



The Basic Education Employment Initiative

Report on the Basic Education Minister's
Dialogue with Civil Society

Report on the **Minister's Dialogue with Social Partners**

24th April 2021

01 Background

Ms Angie Motshekga MP, Minister of Basic Education, requested the NECT to convene a meeting with members of civil society. The purpose of the dialogue was to update and thank social partners for the contributions made to Phase 1 of PYEI-BEEI, and to invite comments and suggestions from social partners on the possibility of a second Phase of the programme.

02 Participation

Over 200 people participated, including NGOs, government officials, teacher unions and governing bodies, and other members of civil society from the basic education sector.

03 Opening remarks

Mr Sizwe Nxasana, Chairman of the NECT, gave opening remarks and provided a context for the meeting.

04 The Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI)

Mr Dicks from the Project Management Office in the Presidency reflected on the programme and its importance. He alluded to the possibility of a second phase of the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI) and highlighted the need for improvement in regard to skills and training, and the payment system. Mr Dicks expressed a desire for the institutionalization of the programme, emphasizing the importance of long-term teacher support.

05 Message of support

Dr Regina Mhaule MP, Deputy Minister of Basic Education, echoed the remarks from the Presidency on the success and impact of the PYEI. She affirmed the wish of the Department to proceed with the implementation of a second phase of the BEEI, and showed appreciation for the response received from communities, youth, schools and other social partners.

06 The Basic Education Employment Initiative (BEEI)

Mr Paddy Padayachee, Deputy Director General in the Department of Basic Education, gave a presentation reflecting on Phase 1 of the employment initiative and a snapshot of a possible Phase 2 of the programme. The background and implementation process were outlined, which included the following:

- Allocation of job opportunities per province
- Budget for the project
- Training and support in five areas (Education Assistant in Curriculum, eCadres, Reading Champions, Handyman/Infrastructure maintenance, Psychosocial Support - Child and Youth Care Workers)

The presentation also highlighted the following achievements from Phase 1 of the programme:

- The saving of posts (educator and non-teaching staff)
- Successful consultations with relevant stakeholders
- Recruitment and selection achieved the planned target appointees
- Orientation and training was provided for all PED
- Assistants were trained in all five identified areas
- The programme was closely monitored all provinces

Challenges that were experienced in the project were identified as being:

- The late release of funds to the Department, which affected planning and implementation
- Delays in the recruitment process
- Lack of sufficient training due to the pandemic
- Lack of a data management system and
- Late payment of some assistants

Positive feedback from surveys was received from the various role-players who participated in the programme, including teachers, principals and the assistants themselves.

Mr Padayachee noted that Phase 1 had been implemented as a relief to the pandemic, and that a second phase would serve more as a platform for skills transfer and a pathway into future opportunities within the basic education sector. This would include the development of psycho-social support and the deployment of skills to address the digital divide. Phase 2 would also seek to strengthen governance, accountability and management of SGBs and SMTs, since the project will be implemented and managed at school level. It will also use available evidence on work-related stress, early grade reading, and the use of digital platforms.

Phase 2 is expected to prioritise special needs schools and is expected to commence in July or August 2021.

07 Testimonials

Testimonials provided from role-players on the success of the initiative emphasised the need for humility, collaboration and the effective use of available resources. The teacher perspective reflected on the challenges that teachers were experiencing and indicated that the BEEI had positive effects on the workload of teachers, but also on the recovery of learning, achievement of curriculum goals and learner support. The school assistant noted that the BEEI provided work experience but also restored dignity to people lives through the provision of livelihoods, skills development, as well as community engagement. The extension of the programme was supported by all parties, with a call for more attention to be given to special schools.

08 Minister's input

The Minister of Basic Education, Hon. AM Motshekga MP, applauded the work done by and the support provided by civil society, acknowledging that collaboration with civil society and across government departments had led to the success thus far. The Minister concurred with the views from the other speakers regarding the impact of the programme on communities and those involved. She also acknowledged that there were areas of improvement and that the break presented an opportunity to work on these areas. The Minister further highlighted that the impact of the BEEI programme should last well beyond the duration of the initiative, and that youth should be equipped with portable skills that will enable them to enrich their lives going forward. The Minister thanked the NECT for providing a platform for the Department to engage with civil society.

09 Questions and comments

Questions and comments were posed in the meeting and on the chat facility, only some of which were addressed in the presentations due to time constraints. The Department has undertaken to deal with outstanding matters in future Dialogues on the subject.

10 Next steps

This report will be shared with the Department of Basic Education and matters raised by civil society will be dealt with and addressed in future in a similar forum. In addition, comments and suggestions were made, all of which have been captured. This will serve as a base document for the agenda of future dialogues on the BEEI.