

# RESEARCH BULLETIN ON POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

NUMBER 3

*“Together, Turning Every Workplace  
into a Training Space”*



**higher education  
& training**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL



It is my pleasure to present to you the third edition of the *Research Bulletin on Post-School Education and Training*. The two previous editions can be found on the Department's website at [www.dhet.gov.za](http://www.dhet.gov.za)

The response to the Department's call to stakeholders for contributions to the Bulletin has again been exceptional. So too has been reader interest the publication. At the time of finalising the third edition of the Bulletin, the second edition had been viewed by about 6 800 visitors. It is evident that the Bulletin is meeting a great need in the research community. May the Bulletin continue to attract more readers and provide illuminating insights into the complex world of post-school education and training. May it also bring the producers and users of post-school research closer to one another to inform policy and practice. Thank you again to various researchers, research organisations, universities and public entities for their valuable contributions to this edition of the Bulletin.

*Mr G.F Qonde*

*Director-General: Department of Higher Education and Training*

## EDITORIAL STATEMENT

The *Research Bulletin on Post-School Education and Training* is published by the Department of Higher Education and Training as a service to the research community and all stakeholders and participants in lifelong learning. It is intended to be an annual browser-based application. It comprises research notes, abstracts, excerpts, summaries, conference notices, call for papers, reviews, study tours, statistical analyses and short pieces of interest to all concerned with post-school learning.

The *Bulletin* promotes research. It is not primarily a journal of opinion but is open to all well-argued and substantiated views, for which the authors alone will have responsibility. Contributions are expected to be brief (maximum 400 words). Plain language is encouraged so that excessive use of jargon can be avoided. The Editorial Committee will assist authors to observe the criteria adopted by the Department to select articles for the publication. The final decision to accept a contribution rests with the Editorial Committee. Material published in the *Bulletin* may be freely disseminated but the source (*DHET, 2015: Research Bulletin on Post-School Education and Training*) must be acknowledged.

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## RESEARCH ARTICLES

### 1. The size and shape of the public and private post-school education and training system: what are the post school learning opportunities available for out of school youths and adults? (Ronel Blom)

The purpose of this study was to assess the size and diversity of the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) sector. The study investigated all public and private institutions offering programmes at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Levels 2 to 6 (pre-degree programmes). Approximately 7 000 public and private sites of learning were identified, with the greatest number found in Gauteng, followed by Kwa-Zulu Natal and the Western Cape. These sites offered all types of qualifications, namely unit-standards based qualifications, curriculum-based, and legacy qualifications, such as the National Technical Education (NATED) qualifications.

The study concludes that the public PSET system, especially the college sector, has experienced a severe contraction, resulting in an inverted pyramid where the public college base has been reduced, leaving the public university system to cater for almost all post-secondary education needs. This has led to the emergence of a larger private post-school sector, which subsequently necessitated the introduction of various regulatory mechanisms to ensure quality delivery. While some data is still outstanding in respect of private education and training, it is evident that in the last decade, very little skills development would have taken place if private PSET institutions did not step in to fill the vacuum created by the restructuring of the public system.

The research report includes details on the geographical spread of PSET institutions; types of qualifications offered by the different education and training sectors; and an emerging typology of providers, including 'workplace providers'; 'training centres' and 'institutions'. In examining this diverse range of 'providers', the study questions whether the system has an adequate number of PSET institutions which can offer programmes for post-school youth and adults.

The study will continue into the next phase and will examine student demographics, throughput and success rates, as well undertake case studies of a sample of institutions.

The paper is available at: <http://wits.academia.edu/RonelBlom/Papers>

*Dr Ronel Blom is a researcher at the Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL) at the University of the Witwatersrand's School of Education. She has undertaken a study on the Size and Shape of Post-School Education and Training in South Africa, on behalf of the Education Policy Consortium, funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training.*

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**2. Enhancing learner support in the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector through collaboration between NGOs and SETAs in South Africa: The case of the merSETA Access Trust Project (*More Ickson Manda*)**

In order to break the cycle of poverty and hopelessness that enslaves the majority of youth from disadvantaged communities, young people face the dual battle of finding belief in themselves and persuading others to believe in them. Sourcing funding to open the doors of training institutions, and ultimately gaining entry into the workforce are known challenges that young people face.

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of collaborative initiatives between Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in enhancing learner support in the manufacturing and engineering sector, by focusing on one such collaboration.

The study was conducted in the form of a case study, using interviews, and document analysis as primary methods of collecting data. A review of literature was also conducted in order to obtain insights into similar programmes undertaken elsewhere.

Evidence from the literature shows that on average, 70% of the families of higher education drop-outs surveyed were in the category of “low economic status”. Many of those who dropped out indicated that they worked to augment their meagre financial resources, no doubt adding to their stress levels and distracting them from their studies” (Letseka and Maile, 2008:5<sup>1</sup>). In acknowledging this reality, the Presidency advocates that in order to improve the number of learners completing their studies, funding should reward graduate output without reducing the attractiveness of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds (The Presidency, 2014<sup>2</sup>).

Economic disadvantage is not the only barrier affecting success of previously economically disadvantaged learners. According to Prinsloo (2009<sup>3</sup>), other factors affecting the success rate of learners in tertiary institutions include poor guidance and lack of psychological support. These dynamics affect the ability of learners to cope with study pressure and as well as their preparation for the labour market.

Findings from the study show that collaboration between SETAs and NGOs can enhance learner support and learner success rates. The study also found that financial, technical and social support all play an equally important role in learner success in technical and vocational education and training. However, more work still needs to be done to enhance the effectiveness of learner support through collaborative initiatives by SETAs and NGOs.

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<sup>1</sup> Letseka, M & Maile, S. (2008). High university drop-out rates: a threat to South Africa’s future. HSRC Policy brief: Pretoria: HSRC.

<sup>2</sup> The Presidency (2014). 20 year review: 1994 – 2014. Pretoria: The Presidency.

<sup>3</sup> Prinsloo, P. (2009). Modelling throughput at UNISA: the key to successfully implementation of ODL. Pretoria: UNISA.



NGOs and SETAs are encouraged to build a monitoring and evaluation framework into their collaborative initiatives as a way of clarifying expectations. To minimise the risk of misaligned expectations, it is recommended that it is extremely important from a contractual perspective to clarify the expectation upfront. More interventions should also be undertaken to increase the number of funded disadvantaged female learners in engineering related fields as the study found that the number of female learners who benefited from the merSETA Access Trust initiative was lower than male learners.

The report is available at: <http://www.merseta.org.za/Knowledgerepository.aspx>

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**3. A case study on accelerating the production of artisans in support of inclusive economic growth in South Africa (Helen Brown)**

The Manufacturing and Engineering Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) Accelerated Artisan Training Programme (AATP) has impacted positively on alleviating the acute shortage of artisans in support of economic growth in South Africa. The programme was conceptualised in 2004 by the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa (SEIFSA), a national employer federation representing the metal and engineering industry. In 2007, the merSETA assumed responsibility for the programme and launched the programme pilot on 1 June of the same year in Johannesburg.

merSETA's AATP proved that it is possible to train and qualify junior artisans in the automotive and metal industries within a period of between 22 and 36 months when: (1) entry-level qualifications are increased to include mathematics and science subjects at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 4, (2) institutional training (i.e. theory and simulated practical) against the training schedule for the trade is completed before entry into the workplace to support a 'work-ready' apprentice for the employer, (3) monitoring of workplace exposure, coaching/mentoring against the training schedule is increased in frequency on a peer group support system between employers for purposes of sharing best practice, (4) the trade test remains the benchmark of competency, (5) a 'ring-fence' approach is implemented to ensure funds and resources are exclusively dedicated to the programme; and (6) training is linked to Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) research (AATP Final Project Closure Report 2014).

Between 1 June 2007 and 31 March 2014, the AATP produced 3 355 fully qualified artisans in the automotive and metal trades, with a further 1 702 candidates expected to qualify by 2016. This activity stimulated the national system of training apprentices to the level where just over 10 000 apprentices were registered in the manufacturing sector from 2010 onwards. The success of the programme can be empirically measured through the results of the Tracer Study conducted in 2012. AATP candidates achieved a 71% first trade test pass rate (merSETA Tracer Study, 2012) whereas the control group of traditional four-year apprenticeships achieved a 66% first trade test pass rate. The study also found that 80% of AATP apprentices were employed after completing the trade test. This figure was similar to that of the control group (merSETA Tracer Study 2012).

Employers who had been involved in the AATP pilot confirmed that 'accelerated' artisans are productive on average two years earlier than artisans produced through the traditional South African four-year apprenticeship. Employers found the 'accelerated' artisans competent to build productivity and start contributing to company profitability.

Given its shorter training period, the high quality of the artisans it produces and the effectiveness of the practice model, the AATP can possibly be successfully replicated to alleviate artisan shortages that are hampering economic growth in South Africa, as well as other countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. The study concludes that the AATP has the potential to help improve the future prospects of individuals (apprentices) and the prospects of the communities and of the countries in which they live.

The full case study is available at the merSETA knowledge repository:  
<http://www.merseta.org.za/Knowledgerepository.aspx>

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**4. Academic success factors: Case-study evidence from entrepreneurship students at a University of Technology (Chux Gervase Iwu, Lucky Sibanda and Henrie Olumide Benedict)**

A group of second year Entrepreneurship students were asked to provide their perceptions of the main factors that contribute to their academic success and or failure. This exploratory study utilised questionnaires to gather data from a convenient sample of the target population. The target population consisted of second year students studying Financial Management (a major subject in this programme). The choice of sample (second year students) was justified: (1) on the basis of the Council on Higher Education's (CHE's) disillusionment with low throughput in undergraduate higher education, which is considered the fault of a negative first year experience; (2) assumptions that second year students would have experienced higher education and would be better placed to relate to a survey of this kind (i.e. identifying academic success and failure factors from their experience); and (3) the contextual definitions of 'success' and 'failure' within this study.

This study undoubtedly has value because if success and failure factors are identified and reconciled, students' success rates are likely to improve with appropriate interventions. Moreover, it is likely for university administrators to gather basic information which can then be utilised for introducing effective strategies to reduce failure and subsequently increase chances of success. Beyond this, it must be acknowledged that Entrepreneurship has been considered as one of the ways to boost the economy of any nation. Therefore, finding ways of attracting and retaining students in the programme will improve access to Entrepreneurship education as well as fast track economic development once graduates are able to add value to their respective communities.

A descriptive analysis of the findings suggest that the factors with the highest frequency which are perceived to contribute to success and failure include, regular studying and lack of attendance at lectures, respectively. The finding also revealed that 20 out of the 38 identified factors influencing success were personal, meaning that students firstly are able to control their learning environment, but also important was the researchers' consideration that given the necessary support, students could improve their chances of success in higher education.

Some important recommendations for further engagement on the subject were made. The researchers believed that it may be helpful to conduct a comparative study of the perceptions of both lecturers and student factors as it would provide insights on the possible approaches towards success enhancement from both parties. Perhaps through an in-depth analysis of results using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), comparing the factors and factor rankings of responses from second year students from other qualifications; for instance: Accounting students and Human Resources Management students, may result in statistically significant differences in responses.

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**5. Pushing the envelope of student access and success: Developing the Higher Certificate in Foundation Development and Access at the University of the Free State (Gert Hanekom, Francois Marais and J Francois Strydom)**

In April 2013 the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at the University of the Free State (UFS) started investigating the establishment of a Higher Certificate in Foundation Development and Access (referred to forthwith as the HC). This initiative grew from discussions held between the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the UFS's CTL, where the development of post National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 5 qualifications offered in collaboration between Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges and Universities was championed. The successful two-decade track record that the UFS had in offering its University Preparation Programme (UPP) in collaboration with TVET Colleges provided a strong foundation on which to develop an alternative HC.

This "foundational" HC would not only provide students with access to Higher Education (HE), but also maximise their chances of graduating. The HC is viewed as a qualification that would contribute to curbing the crisis of students who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The development of the "foundational" HC builds on the existing structures, curricula and points of delivery of the UPP. The UPP has already proved to be effective in granting degree access to students, who would otherwise not have access to post-matric studies as a result of their matric marks. It is also evident that students who complete the UPP first, eventually achieve good results in their degree studies. Since 1996, 2 598 Degrees have been awarded to students who began with the UPP, including 232 Honours, 33 Masters, and nine M.B.Ch.B. Degrees.

Based on the positive experience of the UFS, the HC will focus on strengthening those foundational academic skills (e.g. Academic Literacy) that students need to succeed in HE studies. Successful students will be granted access to the second year of study of an appropriate extended degree on a subject credit basis. If the HC is approved and accredited, it will mean that successful students will receive a South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) registered qualification.

Although the envisaged HC deviates from the expectations of the latest Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) that a HC should make students employable, be vocationally-oriented, and include work-integrated learning, the DHET and the Council on Higher Education (CHE) regard it as ground-breaking in terms of its potential benefits for students. That is why it pushes the envelope in terms of thinking about student access and success in the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) sector, especially with regards to existing policy on the nature and aim of entry-level post-matric qualifications.

This HC was approved by the UFS Council in March 2014. However, owing to deviation from existing policy, issues such as clearance in terms of the Programme Quality Mix (PQM) and accreditation at the national level have yet to be finalised (as of October 2014).

The article is available at: <http://ctl.ufs.ac.za/content.aspx?id=4>

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## **6. A skills planning mechanism takes shape through the LMIP (*Human Sciences Research Council*)**

Research to support the development of a skills planning mechanism for South Africa through the Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) has made significant progress in the past year. The starting point for the research was the recognition that the country did not have a reliable institutional structure to monitor the dynamism of the labour market and thus inform skills planning accordingly. To address this gap, research in the LMIP contends that the planning mechanism should consist of two inter-related functions: (i) a Labour Market Information System that would be tasked with collecting, collating, analysing and disseminating labour market information; (ii) a decision making process based on labour market intelligence to inform skills planning. In this way, the LMIP views the skills planning mechanism as both a process and a structure.

The present skills planning system is supply led. The LMIP proposes that a developmental state model should underpin South Africa's skills planning approach. Greater emphasis should be given to demand-side considerations, where economic priorities are an important factor in informing the skills agenda. Inputs from key partners are required to manage skills supply and demand, and to determine how resources may best be invested in skills development. Obtaining and managing information is a critical function and the mechanism must be able to coordinate, produce and utilise valid and up-to-date information on supply (using data from HEMIS and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Management Information System, private post-school education and skills development providers, workplace training data, etc.), on current demand (using data from StatsSA, job vacancies, scarce skills lists etc.) and future demand (using data from new business and government growth initiatives and other research).

The LMIP proposes a new mechanism for planning that adopts a top-down and bottom-up approach to the skills planning process. At the top of this planning mechanism will be the National Planning Commission (NPC) and Cabinet. The NPC has produced the National Development Plan and it can be expected that the Planning Commission, through the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) could be responsible for developing a more integrated plan, ensuring that there is more coordinated or 'joined up' thinking among government departments. At the national level the Planning Unit, with the Skills Planning Council, will play an important developmental role, particularly around tracking major changes implemented by other government departments, as well as other changes in the economy, and in identifying their implications for skills development. The core of the planning process will continue to be focused upon the SETA s, universities and technical vocational education (TVE) colleges that would be focused on managing supply and demand at the sector level. For more detailed information see: <http://www.lmip.org.za/news/lmip-update-2014>

The LMIP supports the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training's (2013) position on the establishment of a Centralised Skills Planning Unit (renamed CSP Intelligence Unit – CSPIU) which will be responsible for understanding skills supply and demand and support improved decision-making processes. We propose that the CSPIU be located within the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The DHET would be responsible to ensure synergy and cooperation amongst government departments.



The work of the LMIP is on-going and further refinement of the models and approaches proposed will be undertaken.

A range of LMIP outputs may be found on the project website: [www.lmip.org.za](http://www.lmip.org.za)

*The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) has been contracted by the Department of Higher Education and Training to lead and coordinate research towards developing a credible institutional mechanism for skills planning. A consortium consisting of the HSRC, the Development Policy Research Unit (UCT) and the Centre for Researching Education and Labour (Wits) has been established to drive the research agenda known as the Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP).*

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## 7. Understanding artisanal training in South Africa (*Angelique Wildschut*)

Artisan training and development has been identified as a critical area to address the challenges of economic growth and redress, and provide an avenue to address the growing youth unemployment challenge in South Africa. However, the artisan system continues to bear the historical scars of race and gender discrimination. The Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) has undertaken new research into key historical events in the evolution of the system, as well as a macroeconomic analysis of the shifts and shape of artisan skilling and employment over the last few decades. A Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) report titled, 'Towards understanding the distinctive nature of artisan training: Implications for skills planning', aims to identify implications for artisan development in South Africa. The report contributes to our understanding of the artisan system in three distinct ways:

- i. It brings a historical lens to bear, going back to the 17th century to trace the specific trajectory of artisan skilling since the colonial period. The analysis illustrates the relationship between artisan skills production and the country's economic growth path. It maps how systematic racial exclusion in the political context and a discourse about skills shortages in the labour market, have been important historical drivers of the nature of artisan skills production.
- ii. It considers the distinctive features of artisan training in South Africa, highlighting the depth and extent of a largely negative discourse about vocational education and training.
- iii. The future of artisan skills production has to take shifting sectoral and employment trends in the economic structure into account. In particular, shifts away from employment in the primary and secondary sectors, and a shift towards employment in the informal economy, are critical contextual realities for artisan skills planning in the present and future.

The report is available at:

<http://www.lmip.org.za/sites/default/files/documentfiles/HSRC%20LMIP%20Report%202%20Web%200.pdf>

*Dr Angelique Wildschut is a Senior Research Specialist at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and leads the LMIP research theme on 'Artisanal Milieux and Identities'.*

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**8. The challenges and prospects of access to higher education at UNISA (Moeketsi Letseka and Victor Pitsoe)**

In *Studies in Higher Education*, Letseka and Pitsoe (2014) explore the issues of student access and success at the University of South Africa (UNISA). They sketch the challenges of Open and Distance Learning (ODL), articulation, learner support, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and poor throughput rates. Drawing on British philosopher Karl Popper's *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, they argue that theorising ODL should be based on an understanding of theory as a 'coherent and systematic ordering of ideas, concepts and models for the purpose of constructing meaning in order to explain, interpret and shape practice'. That is, theory should provide a perspective that reduces complexity while suggesting generalisability. They explore whether, over the years, ODL has been able to develop sound articulation praxis to move itself into the twenty-first century. Such theorising should enable distance educators to reflect on the choices for adopting new technologies and new approaches to teaching and learning.

In order to provide adequate support to its diverse student demographics, UNISA has adopted the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the form of *MyUnisa* online portal. While the use of modern electronic technologies might be regarded as *fait accompli* given that we are now presumed to live in a networked society, Letseka and Pitsoe consider whether it is indeed the case that everyone is networked as Immanuel Castells wants us to believe. They question whether this laudable initiative might have the unintended consequence of excluding the vast majority of students who are excluded from the benefits of the digital age by their material conditions of existence and unfavourable geographical locations.

The challenge of RPL might be sweet music to the hardened factory worker who yearns to have his work experience recognised and accredited in order for him to be certificated. The question is, have we cleared the hurdles of processes and procedures for granting RPL? The case in point, most RPL applicants find it difficult to 'de-constitute' and 're-constitute' previous unconscious performance into a codified propositional form that accreditation processes and procedures can recognise. Put bluntly, the researchers propose that there is lack of clarity and explicitness with respect to RPL assessment.

Letseka and Pitsoe (2014) are convinced that UNISA will continue to play an important role in national human resource development plans and priorities. It is the researchers view though that UNISA can do better in terms of the issues of access and success were the institution to pay more attention to clarifying and resolving some, if not all the challenges highlighted in the paper.

Citation: Letseka, M., & Pitsoe, V. (2014) "The challenges and prospects of access to higher education at UNISA", *Studies in Higher Education*, 39 (10), 1942–1954.

The article is available at: Link: <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cshe20/39/10#.VIBPEU0cSpo>

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**9. TVET Colleges enhancing youth employability in local communities (*Kedibone Boka and Benita Reddi*)**

JET Education Services has been managing the implementation of the School Infrastructure and Youth Employment Creation Project (SIYECP) funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) through the National Skills Fund. The programme started in 2012 and aims to provide youth in rural communities in two provinces with an integrated package of appropriate work-related construction, life, and business skills. The programme, designed to increase the employability and income generating capabilities of youth, also sought to improve the capacity of public Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges to provide vocational learning pathways for young school leavers, and to engage with workplaces that would absorb them. An anticipated spin-off was the positive contribution to infrastructure development in rural communities.

JET provided management and operational support to TVET Colleges which provided theoretical and practical training in construction skills, followed by work exposure and youth livelihood training. The programme culminated in the placement of participants on construction sites such as school buildings in communities surrounding the colleges.

The project was delivered to 190 youth by three TVET Colleges: Orbit (Brits, North West); Ikhala (Queenstown, Eastern Cape); and King Hintsa (Butterworth, Eastern Cape). SIYECP has been successful in equipping rural youth with skills relevant to the developments taking place in their communities. It further provided youth with opportunities to earn a stipend, put their skills into practice on construction sites, and gain workplace experience. An illustration of the programme's success is the King Hintsa cohort of learners who participated in the construction of seven schools in the Amathole municipality.

The project has empowered TVET Colleges about the challenges of placing and managing learners in the workplace. Challenges include the colleges' lack of human resource capacity to monitor students on construction sites, and the difficulty construction supervisors faced in managing programme participants over whom they had little authority. With regard to programme management, the need for dedicated, meticulous, and hands-on project management in complex projects was confirmed. Monitoring and evaluation was integral to holding all stakeholders accountable and providing project implementers with an opportunity to review and track progress in relation to the project's objectives.

The significance of the SIYECP programme is that it demonstrates the emergence of a model of sustainable youth development involving livelihoods training, skills development, income generation, and community benefit. TVET Colleges involved in the project obtained a much better understanding of the concept of integrated training, which will provide them with the skills required in the world of work.

*Kedibone Boka holds a M.Ed. Degree, has extensive experience working in education sector, and currently is the Executive Manager for Youth and Community Development Division at JET Education Services. Her responsibilities include working with TVET Colleges on systems, capacity building and monitoring and support projects.*

*Benita Reddi holds a Science Degree from the University of the Witwatersrand and an Honours Degree in Psychology from UNISA. She has almost eight years of experience working in education and research and is currently a specialist coordinator in the Monitoring and Evaluation division at JET. Her research interests include psychological assessment as well as the development of innovative data techniques for programme evaluation.*

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## 10. Benchmarking towards recognised development of musicians in the South African Police Service Bands (Loffie Naude)

The initial South African Police (SAPS) Band was established in 1903 in Pretoria. During the early years of its existence there were no official assessment (evaluation) tools to establish the standards of music-making in the South African Police Service. At the time musicians were recruited from the Police Stations, some on the basis of their formal qualifications, and others because of their demonstrated musical skills, musical aptitude and performance abilities.

During the latter part of the eighties and early nineties a syllabus was used to train SAPS Band members. This syllabus was further developed in 2004 but was not submitted for accreditation within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) context. SAPS as an employer could neither recognise the internal training of its Band members nor consider them for promotions in the SAPS. SAPS Band members in the Inter-Departmental Music Advisory Committee (IDMAC) system<sup>4</sup> were competing for positions against candidates with academic and professional qualifications obtained at universities and officially recognized on the NQF.

An innovative intervention was required to address the dead-ends that many SAPS Band members were experiencing. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) proposed a solution: a benchmarking exercise which would have two purposes. First, benchmarking would prepare SAPS Band members for a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process to make possible recognition of their knowledge and skills. Second, the benchmarking would also be used to develop a new qualification in cooperation with the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) to ensure full accreditation in the context of the NQF.

The most important lesson learned through the benchmarking workshop is that agency is an important factor in changing dead-end situations into contexts offering hope and prospects. Agency in this instance refers to the ability to:

- see opportunities for change and to act on these opportunities;
- replace uncertainty about the future with certainty, options and hope; and
- create pathways for the way forward for sustainable learning and development.

*Dr Loffie Naude is a senior member in SAQA's Research Directorate. He specialises in enabling RPL in new contexts, and research and development relating to RPL, CAT Lifelong Learning, and education and training systems. In his research and work he uses a diverse range of theoretical approaches.*

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<sup>4</sup> The IDMAC was established to develop a music curriculum that could be quality assured within the context of the NQF

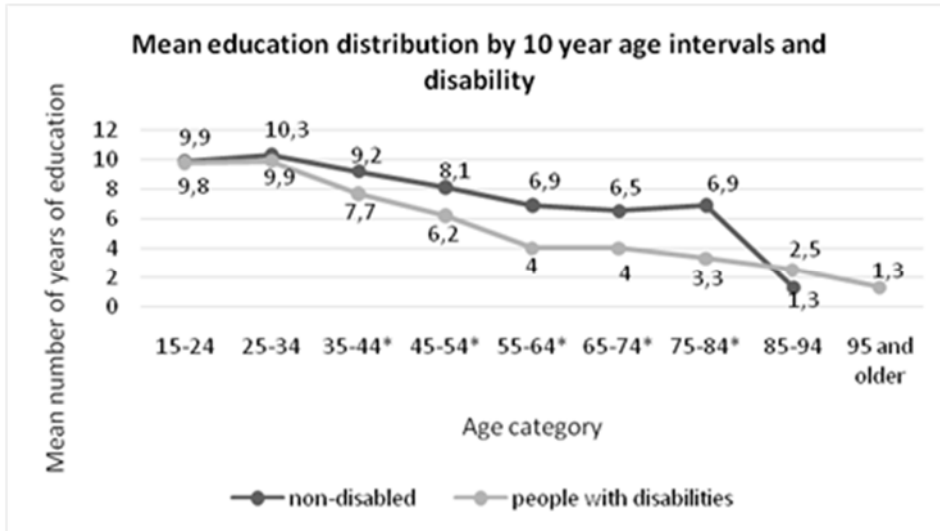
### 11. Disability and education in South Africa (Jacqueline Moodley)

The Centre for Social Development in Africa at the University of Johannesburg recently conducted a study on Poverty and Disability in South Africa (Graham, Moodley, Ismail, Munsaka, Ross and Schneider, 2014), which was funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The overarching aim of the study was to understand how poverty and disability intersect to shape key capability outcomes for both people with disabilities and non-disabled people. To achieve this aim, the researchers undertook a secondary analysis of the National Income Dynamics Survey (SALDRU, 2008). One of the key outcomes explored in terms of capabilities was the analysis of the state of education between people with and without disabilities.

The main finding from the analysis was that non-disabled people, on average, had 2.7 more years of education than people with disabilities. In addition, significantly more people with disabilities had no schooling than non-disabled people, and non-disabled people were more likely to progress to secondary and post-secondary education than people with disabilities. It was clear that people with disabilities fair worse than non-disabled people in terms of educational attainment. *But what can these differences be attributed to?* The data revealed that the differences in educational attainment between people with and without disabilities were not solely due to disabilities. Given that people with disabilities were older (mean age of 47 years) than the non-disabled population (mean age of 34 years), and that the NIDS sample consisted of more African people than other race groups, one possible explanation for the differences in education between people with and without disabilities could be attributed to apartheid era policies on education. This was confirmed by a regression analysis which identified race as the most significant contributor to the differences in educational attainment.

In order to determine if this picture was changing over time, educational attainment was analysed over 10 year age cohorts. The data revealed that differences in educational attainment are leveling out for younger cohorts, as seen in the chart below. This is not to say that there are not still immense challenges in the education system, particularly with regard to quality and access to resources required for special needs education. What the data reveals is that we are beginning to see promising and positive changes in education for people with disabilities. This positive change in education is a vital step in unlocking further opportunities for employment and development of people with disabilities in South Africa.





The report is available at: [http://www.uj.ac.za/EN/Faculties/humanities/Research/Research-Centres/csda/Documents/Poverty\\_Disability%20Report.pdf](http://www.uj.ac.za/EN/Faculties/humanities/Research/Research-Centres/csda/Documents/Poverty_Disability%20Report.pdf)

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**12. Towards answering questions about productive thinking: an analysis of Practical Assessment Tasks of the NSC Services Subjects (Celia Booyse)**

In a globally interdependent environment, educators are charged with preparing learners for a complex, interactive world. Many researchers argue that radical improvement in the acquisition of certain abilities is necessary because learners leaving school do not show evidence of the very skills and capabilities which would support economic growth. The real educational challenge is to develop learners with critical minds and an ability to apply productive thinking skills in the particular socio-economic environments that are needed to grow an economy.

In monitoring the standards and appropriateness of assessment practices in the National Senior Certificate in South Africa, Umalusi's evaluation teams analysed the standards of the practical assessment tasks in Consumer Studies, Hospitality Studies and Tourism (collectively known as the Services Subjects). The theoretical framework for the analysis emanates from notions of reproductive and productive thinking, which has specific reference to the work of Romiszowski (1981), but which also considers the work of Kolb (1984) and that of Marzano (1998, 2001) which took the conative and affective aspects of thinking in consideration. The instrument developed for the analysis measures the level of reproductive and productive skills required to be displayed in the tasks, in terms of cognitive, psychomotor, reactive and interactive categories.

The research findings provided answers to the kind of thinking learners are currently expected to display in practical assessment tasks, and the impact on learner preparedness for becoming responsible citizens entering the labour market in the hospitality and tourism industry.

The findings were presented in June 2014 at the 8<sup>th</sup> Southern Africa Association for Educational Assessment (SAAEA) conference in Windhoek, Namibia.

**The article is available on request from the Department of Higher Education and Training at: [dhetresearch@dhet.gov.za](mailto:dhetresearch@dhet.gov.za)**

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**13. Question paper compliance in terms of cognitive categories, level of difficulty and progression for subjects in selected vocational programmes in South Africa (Duma Sithebe and Celia Booyse)**

When Umalusi decided to evaluate selected National Certificate (Vocational) (NC (V)) programmes, there were cogent reasons for addressing the Hospitality and Tourism programmes. One of the reasons was that tourism was identified as one of the six core pillars of growth in South Africa's New Growth Plan. Similarly, the South African Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP2) identified tourism as a growth area expected to contribute to the development of, among others, economic activity in rural areas and culture.

Research teams undertook an item-by-item analysis of the NC (V) Level 4 examination papers of the subjects in the Hospitality and Tourism programmes. The instrument used for the analysis, based on a five-category scale, provided a nuanced indication of the cognitive categories being assessed. The evaluation teams noted the importance of the use of a range of cognitive categories in the examinations, from reproduction of information, to replication of basic procedures to analysis and synthesis. The percentages of marks awarded to each of these categories in the Assessment Guidelines were expected to be adhered to at the point of setting the paper, as this would give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate a variety of cognitive skills. The findings from the examination paper analysis provide evidence of the degree of (non-) compliance with the Assessment Guidelines, the expected representation of cognitive categories and demand in the examination papers and the progression between the three levels in the NC (V) as evidenced in the examination papers.

The findings were presented at the Southern Africa Association for Educational Assessment (SAAEA) conference in Windhoek, Namibia.

**The article is available on request from the Department of Higher Education and Training at: [dhetresearch@dhet.gov.za](mailto:dhetresearch@dhet.gov.za)**

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#### 14. Accreditation options for Workers' Education in South Africa (Heidi Bolton)

The South African government is committed to addressing unemployment, poverty and inequality. Education, training, and lifelong learning are central in this work, and Workers' Education (also referred to as Popular Education and Adult Education) is an important part of the national development agenda. This kind of education is however largely outside the quality assurance system of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). *What are the possibilities for bringing it into the system, and would the sector want that?*

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) commissioned the South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) to look into possible answers to these questions. Particular questions addressed included: What is the nature of Workers' Education and how does it differ from mainstream education? What model is likely to afford long term sustainability in the sector? Should Workers' Education be accredited and if so, how?

A qualitative approach was used for this study. Data collection methods included one-on-one and focus group interviews with a wide range of stakeholders. Data were also collected through documentary analysis.

Findings include descriptions of some of the offerings in the sector, what the current basket of education and training-related legislation enables and some clarity regarding the nature of Workers' Education.

Four possibilities were identified for the way forward. The first is for Workers' Education institutions to operate as Community Colleges. The main advantage of this model is that it fits within and would extend, the current legislative framework. Further, it would enable Workers' Education to be taken to scale.

A second possibility is that one of the Workers' Education institutions assumes the role of coordinating Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for workers. This role could include the facilitation of developmental activities, providing workers with essential information on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), assistance with RPL, mediating the use of knowledge and skills across contexts, conducting assessments and facilitating credit accumulation that could lead to certification.

A third route, for Workers' Education institutions to become private non-profit providers, was found to be not financially viable.

The fourth option, that of an agreed Worker's Education institution becoming an accreditation agency, is also not recommended as it would likely complicate a system for which attempts at simplification are already underway.

The research recommends that selected existing Workers' Education institutions expand their services to include 'Continuing Professional Development' for workers, and be located in the Community College sector. Consideration would have to be given as to which offerings need to be integrated into the NQF, and which not.

The research has been fed into a national democratic process involving sector definition of its own constituency, form and purpose. A report on the findings will be available in 2015.

*Dr Heidi Bolton is a Director for Research at SAQA.*

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## **CURRENT AND PLANNED RESEARCH PROJECTS**

### **1. Facilitating college to work transitions for TVET College students - A research and development project (Joy Papier)**

The overarching aim of this project is to facilitate pathways for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College graduates into the workplace. Recent government policies emphasise the need for public TVET Colleges to strengthen relationships with industry in order to improve learners' chances of placement, both for practical internships and also for longer term employment. The project reference team recommended that N6 students be targeted as they are required to obtain practical training at the end of their college programme as a prerequisite for achieving the qualification.

Phase one consisted of linking employers and TVET Colleges in targeted economic sectors: Engineering, Tourism-Hospitality, and Wholesale and Retail. Employers were consulted about what they believed would enhance the employability of college graduates within their sectors. Although some of the 'necessary skills' described by employers were embedded in the N4 to N6 courses, they were not dealt with in any systematic way. The project colleges agreed with the sentiments expressed by employers that such cross-cutting skills might be better addressed in a focused, targeted, work-preparation programme delivered just prior to students leaving college for their practical placements. In this way, students would see the preparation programme as relevant and timely. With this rationale and frequent consultation with stakeholders, a 'work preparation programme' was conceived as an addition to the N6. The programme consists of five short modules with materials that are interactive and activity based. The preparation programme was delivered during the college holidays and included two structured visits to industry for purposes of student reflection and feedback.

The final phase of the project is currently underway. Students have been placed with various employers and are being monitored throughout the project. On the advice of the relevant Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), employers have been encouraged to access the PIVOTAL grant for student stipends but in the interim, colleges have been afforded student stipends in order not to delay implementation. The project ends in April 2015 and will yield significant findings/insights which will be shared in the various phase reports and on other platforms. Other colleges have expressed interest in the work preparation materials, and the project has already resulted in synergies among college departments internally as well as between colleges, SETAs and industry - which can only be to the benefit of college graduates in the future. A final report will be prepared at the close-out of the project that will include follow up data on the students, six months after their preparation and placement.

*Prof Joy Papier is a Director of the Institute for Post-School Studies (IPSS) (including FETI),  
University of the Western Cape.*

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## 2. College improvement in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo (Kedibone Boka)

JET Education Services was appointed by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in September 2011 to manage the Technical and Vocational education and Training (TVET) Colleges Improvement Project (CIP) in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo for a period of three years. The Eastern Cape CIP was launched by the Director-General of Higher Education and Training in October 2011, while the Limpopo CIP was similarly introduced to Limpopo colleges in January 2012.

The key objective of the project has been to improve the functionality of the 15 colleges across the two provinces. The main intention of the intervention was to improve the ability of colleges to increase the certification rate of students.

In order to achieve these objectives, the project has foregrounded the improvement of teaching and learning delivery at college and campus level to develop campus improvement plans and processes. These plans included a focus on lecturer development, analysing subject exam results in order to identify weak subjects and academic support programmes. This was supported by a strong focus on increased access of college students to workplace learning opportunities, as well as support to improve data management at a campus level. Mathematics focused revision workshops were conducted for students as part of supporting weak subject performances identified in the college improvement plan. To ensure sustainability in student academic support at campus level a student-based peer tutoring system was set up and a capacity building mechanism to support those who run the system was implemented.

The college improvement project initiated support at campus level through the development of campus improvement plans and processes. With the support of deputy principals, academic and student support managers and Education Management Information System (EMIS) managers, JET technical advisors went to campuses to monitor and support lecturers, Head of Departments (HODs), Work based Education (WBE) co-ordinators and EMIS data capturers. JET co-ordinated training workshops at colleges for teaching and learning, WBE as well as college wide integrated academic capacity building. Technical advisors have also provided support around strategic and operational planning and budgeting, enrolment planning and management, improving occupational health and safety, and the training of governing councils.

The Work Integrated Learning activities have resulted in the development of campus level WBE committees and the placement of significant numbers of students in on-course work experience during their holidays.

The lessons learnt from the CIP are currently being written up by JET and the findings will be disseminated in early 2015. JET is also working closely with DHET to ensure that these findings will be made available to the college sector and all relevant stakeholders.

*Kedibone Boka is the Executive Manager for Youth and Community Development Division at JET Education Services. Her responsibilities include working with TVET Colleges on youth development projects and livelihoods.*

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### **3. Strengthening occupational and vocational qualifications (Stephanie Allais and Yael Shalem)**

The Centre for Researching Education and Labour is investigating the relationships between the nature of knowledge areas, their organisation into curricula, their use in workplaces, and the perceived needs and regulation of the labour market in different occupational areas. Initial work has been conducted to build criteria for evaluating and strengthening vocational, occupational, or professional curricula. To look for conceptual continuity between general, vocational and professional education, researchers go back to distinctions that have been purposefully eroded in educational thinking, such as the distinction between education and training; between knowledge for its own sake and instrumental knowledge; and between skills and knowledge. The researchers claim space for them and explore their implications. They then draw on recent research into professional and occupational curricula, and bring some of its theoretical insights back to debates about secondary level curricula. On the basis of a consideration of this literature, the researchers propose three key concepts through which to think about curricula, and an additional concept (concept three below) through which to think specifically about vocational or professional subjects and qualifications:

1. Knowledge for its own sake;
2. Powerful knowledge;
3. Occupational formation; and
4. Epistemic ascent.

The researchers have tested the criteria through a cursory application to a selection of vocational subjects in the South African secondary school curriculum, showing serious problems with some of the vocational subjects on offer. They will now attempt to apply them to curricula in nursing, teaching, law and economics.

*Dr Stephanie Allais is a senior researcher at the Centre for Researching Education and Labour.*

*Yael Shalem is an associate professor at the School of Education, and a research associate of REAL.*

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#### **4. Explorations in the research-policy nexus in the LMIP (Rushil Ranchod)**

The Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) represents an important attempt to promote evidence-informed policy making and the cultivation of the research-policy nexus in South Africa. From its initial conceptualisation, the LMIP has attempted to utilise a model of close engagement and interaction between government and the research community, to enhance the process of knowledge development and sharing amongst all stakeholders.

A key part of the LMIP's research communication function is to reflect on the process adopted by the LMIP to develop a rigorous evidence base to support policy making in the Department of Higher Education and Training. A study has been initiated with the following objectives in mind:

1. Locate the LMIP as a case within a broader debate on evidence-based policy making in South Africa;
2. Explore the rationale for the structures, mechanisms and processes that were instituted to facilitate the development of evidence-based policy making in South Africa and assess the operation of these through the life of the LMIP;
3. Explore the utility, importance, successes and challenges of research use to inform public policy making in South Africa through the case of the LMIP; and
4. Determine strategies to enhance the operation of researcher-policymaker interactions in South Africa.

Interviews have commenced with senior research leaders in the LMIP and government managers, to unpack the nature and process of researcher-policy making interactions. This case study holds value to enhance collaborative interaction across government and ultimately contribute to enhancing the use of evidence in the policy making process. A report on the findings will be available in 2015.

*Dr Rushil Ranchod is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Human Sciences Research Council and manages the LMIP's research communication portfolio. He was a 2014 World Social Science Fellow.*

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**5. Understanding barriers to accessing skills development and employment for youth in Argentina and South Africa in a comparative and international perspective (Siphelo Ngcwango and Peliwe Lolwana)**

Wits REAL Centre has partnered with the PREJET Centre at the University of Buenos Aires for the project which is conducted in both Argentina and South Africa as a form of 'South-South cooperation'.

The research project is focused on Policies, People, and Institutions:

- Policies addressing skills development and work access in the public governance system;
- Young people with respect to what they bring to the table, in terms of educational achievements, family and household characteristics; spatiality of residence; employment histories, values and expectations, and
- Institutions and programmes that support the policies above and their own strategies to manage the implementation of the policies and programmes.

The study broadly aims to gain insight into barriers to accessing skills development and employment for youth in Argentina and South Africa and the policies addressing them, in the context of regional and international trends. The methodology involves:

- Identifying and classifying policies addressing skills development and work at the national public governance system;
- Describing and analysing youth employment at a national level and in specific sectors of the economy, from a quantitative perspective, focusing on factors that facilitate or block the access of youngsters to decent work; and
- Analysing strategies of implementation and performance developed by institutions and programmes that support the policies above, in specific sectors of the economy.

The first phase of the project was a conceptual seminar hosted by PREJET in May 2014, the second phase involved a seminar focused on discussion of findings and was hosted by Wits REAL Centre during 17 -21 November 2014.

The fieldwork aspect has been completed in both countries the teams are now finalising analysis and the write up of reports.

*Siphelo Ngcwango is a research associate at Wits University Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL). He is the project manager for the LMIP theme 2 project and researcher on barrier to employment and skills development for youth in South Africa.*

*Peliwe Lolwana is an Associate Professor, Director: Researching Education and Labour (REAL) Centre University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Peliwe is also a researcher on the barriers to employment and skills development for youth in South Africa and manages the collaboration with PREJET in Argentine and NORRAG in Switzerland for this project.*

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**6. A critique of the White Paper for Post - School Education and Training (PSET) (Avukile Dlanga)**

The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training has identified some of the key common elements in the causality of youth unemployment and un-employability. The White Paper has, however, not explained the relationships needed to ensure transformation of the current system to achieve the intended results. In other words, one cannot move to a new system without first addressing the current and emerging challenges within the education system. The White Paper has not comprehensively included the current factors which add to current challenges.

The key issue is that the theory of change is not clear and therefore one cannot evaluate whether the intervention logic is appropriate or not. The intervention logic should be able to translate the implied theory of change into a strategy for a post-school system. In addition to this, the White Paper has not identified policy and institutional challenges which have impacted on the capacity of the system to provide jobs for youths. As a result there is no information on what has happened to the thousands of youth that have been trained but have not been employed.

The current Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA) tracer study is an attempt to find this information. Therefore, TETA intends to conduct a comprehensive baseline study which will provide the necessary evidence to guide all its future skills development programmes.

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:**

1. Identify clearly the causes of post-schooling challenges;
2. Identify not only the causes but also the associated contributing factors;
3. Identify an appropriate status of the post-schooling system so that an appropriate theory of change can be developed to guide intervention strategies in South Africa.

In conclusion, the White Paper is very compelling but will remain a wish list unless it begins to provide a solid framework to produce results. Source: Dlanga, A. 2014.

*Avukile Dlanga is a Research and Knowledge Manager at Transport SETA and a former Trade Unionist and Soccer Player commonly known as (Richy).*

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### **7. Research on TVET lecturer training in Africa and the European Union (Seamus Needham)**

The sixth South Africa-European Union summit in 2013 reaffirmed the ongoing and enhanced collaboration in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), while new plans were made for collaboration in the areas of national skills planning, new skills for new jobs and internationalisation in higher education. In the Senior Officials meeting that followed in November 2013 in Brussels, more ideas were exchanged between South Africa and the European Union (EU) with regard to mutual cooperation in the field of higher education. In this context, a joint study was proposed on TVET College lecturers training in the EU and in South Africa.

In 2014, the TVET Institute, the vocational arm of the Institute for Post-School Studies at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), was invited to co-write a proposal with two research consortia in Europe for a European Union (EU) tender on 'TVET College Lecturer Education through International Cooperation'. Professor Joy Papier and Seamus Needham participated in this proposal and the project was awarded in December 2014.

The research commenced in December 2014 and involves a comparative study of TVET College lecturer education in five African countries namely; Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, South Africa and Tanzania, as well as taking into account TVET College lecturer education in European countries. The key focus of this research will be to compare experiences and good practices of TVET teacher training across these contexts that can inform future policy decisions between the EU, Africa and South Africa. The study will make use of local TVET experts in Africa and will include in its scope the following areas:

- Key policies and programmes;
- Qualifications systems for TVET teachers;
- Quality assurance mechanisms, and
- Induction and professional development of TVET teachers.

Professor Joy Papier and Seamus Needham will primarily focus on routes into TVET College lecturer training in South Africa to date, and assist in the formulation of the final comprehensive research report to be completed by the end of June 2015.

*Seamus Needham is the Research and Planning Manager of the FET Institute (the vocational arm of the Institute of Post School Studies - IPSS) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC).*

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### 8. Investigating efficacy in adult learning centres: a multi-case study (Biki Lepota)

The White Paper on Post-School Education and Training acknowledges that there are shortcomings and deficiencies with the current system of Public Adult Learning Centres. Consequentially, that has necessitated the reconceptualising and renewing of South Africa's post-school education system in order to move towards a new vision for adult learning sites as community colleges. From Umalusi's point of view, there is a need for appropriate research to inform policy development and implementation given this context of change and renewal. It is for that reason that Umalusi has embarked upon a study entitled *Investigating efficacy in adult learning centres: a multi-case study*.

In terms of its definition, institutional efficacy is understood as the capacity of the adult education centre to achieve desired results. The investigation seeks to establish the factors that contribute to the effective and efficient functioning of adult education centres in relation to: (a) governance; (b) teaching and learning; and (c) wider community and institutional relations. The study employs a multi-disciplinary approach focusing on the institutional efficacy of selected centres from a range of sectors in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Limpopo and the Western Cape provinces. In collecting data, the research uses a range of methods, including interviews, focus groups, observations and analysis of documents available at the selected adult education centres.

While this study is based on a selection of adult learning centres in four provinces, the research is vitally important for Umalusi, for at least two reasons. First, it is expected that the results will provide useful information for the development of a theoretically sound instrument for accreditation and monitoring of adult learning sites. Second, it is expected that the findings would yield useful information to assist in improving the quality and standards of teaching at adult learning centres. In sum, the findings of the study will provide a useful reference point for the identification and elaboration of cross-cutting trends and themes regarding institutional efficacy.

*Biki Lepota has been Researcher at Umalusi since January 2009. His previous positions include being the Manager at the Council on Higher Education, Publisher at Media24's NB Publishers and Lecturer at the University of Pretoria.*

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### 9. Design evaluation of the Draft Policy on Community Colleges (Renay Pillay)

The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2013) states that “the education and training system must find ways to cater to the needs of millions of adults and youth who are unemployed, poorly educated and not studying”. The White Paper calls for the establishment of a new type of institution that will cater mainly for youth and adults who did not complete their schooling or who never attended school and thus do not qualify to study at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges and Universities. The White Paper indicates that these institutions will be known as Community Colleges.

Community Colleges have been proposed as a third tier of institutional type alongside Universities and TVET Colleges. They are envisaged to cater for second-chance learning opportunities for out-of-school youth and adults, by building on the current offerings of the existing Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs), which offer general education programmes. Community Colleges will be a diverse set of institutions, offering programmes that are appropriate to their particular communities.

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has recently published a call for public comments on the draft National Policy on Community Colleges (Government Gazette No. 38158, 7 November 2014). The draft policy provides a framework for the process of establishing Community Colleges, its governance and management, employment of staff, funding framework, programmes and qualification offerings, quality assurance, examinations and assessment as well as monitoring and evaluation.

The DHET has also commissioned a design evaluation of the Draft Policy on Community Colleges. It is significant that this is the first known design evaluation of a public policy instrument that is taking place in South Africa. This design evaluation is expected to make an important contribution to illustrating evidence-based policy making at the point of policy development.

The evaluation seeks to, *inter alia*, assess the robustness of the theory of change that is implicit or explicit in the draft policy, validate the inherent logic and internal coherence of the policy document, clarify the results or outcomes against the education sector policy as well as assess the implementability of the draft policy.

The evaluation report will be finalised following stakeholder engagement, and will be available on the DHET website in May 2015.

*Renay Pillay is Acting Deputy Director in the Research Coordination Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate, DHET.*

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### 10. An African model of employability (Christopher John Beukes)

This study involves the development of an African model of employability, which focuses on the design and enhancement of an employability assessment tool.

The model has been worked upon and refined for a period of over six years. This model assumes a wider interconnectedness of skills, and maps skills to nature as well as the parts of a tree. It is for this reason that the model is named *employabilitree* and assumes that if skills grow like a tree, then money really does grow on trees.



There are twelve parts to the *employabilitree*, namely: 1. Elements, 2. Seeds, 3. Bugs, 4. Sap, 5. Roots, 6. Trunk, 7. Branches, 8. Twigs, 9. Leaves, 10. Fruit, 11. Forest and 12. Seasons. In relation to skills, these parts represent 1. Positivity, 2. Service, 3. Barriers, 4. Creativity, 5. Foundational, 6. Core, 7. Fields, 8. Career, 9. Work, 10. Motivation, 11. Networking and 12. Cycles. The study found that comparing the intangible with the tangible can create an environment of maximized skill transfer and retention.

The results of an *Exploratory Factor Analyses* conducted by Beukes (2009<sup>5</sup>) reveal that the items of the assessment tool satisfy the psychometric criteria of both content and construct validity. The Bartlett test of sphericity yielded a statistical approximate chi-square ( $p < 0.000$ ), which also indicated the probability that the correlation matrix had significant correlation amongst the variables (Beukes, 2009). Reliability (internal consistency) coefficients were 0.91. According to Anastasi (1976<sup>6</sup>) a desirable reliability coefficient would fall in the range of 0.80 to 0.90. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994<sup>7</sup>) use 0.70 as a directive, whilst Bartholomew, Antonia, and Marcia (2000) argue that between 0.80 and 0.60 is acceptable.

The predictive validity of the model will be researched further as part of a doctoral thesis. The model will be available at no cost through a creative commons agreement so that it can be disseminated as far as possible without the challenges of finances getting in the way of quality education.

*Christopher John Beukes holds a Master's Degree in the field of industrial and organisational psychology. He is currently working on the establishment of the Central Application Service at the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).*

<sup>5</sup> Beukes, C. J. (2009). The relationship between employability and emotional intelligence. Unpublished research report, Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, University of South Africa, Pretoria.

<sup>6</sup> Anastasi, A. (1976). Psychological testing. New York: McMillan.

<sup>7</sup> Nunnally, J. C., & Bernstein, I. H. (1994). Psychometric theory. New York: McGraw-Hill.



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## CONFERENCES, STUDY TOURS AND REVIEWS

### 1. Seventh Annual South African Technology Network Conference 2014 (*Muntuwenkosi Chili*)

*Universities of Technology: Enhancing Teaching, Learning and Assessment Initiatives in Universities of Technology: Looking Back and Going Forward.*

Hosted by: Mangosuthu University of Technology, Fairmont Zimbali Lodge and Resort, KwaZulu-Natal

14-16 October 2014

The South African Technology Network (SATN) was established by five Universities of Technology in 2006 (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Central University of Technology, Durban University of Technology, Tshwane University of Technology and the Vaal University of Technology). Subsequently, Mangosuthu University of Technology and the Polytechnic of Namibia joined the organisation in 2009 and 2010, respectively.

The purpose of the SATN October 2014 conference was to provide a platform for discussion on matters pertaining to higher education, and the synthesis of perspectives and guidelines in response to post-school education and related policy and legislative processes. The conference intended to facilitate engagement on issues that were of particular interest to Universities of Technology. The conference was opened by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, who highlighted the need for improved access and success in Higher Education across the country. He also urged Universities of Technology to partner with Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges to ensure that their programmes were streamlined.

Conference papers and discussions focused on the following: systemic and institutional policy issues enabling or constraining teaching and learning activities; enhancing the teaching and learning environment; institutional enablers for enhancing the academic qualifications of academics; teaching at post-graduate levels of education; enhancing student support and development services to improve teaching and learning outputs; enhancing curricula renewal activities and graduate employability; sharing good practices philosophies that inform teaching and learning initiatives.

Among the many issues discussed, the conference identified student placement for work integrated learning as the most important. Participants also explored how SATN could gather industry input in order to make teaching programmes more relevant. Delegates agreed to establish a committee to engage business in relation to on-the-job training for students.

Conferences papers and presentations are available at: [www.satn.co.za](http://www.satn.co.za)

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**2. Umalusi to host the 2016 International Association for Educational assessment Conference  
(Biki Lepota)**

Umalusi has won the bid to host the forty-second International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) Annual Conference in 2016. Information in relation to conference dates, theme and sub-themes, location, and conference registration fees will be communicated during the 2015 IAEA Conference. It is expected that the conference will be attended mostly by university academics, scholars, and officials from provincial and national education departments, research organisations, the private sector and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

*Biki Lepota has been Researcher at Umalusi since January 2009. His previous positions include being the Manager at the Council on Higher Education, Publisher at Media24's NB Publishers and Lecturer at the University of Pretoria.*

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### **3. American Community Colleges – Findings from a Study Tour (Amanuel Garza)**

The vision of the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2013) to expand the post-schooling sector addresses the problem of narrow pathways and poor opportunities available for young people who are out of school.

Countries across the world have developed different systems of post-schooling that reflect their economic, socio-cultural and historical trajectories. Since these systems have evolved in response to unique demands specific to those countries, it is neither possible nor desirable to simply imitate these systems. However, a comparative study aimed at understanding the broader patterns and conditions of success or failure, can provide useful lessons for South Africa.

Community colleges in the United States of America present one such example. Community colleges are in many ways American innovations and have evolved in relation to forces of change that are unique to the country. American community colleges have grown from less than ten at the start of the twentieth century to over 1 000 in 2012. This remarkable achievement was driven by a combination of forces of community demands for more education and training and American national concerns for a trained workforce. This is partly reflected in the diverse groups of communities served by these colleges. The following characteristics and practices can be discerned about the American community college system:

- open access, low barrier to entry and affordability;
- diverse and comprehensive programmes that cater for diverse needs ranging from programmes that offer pathways to access higher education, development of the workforce and continuous education, to community and personal enrichment programmes;
- flexibility in providing credit and non-credit programmes during the day and in evenings and over weekends;
- a local community presence that fosters a strong partnership with local industry, business and community needs;
- close articulation with local secondary schools and universities;
- responsiveness through curriculum partnership structures such as an external advisory board that includes local community and industries; and
- the provision of extensive developmental and bridging programmes for unprepared students.

Notwithstanding the many challenges faced by American community colleges, initial observations suggest that a diversified, differentiated, flexible and affordable post-school sector is critical to facilitate the social mobility of a large number of people and foster national and economic development.

**A Power Point presentation on the study tour is available on request from the Department of Higher Education and Training at: [dhetresearch@dhet.gov.za](mailto:dhetresearch@dhet.gov.za)**

*Amanuel Garza has MA in Educational Planning and Economics of Education with over 15 years of teaching. He is currently working as a System and Capacity Building Specialist for TVET Colleges in South Africa.*

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**4. Book Review: Education, Economy and Society by Salim Vally and Enver Motala (Wayne Dirk)**

*Education, Economy and Society* (2014) attempts to dispel myths about the relationship between education, the economy and society. It argues that there is not a seamless relationship between the provision of skills through education and training and the capacity of the economy to absorb such skills. The editors and the various authors argue against the view that there is a skills-deficit which, if removed, will solve the problem of youth and adult unemployment (human capital theory). Such a view, it is argued, leads to an instrumentalist approach to education that reduces all learning to its usefulness to the economy. According to the authors, market-based economies are unpredictable and cannot be relied on to deliver long-term solutions for the problem of unemployment. Drawing on empirical research, the book provides evidence that market economies tend to shed skills in a manner that leads to insecure forms of employment. From the case studies presented, it is evident that deeper empirical research is needed about the nature of the South African economy and its relationship to education and training.

The word of caution submitted by *Education, Economy and Society* is that education policy-makers should not regard the formal economy as a panacea for the problems faced by unemployed youth and adults in a developing country such as South Africa.

The arguments presented in this book are important for government policy-makers and academics who have to find creative solutions for the problems of unemployment, poverty and access to quality education and training. Government policy-makers, in particular, will find some resonance between the themes of *Education, Economy and Society* and the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2014). Both place emphasis on increasing the knowledge-base to address the complexities of post-school education.

The Research Agenda (2014-2017) published by Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), attests to this view and it is hoped that research in the areas it has identified will develop new concepts, ideas and theoretical frameworks that will assist in developing practical responses to the concerns raised by the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training and *Education, Economy and Society*.

The critical worth of *Education, Economy and Society* is that it forces a renewed dialogue on human capital theory. It is therefore a significant and valuable starting point for collaboration between policy-makers and researchers tasked with addressing the many challenges facing post-school education in South Africa.

**The Education, Economy and Society publication by Salim Vally and Enver Motala is available from the UNISA press.**

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**5. The formal education journey of Cassim Dangor, 1963-1985: Reflections on education challenges in apartheid South Africa by Goolam Vahed (*Wonga Tabata*)**

Associate Professor Vahed's journal article on the challenges faced by "first-generation" university students at University College, Durban, on Salisbury Island in the 1960's makes for interesting reading. The term, "first generation", refers to those students who come from families whose members have never entered universities or institutions of higher learning. Vahed's article is based on the educational journey of Professor Cassim Dangor, a South African academic of Indian descent who was born in Standerton and became one of the Pharmacy students to enrol at the ethnic University College, Durban, in 1963 which later became University of Durban-Westville (UD-W) in the early 1970s when the institution moved to Westville.

Vahed points out that Dangor faced many alienating academic, cultural and political challenges on Salisbury Island. Through determination and hard work, he secured a USA post-graduate scholarship in 1970. In Mississippi, USA, he was exposed to the Black political protest movement and racism but the academic experience was more enriching than at UD-W. Dangor eventually became a Professor of Pharmacy at UD-W and taught anti-apartheid leaders such as Indris Moodley and Pravin Gordhan. Pravin Gordhan later became South Africa's Minister of Finance and is currently the Minister for Co-operative and Local Government. This biographical study remains relevant in post-apartheid South Africa as it traces academic experiences, student alienation and politics in the then "Bush Colleges" under apartheid.

The article is available at: <http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/hist/v59n1/03.pdf>

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**6. Review of 'The list of occupations in high demand: 2014' (Siphelo Ngcwangu and David Balwanz)**

In November 2014, the Department for Higher Education and Training (DHET) published a Government Gazette titled 'The list of occupations in high demand: 2014'. This publication argues that the 'provision of education and training...be better coordinated with the needs of society and the economy'. To address this concern, the publication 'provides a list of occupations...in high demand' with the intention of informing 'decision-making in ...skills planning and development,' (DHET 2014:4). The researchers agree that the DHET should play a leading role in positioning education and skills development to better meet the needs of society. It is in this spirit that they critique this recent publication.

The document references a number of other government policies such as the National Development Plan (NDP) and the White Paper for Post School Education and Training (PSET) however it does not clarify how it responds to these policies specifically. This results in a number of contradictions, for example, while most South Africans view the NDP as national policy and therefore a priority, the document allocates less points to it than for instance the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) proposals (see point scoring system page 14). Such contradictions leave the reader with more questions than answers with regards to how policy priority is translated into the list and to which priorities is the list responding. In the same vein it is also not clear how government departments would actually implement the list to align to their respective programmes which are not designated special status but are of national importance. These are issues that the list itself may not address entirely as they are more about intergovernmental relations rather than skills identification.

The researchers' first critique relates to the use of the Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO). Since the OFO includes only formal sector occupations, they argue that it offers an overly narrow conceptualisation and valuing of education and skills. Using the OFO to frame DHET thinking on education and skills development has three deficiencies: (i) as concepts for thinking about the relationship between education, economy, and society, 'knowledge' and 'skill' are more flexible, transferrable and timeless than 'occupation' or 'job', (ii) the OFO framework excludes over half of the adult population (those who are unemployed, in the informal sector, or using skills and knowledge informally in the community) in its conceptualisation of education and skills development, and (iii) the OFO framework undervalues liberal arts education and higher education knowledge production, research activities and transdisciplinarity initiatives (each of which are associated with the growth of high-skill jobs). The researchers argue that an education and training system designed around responding to this OFO list will be constrained by its inability to account for other economic activities which citizens engage in but are not necessarily in the formal sector of the economy.

The second critique is that the list is explicitly biased towards science, engineering and business occupations (DHET 2014:14). This bias reflects a belief that technocratic solutions (e.g., more engineers and accountants) will solve the problems of society (e.g., the persistence of poor roads and poor audits) and prioritises technocratic skills over the role of education in promoting social



values (e.g. integrity, solidarity) and contributing to other forms of community wellness and development. For example, violence against women and drug and alcohol abuse are prominent social problems: but according to this list, the 'market demand' for spiritual advisors, substance abuse counsellors, and experts in supporting victims of sexual assault is low. Other government departments (such as the social cluster) would find this exclusion of priority areas for social cohesion and development to be problematic given growing demand for social support services as social problems widen due to a range of economic and social factors. Other omissions include the cultural sectors such as the film industry which has a high economic growth potential through the expansion of the film industry. Importantly, this list exemplifies two serious deficiencies of the developmental state paradigm: it offers neither a moral compass nor a transformative social vision for a safe, humane and meaningful future for which so many South Africans continue to desperately yearn.

Providing more clarity on the sources of the list and why other skills areas are excluded may be of use to the general reader and provide research experts with more insight on what informed the original conceptualisation of the priority areas of the list.

The list of occupations in high demand is available at [www.dhet.gov.za](http://www.dhet.gov.za)

*Siphelo Ngcwangu is a research associate at Wits University Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL). He is the project manager for the LMIP theme 2 project and researcher on barrier to employment and skills development for youth in South Africa.*

*David Balwanz, Centre for Education Rights and Transformation, University of Johannesburg.*

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## 7. Response to critique of DHET'S Occupation in Demand List (*Hoosen Rasool*)

The Siphelo Ngcwangu and David Balwanz critique, *How can we meet our skills needs if we don't know what they are?*, published in the Mail & Guardian (28 November 2014) and the Research Bulletin on Post-School Education & Training (No 3, March 2014) about the DHET's *List of Occupations in High Demand* warrants a response to set the record straight.

Firstly, a *Draft List of Occupations in Demand* was gazetted by the Minister of Higher Education and Training for public comment in May 2014. Eight-seven organisations/individuals provided their inputs and feedback on the draft Gazette (which, incidentally, informed the revision of the draft list of occupations). It is unfortunate that the researchers from the Wits University Centre for Researching Education and Labour (REAL) and Centre for Education Rights and Transformation chose not to participate in the public comment process, but instead engaged on this issue via the media, after the deadline date. Quite plausibly, this raises the question – why did they elect not to participate in a public comment process, but chose the media route instead?

Secondly, much of their criticisms draw on the worn-out, debased narrative of the recently published book “Economy, Education and Society” edited by Salim Valley and Enver Motala whose “big gripe” with society is that there is a conspiracy by business to project its very own failings of creating employment on the doorstep of the education and training system under the disguise of a supply-side shortfall. This simplistic argument has failed to gain traction in virtually every part of the world, and is highly unlikely to do so now, because it offers no viable solutions to the intractable dilemmas of high unemployment, inequality and poverty afflicting our society. Clearly this narrative does not take us forward in any way whatsoever.

Thirdly, there is a tacit expectation by the researchers for the Occupations in High Demand List to indicate “how government departments would actually implement the list to align to their respective programmes”, but this is not the remit of the *List*. The purpose of the *List* is simply to identify occupations in high demand in the economy using primary and secondary research. It is expected that labour market actors and government departments will utilise the *List* to address their own human resource needs according to their respective plans.

Fourthly, a lesser number of points were allocated to the National Development Plan (NDP) because the NDP does not talk directly to occupations (nor is it supposed to!), in a manner that, for example, the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) was mandated to do. Notwithstanding, a scorecard was devised for determining occupations in high demand in such a way that different weights can be assigned to sources used in the report. Researchers can therefore re-weight the scorecard based on their own priorities and determine whether they arrive at a fundamentally different set of conclusions.

Fifthly, the internationally recognised and accepted unit of measurement in national education and training systems world-wide for determining skills shortages and skills in demand are “occupations”. There is no better unit of measurement than “occupations”. Furthermore, the criticism that “occupations” exclude large sections of the population is fallacious, because occupations are generally understood to be a set of jobs or specialisations whose main tasks are characterised by such a high degree of similarity that they can be grouped together for the purposes of classification.

Unemployed, unskilled and people working in the informal sector are also classified into occupations.

Sixthly, the contention that the Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO) “undervalues liberal arts education and higher education knowledge production, research activities and transdisciplinarity initiatives” is clearly a misunderstanding of what is the purpose of the OFO. The OFO is a skill-based coded classification system, which encompasses all occupations in the South African context sector-wide. The classification of occupations is based on a combination of skill level and skill specialisation which makes it easy to locate a specific occupation within the framework. As a standardised coding system for occupations it enables aggregation across economic sectors. The OFO makes no value judgment but functions much like a postal code system, albeit in an occupational context. The OFO is certainly not perfect, but it is a useful tool for the skills planning process.

Seventhly, another criticism levelled by the researchers is that the list is “explicitly biased towards science, engineering and business occupations”. Unfortunately, the economy, or labour market for that matter, is not driven by the principles of “democracy” and “fair play”. It is driven by the forces of supply and demand. Admittedly, there is a strong bias towards “science, engineering and business occupations” because the market signals a high demand for these occupations relative to others. The development of the *List* is part of a constellation of processes initiated by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to shift the post-school education and training system from a supply-driven to a demand-driven mode of planning, with the intention of improving labour market outcomes across the urban-rural and formal-informal divide.

Of course, occupations such as those that prevail in the liberal arts and the social sector, although not identified as being in high demand, are important for the well-being of our society. This is precisely why the government has instituted an active labour market policy regime to correct imperfections in the market. The *List* supports the imperatives of the developmental state by minimising the inevitable risk of training for unemployment. The cold, hard reality is, whether we believe it or not, or like it or not, a science, engineering and business graduate is considerably more likely to secure employment and a higher wage premium than those in other disciplines.

Finally, after two decades of democracy, what is vitally needed from researchers and research organisations is to make the transition from a discourse of pure critique and rhetoric, to a discourse in which scholarship continues to be critical in character, but simultaneously postulates solutions to complex societal problems. This is what is precisely lacking the Ngcwangu and Balwanz discourse.

*Prof Hoosen Rasool is an education and training consultant for FR Research Services which specialises in advising governments in Africa on expanding and strengthening their post-school education and training systems. He assisted the Department of Higher Education and Training with the compilation of the Occupations in High Demand List (2014)*

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**8. Review of recent internal migration and labour market outcomes: Exploring the 2008 and 2010 National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) panel data in South Africa by Mbatha N. C. and Roodt J. 2014 (*Gugu Buthelezi*)**

This piece reviews an article published in the South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences on “*Recent internal migration and labour market outcomes: Exploring the 2008 and 2010 National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) panel data in South Africa*”.

The study investigated whether South African recent migrants from rural to urban areas experience relatively lower rates of participation in formal labour markets compared to local residents in urban communities. It concludes that these migrants are over-represented in the informal labour market and in the unemployment sector. This means that rural to urban migrants are less likely than locals to be found in formal employment and more likely to be found in informal employment and among the unemployed.

The researchers analysed the South African National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) panel datasets of 2008 and 2010. The study found that migrants in general experience positive outcomes in informal labour markets; they also experience positive outcomes in formal markets, which is contrary to expectations. The study also found that earned incomes are closely associated with migration decisions and educational qualifications (e.g. a matric certificate) for respondents between the ages of 30 and 60 years. Youth (15 to 30 years old) and senior respondents (over the age of 60) are the most disadvantaged in the labour market. The researchers conclude that migration is motivated by both push (to seek employment) and pull (existing networks or marriage at destination) factors.

The policy recommendations from the study are that the emerging patterns of rural to urban migration, both indicative and established are important for informing strategies aimed at creating employment and developing skills for the unemployed, migrants and especially the youth.

**The article is available in the South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences.**

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**9. Review of “The diversification of post-secondary education: New trends in higher education”, prepared for UNESCO and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) (Gugu Buthelezi, Renay Pillay and Siphesihle Mavundla)**

The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) analyses varying patterns of diversification in the PSE sector. The analysis focuses on institutional arrangements for the provision of Post School Education (PSE), the growth and expansion of the sector, the types of courses offered in PSE institutions, the extent of employment/unemployment among PSE graduates and the mechanisms of financing post-secondary education.

Case studies were carried out in five countries: Azerbaijan, Chile, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, and Nigeria. These countries are at varied levels of higher education development, as reflected in their gross enrolment ratios (GERs) for higher education in 2008. The expansion of PSE is common to all of them and is in line with global trends. Nearly 40 percent of all students enrolled in post-secondary programmes in Azerbaijan attend non-university institutions (partly because the government fixes university enrolment targets). Korea has reached universal levels of enrolment in higher education, and therefore the possibilities of further expanding the higher education system are rather limited. In Malaysia and Nigeria, enrolments in PSE increased in different categories of institutions.

On the basis of the case studies, the publication developed a classification of PSE institutions into four categories: 1) universities, 2) colleges/non-university institutions, 3) tertiary short-cycle institutions and 4) post-secondary non-tertiary institutions.

The case studies indicate that the pressure from both expanding secondary education and the employment market demand for relevant skills resulted in a more diversified system of post-secondary education, consisting of universities and non-university institutions.

The publication found that diversification has helped expand PSE, very often with resource support from non-government sources, especially in non-university PSE institutions. Thus the expansion and multiplicity of PSE providers pose challenges to planning and managing this particular segment of the education sector. Further, it is becoming increasingly difficult for national governments to manage the PSE system. Many institutions operate under different ministries and councils and coordinating the activities of these varied agencies presents a challenge. In addition, the existence of many private agencies poses a further challenge in devising integrated plans for the development of tertiary education. There is an increasingly felt need to define clearly the national policies and evolving mechanisms required to regulate PSE. The publication recommends that Ministries of higher education and institutions should therefore do much more to support regulated expansion of PSE and ensure that its provision is of high quality.

**The publication is available at: [www.iiep.unesco.org](http://www.iiep.unesco.org)**

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## STATISTICAL PUBLICATIONS

### 1. Statistics on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa: 2013 (*Gugu Buthelezi*)

Since its establishment in May 2009, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has published three issues of its annual statistical report Statistics on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa. The three previous reports for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 are published on the DHET website, [www.dhet.gov.za](http://www.dhet.gov.za)

The publication covers statistical information pertaining to public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), public and private Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges, public and private Adult Education (AET) Centres, and workplace-based education and training facilitated by Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).

It provides statistical information varying from student enrolment, graduation and certification, and institutional staffing levels at post-school education and training (PSET) institutions, to information about workplace-based education and training.

The publication serves is key to informing planning and budget allocations in the PSET sector. The publication is in essence is a compilation of statistics about the PSET system that can be utilised to monitor and evaluate the growth of the system and to determine its effectiveness. It is therefore a crucial element in planning processes that aim at expanding and strengthening PSET in South Africa.

Researchers and other stakeholders are encouraged to continue to use the publication as a basis for further inquiry and analysis.

The 2013 statistical publication will be available on the DHET website in April 2015: [www.dhet.gov.za](http://www.dhet.gov.za)

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