



higher education  
& training

Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**SPEECH BY MINISTER BLADE NZIMANDE ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH  
OF UMGUNGUNDLOVU TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING COLLEGE RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT  
CENTRE AND GRADUATION CEREMONY AT UMGUNGUNDLOVU, KZN**

Thank you Programme Director

Baba Shakes Cele, MP

Ward Councilor Baba Ndawonde

Principal of the College, Ms Ntombi Ntshangase

Chair of Council and Council Members

CEO of the ETDPSETA Mrs Sesi Nxesi

Members of the Board present

Principals of other Colleges

DDGs TVET and Skills Branches

Representatives of COGTA, Department of Social Development, KZN Department of  
Education, EPWP

Regional Managers, Dr S. Nzimande

College Management and Staff

Officials from my Department

Bafundi base Umgungundlovu TVET College

Members of the ECD Community and Khulugqame ECD Organization

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Our Special Graduates

Members of the media

Nginyanibingelela

I am very excited to be part of this auspicious occasion of the official launch of the Umgungundlovu TVET College Recognition of Prior Learning Assessment Centre Launch and the graduation ceremony of more than 90 learners in Early Child Development NQF Level 4. This project you are graduating on, has cost the SETA an amount of R3 000 000. I am aware that this RPL project in total across the country, with eight (8) participating TVET Colleges graduated learners against two (2) qualifications such as the Further Education and Training Certificate in Early Childhood Development and Further Education and Training Certificate in Community Development.

Three hundred and seven (307) learners graduated from the Early Childhood Development qualification of which two hundred and ninety two (292) were females and fifteen (15) were males. One hundred and fifty seven (157) graduated from the Community Development qualification of which one hundred and thirty seven (137) were females and twenty (20) were males.

The SETA has allocated R7 200 000 for the training component of the RPL at eight (8) TVET colleges across the country. In addition during the first phase of the pilot

programme two (2) RPL Assessment Centres were established at Vuselela TVET College in the North West province and at Umgungundlovu TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal at a cost of R3 000 000. During the second phase of the pilot project which is currently underway, an additional of 300 learners are being trained through RPL and five (5) RPL Assessment Centres will be established.

One of the conditions of the selection process during the RPL of potential learners was that the applicants must have a minimum of three (3) years of experience working in either ECD or a Community Development environment. I am aware that many of the graduates had to sacrifice earning on the days that they attended classes at various TVET colleges. I would like to see the research being conducted into the experiences of graduates after having completed their studies to determine how their lives have been impacted or changed.

I have identified the integration of recognition of prior learning (RPL) into the post-school education and training system as one of my Department's critical areas of focus for the next five (5) years as contained in the department's (5) year strategic plan, up to and including 2019/20. I have published a Government Gazette on the Recognition of Prior Learning Coordination Policy on 31 March 2016.

I have published this policy, as it is important at this stage of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) development, especially in the light of the urgent needs of South African citizens to have previous or prior knowledge, skills and competencies recognised towards access, mobility and career pathing. The RPL Policy is intended to provide a strong enabling policy environment for further development and implementation of the RPL across the post-school education and training system and across all levels of the NQF.

In the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, we have realised that in order to ensure that enrolments are increased, admission will not only be based on qualifications held by learners. Recognition of prior learning will be applied more widely,

especially for young adults who wish to access programmes, amongst others, in our colleges.

The published policy is taking us towards this direction, hence also I am happy with this partnership, within the context of the White Paper and our Policy on RPL. By implementing this initiative we will allow individuals to enroll in programmes for which they have the necessary background, and will enable the college to determine which learners need extra support.

The launch of this Centre is but one of the vital components of the Department's attempts to forge a new community based approach to vocational education and training. I would like to thank the ETDP SETA for taking this initiative to implement projects that support the goals of the Department in sponsoring the development of a Centre that adds to the foundation of the Department's policies that are based on community development and community based education development in particular.

Uyabona no "bush mechanics" laba engihlala ngikhuluma ngabo nabo sekuzoba seduze ukuba bakwazi ukuzithuthukisa.

Our policies that have been promulgated since 1994 have been based on social justice with an emphasis on human rights, social inclusion, access, fairness and equality. Our country is faced with a challenge of creating opportunities for the many unemployed who may have little or no formal education or many of whom need to be redirected via a skills intervention process towards areas of the economy where they are most needed. At the same time there are many people who are employed or self employed but cannot gain the due recognition of their skills due to a lack of formal qualifications.

The establishment of this Centre to focus on recognizing prior learning is a great attempt in addressing the plight of people performing valuable work yet without the due reward. This Centre has a primary focus on Early Childhood Development which is key to developing the foundational skills in our children to afford them the basis for success in the schooling education system. The challenge to the College is to build upon this initiative of the ETDP SETA and to extend it to all spheres of the College. This initiative is an

example of vocational education in its many forms being developed as the foundation of our post-school education and training system.

The Department has been working with education and community role-players to develop an educational precinct in Imbali. The Imbali precinct development represents an innovative model for education delivery, forging relationships between the community and education institutions to support each other, to develop and share resources and to implement programmes that are both nationally and internationally relevant and which create the opportunity of movement from one institution to another without barrier of entry rules. We are working towards a model of community based education to provide quality education by institutions that serve the community.

I would like to draw to your attention that many of the recipients of this pilot initiative of the ETDP SETA and Umgungundlovu TVET College entered the RPL programme without having Matric and the certificate that are awarded to them are at NQF Level Four which gives them the equivalent of a Matric. With these certificates they can now access the National Qualifications Framework which affords them an opportunity to access the education system and to further their studies at higher levels and in directions of study that they choose.

Kumele sikushayeke ihlombe elikhulu lokhu okwenzeka namhlanje ngoba kungumlando ngempela futhi kuqala kwi College lethu la eMgungundlovu.

This collaboration between a SETA and a TVET College is a prime example of the value of educational programmes that are being delivered in the TVET space and which we need to encourage more of our people both school leavers as well as adults to participate in. It also shows that valuable learning that leads to an improvement in one's social and educational opportunities can take place outside of the higher education space.

The fact that many of the graduates in this collaboration entered the programme without matric and now exit as empowered individuals within the ECD environment is a testimony to the fact that the goal of social justice via education is an achievable goal. However, one of the key challenges that still faces us as a nation and as educationists is the

challenge of the creation of a well-articulated system which links all parts and role players within the wider education system to facilitate the mobility of learners between educational streams, sectors, institutions and the world of work in a seamless manner.

This programme sought to create an opportunity for people working in ECD centres without any ECD qualifications is an example of a programme that created access to a qualification but also demonstrated how learners can and should be supported during the educational event.

Recognition of Prior Learning is about giving people the opportunity to formalize their on the job learning, it gives recognition to people who have for many years been performing the work without recognition both educational and financial, the opportunity to become lifelong learners rather than simply toiling away each day without due reward. The establishment of this RPL Centre at Umgungundlovu TVET College will ensure the following:

- Exclusionary practices of learner access of the past are reduced.
- There will be easy migration for learners within the UTVETC and will present a visible example of articulation within the institution and will promote lifelong learning opportunities. The Imbali Education Precinct project will break down the barriers that tend to exist between different levels and types of education institutions and will provide learners an opportunity to participate in a truly integrated education system.
- It will allow learners to explore their potential and explore various career paths due to them now having access to educational opportunities to promote their lifelong learning.
- It would ensure that competencies accumulated through formal and non-formal interventions/opportunities are treated equally.

- Very importantly for the UTVETC itself and the wider education community, this RPL Assessment Centre will entrench the parity of esteem emanating from all spheres and modes of learning.

As I conclude, I would once again like to thank the ETDP SETA for collaborating with the Umgungundlovu TVET College in demonstrating that collaboration is key in bridging the gap between policy and practice. The Establishment of this RPL Assessment centre will go a long way towards providing the community that is served by the Umgungundlovu TVET College with access to education and training opportunities.

I want to say to the first recipients of an innovative RPL project that you should use this qualification and the learning opportunity presented to you to go and establish your own ECD Centres. The establishment of your ECD Centres will promote employment opportunities and you will begin contributing meaningfully to the economy of our beloved country. Your Centre will also afford learners in the future with sites for Workplace Integrated Learning.

Lastly to our graduates, you must know that as from today you are our ambassadors and that RPL can change not only your lives but your families and community lives as your work in the main is about the lives of others.

You will agree with me that it's about sacrifice, determination, discipline and dedication. I must also thank everybody who has been involved in ensuring that today you are graduating, from our college personnel, SETA officials, family members and our community.

Let's ensure that this Centre and others Centres in our Colleges produces more graduates to be of great service to our communities.

I thank you

**Enquiries:** Busiswa Gqangeni [Gqangeni.B@dhet.gov.za](mailto:Gqangeni.B@dhet.gov.za)/ 0795475299

**Issued by the Ministry of Higher Education and Training**