



higher education & training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**ADDRESS BY MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING, DR. B.E.
NZIMANDE, ON THE OCCASION OF THE MHLONTLO BURSARY HANDOVER
CEREMONY, TSOLO, 05 MAY 2014**

Programme Director

The Mayor of Mhlontlo Local Municipality;

Councillors present;

SETA CEOs and officials;

Senior Officials from my Department;

Parents;

Abantu abatsha bonke abalapha;

Dististinguished guests;

Comrades and Friends;

Molweni

I feel privileged to be part of this event; A BURSARY HAND OVER CEREMONY aimed at benefitting the children of this Municipality, Mhlontlo! I would like to thank all distinguished guests for being present at this function. A special word of gratitude to the Mayor of the town, his executive and the community of Mhlontlo.

We are gathered here today to celebrate and reward the class of 2013 which recorded the highest pass rate of 78.2% at national level, with the Eastern Cape achieving 64.9% overall. This province has had a constant and steady improvement from 58.1% in 2011 and 61.6% in 2012. Today we are celebrating the ten students from this community who have been awarded full bursaries by the National Skills Fund (NSF), one of our wings at the DHET, to pursue their chosen careers at universities and in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges. Of these ten beneficiaries, two are enrolled with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, one studying towards BCom Accounting degree and the other registered for the National Diploma in Electrical Engineering; two others are enrolled with the University of Fort Hare, one studying BCom Accounting and another BSc in Agricultural Sciences. A further three students are enrolled with King Hintsa TVET College for national certificates in Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering respectively; one student has enrolled with King Sabatha Dalindyebo TVET College for a National certificate in Mechanical Engineering. Yet another is enrolled with Esayidi TVET College studying towards a National Certificate in Travel and Tourism. Briefly, of the ten students, five are enrolled at universities and five others at TVET Colleges. The colleges and universities where these ten students are registered offer the kinds of skill that will definitely benefit this municipality.

My message to the bursary holders is: grab this opportunity and use it wisely. You are part of the national vision of helping your communities eradicate poverty through skills acquisition. Acquiring skills will help you gain employment or become entrepreneurs who will employ others. As the National Development Plan outlines, education and innovation are central to the development of South Africa. Furthermore, a skilled community is the best foundation for developing a just society, creating better standards of living and participating meaningfully in politics and governance.

When you have completed your studies, you will join the ranks of the revered graduates from Mhlontlo who have made a meaningful contribution to our country. I speak of the two judges from this community, now both late, Judges Patrick Maqubela and Fikile Bam. Brigalia Bam, known affectionately as Ma Bam, the retired chairperson of the Independent Electoral Committee (IEC), an elder sister of Judge Fikile Bam, also comes from Tsolo in Mhlontlo Municipality. AC Jordan the author of *Inqumbo Yeminyana*, that great classic of Xhosa

literature, also comes from this area, e-Mbokothwana village. His son Pallo is an ANC intellectual and presently a member of the national parliament in Cape Town. This is evidence that it is possible to rise from humble beginnings to be an outstanding member of society.

Your country needs your skills for it to compete globally and be a preferred destination for international investment. In addition, your families and your community have supported you during your journey through basic education and you should now assume full responsibility for your future, which is entwined with the future of your community. Your success is the success of your community. Education is indeed a matter that concerns the whole of society and which requires unflinching cooperation between government, communities and private entities to ensure tangible and meaningful results.

Programme Director: when I came here in September 2013 to launch the Mhlontlo Local Municipality Trust Fund, the brainchild of Mxolisi Hoboyi, I was touched by the dire need for development in the area. I therefore directed my Department to come back before the end of 2013 to assess skills needs. I gave this instruction precisely because the government of the ANC under President Jacob Zuma has declared education as an apex priority, especially in rural areas like this. This is further emphasised in the National Skills Development Strategy 111.

Since then various stakeholders have been meeting to address the issue of skills in this community including member of my Department, Mhlontlo Local Municipality, LG SETA, Agri SETA, CATHSSETA, ETDP SETA, CETA, W&R SETA, HW SETA, and SERVICES SETA. This process has led to various skills development projects in this municipality. Presently,

LG SETA is contributing -

- R 151 200 for work integrated learning with 18 beneficiaries;
- R 1 329 000 for internships, learnerships and skills programmes, with 139 beneficiaries.

ETDP SETA is contributing -

- R 144 000 for learnerships and internships. The project has 30 beneficiaries.

W&R SETA is contributing -

- R 209 million for learnerships with 50 beneficiaries.

AGRISETA is contributing-

- R 1 million for learnerships, skills programmes and graduate placements for 103 beneficiaries.

Other projects for Mhlontlo are still in the pipeline and include those of:

SERVICES SETA which plans to contribute:

- R 1 million for internships with 30 beneficiaries.

This is a remarkable achievement especially considering that as DHET we were only here in September 2013, a mere eight months back.

DHET's work in the Eastern Cape is not limited to Mhlontlo. We have invested millions of rands in skills development, funded by NSF and the SETAs. Those funded by the National Skills Fund include:

- 35 learners from Alfred Nzo, Amathole, Chris Hani and OR Tambo districts who have been trained in learnerships for cooperatives development to the amount of R 2.99 million;
- 875 learners in Alfred Nzo, Amathole and Chris Hani districts are involved in co-operatives projects costing R55.9 million.
- Skills development support to workers in co-operatives; mentoring of some co-operatives; training, covering co-ops governance and registration, entrepreneurship ideas and opportunities, financial literacy, technical training, managing finances, finance and

banking, business planning, access to finance, market penetration, financial record-keeping and business improvement, to the amount of R 16 million.

- Monyetla Work Readiness Programme (Phase 03), which, for instance, trains call centre agents under the Business Processes Services programme. 105 learners from this province completed the ten months training and work experience programme and 20% of these have been placed in employment. R 60.7 million was allocated to this project and we hope to expand it to other parts of the country during 2014/15 with ± 3 000 beneficiaries, including those from Eastern Cape;
- 1 953 learners from the Eastern Cape have benefited through TVET College programmes in various areas. Some of the areas involved are NCV; N4-N5; N1-N3; skills programmes; learnerships; internships; artisan development; workplace exposure; college capacity development and equipment. By December 2013, an amount of R 81 million had been paid to this project.

Other SETA skills programme interventions in the province include contributions by:

- TETA SETA, which contributes more than R 12.8 million for graduate development programmes, learnerships, artisan development, skills programmes, and AET and workplace experience for 192 beneficiaries.
- BANK SETA, which contributes more than R 16.9 million for learnerships, micro-finance projects, work readiness programmes, bursaries and capacity building for 131 beneficiaries.
- CHIETA SETA, which runs a range of programmes in the Eastern Cape such as learnerships, work placements, apprenticeships, internships, BBBEE, ABET, bursaries, second chance matric and lecture development. 1 207 benefit from this programme which has a budget of more than R 89.8 million;
- EW SETA, which runs programmes like experiential learning, artisan development, certificates on water and waste water treatment and skills programmes. There is a total of 1 028 beneficiaries for these programmes and the budget is more than R49 million.

In response to the higher matric pass rate, the government has allocated more resources to increase opportunities for our youth to access higher education and training:

- The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), which is our primary tool ensuring access to post-school education by poor learners, has assisted 1.4 million students since 1991 with many NSFAS alumni now playing an important role in our economy and society.
- NSFAS student bursary funding at TVET Colleges has increased from R 318 million in 2010 benefitting 61 703 students to R1.988 billion in 2013 targeting 222 817 students. The total bursary funding for the eight Eastern Cape TVET colleges increased from R 33 500 000 in 2009 to R 227 212 000 million in 2014. In addition, my Department has, in the current financial year, made available R 2.5 billion from the NSF and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) towards the construction of 12 new campuses and the refurbishment of two existing TVET campuses. Four of these new campuses, Aliwal North TVET College, Graaf Reniet TVET College, Ngqungqushu TVET College and Sterkspruit TVET College are to be erected here in the Eastern Cape.
- NSFAS student bursary funding at universities has increased from R 2.2 billion in 2010, benefitting 148 387 students, to R 3.693 billion in 2013 targeting 210 000 students. NSFAS has, for example, come through for Walter Sisulu University (WSU), which until recently has been in a quagmire due to maladministration. The total amount allocated by NSFAS in 2011 was R 499 760 702. The allocation for 2011 was R 448 355 569. In 2013 NSFAS made an allocation of R 348 226 019 million to WSU.
- R 1.652 billion has been earmarked for student housing over the period 2012/13 to 2014/15 with R 1.413 billion ring-fenced for historically disadvantaged institutions and campuses. This, for instance, includes the construction of the new R 40 million student residence at WSU's Mthatha branch.

To all our youth who are neither at a training institution or employed, visit your local TVET colleges to explore opportunities available within these institutions. Your local TVET campuses are the best places to receive information on work based experience, apprenticeships, artisanship training, learnerships, and many other forms of sector-focused intervention.

My department is working with all stakeholders to ensure that all TVET colleges have a SETA office to facilitate work placement and also to serve as career guidance centres. To date more than 40 SETA offices have been opened in different TVET colleges across the country. The following SETAs have opened offices in the Eastern Cape's TVET colleges: INSETA at Ingwe TVET College, MERSETA at Lovedale TVET College, MQA at King Hintsa TVET College and Agri SETA at Tsolo Agricultural College. These offices will ensure that every citizen can benefit from training opportunities which are now closer to where they live. We urge and encourage our youth to explore opportunities provided by the different SETAs. Visit your local municipal offices and your local TVET campus to get more information on different SETAs and available opportunities.

To the ten students accepted at the various institutions: I am sure that your families, some of whom are in the audience today, are very proud of you. I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents and teachers for their support, which has been instrumental in the good grades that these students received at matric level. To the parents present here today: your involvement in your child's life is important because you are his or her first and most important teacher in life.

To our teachers, family and community members, we urge you to encourage students to begin now to apply to study in the second trimester and semester in the TVET colleges. I also urge students to apply timeously to study at universities. I am confident that our lecturers and education partners will continue to work together to build a better future for the students who are bursary recipients today. This is because our lecturers from TVET colleges and universities possess a strong sense of mission, embrace the greater purpose of teaching, guided by robust values and principles, and are committed to excellence. Let me once again congratulate all of you for a job well done. I wish you all the best in the journey ahead!

I would like to thank the Mhlontlo Local Municipality for making this event a success and for ensuring that information on education opportunities reaches the community. Do not end here!

You have now established a relationship with my Department and I trust that more information on access to educational opportunities will continue to be shared.

Lastly, we are two days away from the historic national elections, taking place exactly 20 years after the beginning of the democratic dispensation in South Africa. Let us go out there and vote for the kind of government which has and which will continue to deliver services to you, our people.

Ndiyabulela