



Education DialogueSA

A drive towards national actions to improve learning

Protocols for Action-Oriented Dialogue



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Contact details:
Sizwe Nxasana, Chairperson
Email: Sizwe.Nxasana@firstrand.co.za

Godwin Khosa,
NECT Interim Secretariat
c/o JET Education Services,
5th Floor, Forum 1,
Braampark,
Hoofd Street,
Braamfontein
Tel: 011 403 6401
Fax: 011 339 7844
Email: Godwink@jet.org.za

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Purpose and Intentions

Education DialogueSA is one of the five programmes of the National Education Collaboration Trust and engages in discussions or dialogues with a consultative forum, the Dialogue Group, made up of appointed experts representing all sectors of the education landscape.

The intention of the dialogues is to create an avenue for open, honest engagement among key stakeholders such as the teacher unions, student organisations, civil society organisations, business and Government. The dialogues will be non-partisan and inclusive, giving all individuals and organisations the opportunity to explore joint societal actions. (Education Collaboration Framework, 2013: 13)

This document outlines the protocols of Education DialogueSA, including the membership of the Dialogue Group and the aims and rules of the meetings.

Education DialogueSA provides an intersectoral forum for engagement about joint and individual actions that can be undertaken to address our education challenges. The dialogues are planned to be action- and outward-oriented and audible manifestations of our visions, views and thinking, as South Africans, about our national education system. They will serve as a platform for providing dialogue on and advocacy in support of the Education Chapter of the National Development Plan.

The primary goal of Education DialogueSA is to provide sustained leadership to the nation on practical steps that need to be taken to achieve the behaviour changes necessary for improving the education of our children. The programme aspires to contribute to bringing about a coordinated shift in the mind-set of the people of South Africa. This ideal will be achieved by:

- Drawing the dialogue participants into discussions characterised by attentive speaking and listening that will provoke insightful responses;

- Creating an avenue for common understanding that is achieved through the sharing of our individual views and ideas;
- Addressing what we individually fail to think through;
- Engaging South African society in a cycle of deep listening, reflection and speaking;
- Encouraging South Africans to adopt the future now, i.e. generating familiarity with what the future should look like;
- Creating a hunger for continuous and sustained improvement; and
- Continuously stimulating conversations that are open and courageous, but focused on actions.

A dialogue is a conversation in which:

- People who have different beliefs and perspectives seek to develop mutual understanding;
- Stereotypes are softened and more trusting relationships developed;
- Participants gain fresh perspectives on the costs of conflict and begin to see new possibilities for interaction and common actions;
- All have the right to contribute; and
- Those taking part pay attention to their impulses, feelings and opinions and work to uncover the deeper meaning underlying their thought processes.

A dialogue is not:

- A debate, mediation or conflict-resolution exercise;
- About winning or losing.

Herzig and Chasin, 2006¹ and Maiese, 2003²

¹ Herzig, M., & Chasin, L. (2006). *Fostering dialogue across divides: A nuts and bolts guide from the Public Conversations Project*. Watertown, MA: The Public Conversations Project [<http://www.publicconversations.org>].

² Maiese, Michelle (2003). "Dialogue." In: *Beyond Intractability*. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: September 2003 <<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/dialogue>>

The Modus Operandi

The dialogues, in the form of one-day meetings, will take place three times a year and a series of related events will be organised in between meetings to advocate actions more widely. In order to create a better understanding of the education challenges and suggest practical actions to be taken, the dialogues will be structured, rather than free flowing discussions.

The five cyclical stages shown in the sketch below are envisaged to constitute the dialogue process.



Dialogue Topics

Each Education DialogueSA meeting is expected to generate a set of topics for the Dialogue Group's deliberations. It is expected that the members of the Dialogue Group will suggest more topics than can be addressed during the three meetings. For this reason, the co-chairs of the Dialogue Group will make the final decision on the topics that will be discussed.

Briefing Papers

The NECT will source briefing papers on the selected topics from leading experts. The papers will be prepared with the aims of:

- Unearthing the key challenges and ensuring a common understanding of the issues surrounding the chosen topics;
- Stimulating engagement of all dialogue participants from a wide range of backgrounds; and
- Suggesting actions to be taken by Government, business, labour organisations, civil society groupings and individual South Africans.

Dialogue Meetings

The meetings will provide an avenue for structured conversations led by expert input, with facilitated discussions and agreed upon action-steps.

In addition to the topics decided upon by the co-chairs, every dialogue meeting will have two standing items: updates from the implementation of the NECT programmes and a progress report on the recommendations made at the previous dialogue meeting.

The success of the dialogues will be measured by the development of proposals which are creative, succinct and that can be acted upon by individuals or groups of individuals.

Memo to Cabinet and Patrons

It is envisaged that each dialogue meeting will produce a memo to Cabinet, reporting on progress made and suggesting steps that need to be taken by Government to mitigate a specific problem.

Advocacy and Actions

In between the dialogue meetings, the decisions taken and actions formulated will be promoted through a range of advocacy strategies, such as further consultations with specific stakeholder groupings, media campaigns and other programmes of the NECT.



Membership

The Dialogue Group is composed of between 40 and 50 persons who broadly represent the full spectrum of society. The founding members of the Dialogue Group were identified by the trustees of the NECT. New and replacement members may be proposed by the Secretariat, from time to time, and appointed with the approval of the Dialogue Group members.

The Dialogue Group has two co-chairs whose term of office is for two years.

The Chief Executive Officer of the NECT heads the Secretariat and serves as an ex officio member of the Dialogue Group.

With the exception of Government and labour representatives and those representing associations, most members of the Dialogue Group are members in their own capacity. Those representing organisations may delegate an appropriate senior nominee to attend not more than two consecutive meetings on their behalf. The Dialogue Group, through its chairs, reserves the right to approve the nominee's attendance.

Members of the Dialogue Group

Co-Chairs

Enver Surty, Deputy Minister of Basic Education; Ihron Rensburg, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg and member of the National Planning Commission.

Members from the academic community

Brian O'Connell (University of Western Cape); Brahm Fleisch (University of Witwatersrand); Eric Atmore (ECD specialist); Graeme Bloch (Wits School of Public and Development Management); and Servaas van der Berg (University of Stellenbosch).

Members from government and statutory bodies

Gugu Ndebele, Mathanzima Mveli, Paddy Padayachee, Palesa Tyobeka, Temba Kojana, (all Department of Basic Education); Khulekani Mathe (National Planning Commission); Nick Taylor (National Education Evaluation and Development Unit); Nombulelo Sesi Nxesi (Education, Training and Development Practices SETA); Onica Dederen (Limpopo Department of Education); Thabo Mabogoane (Department of Monitoring and Evaluation, Presidency); and Thomas Auf der Heyde (Department of Science and Technology).

Members from labour organisations

Ben Machipi (Professional Educators' Union); Chris Klopper (Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie); Henry Hendricks (National Professional Teachers' Organisation of SA); and Mugwena Maluleke (SA Democratic Teachers' Union).

Members from independent sector schooling

Felicity Coughlan (Independent Institute of Education); Jane Hofmeyr (Independent Schools Association of SA); Janice Seland (Catholic Institute of Education); Mohamed Dockrat (Association of Muslim Schools); and Sheva Messiah (SA Board of Jewish Education).

Members from civil society organisations

Ann Bernstein (Centre for Development and Enterprise); Godwin Khosa (JET Education Services); Janet Love (Legal Resources Centre); Masennya Dikotla (Molteno Institute for Language and Literacy); Matakanye Matakanye (National Association of School Governing Bodies); Mothomang Diaho (TeachSA); Paul Colditz (Federation of Governing Bodies of SA Schools); Phatekile Holomisa (Congress of Traditional Leaders of SA); and Yolisa Dwane (Equal Education).

Members from trusts and foundations

Donné Nicol (Shanduka Foundation); Gail Campbell (Zenex Foundation); Kgotso Schoeman (Kagiso Trust); Mpho Letlape (Sasol Inzalo Foundation); and Tracey Henry (Tshikululu Social Investments).

Members from youth organisations

Thembinkosi Josupu (SA Youth Council); Thlogelogo Malatji (Congress of South African Students); and Yershen Pillay (National Youth Commission).





The Education Collaboration Framework

The Education Collaboration Framework (ECF) is a partnership initiative involving Government and social partners and is aimed at increasing cooperation among the stakeholders involved in education improvement with a view to improving educational outcomes in South Africa.

The ECF seeks to influence and support the implementation of South Africa's education reform agenda by enhancing the coordination of education improvement programmes, ensuring their integration with the Government's reform agenda and increasing their effectiveness and value. Central to the ECF is the need to set up effective mechanisms for driving the collaboration envisaged in the NDP. Equally important to the ECF is the need to improve on the historic performance of partnership initiatives in terms of their efficiency, impact, value for money and sustainability.

The ECF encourages South Africans to work together to improve education by focusing on the following six themes:

1. Professionalisation of teaching services;
2. Courageous and effective leadership;
3. Improved government capacity to deliver effective educational services;
4. Improved resourcing to create conducive and safe learning environments focusing on teachers, books and infrastructure;
5. Effective community and parent involvement; and
6. Effective learner support and wellbeing.

The ECF provides:

- A collaboration model which outlines the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders;
- Guidelines for educational programmes supported by social partners and funded in the main by the corporate sector;
- An implementation vehicle for the ECF in the form of a Trust, viz., the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT);
- Specific priority intervention programmes to be implemented collaboratively under the auspices of the Trust; and
- A Plan of Action.



The work of the ECF is organised into five programmes:

1. District intervention programme – targeting 21 of the 86 districts, starting with eight;
2. Systemic improvement intervention programme;
3. Innovation programmes – aimed at creating partnerships in search of new solutions and strategies;
4. Local intervention programmes – aimed supporting local projects to improve their impact; and
5. National dialogue programme – Education DialogueSA.

Office-Bearers of the National Education Collaboration Trust

Patrons

Cyril Ramaphosa, Deputy Chairperson of the National Planning Commission; Bobby Godsell, Chairman of Business Leadership South Africa; James Motlatsi, former President of the National Union of Mineworkers; Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, founder of Umlambo Foundation and former Deputy President of South Africa.

Board of Trustees

Sizwe Nxasana, CEO of FirstRand (Chairperson); Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education; Basil Manuel, President of the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of SA; Futhi Mtoba, Senior Partner, Deloitte; Bobby Soobrayan, Director-General, Department of Basic Education; Brian Figaji, former Vice-Chancellor of Peninsula Technikon; Mark Lamberti, Business Leadership SA Executive Member; Nkosana Dolopi, Deputy Secretary-General of the SA Democratic Teachers' Union.

Secretary: Godwin Khosa, Jet Education Services.

