



# HRDC: TASK TEAM 1

## SOCIAL COMPACT APPROACH

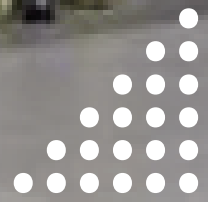


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## SKILLS AND PATHWAYS



PROFESSOR | JOY PAPIER

### PATHWAYS FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS INTO TVET: WHAT IS (STILL) TO BE DONE? PROF JOY PAPIER, INSTITUTE FOR POST-SCHOOL STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE

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Prof Papier has been active in education, policy and development for about 25 years, as a school-teacher, university teacher educator, trainer, development worker and researcher. She holds the degrees of M.Phil (University of the Western Cape), M.Ed. (Harvard Univ, USA) and PhD (Education Policy) from the University of Pretoria. Her current research interests include TVET teacher education, TVET policy and development, vocational curricula policy, workplace and institutional cultures, youth unemployment, and education opportunities for youth and adults. She has published on vocational and general education in several academic journals, presented at conferences and on public panels, participates in national government task teams and is an external examiner for numerous postgraduate dissertations in the field of TVET and post-school studies.

Prof Papier was appointed as South African National Research Chair in Post-School Studies: TVET, and has served as Co-Chair of the African Union Commission Expert Group on TVET as well as the World Bank's Consultative Advisory Group on TVET. She was instrumental in establishing a new academic journal, the Journal of Vocational, Adult and Continuing Education and Training (JOVACET) in 2017, of which she is Editor-in-Chief.



# INTRODUCTION

This thought piece has been produced in response to a brief by the NECT which is tasked with leading a task team that focuses on how to build foundational skills for a transformed economy and society. To this end the NECT has commissioned various thought pieces which will be consolidated for presentation at a HRDC forum to be held in 2020.

The thought pieces are intended to present the status quo in the relevant area, identify gaps in policy and practice levels, and make recommendations for strategic steps that role-players should take towards fast-tracking implementation.

- The thought-piece which follows is informed by the involvement and engagement the writer has had in the skills development domain and in TVET research and capacity building more specifically over the past 22 years i.e. since the first FET Act was passed in 1998, ushering in seminal changes for what were technical colleges at the time. At the time also, technical education as well as adult education were provincial competences, while higher education was a national competence in a separate ministry.

Furthermore, skills development under the various sector authorities (SETAs) resided in the Department of Labour, illustrating the considerable fragmentation of the 'supply side' of education and training.

But there has also been substantial policy development on both the supply and the demand sides of education and training in the last two decades of our democracy, which has attempted to address the incoherence inherited from the apartheid dispensation.



The measures attempted have not always been completely successful, and there have been many unintended consequences, but there is no doubt that there have been incremental improvements.



The formation of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in 2010, and the concept of 'post-schooling' as articulated in the White Paper PSET (2013), brought four spheres of provision under the same authority (universities, TVET colleges, community and adult education, and sectoral training), creating the potential for better integration of goals, greater appreciation of the possibilities and limitations of each arm of delivery, and better coordination of a system that works to the benefit of its multiple stakeholders.


However, while a single department for regulating skills supply and demand brought some coherence to the 'post-school' system, post-schooling being defined in the WPPSET (2013) as education and training outside the formal schooling system, the split from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) separated vocational education that takes place in schools under the authority of the DBE, and that which takes place in TVET colleges under the authority of the DHET.



**THERE IS THUS A NEED**  
**FOR CREATING PATHWAYS FOR SKILLS**  
**DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN SCHOOLING AND THE**  
rest of the **post-school system** in order to  
eliminate **time-consuming and circuitous**  
**routes** that currently do not join up.

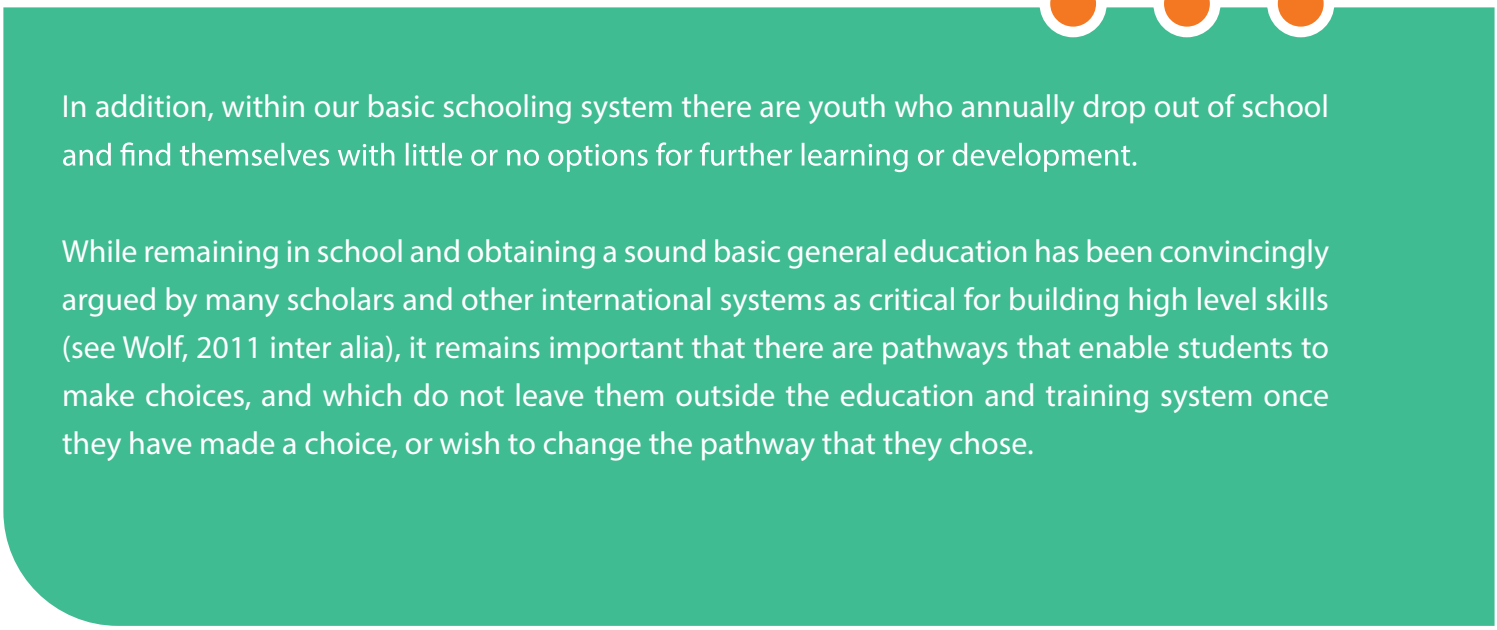
- Many of the frustrations and dead-ends faced by students across schools and colleges are well-known and have been debated by various stakeholders in numerous forums over the last ten years.

This thought piece does not presume to be starting from a blank slate. Almost seven years after the WPPSET (2013) was gazetted there is, I believe, broad understanding of the policy environment in which universities, TVET colleges, community education centres, and occupational training operate, and an appreciation that there is much to be done to create an efficient and effective skills development system to meet the diverse needs of South African citizens.



Although the national implementation plan for the WPPSET is still outstanding to date, there have been important changes since 2013, and this paper focuses on some of the recent initiatives and developments that are likely to impact on skills development of youth and adults.

While the post-school system comprises universities, colleges, occupational training organisations, and community education and training colleges, there are also at least 3 million or more youths who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs) who need to be drawn back into learning.



In addition, within our basic schooling system there are youth who annually drop out of school and find themselves with little or no options for further learning or development.

While remaining in school and obtaining a sound basic general education has been convincingly argued by many scholars and other international systems as critical for building high level skills (see Wolf, 2011 inter alia), it remains important that there are pathways that enable students to make choices, and which do not leave them outside the education and training system once they have made a choice, or wish to change the pathway that they chose.

Technical high schools and more recently the schools of skills have been part of the high school landscape for many years and have run parallel to TVET colleges with offerings at the same levels i.e. **Grade 10, 11 and 12 -Grade 12 (NQF Level 4)** being the exit level qualification. But the currency of each of the parallel school leaving qualifications are varied and cause confusion among students, communities and potential employers alike, and so it is the murky area of qualifications and pathways concerned with skills development in both schools and colleges that is the subject of this thought piece.

# CURRENT PATHWAYS INTO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS

## STUDENTS WHO EXIT SCHOOLS WITH GRADE 12

For those following the conventional pathway from academic schooling and matric the options are fairly straightforward i.e. they can enter the competitive pool from which higher education institutions select students for various programmes and some will be selected.

Others may be able to access learning and work opportunities through learnerships offered to post-matriculants, and those who are not accepted into university could enter TVET college programmes which prioritise students with Grade 12.

- Those students who obtain the NSC (Technical) at technical high schools may be able to secure work directly after Grade 12, or could be accepted into a University of Technology. Although there are no accurate statistics to indicate annual figures on this, anecdotal evidence suggests that some of these students also enroll at TVET colleges into apprenticeships or learnerships with a view to going the trade test route.
- A problematic issue arises for students who enter college NCV programmes having attempted (or passed) Grade 12, and who start at NCV level 2 (Grade 10 equivalent). Mathematical Literacy and English communication are subjects in the NCV and students are reluctant to repeat these at NCV 2, 3 and 4 when they may have passed/attempted these subjects at school in Grades 10-12.

There has however been recognition of this inefficiency in the system by the DHET and there is the intent to alleviate this repetition through appropriate policy.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO LEAVE HIGH SCHOOL BETWEEN GRADES 10 AND 12?

These young people are eligible to enter the National Certificate Vocational route at TVET colleges, which has around 22 different vocationally directed programmes depending on college location and offerings, some of which have stronger work experience components and trade test options.

The NCV has been shown to be cognitively demanding, with some subject areas eg NCV4 in the IT programme being comparable with a similar programme at UoT first year level.

Some subjects have also been shown to be more difficult than comparable senior certificate school subjects (see Umalusi 'Apples and Oranges' report), but NCV 4 students need higher percentages to enter university (in terms of the DHET gazetted NCV policy for higher education entry) than high school students, and NCV programmes contain only 1 language and not two as offered by schools.

- Not enough research has been done on employment outcomes of the NCV but there have been two tracer studies that show about 52% of graduates obtaining employment within 6 to 18 months of completing the NCV programme. Proposals with regard to the NCV have also been made in the discussions around the implementation plan of the WPPSET (2013).
- Currently, students with a Grade 9 school certificate could also enter one of the NATED programmes which in Engineering programmes lead to a trade test after completion of N2 and relevant workplace learning, or in Business studies N4-N6 certificates an additional 18 months of work experience would afford them a NATED Diploma.



However in the limited research that has been undertaken among prospective employers of NATED students, employers have stated their preference for college leavers who have at least N3 and a trade test, and would give priority to those with a Grade 12 certificate.

. Some N6 diplomates might also be accepted into universities of technology and obtain some first-year credits, which would be an institutional decision as systemic articulation is not yet in place across the board. Initiatives within SAQA and research around the Level 5 Higher Certificate are however trying to create clearer pathways for N4-N6 college students into university of technology programmes.



Successful NATED and NCV completers have to compete in the job market with higher education graduates, and there is still a significant lack of understanding and some suspicion about the credibility of TVET college qualifications.



However both the NCV and NATED qualifications have been flagged in the WPPSET (2013) for revision – the NCV for subject and assessment issues, and the NATED in recognition of it being long outdated and in need of modernization and alignment to industry requirements. This work has already started: N1-N6 courses related to the Centres of Specialization programmes have been re-curriculated within the QCTO and with the input of the relevant industry roleplayers.

Other N1-N3 courses will over time be similarly updated under the QCTO and will be known as Occupational Certificates, with Level 4 being known as a National Occupational Certificate (NOC). Occupational certificates unlike the N1-N3 programmes will include compulsory workplace learning and processes related to the Apprentices of the 21st century.

- The QCTO will appoint additional specialised staff for qualification design and development, and prioritise the development of qualifications initially a cross the largest occupational clusters (such as engineering and technology, business administration and services, and health and social care). This process will include the use of field experts and other stakeholders, and the consolidation of several curriculum development initiatives currently under way at colleges, private training institutions and through the Department.
- The QCTO will also develop curriculum and assessment specifications, particularly for artisan qualifications, N4-6 programmes which are still relevant to industry and employers will be redesigned as Level 5 Higher Certificates and Level 6 Advanced Certificates, while those which attract low enrolments will be systematically phased out. Proposals have been made in the draft White Paper Plan to phase out NATED programmes in this manner.



TVET colleges also offer various occupational programmes registered on the Occupational Qualifications Framework, which are privately funded, supported by SETAs, or have other project funders that offer opportunities to employed and pre-employed learners.

Occupational programmes as can be seen from the past few years' national statistics have had low enrolment at TVET colleges as this has been linked to colleges finding funding for them while being under pressure to meet enrolment targets for the official state funded programmes like the NCV and NATED programmes.

- The Department has designed and will pilot foundational programmes (in the form of a flexible set of non-stand-alone modules) intended to enable TVET students to access the full range of TVET programmes, and which, apart from language, science and mathematical skills, should include life skills such as time management, IT and communication skills, and work-readiness.
- Institutional capacity will be improved by dedicating adequate numbers of qualified staff to workplace based learning support and partnership functions, and by integrating workplace based learning continuing professional development into the performance requirements of all lecturers teaching technical, vocational and professional qualifications.

## WHAT ABOUT YOUTH AND ADULTS WITHOUT A GR 9 CERTIFICATE?

This grouping is most vulnerable if they are beyond school-going age, and do not have the basic entry qualification for TVET college admission. Community Education and Training Colleges (CETCs), built on the former Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) have a limited range of offerings for this grouping, as the PALCs mostly offered adult basic education previously and second chance matric.

The new CETCs are intended to provide a wider range of skills-related training in addition to second chance learning such as completion of matric through a NASCA (National Senior Certificate for Adults), but in most provinces these intentions are still in their infancy.

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- Other limited possibilities for this group are public sector training programmes that provincial governments make available from time to time. The new Occupational Certificates at Levels 2 and 3 will in the long term be offered mainly at CET colleges, however, some may be offered at TVET colleges as well.

In this sector particularly the question of sustainable development and using skills to create jobs within the informal economy vs survivalism is a critical matter. It may be useful to look at international examples in this regard, for instance Youth 21 in Brazil, where accreditation of community workplaces (e.g. welding workshops) create jobs as opposed to people setting up welding stands on open ground or pavements.

A partnership arrangement between TVET colleges and informal community workplaces that would attempt to get the community workplaces accredited, and also utilise them as training spaces for internships of college students may be an example of a systemic intervention but would require cooperation across TVET and ACET structures to achieve.

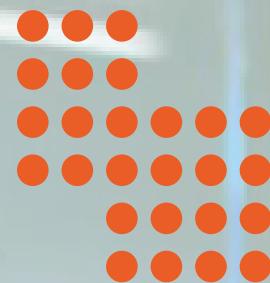


The difference is actually between a community workplace that is accredited and would be able to employ more people and offer learning spaces, while sole agency service providers who are non-accredited and cannot guarantee quality, would not have the confidence of formal service and training providers, and could put learners at risk.



The issue of entrepreneurship training for vocational learners has continued to be a matter of concern and debate in view of unemployment levels among TVET college graduates. I am not aware of studies into the employment outcomes of technical high school or school of skills leavers, so I am unable to comment on that. The research with regard to the outcomes of technical high school leavers and schools of skills completers is scant.







# WHAT ABOUT YOUTH IN VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AT DBE SCHOOLS?

## THE DBE 3 STREAMS MODEL



**The Department of Basic Education has been committed since 2016 to instituting its 3 stream model in general schooling. The three streams are described as follows:**

- The general academic stream that provides access to higher education
- The technical vocational stream directed at vocational education such as the present technical high school offerings (which can be broadened to other schools);
- The technical occupational stream which offers skills training/occupational subjects only, with or without other compulsory fundamental subjects.

- The idea is that the above two vocationally oriented streams should lead to better articulation with TVET colleges for learners to continue their training and become work-ready. However, technical high school programmes are at the same levels of TVET college programme (Levels 2-4), and school leavers could enter employment directly as well.
- While the technical high schools potentially offer the same skills training as TVET colleges, for instance in the automotive area, there has been little curriculum coordination to date, and vocational offerings in these two types of institution that reside in two separate ministries, continue to run parallel to each other.



In the third stream, the Technical Occupational stream is intended to impart language, functional mathematics and life skills as well as to offer 22 vocational specialisations. These are:







These specialisations are also offered in college NCV and N programmes but the curricula are not exactly the same, which is where the potential for confusion lies. Traditionally entry to TVET was largely from Grade 9, but a Community Survey (2016) revealed that 58% of learners enrolled in TVET Colleges had a Level 4 qualification (Grade 12/N3/NC(V) 4) as their highest educational level. Most of the students with Grade 12 were opting for TVET college only after being unable to access university or having failed elsewhere.

On the other hand TVET colleges were finding that students with Grade 9 found difficulty coping with subjects in the NCV Level 2, and some NCV programmes were therefore giving priority to applicants with Grade 11 or 12, but then resulting in student frustration at having to repeat foundational subjects that had already been done in high school.

- In terms of the DBE's third stream (Technical Occupational) the idea is to create a stronger technical basis at Grade 8 and 9 in the senior school phase, for learners to enter the Technical Vocational stream at schools where this is offered, or to move to a TVET college.


Learners will therefore undertake the traditional senior phase subjects and may replace a maximum of two of these with occupational subjects, for which there will be adapted curriculum and assessment policy statements. Technical Occupational subjects can be taken as electives within the General Certificate of Education (GEC) with an exit at Grade 9/NQF Level 1 in order to continue the technical stream elsewhere, or the technical occupational subjects can be offered at a Special School or a School of Skill.

Learners who meet the minimum promotion requirements and wish to exit from school will be awarded a Grade 9 qualification at an NQF level 1 and can then choose to enter a TVET college to further their studies in a preferred occupational field.

- The benefits of this third stream according to the DBE, are that learners' varied needs will be addressed; new opportunities will be created for school learners to support the country's skills needs; and affording learners skills in a specialised technical pathway could contribute to addressing the youth unemployment rate in South Africa.
- It remains to be seen, through tracer studies further down the line, if these goals will indeed be met. The DBE eventually intends to stream around 60% of school learners into the two technically focused streams.


**THE NEW OCCUPATIONAL  
STREAM AT PRE-GRADE 10 LEVEL IS ALREADY OFFERED  
AT THE "SCHOOLS OF SKILLS", WHICH CATER  
FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL  
NEEDS AND OFFER PRACTICAL  
COURSES.**





The DBE is currently working on recapitalisation plans for upgrading technical high schools. There are dangers though, of streaming learners into vocational/occupational streams too early in general schooling, a view upheld by more mature vocational systems where a sound general education is understood to be the basis for creating a skilled workforce. Such a workforce is seen as future-focused, rather than creating cadres of workers with low level technical skills who are unable to adapt to changes in the economy or are unable to undergo re-skilling as may be required.

A narrow skills approach which reduces time spent in obtaining a general education may disadvantage learners in the long term. The NCV programmes as stated earlier are cognitively challenging and rely on strong basics in language, mathematics and science, especially in the programmes that build on these subjects.


- A move to early occupational skills streaming should also rest on a robust understanding of the skills requirements in each sector, so that students are able to make informed career choices and are not set up for failure. Soft skills, work readiness skills, and higher cognitive skills have been found to be important for successful workplace mobility and transitions to more advanced training, and are desired by employers.
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## POLICY VISION FOR TVET COLLEGES

The vision of government policy for vocational education at TVET Colleges is most directly captured in the White Paper on PSET (2013), which says that colleges should: “train young school leavers, providing them with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for employment in the labour market.



They primarily provide training for the mid-level skills required to develop the South African economy, and tend to concentrate on occupations in the engineering and construction industries, tourism and hospitality, and general business and management studies” (White Paper, 2013:11).





The White Paper is also clear about the necessity for a joined up system of provision that is articulated and provides bridges across vocational programmes, occupational programmes and academic programmes vertically and horizontally so that there are no 'dead ends' for learners. Furthermore it recognises the need to develop pathways which lead to employment and further learning opportunities across the delivery system. In this regard schools which offer vocational pathways have to become part of the skills development landscape and the pathways mapped out clearly among constituent institutions.



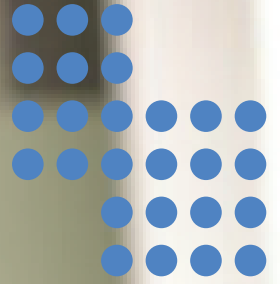
The Department of Basic Education responsible for schooling will need to state clearly its vision with regard to skills training being undertaken in schools within its remit as currently this remains somewhat opaque.

- Whilst there are still many unresolved issues with regard to TVET colleges, there is a generally accepted urgency about the need to train college graduates for the 4th industrial revolution and preparing students for that reality. Government's overall objective in driving its skills development strategy and which it sees the TVET college system as integral to, is to 'develop a skilled and capable workforce that shares in, and contributes to, the benefits and opportunities of economic expansion and an inclusive growth path'.



**This goal rests on several key systemic reforms that will address:**

- Expanded enrolment of youth and adults
- Improving success and throughput
- Streamlined offerings and quality provision
- Development of staff and improved teaching and learning
- Strengthening partnerships with employers for work placement
- Improving student support systems





The key role of TVET colleges in producing intermediate skills is captured within a network of related policies, salient of which are mentioned here below. The National Development Plan (NDP), the New Growth Path (NGP) and other key policy documents of government have set out essential strategies and priorities for development, with an emphasis on inclusive growth and employment generation. The education and training system is tasked with responding to these imperatives, especially to widen the pool of skills available to the country, as it is envisaged that achievement of this goal will enable expansion of critical economic focus areas and equip young people to obtain work.

- The NDP's vision is that, by 2030, South Africa's education, training and innovation system caters for diverse student needs and produces highly skilled individuals. The NDP asserts that to produce a skilled workforce the TVET system has to be responsive to the changing labour market as well as individual needs, and yet be flexible enough to address skills imbalances and shortages.

The 2017/18 financial year saw the approval of the National Skills Development Plan 2030 (NSDP) after a series of broad consultations with relevant stakeholders, which means it can be phased in as of 1 April 2020, paving the way for possible institutional and legislative changes, regulations and other relevant guidelines.



**The National Skills Development Strategy III (NSDS III) underscores the role of TVET Colleges in the skilling and re-skilling of youth as follows:**

- Goal 4.2 specifically highlights that TVET has a role to play in increasing access to occupationally directed programmes to address the low pool of intermediate skills in the country, while
- Goal 4.3 emphasises that TVET Colleges should be responsive to sector, regional, and national skills needs and priorities.



**In the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) 2030, (the successor to NSDS III):**

- Outcome 1 is to: "Identify and increase production of occupations in high demand" (DHET, 2019: 26). To this end, targets will be set for skills levy resources that will be directed at developing intermediate level skills including the 30 000 artisans a year to be developed by 2030.
- Outcome 4 is to "Increase access to occupationally directed programmes" (DHET, 2019: 28) and this will be achieved through SETA identification of artisans and other intermediate skills required by each economic sector and feeding this intelligence to colleges.

Two Lists of Occupations in High Demand (OIHD) have already been gazetted (DHET2014; DHET 2016) respectively and the most recent gazette (DHET 2018) builds on the past work. The list is categorised into three levels of demand: highest demand, higher demand and high demand. From the list it appears that managerial positions rank amongst the highest demand, followed by demand for tradespersons and operators.

In the National Infrastructure Plan TVET Colleges are tasked with supplying some of the skills needed for the 18 strategic integrated projects (SIPs). Thirteen priority trades on demand have been identified for infrastructure programmes and other programmes such as War on Leaks and the Phakisa programme on the new ocean economy. Selected TVET Colleges have been designated as centres of specialization (CoS) for the provision of QCTO developed programmes for the 13 priority trades.



### The top 15 trades in no order of priority are:

- Electricians
- Riggers
- auto electricians,
- Air conditioning and refrigeration technicians
- Metal fabricators/sheet metal workers
- Diesel mechanics,
- Motor (petrol) mechanics
- Welders
- Carpenters and joiners,
- Fitters and turners,
- Boilermakers
- Toolmakers and millwrights.




- For the prioritised particular trades and skills, college curricula have been updated with industry input and outdated NATED programmes can be replaced with the modernised qualifications. These are also based on partnerships with industry for student work experience.
- The CoS Programme has two objectives: first, to address the demand for priority trades needed for the implementation of government's NDP in general and its National Infrastructure Plan more particularly; and second, to build the capacity of the public TVET College system to deliver trade qualifications together with employer partners.

The NSF, supported by the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and other donors, are funding the development of the CoS. QCTO qualifications will be delivered at these new centres in partnership with local industry. The CoS Programme is important for the country in that it will produce a new model for training of apprentices and seek to ensure that quality skills for employment are developed through a mandatory public college-industry collaboration.

Currently for instance, colleges struggle to obtain workplaces for students to do mandatory workplace training in order to prepare for the trade test, whereas the CoS starts off with a partnership between college and industry so that the student is ensured of placement for doing workplace learning



The New Growth Path holds that TVET colleges have a central role in providing mid-level skills for young people, and a Skills Accord promotes the adoption of TVET colleges by businesses for better alignment between college offerings and industry needs.



The Youth Employment Accord commits to the provision of work placement opportunities for TVET students by State Owned Companies. In 2014, the DHET declared 2014-2024 as the Decade of the Artisan and launched an advocacy programme in several provinces.

The Minister at the time approved the National Trade Test Regulations for implementation as of 1 April 2015 in order to implement a single national artisan trade testing and certification system across all economic sectors, and quality assured by the QCTO. A series of additional policies, Regulations and Guidelines have been produced since 2009. During the last three years of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) (2015, 2016 and 2017) audited national artisan production numbers increased from 14 389 to 21 188 artisans.

- The National Development Plan (NDP) target is to produce 30 000 artisans per annum by 2030. Part of the significance is to offer RPL to many artisans who have been in the workplace for many years and do not have formal qualifications or have not taken the trade test.
- The Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) Project in 2012 commissioned by the DHET and driven by the Human Sciences Research Council, developed a forecasting model to project future skills needs and assess the imbalances between skills supply and demand. The understanding of skills demand involved an exploration of three inter-related aspects: the state of the economy; the characteristics of the employed and unemployed who make up the labour force; and current and intermediate demand from the analysis of changes in the structure of employment.

The White Paper on PSET (2013) envisaged that by 2030 there will be 1.6 million headcount enrolments in public universities and 2.5 million headcounts in TVET (DHET, 2013: 26). These projections signal the DHET's intention not only to expand the TVET sector, but also to enable it to exceed higher education enrolment. However, funding allocations to TVET in spite of having increased substantially in recent years, still lags far behind that of higher education, with the CET sector still lamentably poorly funded.

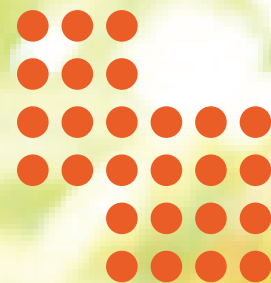
During the 2017/2018 financial year the TVET college sector was allocated 16.7% or R6.7 billion of the post-school budget, compared with HEIs which received 78% or R31.6 billion, and the CET sector which received 5.3% or R2.1 billion.

- With regard to student funding, the NSFAS allocation for TVET students loans/bursaries in 2017 amounted to R2 billion, providing support to 200 339 students. Over a 7-year period the number of college students receiving bursaries has increased by 74.3%, enabling thousands of students to take up college training opportunities. The NCV and NATED programmes are officially funded TVET college programmes, and students in both these streams are eligible for NSFAS funding



**Issues that have arisen time and again as sticking points in vocational/skills development of youth and adults include the following:**

- All outdated qualifications need to be made responsive, relevant, and should have clear pathways that enable articulation across schools, colleges, universities and workplace training
- The role of the teacher/lecturer is critical for student success - college lecturers need initial and continuing professional development in line with new dedicated qualifications
- Institutional management and governance need strengthening



Increasingly, the focus is on implementing the dual system of apprenticeship that was piloted in partnership between DHET and SACCI through the Artisan of the 21st Century (A21) system. The A21 system utilises occupational qualifications being developed by the QCTO and implemented in the CoS.

The programme which was initially focused on artisan trades, will expand in the future to include non-artisan trades so that other occupations also benefit from theory, simulation and workplace experience which characterise the A21 programmes (Western Cape Government). The DHET (2020) lists 19 NATED programmes and 18 NCV programmes for N6 and NCV4. Headcount growth has been driven largely by the NATED programmes, with a relatively smaller increase in NCV numbers, as can be seen by the enrolment figures for 2018.

<b>College Enrolments 2018</b>	<b>Occupational 20106</b>	<b>NCV 131212</b>	<b>NATED N1-N6 482175</b>
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- The low enrolment in occupational programmes is concerning as it is a deviation from the policy intention in the WPPSET and the NSDP to increase occupationally directed programmes. For reasons well known, particularly the influence of funding on programmes provision, compared to NATED and NCV enrolment, occupational enrolment has constituted a very small fraction of enrolments in TVET over the years as here colleges are reliant on funding to come from sector education authorities, employers who sponsor their workers, or students' who are privately funded.

## CURRENT POLICY CHALLENGES IN VOCATIONAL/SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS



**Issues that have arisen time and again as sticking points in vocational/skills development of youth and adults include the following:**

- Workplace linkages are critical for work experience and internships, and the legislative blockages to placements of students must be addressed
- Student success and throughput needs to improve – there is too much of a revolving door syndrome and wastage through repetition
- Quality assurance systems need coherence – there is still too much fragmentation and divergent demands of different quality assurance bodies
- Education and training for youth and adults should have expanded provision, provide access, and have sufficient facilities
- Examination and certification systems are cumbersome and tedious. The different assessment systems and certification requirements for NATED, NCV, and Occupational Certificates, with different certification and quality assurance bodies, often means onerous reporting
- Re-skilling and second chance opportunities for adults are needed, and adult education is still severely under-funded, with limited infrastructure and part time educators
- Policy goals depend on wide ranging partnerships and links with industry, local government and private TVET providers
- Facilities for technology enhanced learning need to be put in place, to develop students and employees for a digital age. This issue is related to quality provision that is relevant and forward thinking, and applies to both vocational training in schools and TVET colleges.

## ADDRESSING THE IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES ACROSS SCHOOL AND COLLEGE VOCATIONAL CONTEXTS

The first section of this paper showed the intersecting policies on skills development that have institutional implications. A major impetus for fast tracking skills development has come from the White Paper on PSET (2013) which proposed substantive changes for TVET colleges with regard to the issues and systems blockages in higher education, adult education, and sector education and training authorities.

The goal of the White Paper is an expanded, effective and integrated post-school education and training system which can contribute to addressing poverty, inequity, and particularly targeting unemployed youth. Thus the vocational pathways from and through schooling, and into TVET, are also being taken into account.



A substantial proportion of youth in vocational pathways are at high schools, and annually leave high school without achieving the national senior certificate, many of them adding to the unemployed youth statistics.

Although the concern of the post school system under the DHET is youth and adults beyond/outside of formal general schooling, the disjuncture with youth in a vocational path at secondary school has been recognised, and there are intentions to streamline and articulate the pathways for youth through and across the various institutions in which skills development programmes are being delivered.

- A coherent skills development strategy would need to take account of secondary, post-secondary, and post-school youth and adult options for continued education and training. The following goals of the WPPSET were raised in the draft national plan and are worth re-stating:



#### **For the TVET college sector:**

- Advocate the purpose of TVET as being to provide intermediate skills for the world of work, which includes formal employment and self-employment, and holistic, inclusive skills development
- Colleges should provide specific and general vocational skills
- The goal is to build quality teaching learning and assessment, and strong institutions
- Streamlined college offerings
- Ensure proper enrolment planning and growth
- Ensure sufficient staff capacity, student support services, workplace access and workplace-based learning
- Improve governance
- Set in place a proper funding framework
- Work towards making TVET colleges institutions of choice rather than fall-back options



### **For Community education and training:**

- Build a new system of community and adult education and training offering diverse life-long learning opportunities for youth and adults who cannot return to formal general schooling or access TVET colleges, and to offer them 2nd chance learning and other informal learning programmes
- Improve chances of learning that lead to formal work or self-employment
- Expand and improve the current provision for youth and adults in communities
- Provide education and training that is community based, flexible and takes account of local development needs
- Build a new professional cadre of community and adult learning educators

Subsequent to 2013, the DHET constituted a number of task teams to streamline the proposals made in the White Paper, and to construct an implementation plan (National Plan PSET) that could provide the concretised steps needed to meet the intended outcomes of the White Paper. The draft national plan was submitted for limited public comment around 2016/17, but the plan has to date not yet been finalised.

The draft of the pending implementation plan makes a number of far-reaching proposals to address the incoherence of skills development across the various sectors i.e. schooling, colleges and UoTs.

## **WHAT IS STILL TO BE DONE TO COORDINATE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT ACROSS INSTITUTIONS AND SECTORS?**

As stated earlier this thought piece did not presume to start from a blank slate, or to put forward 'new' problems. The systemic blockages that exist have arisen time and again for discussion and have been well analysed and synthesised in successive policy forums.

None of the proposed solutions can be achieved simply with the stroke of a pen or by decree – and we should avoid simplistic critique. The WPPSET (2013) tank team debated the sticking points and made numerous proposals, all of which are important for a smoothly functioning skills development/vocational system that is properly joined up.


- A careful reading of that policy should reveal that it will take time to see the results of many of the proposals once they have been implemented. For instance, it is envisaged that TVET colleges should progressively shift towards having a larger proportion of their students enrolled in NQF Level 5 programmes – that is, at Higher Certificate or equivalent level.
- The reasoning for this is that it will relieve pressure on the university system by better accommodating the increasingly large numbers of matriculants seeking opportunities for technical and vocational education. The DHET also intends to introduce new foundation programmes to colleges for matriculants who need additional Mathematics and Science before going on to college or university programmes (p14).

The outcomes of these interventions have many independent variables and will surely not be seen in the short term. The proposed review of TVET qualifications will evaluate what the various qualification types have to offer, how they articulate with other programmes and qualifications, what the challenges are, and how the system can be rationalised to be easier to understand, more efficient and user-friendly, in order to meet the economy's needs for mid-level skills.

Because of the central role that workplace learning has in the training of workers in apprenticeships, learnerships and internships, it is considered essential that employer representatives play a role in the review process together with college staff, other experts, and workers. It is suggested that both the DHET and the DBE are involved in the review as both offer vocational programmes (p.16).



Overall, the WPPSET (2013) was concerned with the quality of programmes, that is, their content and their delivery, which have a range of constituent elements.



One element would be to improve the teaching and learning infrastructure of colleges so that the facilities and equipment necessary are available for the type of education expected, particularly well-resourced workshops for the practical training learners need.


Notwithstanding the caution expressed herein with regard to having realistic expectations about the turnaround of a large vocational/skills development system, there are already processes that have started or are pending, which the following section outlines.

## **ACTIONS PLANNED OR ALREADY IN PROCESS**

As stated above, there have already been several years of extensive consideration of the systemic and strategic blockages that impede the achievement of the goals outlined in the WPPSET, and the national plan for its implementation is at an advanced stage.

The problems and blockages that beset skills development pathways currently have been copiously deliberated in government task teams, as well as in earlier stakeholder forums since 2010. The implementation plan will clarify the steps in the processes for the way forward, but some of the most pressing systemic actions are stated below.

- With regard to DBE schools that offer vocational/skills training, proposals made in the White Paper Plan include the intent of the DHET to undertake a consultative process with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and including the QCTO, CHE, SAQA and Umalusi, to review all NQF Level 4 vocational qualifications for purposes of alignment and articulation between the DBE's three stream model and any future revised TVET qualifications.
- This includes considering the overlaps between the National Certificate Vocational (NCV), offered at TVET colleges, the National Senior Certificate, and the NSC (Technical), offered at technical schools, and their access into Higher education.




There is understanding that this may involve changes in existing legislation and regulations and the timeframe for the processes needed to be undertaken will need to be realistic.

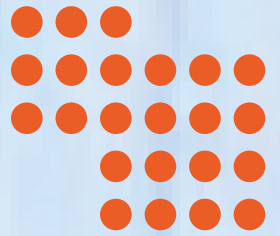
Work placement for college students to gain authentic workplace learning has long been recognised as a serious challenge that affects the credibility of college programmes among prospective employers. Part of the reason for the difficulty in securing placements has been occupational health and safety and insurance concerns about learners at industry.

To address these concerns the related policies and legislation (such as the Labour Relations Act and the Compensation for Occupational Diseases and Injuries Act) will have to be brought into alignment through an inter-ministerial committee with the Department of Labour, and inputs from NEDLAC.

- With regard to articulation blockages there is an intent going forward, that when qualifications are designed and developed, articulation routes must be mapped out at the outset, and linked to the primary purposes of the qualifications.
- The DHET will establish a mechanism to monitor articulation blockages and make recommendations for improvement. To overcome the lack of understanding about pathways and requirements, a communications strategy will be undertaken to promote understanding of the NQF as a framework and what it means to articulate from one qualification to another in a cognate knowledge area or through practical knowledge.



The DHET together with the QCTO, will review the TVET examination system in order to streamline and reduce external examinations by introducing rigorous internal assessment. There is recognition that lecturers' capacity for diagnostic and continuous assessment and remediation have to be built. With regard to quality assurance arrangements that are burdensome and confusing, the quality assurance functions of all quality councils concerned with the TVET sector are currently being reviewed and amended to improve efficiencies.



## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The issues raised in this paper are all equally critical, many of them being inter-linked and inter-dependent. The following are recommendations made in the body of this paper that need to be addressed with due speed:


1. Schools which offer vocational pathways have to become part of the skills development landscape and the pathways mapped out clearly among constituent institutions. The Department of Basic Education responsible for schooling will need to state clearly its vision with regard to skills training being undertaken in schools within its remit as currently this remains somewhat opaque. Creating clear pathways for skills development between schooling and the rest of the post-school system will eliminate time-consuming and circuitous routes that currently do not join up.

2. Research on the employment outcomes of technical high school or school of skills leavers. This is essential as such data is crucial for making informed decisions, for instance with regard to early vocational streaming and the trajectories of students who complete at technical high schools and schools of skills.

3. All vocational qualifications (colleges and schools) need to be reviewed for overlap, confusion of their purposes, and made responsive, relevant, with clear pathways that enable articulation across schools, colleges, universities and workplace training. Both the DHET and the DBE should be involved in the review as both offer vocational programmes, and employer input should be obtained as necessary.

4. Workplace linkages are critical for work experience and internships, and the legislative blockages to placements of students in the workplace must be addressed.





1. A plan for technology enhanced learning needs to be put in place, to develop students and employees for a digital age. This issue is related to quality provision that is relevant and forward thinking, and applies to both vocational training in schools and TVET colleges.

2. The draft national implementation plan of the WPPSET was submitted for limited public comment around 2016/17, but the plan has to date not yet been finalised. The draft implementation plan makes a number of far-reaching proposals to address the incoherence of skills development across the various sectors and must be finalized so that it can move forward.


3. A consultative process involving the DHET, the DBE and including the QCTO, CHE, SAQA and Umalusi, to review all NQF Level 4 exit vocational qualifications for purposes of alignment and articulation between the DBE's three stream model and any future revised TVET qualifications. This includes considering the overlaps between the National Certificate Vocational (NCV), offered at TVET colleges, the National Senior Certificate, and the NSC (Technical), offered at technical schools, and their access into higher education.

4. As a country we now need to move with due haste in bringing society on board with the steps that are needed to effect the changes that have been mentioned above – the legislative amendments, the advocacy, the consultative bodies, the structural adjustments, and so on.



From public DHET reports, recent policies, interventions and relevant research it would appear that there is an appreciation of the urgency, as well as an understanding of the magnitude of the task that has to be undertaken.





The Covid 19 crisis has shown up the deficiencies and inequities of the TVET system which is far from ready for new ways of teaching and learning. For instance, responsibility for methodologies that assist self-study, and resources that engage learners interactively and enable independent learning, has had to be hastily thrust upon a teaching cohort mostly ill-prepared for such pedagogies. The probability is that many learners will fall behind or be unable to cope emotionally with new learning demands, adding to the poor performance statistics.

But in revealing the deficiencies that prevent learners in impoverished circumstances from participating in learning, the crisis has also given impetus to efforts for improving networks, lowering data costs, providing the affordances that learners need to learn remotely, modernizing infrastructure, and generally in calling out the social inequalities that beset communities more than two decades after the end of apartheid.

- There is no doubt that in most instances things will never be the same, and by all accounts neither should they be. As a country we now need to move with due haste in bringing society on board with the steps that are needed to effect the changes that have been mentioned above – the legislative amendments, the advocacy, the consultative bodies, the structural adjustments, and so on.
- This means negotiating and securing commitment to the proposals made in the draft national implementation plan of the WPPSET and ensuring that there are sufficient warm bodies at national and provincial level to systematically achieve the goals that the lives and futures of our young people depend on.



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