

Education against all odds

14 September 2015 - After her father died and her mother disappeared without any trace, at the tender age of five, she had no other parental care option, except an extended family member.

It was the beginning of a new life for her and her three siblings; going to bed without food and at other times, being physically abused for no apparent reason by their foster care uncle.

Angel Baloyi, who's now sixteen years old and at level 2 which is equivalent to grade 6, is the recipient of one of the main priorities of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) - to provide learning opportunities to out-of-school youth and adults who did not complete their schooling or never attended school.

She is studying Maths, English and Setswana – together with 12 classmates who are all under twenty years at Don't Waste Time Nthatho Community Learning Centre in Winterveld, north of Pretoria.

And despite the hardships of being an orphan child, she aims to join the health sector as a nurse in the near future in order to assist in the education of the youngest who's five years old and the other two, aged 12 and 15.

At the centre, the *DHET News ebulletin* interviewed one of the students Flora Sithole (31), who has been out of school for 10 years and intended to come back in 2014 academic year to continue with grade 9 (level 4).

"While I was at home, I tried to find a decent job but I couldn't due to lack of qualifications and skills. I then decided to come back to school so that I can fulfil my dream of becoming a teacher," says the mother of a 12 year old boy.

Flora, admitted that she is one of many young people who are so poor at reading and writing: "When I arrived at the centre, I had serious problems with reading and writing in English as I have not read anything for years, but I'm coping, especially with the pronunciation of English words."

She is studying health care, maths, travelling tourism, English, life orientation and Setswana.

This centre also offers various skills including those most needed by local communities such as welding, bricklaying, carpentry and computer lessons.