education and training as well as in society. The Summit offered an opportunity for delegates to develop a theoretical framework to engage with changes in the macro education and training arena, and to explore further strategies, priorities and demands to build and advance a platform for workers education. Strategies for adult education and training, recognition of prior learning, skills development and transformation of higher education were prioritized as part of workers' education agenda.

The key objectives of the Summit were to:

1. Develop a common framework to understand what workers' education is and its role in society.
2. Analyse new policy developments in the macro education and training arena and its implications for workers' education; and
3. Generate ideas to inform debates, strategies, policies and plans to mobilize and organize for workers' education.

Declaration of the National Summit on Workers' Education

After two days of fruitful presentations and discussions on workers' education, commission reports were tabled and discussed. This resulted in the declaration of the National Summit on Workers' Education. The Declaration stated as its purpose to:

- Explore the development of a common understanding of and the role of workers' education.

- Analyse policy developments in the macro education and training arena and its implication for workers' education; and
- Generate new ideas to inform national debates, strategies and policy to promote workers' education in society in a non sectarian participatory manner.

Transforming education to promote and advance Workers' Education

The summit made several important recommendations on how this could be achieved:

- The need for radical change not only to transform existing institutions but also to create workers' education institutions.
- Workers to influence all aspects of curriculum including labour studies in the schools that respect the role of workers.
- The labour movement to attract intellectuals in order to have strategic discussions on how to promote working class values and curriculum across institutions.

Recommendations

- SADTU to liaise with Ditsela and COSATU to strategize on developing and implementing a programme on workers' education.
- SADTU to investigate the possibilities of designing a programme of action that will advance and promote workers' education to promote unity and solidarity of the working class within its membership.

1GOAL: Education for All Campaign

SADTU spearheaded the 1Goal: Education for all Campaign which culminated in the symbolic march to the Costitutional Hill on the 10th June 2010. The aim of the campaign was to seize the power of football during the World Cup in South Africa to ensure that education for all, especially the working class people of South Africa is a lasting legacy of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. This is global campaign is advocated around the "Education for All" goals, which will see, amongst others, every child accessing their right to education and halving adult literacy by 2015. The campaign has a particular resonance in South Africa. Further, this campaign offers us a platform to come together and mobilize around the project of education in South Africa, with the call for quality public education for every person in South Africa.

The 1GOAL for Education Working Group

SADTU was the co-convener of the 1GOAL for Education Working Group tasked to look at ways this campaign can be taken forward and ensure that the campaign is located within educational concerns of South Africa. A decision was taken to bring together other civil society organizations to advocate collectively around education and the right to education. The first activity of the Working Group involved the 1GOAL: Lesson for ALL. This lesson was launched on the 20th April 2010, in over 100 countries, with an estimated 15 million participants. The

South African version of the lesson was conceived as an advocacy awareness lesson to draw awareness to global and national educational concerns. The lesson opens a space for South Africans to share our experiences, concerns and hopes around education, as well as being critical to mobilize the public to the campaign. The campaign was also linked to the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign of which SADTU is a major signatory. The 1GOAL: Education for ALL Campaign engaged learners, parents, teachers and community members to 'yellow card' their education concerns which were to be delivered to the President of South Africa, during the Education Summit of Heads of State.

Implication for SADTU

- SADTU as a leading progressive education organization played a major role in planning the peaceful march and embarked on a media publicity to mobilize South African communities and those who were to attend the 2010 World Cup.
- SADTU and COSATU leaders became the face of the mass mobilization as access to education impact on the working class children of which as part of COSATU were are the champion of the working class interests in South Africa.
- SADTU contributed its human, financial and moral resources to ensure the success for the campaign as a lasting legacy for educational transformation in our country.

Further Education and Training Summit processes

The Further Education and Training Roundtable (RT) was held on the 9th April 2010, on the basis of which key stakeholders had agreed to address challenges in the FET college sector. The Swiss- South African Cooperation Initiative (SSACI) offered at the Roundtable to fund the process, and to appoint a project manager for the FET Summit process. Stakeholders were invited to nominate members of the Task teams. Task Teams (TTs) were to report to the Working Committee. The purpose of the Working Committee is to process the work that has come from the TTs. The Working Committee is likely to identify contentious issues and bring them to the attention of the Steering Committee to be resolved. Solutions need to be found politically from stakeholders, which would happen at the Steering Committee. When going forward to the FET Summit on the 3-4 September 2010, there will be summary document that reflect consensus on the work of the TTs.

The FET Summit will make recommendations to the Minister of Higher Education and Training, apprising the Minister of any points of difference between stakeholders and providing a thorough understanding of issues, supported by the evidence-based work of the TTs to inform decisions. Some matters will have to go to the negotiation between representatives of employer and employee. The responsibility of the Steering Committee (SC) is to be in a position to take a collective view to the Summit. Issues regarding management and governance are particularly critical in provinces where colleges are not being adequately supported, and this must be

urgently addressed by the SC before the colleges begin to collapse. The overall objective of the TTs was to prepare an evidence based working document for the FET Summit. Two critical aspects of planning were immediate stabilization of the sector as well as medium- and longer-term goals rooted in a clear and clear and detailed sense of what is possible and desirable for the sector, the economy and society.

Update of Task Teams

Task Team 1: Policy and Legislation

This task team provided an update on the short and long-term thinking, differentiation and integration within and across task teams. Their discussions focused on differentiation, distribution of functions, employment of college staff, communication, organizational development and change management, and institutionalization within the FET college sector.

Task team reported that permanent college staff be funded by the state, where there will be one employer of permanent staff. It emphasized that the guiding principles should be that colleges be attractive place of employment, equitable conditions of employment, effective performance management and accountability of staff. It highlighted communication as a key for change management practice. It emphasized that deep and sustainable change management is needed. It also stated that organizational development of the DHET should play a developmental and steering role, not management of colleges. Organizational development of colleges should entail people, structures, and systems that are contextualized to each college and 'fit for purpose'.

Task Team 2: Programmes

This report of task team 2 outlines the activities understaken with respect to short and longer term issues related to programmes in FET colleges. The task team was asked to review all relevant policy, plans, legislation and research with close attention to the current and future programme mix offered at colleges. it was also to conduct relevant interviews, and to draft recommended policy and legislative changes.

Occupational Programmes: N Programmes

- Colleges should be assisted to provide the N1-3 programmes to learners who are in apprenticeship programmes.
- Plans relating to the provision of N programmes (4,5 and 6) should motivate the numbers they are planning for in 2011. (Colleges should not expand beyond their current numbers and should indicate demand for these graduates).

Occupational Programmes: Learnerships

- The task team recommended that 80/20 policy pertaining to the provision of NCV versus occupational programmes should be lifted.

- For 2011, FET colleges should be actively encouraged to offer relevant components of the learnerships where there is demand.

The National Curriculum Vocation (NCV)

- There should be a consistent approach adopted regarding the carrying of subjects (projection rules).
- There were mixed views in the task team as to whether a minimum throughput level should be required as a criterion to be able to offer the programme.
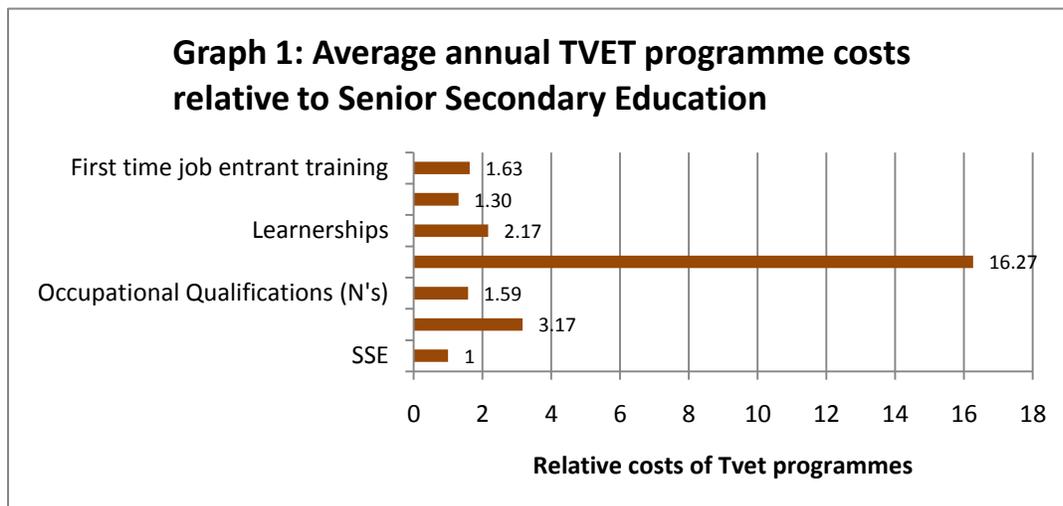
Level 5 and 6

- Recommendation for 2010/2011 is that the programmes that are offered comply with agreed upon Quality Assurance arrangements from Council on Higher Education. In the longer term this could include Quality Council for Trades and Occupation.

Longer term recommendations: Flagship Programmes

- The flagship programmes should establish the brand of the FETC in the mind of the country.
- The flagship programmes should be nationally funded through the FET funding mechanism.

Providers	Programmes	Purpose	Target audiences
1. Schools	General Ed (Gr10-12)	Foundations and core learning/ maximum flexibility	Relevant school cohorts
2. Public Adult Learning Centres Plus private providers and NGOs	Foundational Learning Certificate and Adult Matric	Fundamentals programme, Upgrade education foundations	Upgrading or matric alternative for young adults
3. Technical schools	Technology FET Certificate	Alternative to general ed/ preparation for workplace or occupational learning	Pupils exiting grade 9 - for grades 10 to 12
4. FET Colleges	NCV: theory,	Theory & practice for entry into variety of occupations/	For grade 10- 12? or Post-matric? Accelerated (2-

	practical: currently 14 programmes	industries (potentially could allow access to HE)	years)?
5. Private providers/ workplace providers/ FET Collges (limited)	Occupational Qualifications: requires SWE /N's to new Occupational Qualifications	Occupational specialisation - demonstrated occupational competence and certification	For grades 10 – 12; post matric + employees
6. Private providers/ Workplace providers/ NGOs/ FET Colleges (Limited)	Skills training: skills programs/ short courses (sometimes part of other programmes such as EPWP, CWP, NYS)	Increase employability, productivity & LM mobility	Employees, emerging business and unemployed
7.	Work readiness programs	Customised programs to raise employability through matching, placements, bridging/ grooming	Unemployed youth and new entrants

Graph 1: Average annual TVET programme costs relative to Senior Secondary Education

First time job entrant training — 1.63
— 1.30
Learnerships — 2.17
— 16.27
Occupational Qualifications (N's) — 1.59
— 3.17
SSE — 1

Relative costs of Tvet programmes

Source: Task Team 2 Report: Programmes (2010)

Task Team 3: Funding and Planning for 2011 and beyond

The purpose of this task team is to develop an analysis and recommendations on:

- The current scope of funding available to colleges – how it is calculated, allocated and distributed.
- Key challenges and blockages in the flow of funding to colleges.
- Key challenges in the capacity of colleges to plan and manage budgets.
- The applicability and appropriateness of the current norms and standards in light of the mission and purpose of colleges.
- Immediate and medium-term strategic priorities for colleges and the planning and funding implications thereof for 2011.
- Proposal on possible models of funding beyond 2011.

The following recommendations were made:

- Collaborative funding model –NCV should continue to be funded through conditional grant, while occupational programmes should b funded through portion of levy funding.
- Role of private sector in supporting access to the workplace for workplace learning and incentive grant from SETAs.
- Annual block grant for community/livelihood programmes from NSF, administered by DHET.
- Key implication in the requirement for substantial increase in capacity of DHET to manage and monitor planning and funding.

Planning for the Further Education and Training Summit

The EDTPSETA has allocated a budget of around three million rand for the FET Summit that is to be held on the 3-4th September 2010 at Birchwood Hotel. Each stakeholder was requested to submit a list of delegates to the ETDPSETA for planning around transportation and accommodation. The EDTPSETA was to identify the breakdown of delegates in proportion to the number of stakeholders. The Working Committee will be notified in due course about progress towards the FET Summit.

Recommendations

- SADTU to argue for the role of state to be strengthened in the FET colleges sector whereby the state is the employer and monitor the sector to ensure accountability from management of FET colleges and oppose the notion of autonomy of the sector.
- The government to adopt a framework that is operational to allow SETAs to work closely with the FET colleges sector and assist in quality assurance of programmes to ensure articulation between education, training and workplace learning.
- SADTU impress upon DHET to open access through provision of skills programmes for unemployed and out of school youth in the country.

Discussion Document on National Curriculum Vocation and its challenges

Conceptualization

This discussion document discusses the background of the National Curriculum Vocation (NCV) programme, states its challenges which renders the programme short in meeting the needs of industry and therefore addressing the challenges of critical skills in our country, and call for its review as a learning programme. The document will discuss areas that need to be reviewed. It will look at possible changes going forward in the FET college sector. It will also argue that the policy document should look at the purpose of the NCV, its structure and assessment. In the final analysis it will put forward recommendations based on the shortcomings of the NCV programme meeting skills requirements in our country.

Background of the National Curriculum Vocation (NCV) programme and its challenges

The National Curriculum Vocation (NCV) qualification is a Ministerially-approved qualification which was implemented in public FET colleges in January 2007 at level 2. Levels 3 and 4 followed consecutively in the two subsequent years. Level 4 marks the completion of the full qualification across all three levels, and was offered and examined for the first time in 2009. Numerous debates have emerged about the purpose of the NCV and the extent to which it meets the needs of industry. In particular, there appears to be uncertainty about whether the NCV is preparing learners to enter particular occupations and if so, which ones, whether the NCV is primarily a foundational programme that prepares learners to access an occupational learning programme. This uncertainty has then raised the questions pertaining to the intended target audience of the NCV, the extent to which curricula is appropriate for its intended purpose and the cost effectiveness of the programmes.

Further, there is a concern about the level of throughput and the high numbers that appear to be exiting the qualification prior to completion as well as the large numbers that are repeating subjects. There is also related concern about the fundamentals within the NCV. This relates to both the question of whether certain students should be exempt from fundamentals if they have already achieved their grade 12 as whether on the other end of the spectrum whether certain programmes should have less stringent requirements for the fundamentals. The other factor is that although the qualification was phased in as the N1-N3 Ministerially approved programmes were phased out, these qualifications differed materially in terms of purpose, design and structure. The NCV therefore does not have a precedent qualification to which it may be benchmarked, and in the absence of such a benchmark has often been compared against NATED programmes, the national curriculum statements (NCS) of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) and Learnerships.

Reasons for the review of the NCV

Following from the challenges outlined above, the following reasons are used for the NCV review: \

- To evaluate the manner in which the NCV has been implemented to date; i.e weaknesses and strengths.
- To evaluate the extent to which the NCV has met its stated purpose.
- To evaluate whether this purpose is still considered relevant within the context of the proposed new role of the FET colleges sector and the broader programmatic landscape that is envisaged and to develop a clear purpose statement for the FET colleges sector; and
- To determine the implications of any changes to the purpose statement, taking into account strengths and weaknesses that have been identified, to the future implementation of the programme.

Areas of review

During review process, the phases of the review process should consider the key questions that should form the focus of the NCV review. The initial component of the review of the NCV should be to:

- Explore the nature of learners accessing the NCV so as to ascertain whether this is consistent with the original intention of the qualification with respect to its intended purpose. As part of this evaluative process, there will be a need to understand the selection process and whether there has been appropriate matching of learners to programmes and fields of learning with respect to ability to cope with academic demands of the programme, the extent to which the learner meets other requirements pertaining to the occupation, and whether the learner is motivated with respect to the field. This will need to consider an analysis of throughput data taking into account learner enrolments, examination enrolments and results since 2007.
- Appraise the strengths and weaknesses that have emerged during the implementation of the programme. This should consider programme delivery (theory and practical) including the manner in which the curricula is delivered, quality and level of resources (practitioners, infrastructure, equipment, textbooks and other materials for learning and teaching, costing and funding flows, workplace exposure/experience, student support and career guidance, etc).
- Review the current assessment policy, structures, processes with respect to the purpose of the NCV and the extent to which these are being implemented as intended.

- Review factors that have assisted and hindered the implementation of the NCV taking into account the learning implementation process to date.
- Further, it is suggested that there is a need to explore the opportunities that learners have been able to, and are theoretically able to achieve upon completion of the programme so as to ascertain whether this is consistent with the original intention of the qualification with respect to its intended purposes.

Policy document: Purpose of the NCV

On the policy document, we need to consider the following questions with respect to the purpose of the NCV:

- Is the stated purpose of the NCV still relevant and considered appropriate? This should take into account the learning acquired during the implementation of the NCV and the opportunities or lack of that learners are able to access. The discussion should also be located within the Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) supported for FET Colleges sector as well as the broader programmatic landscape.
- Whether the exit point of the qualification should remain at Level 4 of the NQF, and if not, consider the ramifications of locating it differently.
- Should there be a minimum academic competency level of entry into the NCV programmes?
- Should there be any other requirements for entry into NCV programme?
- Whether the admission certificate into Level 3 and 4 should require a complete certificate at the lower level.
- What other programmes that will respond to the skills requirements based on the Medium-Term Strategic Framework's strategic priorities of the National Skills Development Strategies 111.

The Structure of the NCV

Again taking into account agreement on purpose, the review must consider the following with respect to the structure of the NCV:

- Whether the current structure is appropriate in terms of principles of curriculum development, i.e. does it enable learners to build on learning from the previous year?
- Whether the relationship between theory and practice is appropriate, taking into account the purpose of the qualification?
- The manner in which NCV should relate to the workplace, during and post qualification.
- The extent to which support can be and should be built into the programme- including support for academics, career guidance, work readiness, other?

Assessment structure

The review of the NCV curriculum should consider whether the current assessment policies and practices are optimal and what changes may be required. In particular, there is a need to consider the requirements of the external assessments of written and practical assessment components that are externally set and marked by the Department of Education, and externally moderated by Umalusi and/or appropriate ETQA. Proposals must take into account the purpose of each year of the NCV and whether an external assessment is required for each year. This should take into account long-term viability of external exams against ensuring the credibility of the qualification.

This should reference decisions pertaining to purpose of the qualification and articulation arrangements. There is also a need to consider what indicators for monitoring and evaluating NCV going forward should be. This should include the development of key indicators for determining the successes of the programme as well as indicators pertaining to the inputs of the programme.

Implications and Conclusion

The purpose of this discussion document was to argue for the review of the NCV because of the challenges that were encountered in the FET College sector with regard to its implementation. Such challenges are that there are uncertainties as to whether the NCV curriculum is preparing learners to enter particular occupations and if so, which ones, or whether it is a primarily foundational programme that prepares learners to access occupational learning programme. The reason to argue for the review of the NCV curriculum is based on the premise that many college lecturing staff were not thoroughly trained towards its delivery as an occupational learning programme and lacked the necessary skills to teach it.

In one of the provincial FET Summit, college lecturers raised concerns that the NCV programme is not clearly defined and therefore open to different theoretical interpretations. They also complained that its interpretation lead to confusion during the delivery of teaching. They raised problems such as its lack of articulation between mainstream education and college levels, and blamed it for being too academic to learners who want to embark on vocational and occupationally directed learning programmes.

Based on these concerns and challenges by its practitioners, the author of this discussion document proposes that the NCV should be reviewed as there is confusion towards its implementation because of lack of capacity, readiness and understanding towards its implementation in the FET Colleges sector.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made:

- To propose for the review of the NCV which should take into account the finding to how it has been implemented in the FET colleges sector.
- During the review process, the need to consider policy document for the purpose of the programme that is based on understanding that this policy will need to be amended on the findings of the review.
- The 80/20 policy pertaining to the provision of NCV versus occupational programmes should be lifted.

Discussion Document on Collaboration between Higher Education and Further Education and Training Sector

Conceptualization

In this discussion document, a case is made for collaboration between higher education (HE) and further education and training (FET) sectors. An analysis performed by Sheppard (2009) using Statistics South Africa's Community Survey (Stats, 2007) shows that during 2007, there were nearly 700 000 young people in South Africa between ages 18 and 24 who were unemployed and in possession of a school-leaving certificate or an FET college certificate which allowed them to continue with further studies at post NQF 4 (including formal HE studies); but they were in fact not engaged in any such further studies.

Clearly the reasons for the existence of such a large pool of young people in our society are complex and probably multidimensional. The following could however contribute towards an explanation of this phenomenon:

- The low absorption rate of such young people into formal economic activity.
- The high cost associated with HE study and despite the success of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), the limited availability of financial aid for large number of financially needy students.
- The relatively limited number of student places available at South Africa HEIs.
- The demise of the so-called N4-N6 programmes at FET colleges.
- HE learning programmes formerly offered by some FET colleges.

Apart from the negative social impact of such large group of young people, the skills needs of South Africa's developing economy clearly demand a creative solution to this undesirable social phenomenon.

Reasons for the involvement of the FET College sector as a part of the solution

There are a number of reasons for following this route proposed in the discussion document:

- By common consent South Africa's skills crisis is particularly acute at lower-middle, middle and higher-middle skills levels which are covered by FET colleges to a far greater extent than our HEIs, which concentrate on higher skills levels.
- Involving FET colleges in a partial solution to the problem of large non-studying and non-working young people would ensure that any further study is undertaken in a more applied and work-oriented study programmes; precisely the areas in which South Africa is desperately short of skilled person power.
- The education unit cost associated with FET colleges is likely to be considerably lower than that of universities due to the absence of postgraduate teaching and the research function in these colleges. This means that involving FET colleges in some form of further learning should make it more affordable for prospective students to continue with post NQF Level 4 studies.
- FET colleges are geographically better distributed across nine provinces than our HEIs and would thus make any further study by young people more accessible to them at lower cost as accommodation costs would be reduced significantly.
- In 2007, a National Plan for FET colleges (DoE, 2008) was announced by the then Minister of Education. Involving FET colleges as part of a solution to the problem of large number of unemployed and non-studying people would in many instances build on this National Plan and advance its aims.

As a partial solution to finding a viable alternatives for such large number of unemployed and non-studying young people in South Africa, this discussion document proposes a FET college sector characterized by greater coordination between various role-players involved in FET college learning programmes, by a more flexible approach to the scope of learning programmes which FET colleges can offer, and by a differentiated FET college sector in which not all will of necessity offer post NQF Level 4 trade and occupationally directed learning programmes or HEI learning programmes.

Institutional landscape of the HE and FET college sectors

Both the HE and FET sectors have been subjected to inclusive restructuring programmes launched by the government in the past few years. These restructuring programmes definitely had an impact on the scope of choices available to young people considering post-school or post-

initial FET college studies. In the case of HE, the government in 2002 embarked on a process aimed at reducing the then 21 universities and 15 technikons to 23 universities (with the technikons renamed universities of technology (UTs) and two national institutes for HE – one in the Northern Cape and the other in Mpumalanga. The reconfigured HE institutional landscape was to present a more differentiated HE system consisting of: six comprehensive universities which represented the merging of universities with technikons and/ or expansion of the mandates of traditional universities to include erstwhile technikon programmes, six UTs and eleven general universities as well as two national institutes. This restructuring programme was preceded by an equally significant but more limited restructuring exercise which started in the late 1990s, in which upwards of 120 colleges of education were incorporated into universities and technikons; making all teacher education a national competence rather than being both a national as well as provincial competence as it had been before.

In practice such restructuring reduced advanced educational opportunities for young people, as about 140 HEIs (universities, technikons and teacher education colleges) were reduced to 23 universities. One of the more immediate outcomes of these mergers and incorporations was that non-viable campuses were closed or used for other purposes. This meant that young people who previously would have easier geographical access to some form of HE within their more immediate living environment- especially teacher education colleges – now had to cope with increased costs which studying away from home inevitably brings.

The FET college sector was also subjected to inclusive restructuring in that in 2002, the number of lone-standing FET colleges was reduced drastically in favour of establishing larger FET colleges with a number of campuses. In this way approximately 150 former technical colleges were reduced to 50 FET colleges, with geographical distribution as follows: Eastern Cape -8; Free State- 4; North West -3; Gauteng- 8; Mpumalanga -3; KwaZulu-Natal -9; Limpopo- 7; Northern Cape-2; and Western Cape-6. This distribution of FET colleges includes colleges in urban, semi-urban and rural areas. An important facet of this restructuring was that no existing site of learning was closed. In 2007 headcount enrolments in HE sector amounted to about 761 000, while for the FET college sector headcount enrolment amounted to about 320 679 in South Africa. In many countries with stronger FET systems these figures would be reversed (Centre for Higher Education Transformation, 2009).

Part of the DoE's strategic plan for the FET college sector involved dramatic increase in these enrolment figures of about 40% per annum have been mooted for some provinces in order to attain the target of one million students in FET colleges by 2014 (DoE, 2008). To date such increases have not materialized partly due to insufficient funds available to provincial education departments to fund increased enrolments, and partly due to the fact that in the provincial education departments school education normally enjoys a much higher priority than FET college education. Despite these difficulties, a government strategy aimed at reversing the 'size' of the FET college system relative to that of the university system should be supported.

The necessity of collaboration between HE and FET college sectors

In South Africa, HEIs are classified as a national competence and while enjoying considerable amount of institutional autonomy, resort directly under the Minister of Higher Education and Training as far as any interactions with the government are concerned. In addition, universities are certification authorities in their own right. FET colleges, in contrast, were regarded as a provincial competence and resort under various provincial education departments, although the Minister of Higher Education and Training is responsible for determining national policy for FET colleges. in one sense, the provincial education departments are thus providers of FET college education and fulfill this responsibility through FET colleges under their jurisdiction as sites of educational delivery. Furthermore, FET colleges as far as learning programmes leading to the NCV are concerned, are not certification authorities in their own right; the certification function being performed by Umalusi, the successor to the former South African Certification Council.

The governance arrangements for these are similar to those internationally and seriously represent serious challenges to any enhanced HE-FET collaboration; as on the FET college side two parties (provincial education departments and the FET college council) with very different levels of decision-making autonomy (Woo-Cumming, 2007). In addition, in South Africa, unlike in some other countries with similar governance arrangements for these two sectors, the provincial education departments in general are solely lacking in understanding expertise and capacity in respect of the place and role of FET college education in our sector.

A survey (StatsSA, 2007) of a number of instances of existing interaction and collaboration between HEIs and FET colleges in South Africa has shown that:

- Few examples of actual articulation pathways for FET college qualifications into HE exist at present- of eight case studies, only two represent an arrangement where learners are able to carry some credits from their FET college studies into the universities. In the one case this arrangement is likely to come to an end with the demise of the N4 to N6 learning programmes offered by FET colleges in the past.
- Most HE-FET college collaboration projects are centred on individuals who have driven the process. When these persons leave the institution, the collaboration often falters and more often than not, comes to an end.
- When push comes to shove, academic faculties/schools or departments of universities often present admission and other academic requirements that are way beyond those contained in the initial articulation agreement structured at institutional level.
- Cases of in-principle agreement on articulation frameworks between HEIs and FET colleges exist which have not been taken further and implemented. In most cases this was due to lack of funding and/or doubts within the university academic on the feasibility of such articulation frameworks working in practice.

- Existing collaborative programmes have not focused on building FET college educator capacity to offer programmes at HE level.
- Due to the differing governance arrangements for HEIs and FET colleges, articulation agreements are not translatable across provinces or across HEIs. This limits the extent of such agreements to the participating institutions only.
- External funding to initiate collaboration projects appears to be necessary as neither FET colleges nor HE institutions are prepared to commit their own resources to initiate such collaboration processes.

The case studies of existing HE-FET college collaboration reveal that the required social capital, norms, networks, trust and dynamic power equilibrium to sustain the partnership arrangements cannot be assumed. All of these cases showed the significance of a champion to drive and nurture collaboration, and the discontinuity that occurred when the champion/driver left the partnership. In the absence of any policy framework that guides and standardized such arrangements, existing institutional arrangements have proven fragile and have relied strongly on external human and financial resources to sustain them.

Implications and Conclusion

The analysis presented in this discussion document reveals a number of 'positives' which could serve as a springboard in the establishment of coordinated, flexible and differentiated FET college system in South Africa. As can be expected, some 'negatives' also exist which would have to be countered in the building of such a system. The following constitutes some positives on which to base such as system:

- Comprehensive sets of well developed policies for the HE and FET college systems which include national plans for both sectors.
- Completion of incisive institutional restructuring exercises for the HE and FET college sectors.
- Establishment of three quality councils as part of the new NQF Act of 2008 – each having clearly set responsibility.
- Improvement of infrastructure in HE and FET colleges systems.
- Recognition of the need for greater levels of articulation between qualifications in HE and FET colleges system.

The following could constitute some of the negatives that would have to be overcome in establishing such a system:

- Lack of harmonization between some HE and FET college policies.
- Lack of sufficient scope of differentiation in present threshold values for headcount enrolments for FET colleges in non-NCV programmes.
- Low level of academic staff capacity and quality in FET colleges.

- Inadequate levels of coordination between role-players involved in the FET colleges and HE system.
- Present inflexible approach towards the composition of differentiated menus of learning programmes for FET colleges.
- Delay in the proper functioning of the QCTO.

Recommendations

Based on the above positives and negatives, the following recommendations are made:

- A national framework that affords HE-FET colleges collaborative initiatives the necessary affirmation and encouragement to sustain such interventions into the future in order to significantly expand opportunities for advanced study for young people.
- The DHET, as part of a solution towards solving the problem of young people who are unemployed and not in any post NQF Level 4 studies, formally establishes a comprehensive project on strengthening the FET college system through increased HE-FET colleges collaboration and by expanding the present mandate of the FET colleges.
- The DHET project team use as background information and resource document the National Plan on FET Colleges (DoE, 2008) and any other reports on our FET system that have been produced recently.