SHAPING THE FUTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA'S YOUTH

Rethinking post-school education and skills training

Edited by Helene Perold, Nico Cloete and Joy Papier

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AFRICAN MINDS

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Acronyms

ABET	adult basic education and training
AHEAS	Advancing Higher Education Access and Success
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
CASE	Community Agency for Social Enquiry
CAT	credit accumulation and transfer
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
CETC	Community Education and Training Centre
CHET	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
CHEPS	Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies
CNC	computer numerical control
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DUT	Durban University of Technology
ECSECC	Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
EGS	Employment Guarantee Scheme
FET	further education and training
FETC	further education and training college
FETI	Further Education and Training Institute
FETMIS	Further Education and Training Management Information System
HE	higher education
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HEQF	Higher Education Qualifications Framework
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
LFS	Labour Force Survey
merSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA
MSETTP	Micro and Small Enterprise Training and Technology Project
NC(V)	National Certificate (Vocational)
ND	National Diploma
NDP	National Development Plan

NEET	not in education, employment or training
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
NYSP	National Youth Service Programme
OBE	outcomes-based education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OMT	office management and technology
PGCE	Post-Graduate Certificate in Education
PSE	post-school education
PSETS	post-school education and training system
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RPL	recognition of prior learning
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
UWC	University of the Western Cape
UYF	Umsobomvu Youth Fund
VEOP	Vocational Education Orientation Programme
WIL	work-integrated learning
YAC	youth advisory centre
YDN	Youth Development Network

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Charles Sheppard completed his PhD in 1998 with his thesis 'A school-based indicator model for quality education in South Africa'. He is currently employed as Director: Management Information at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. He has extensive experience in education research, management information systems, performance indicators, data analyses, education planning, education capital investment, higher education management information systems, enrolment planning and higher education funding frameworks.

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INTRODUCTION

Nico Cloete and John Butler-Adam

One of the most widely quoted of all of the Centre for Higher Education Transformation's (CHET's) reports is *Responding to the Educational Needs of Post-School Youth* (Cloete *et al.* 2009). It is usually cited for one or more of the following reasons. Firstly, the report introduced the concept of 'not in education, employment or training (NEET)', which is firmly entrenched in South African education jargon – even Statistics South Africa now uses the term in its reports. Secondly, it shocked the education community (and the education ministry) with the finding that almost three million youths between the ages 18 and 24 were so-called 'NEETs'. Thirdly, it spurred the education ministry to focus on the further education and training (FET) sector.

The study received widespread coverage, with a *Mail & Guardian* article by Primarashni Gower, entitled 'Idle minds, social time bomb' (31 July 2009), referenced in the *New York Times*, drawing attention to the potential social disruption that 2,8 million young people not in education, employment or training could cause. The impact of the study was deepened when the 2009 crime statistics showed that the average age of a house robber is between 19 and 25 years (the study reported on 18- to 24-year-olds) and that of the robbers arrested, 90 per cent did not have matric and/or were unemployed.

Further afield, of course, the 2011 North African 'spring' highlighted the prominent role of young people in those uprisings. By 2010 youth unemployment and the lack of training opportunities had become an acknowledged problem worldwide. Across the 30 OECD countries, there were nearly 15 million unemployed workers aged 15–24; this is 4 million more than at the end of 2007. In France and Italy, one in four young workers was unemployed; in Spain, 40 per cent were jobless (http://blogs.wsj.com/economics/2010/04/14/youth-unemployment-surges-world-wide/).

Statistics South Africa estimated by mid-2010 that South Africa's population is close on 50 million, of which more than half (52 per cent) were estimated to be younger than 25. New entrants to the labour market (15- to 24-year-olds) constituted 20 per cent of the total population and 32 per cent of those

normally considered economically active (15- to 64-year-olds). Statistics South Africa also reports that out of a total of 10.1 million individuals in the 15–24 age cohort, 32.7 per cent (or 3.3 million young people) were neither employed nor attending an educational institution (Smith 2011).

The OECD released a survey of South Africa in July 2010, which revealed that South Africa had the worst rate of unemployment for youth between the ages 15 and 24 among 36 countries surveyed in 2008. According to the report, South Africa's 50 per cent employment rate for working-age youth is lagging behind other middle-income emerging market economies, which employ about 80 per cent. The situation is compounded by racial disparities: 53.4 per cent of young black 15- to 24-year-olds were unemployed by the end of 2009, which was three times worse than the 14.5 per cent unemployment rate of young white South Africans (Smith 2011).

On the one hand, youth unemployment is a demand-side problem (Altman and Marock 2008) as the number of jobs created in the economy is too small. On the other hand, youth unemployment is a supply-side problem because many young South Africans lack the appropriate skills, work-related capabilities and higher education qualifications required for a high-skills economy. The 2009 CHET publication described the post-school education and work environment as being characterised by the following: (1) a large annual outflow of students from schooling without meaningful further educational opportunities; (2) post-school institutional architecture that limits further educational opportunities for young people; (3) lack of integrated and systematic data about the 'excluded youth'; and (4) a recapitalised FET colleges sector that requires capacity building.

The basic statistics that paint the landscape of the need for access to higher education in South Africa are as follows:

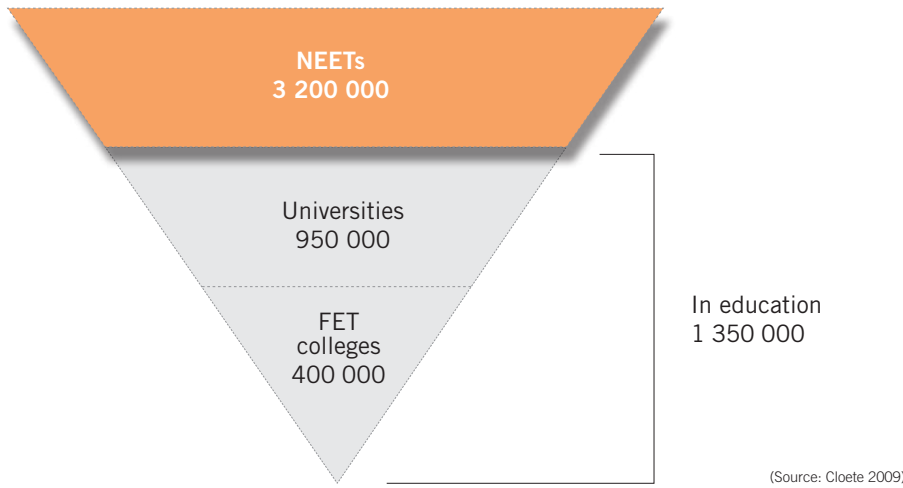
Number of students writing the Grade 12 exit exam

National Senior Certificate (NSC) in 2011	496 090
Number of students who passed the exam	348 117
Number of students who qualified for entry into a university	347 647
Estimated number of students who were admitted to a university	175 000
Number of students who will pass but not get into university	173 117

To the students who will not enter a university (173 117) should be added the students who failed the Grade 12 exam (147 973) – making a total of 321 090 Grade 12 students who will have left school with few, if any, options as to what they can do next. An additional 14 948 full-time candidates enrolled for the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations, but did not write the

examinations. In addition, there is an unknown number of young people who left school having completed Grades 9 or 10 or 11 who have even fewer options with regard to continuing education or the possibility of employment. The accumulated effect of this situation is that *in 2010 there were 3 200 000 young people in the 18–25 age group who were not in education, employment or training*.

The number of NEETs must be put into context. There are 950 000 students in South African public and private universities and 400 000 students in public and private further education and training colleges (FET colleges) – a total of 1 350 000. In other words there are two and a half times as many young, unemployed, people who are *out* of education as there are *in* education in the 18–25 cohort. They represent close to 45 per cent of the cohort.



(Source: Cloete 2009)

According to the OECD, 20 million South Africans (40 per cent of the total population of 50 million) live in poverty – and 16 per cent of those people are of an age when they could, and should, be in post-school education. For these young people, the situation in which they find themselves can best be described as being trapped in, and adding to, the poverty cycle. For these youth, with the exception of a small minority of 'entrepreneurs', the only successful way out of the trap is better educational opportunities.

A plethora of policies

Three important documents with a bearing on the post-school sector and its development were released by the South African government during 2011. All three highlight the importance of education and training, and comment on how

these systems should be effected. They are the Department of Higher Education and Training's *Strategic Plan for Higher Education and Training 2010–2015*, the *New Growth Path* published by the Economic Development Department and the National Planning Commission's *National Development Plan (2030)*. Early in 2012 a fourth policy document, the *Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training*, was released by the Department of Higher Education and Training.

In addition, a position paper on the non-university post-school sector was produced in 2011 by Higher Education South Africa (HESA) – the association of university vice-chancellors. The *Position Paper on an Extended Post-School Education System* sets out the consensus position of the vice-chancellors – namely that universities have two central roles to play in relation to the rest of the post-school system: (1) human resources and curriculum development and (2) targeted partnerships that can lead, in a diversity of ways, to greater articulation within the post-school sector as a whole.

South Africa is thus currently considering a significant range of ideas and new strongly promoted policy proposals. These are likely to have a major impact on what needs to be done to provide the best educational opportunities for young (and not so young) South Africans and, more especially, to provide access to post-school education for poor young South Africans, the majority of whom are women and the vast majority of whom are black. Once debated and revised, the Green Paper will be passed as an Act of Parliament, and will become the mechanism through which the changes proposed in the various documents will be effected. As a matter of interest, all of the government documents tie their plans into anti-poverty and human resource development strategies and so the changes that the Ford Foundation is introducing to its Advancing Higher Education Access and Success (AHEAS) initiative in South Africa will serve to draw the initiative even closer to the other initiatives that form the raft of work in its Office for Southern Africa.

The four documents carry similar, although not identical, messages. Their main designs for the future of the post-school education sector are as follows:

- The university sector must be expanded (two new universities are to be created in the two provinces that presently do not have universities).
- This implies that even more post-graduate students will have to be enrolled and encouraged to work in academia – against the reality of an impending shortage of academics. It also implies that students who graduate with Masters and Doctors degrees will have to be of a high quality. The target is to shift the present PhD production rate from 28 graduates per million per year to 100 graduates per million per year by 2030.
- Universities need to be positioned to play their role in the 'knowledge economy' and to fulfil their roles as critical drivers of social and economic development – and employment.

- Universities must become the core of a national system of innovation.
- Universities need to contribute to the faster growth of a 'green economy'.
- The goal for cohort enrolment in universities must grow from the present mean rate of 17 per cent to a mean rate of 30 per cent by 2030 (i.e. in the next 18 years).
- The FET sub-sector must be expanded and strengthened in terms of its capacity, quality, curriculum development and successful teaching and learning, and thus also in terms of throughput rates. The FET colleges presently have extremely low success rates – on average around 20 per cent of all students who enter ever qualify. In some institutions, the throughput rate is as low as 4 per cent.
- The college sub-sector must become both more diverse and differentiated, but at the same time more integrated and coherent – and this means that well-defined and well-understood routes of articulation between all the sub-sectors of the post-school system (including the universities) must be created and sustained.
- Enrolment must grow from the current level of 400 000 to 1 000 000 by 2014 (a growth of 300 per cent in two years) without losing sight of the need for quality and success.
- Students must be supported as they navigate their way between sub-sectors of the post-school system.
- New kinds of post-school institutions, such as community education and training centres, will be created at the post-school pre-university level.

This book

This book coincides with the release of the policy recommendations on post-school education and training by government and higher education stakeholders. In a number of cases the authors featured in this publication were involved in developing the policies mentioned above, resulting in a certain amount of 'cross referencing'. However, the book is not a systematic attempt to address the various policy positions, although many of the chapters address, directly or indirectly, some of the policy issues raised (particularly those in the *Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training*).

The book opens with an analysis by Stephanie Allais on how the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has developed since the early years of South Africa's democracy and the implications this holds for young people not in education, employment or training. The two chapters that follow focus on youth: Cecil Mlatsheni examines the impact of unemployment on South African youth, and Tia Linda Zuze provides an international perspective on issues associated with youth-to-work transitions.

The book goes on to examine various aspects of the South African post-school education and training system. Using the most recent data available, Charles Sheppard and Ronaldo Sheppard provide a unique statistical analysis of the FET system and project two possible scenarios for its growth. This is followed by a chapter by Rolf Stumpf, Joy Papier, Timothy McBride and Seamus Needham, which examines the potential for FET colleges to follow mixed higher education/further education and training models and to increase occupational and workplace training programme enrolments. The contribution by Trish Gibbon, Johan Muller and Heather Nel then examines options for universities to play a strategic role in helping to build an expanded post-school education and training system and support it in the future.

The focus on training is explored by Nicola Branson, who examines trends in training in South Africa, followed by Sean Archer, who identifies a number of fundamental questions that need to be answered empirically if South Africa is to respond effectively to its national skills-development needs. The book concludes with a chapter by Helene Perold that provides a youth perspective on key issues raised in the book.

While the goals and targets articulated in the policy documents are valuable, even noble, and relevant to the country's needs, it could be argued that there are significant implementation problems embedded in each. These vary from unmotivated projections of FET growth from 400 000 to 1 million in less than three years, to a tripling of high quality doctorates in less than 20 years, and more. Paradoxically this latter projection is less likely than the former to come to pass: doctoral graduate production has been static for the last decade, and the document is silent about how this trend could be changed. What is certainly positive in these documents is a certain convergence of vision in the projections of an expanding post-school higher education system, with substantial growth at the college level, the importance of preparing students for a knowledge economy and the hope at least for an articulated, coordinated and differentiated system. This is indeed a radical departure from the earlier post-apartheid vision. However, what has remained is an over-inclusive checklist approach to reform planning charcteristic of post-apartheid reform thinking. A number of papers in this volume attempt in different ways to push beyond this utopian limitation. Chapter 6 'Higher education and an expanded post-school education system', for example, displays a refreshingly reflective and realistic approach to policy and implementation development. Unless policy prescriptions begin to push in this direction, we seem doomed to the by now depressingly familiar cycle of policy optimism followed by implementation despair.

April 2012

THE BOUNDARIES AND FUNCTIONS OF POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Chapter 1

WHY SOLVING ONGOING PROBLEMS WITH THE NQF MATTERS

Stephanie Allais

Introduction

Post 1994, the original design of the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was intended to replace all existing qualifications in the country with a new set of qualifications and part qualifications (unit standards). These were designed by new structures known as Standards Generating Bodies and ratified by representative bodies known as National Standards Bodies. The new qualifications and unit standards were to be composed of learning outcomes and would be registered by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) on the NQF. Unit standards were supposed to be the building blocks of qualifications, were intended to allow the possibility of learners gaining awards for smaller achievements rather than a whole qualification, and being able to credit their unit standard award towards a qualification. Qualifications, according to the initial design, would be comprised of unit standards.

The intention was to ensure the overhaul of *all* learning programmes and curricula at all levels and in all sectors. Quality assurance bodies would be accredited by SAQA. Educational providers would then apply to be accredited to offer or to assess specific qualifications and unit standards. Assessors would be 'registered' by quality assurance bodies to assess specific unit standards and qualifications. In this chapter this original model for the NQF is referred to as 'NQF 1.0'.

How NQF 1.0 was put into practice varied dramatically across different education and training sectors. In general, the formal education and training system did not comply with the qualifications or quality assurance model of NQF 1.0. They did not use the unit standards-based qualifications designed by the standards generating bodies, instead continuing to design their own

qualifications. And while many new qualifications and unit standards were developed by the standards generating bodies, most of these were never used by any providers. This could be dubbed 'NQF 1.1': officially the original model was still in place, but in reality many of its aspects were not complied with (this is explained in more detail below). Ultimately, the NQF was officially adjusted to acknowledge its varied application in different education and training contexts, resulting, as discussed below, in 'NQF 2.0'.

The original model of unit standards-based qualifications, as well as the specifics of the quality assurance model, was largely applied in vocational and occupational education, professional training, community development, skills training and in adult education. In these areas, the new NQF qualifications were used or attempts were made to use them and educational providers felt compelled to use them. It is primarily in these parts of the education and training system that the quality assurance processes of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) have been implemented, or providers have attempted to comply with them, many giving up in the process.

These are all the weakest parts of the education and training system. They are low-status, unlike, say, universities, which are a powerful voice in society. They are also low priority in the eyes of the general public, unlike schools, which are constantly in the public spotlight. In many instances they do not have strong well-established curricula and qualifications, or a long history of well-respected qualifications. Many (of course not all) do not have strong and consistent bodies of educators with high levels of qualifications. This does not mean that all education in these sectors is weak. Many NGOs have offered outstanding adult education as well as youth development programmes. Many not-for-profit and for-profit organisations offer excellent customised programmes for workplaces. There are, of course, many weak providers and courses, and many unscrupulous organisations. All of them, weak and strong, have been forced to comply with the highly flawed model of the NQF 1.0, with damaging effects. A policy which on the one hand focuses on centralising control, accountability mechanisms and standards specification, but on the other hand decentralises the management and delivery of education and the development of curriculum, has been very damaging to the parts of the education and training system which is extremely diverse and institutionally weak. It has made the work of the good providers and organisations impossible, and has done nothing to root out unscrupulous providers.

Through the NQF a complex and extensive qualifications and quality assurance system has been developed for a tiny, weak and haphazard system of provision. One consequence of this has been very little focus by government on substantively building or supporting provider institutions, whether these are adult education providers, FET colleges, or providers aimed at workplace-based training. Another consequence is that the regulatory environment has

made it difficult for non-state providers to operate, particularly community-based organisations, but also organisations providing customised training programmes to businesses. Instead of directly meeting the needs of communities or clients, providers have been forced to design their programmes against unit standards and meet the accreditation requirements of various SETAs.

These include many of the organisations attempting to meet the various needs of youth who are no longer in the education system, but are unable to find jobs. There is a range of vibrant and dynamic NGOs and other organisations that have attempted to develop customised courses and programmes to meet the needs of these youth. But these providers have been told that it is essential for them to offer programmes against unit standards and unit standards-based qualifications, and be accredited against these. In many instances, for example, an organisation which is not primarily an educational provider, which is attempting to build any kind of training component into their programmes, is told by funders that they cannot be funded unless they meet the accreditation requirements. Thus, while huge amounts of funds remain unspent in the National Skills Funds and, to a lesser extent, in the coffers of the SETAs, many organisations have been unable to access funds because their courses and programmes are designed with very specific target groups in mind (obviously good educational practice), which makes it impossible for them to fit into the straitjacket of the unit standards. The irony is, as pointed out above, that the bulk of the education system, the schools and universities, have not complied with this policy.

These problems are explained in more detail below. The original model of the NQF, and its underlying problems is discussed, followed by an explanation of how and why it has been a particular problem for vocational education, skills training, community-based education, and adult education – the forms of provision most important for young people who have not completed schooling, or who have completed it but are unable to access higher education. Some recent policy changes and speculations about their likely effects are considered.

The original model: 'NQF 1.0'

The original model of the NQF – referred to here as NQF 1.0 – centred around the idea of learning outcomes. An overarching national qualifications framework for all education and training was intended to be a mechanism to ensure that learning was 'relevant' and of high quality. Furthermore the intention was that the education system produced learners who were competent in the workplace, that access was provided to those previously excluded and that their informal learning was recognised. All qualifications at the same level on the NQF were intended to be of equal status and the model was intended to ensure that assessment was transparent and fair (Mokhobo-Nomvete 1999).

Outcomes were intended to be the starting point in curriculum design and a mechanism for improving quality: they would specify standards for all educational provision and regulatory bodies would be able to assess what institutions were offering against the prescribed outcomes (SAQA 2000).

The NQF was designed as one of the few completely comprehensive qualifications frameworks in the world. A grid of eight levels and twelve fields was created to encompass the entire education system at all levels and in all sectors. The original levels are show in Diagram 1 below.

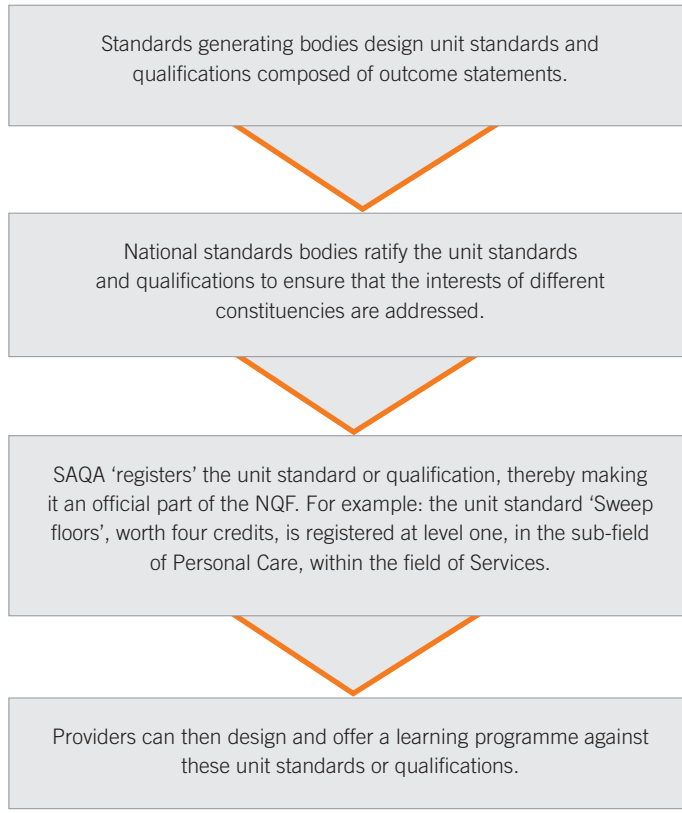
Diagram 1: The levels and bands of the NQF

Level	Band
8	Higher education (all post-secondary education)
7	
6	
5	
4	Further education and training (equivalent to senior-secondary education)
3	
2	
1	General education and training (equivalent to primary and junior-secondary education)

The intention was for this grid to be populated by outcomes-based qualifications, which would replace all existing qualifications. No existing educational provision would remain untouched – all educational institutions would be obliged to redesign their programmes on the basis of these specified outcomes, or to develop new programmes to meet the requirements of specified outcomes. In other words, the NQF was far more than a set of levels. It was an entirely new approach to designing qualifications, changing the roles of educational institutions and educators.

By 1997, SAQA had created its 12 National Standards Bodies with many hundreds of standards generating bodies underneath them (French 2009). Their role, as shown in Diagram 2, sourced from Allais (2007), was to create the new qualifications and unit standards.

Diagram 2: The design of standards on the NQF

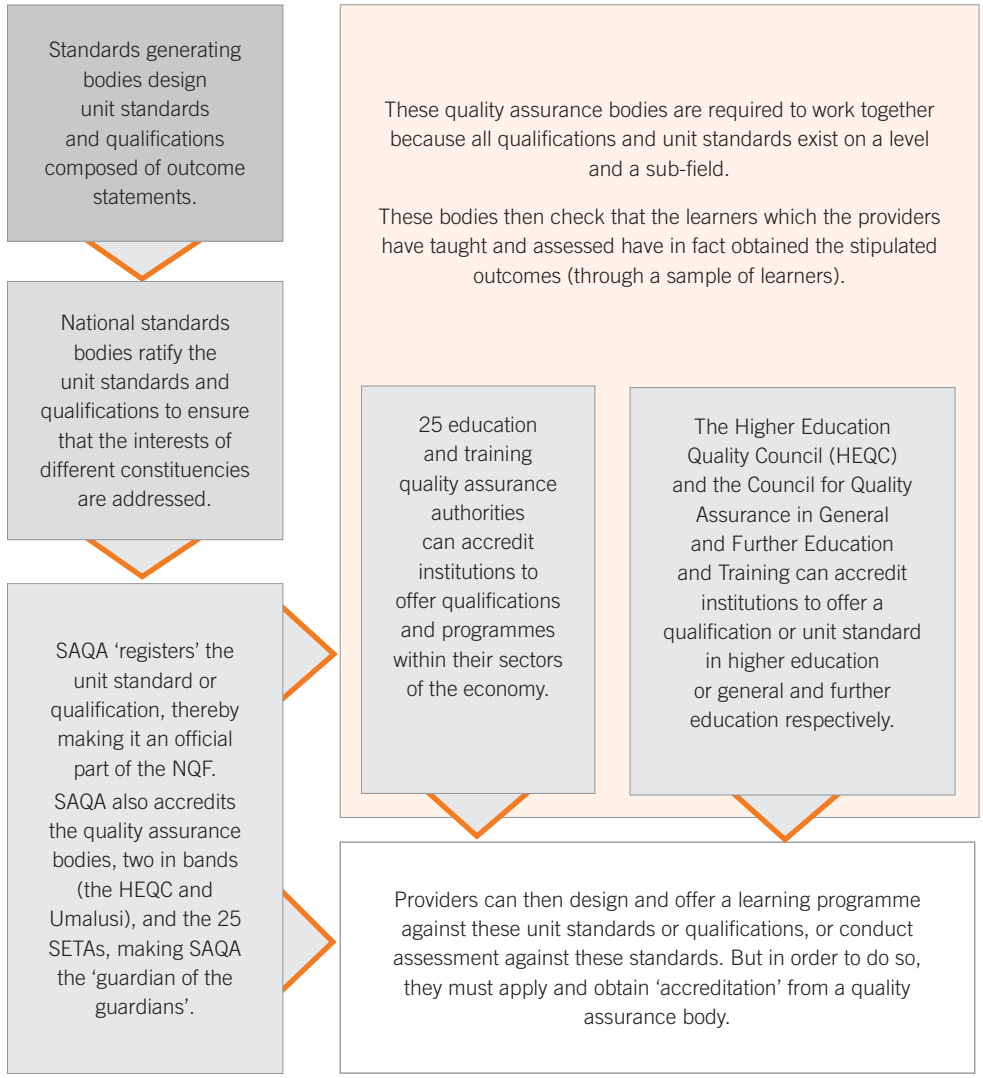


The original intention was that all qualifications would be composed of unit standards. However, this was not accepted by all, and ultimately two types of new qualifications were developed by the standards generating bodies, known in NQF jargon as 'exit-level outcomes and assessment criteria qualifications' and unit standards-based qualifications. The main difference between the two was that the unit standards could be awarded separately, while learners could not obtain credit for the individual outcomes specified in the 'exit-level learning outcomes and assessment criteria' qualifications. Both types of qualifications, however, were comprised of learning outcomes, and have much more in common than they have differences. They were both to be designed by standards generating bodies, separately from learning programmes and educational institutions.

The NQF also introduced a new and specific quality assurance model. Quality assurance bodies were created, and, according to the original model, would accredit educational providers to offer various of the new qualifications

which were being developed by the standards generating bodies. The SETAs constituted in 25 different sectors of the economy, were created under the Minister of Labour through the Skills Development Act No. 31 of 2003. The SETAs had to be accredited by SAQA in order to carry out their quality assurance role. Diagram 3 below, sourced from Allais (2007), attempts to capture the complex relationship between SAQA, the standards generating bodies, the quality assurance bodies, and the educational providers.

Diagram 3: Structures/processes designed for standards setting, quality assurance and provision



Assessment was central to the design of the NQF because of the idea that the outcomes were not linked to a specific programme of learning and that anyone could be assessed against them. The approach assumed that because the learning outcomes would clearly contain the standard against which learners would be assessed, assessment could be conducted by individual assessors, customised to the needs of individual learners. The specification of the outcomes was intended to ensure that qualifications would have credibility (Mokhobo-Nomvete 1999). The plan was that each individual assessor, whether based in an educational institution or not, must be registered as an assessor. SAQA initially pronounced that anyone in South Africa who wished to assess a learner in order for a learner to be granted a certificate had to be registered as an assessor. An assessment unit standard was developed and, according to SAQA's policy, an individual would have to be assessed and found competent against this unit standard in order to assess any education or training in South Africa. SAQA provided a four-year grace period, which ended in May 2004, for the implementation of this policy (SAQA 2001).

The first unit standards were registered on the NQF in June 1998 and more followed in 1999 (SAQA 1999). By August 2006, 818 new qualifications and 10 214 unit standards had been developed and registered on the NQF (www.saqa.org.za, accessed 20 August 2006). As discussed above, both unit standards-based and non-unit standards-based qualifications were developed by the standards generating bodies, but most of the 818 new qualifications were unit standards-based. By 2009, there were 787 unit standards-based qualifications registered (Isaacs 2009). To provide some idea of the types of qualifications included here, a few qualification titles are included. As can be seen, they range from highly specific to rather broad qualifications.

Examples of new qualifications, levels 2 to 5

Examples of Level 2 qualifications

National Certificate: Retail Shop Floor Practices

Certificate: Reception Operations and Services

National Certificate in Steel Tube and Pipe Manufacturing (Seamless Hot-Finished or Welded or Cold-Formed)

National Certificate: Air-conditioning, Refrigeration and Ventilation (also at level three)

National Certificate: Bread and Flour Confectionary Baking

National Certificate: Contact Centre Support

National Certificate: Macadamia Production and De-husking

National Certificate: Victim Empowerment and Support

Examples of Level 3 qualifications

National Certificate in Quality Checking of Tyres and Tyre Components

National Certificate: Beauty Technology

National Certificate: Cigarette Filter Rod Production

National Certificate: Construction Painting
National Certificate: Fast Food Services
National Certificate: Food and Beverage Processing: Oil and Fat Based Product Processing
National Certificate: Jewellery Manufacture in a Mass Production Environment
National Certificate: Seed Processing and Packaging

Examples of Level 4 qualifications
National Certificate: Community-Based Language Practice
Further Education and Training Certificate: Manufacturing and Assembly Operations Supervision
Further Education and Training Certificate: Craft Enterprise
National Certificate: Food and Beverage Manufacturing Technology: Spray Dried Food Product Technologist
Further Education and Training Certificate: Real Estate
Further Education and Training Certificate: Pipeline Operations
Further Education and Training Certificate: Victim Empowerment Coordination
Further Education and Training Certificate: Community Facilitation in Society and Environment Interactions

Examples of Level 5 qualifications
National Certificate: Resolving of Crime
National Diploma: Animal Production
National Certificate: Emergency Services Operations
National Certificate: Maintenance of High-Speed Production Processes (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods)
National Diploma: Footwear Technology
National Certificate: Information Technology: Systems Support

Some examples of unit standard titles are provided below. Note that each of these titles represents many pages of documentation, as there are many specifications that unit standards have to include, as is discussed in more detail below.

Examples of unit standard titles
Apply Self-Management through the Concepts of Positive Self-Esteem and Resiliency
Use a Personal Budget to Manage Own Money
Demonstrate Knowledge and Understanding of the Characteristics of Burial Societies in South Africa
Facilitating [sic] a Numeracy Learning Programme in the Reception Year
Interact with People in Textiles Processes
Access, Process, Adapt and Use Data from a Wide Range of Texts
Develop and Implement the Creative Process
Apply Maritime Geography
Demonstrate a Basic Understanding of the Physiological Processes in Plant Growth and Development
Apply Knowledge of Anatomy, Physiology and Medical Terminology Relevant to Phlebotomy
Demonstrate Knowledge of Environmental Systems and Ecology
Control Traffic

Manage One's Own Development
Identify and Describe Learning Processes
Attend to and Handle a Domestic Violence Incident
Communicate Orally with Relevant Stakeholders in the Recovery of Debt

Almost as soon as implementation of the NQF was initiated, changes were made to NQF 1.0. These are referred to as NQF 1.1. One of the most significant departures was that SAQA was constituted as an institution accountable to the ministers of education and labour, while the original idea had been that it would fall under a joint ministry. Both the model of qualifications development, with its associated systems for curriculum and assessment, and the quality assurance model, were treated differently in the two ministries. In the main, the formal education and training system, under the Minister of Education, did not comply with the official model of the NQF (NQF 1.0).

As discussed above, the intention was for the NQF to *replace* all existing qualifications, and for *all* qualifications in South Africa to be national, generated through standards generating bodies, comprised of learning outcomes, and not linked to specific providers. The NQF would be a repository of these national qualifications. As an 'interim measure', SAQA decided to register all *existing* qualifications on the NQF (SAQA 1997). These qualifications, referred to as 'interim' or 'legacy' qualifications, were seen as qualifications that would be phased out as soon as the new system of designing and registering unit standards and outcomes-based qualifications was up and running. A transitional period of five years (from 1 January 1998 to 31 December 2002) was decided on, after which the idea was that all these 'legacy' qualifications would fall away (SAQA 1997). All higher education qualifications, as well as qualifications submitted by certain colleges and other providers, were thus registered on the NQF, but did not comply with the qualifications model – they were not created by standards generating bodies.

Thus, as the NQF started to be populated with qualifications, two distinct types of qualifications emerged. One type of qualification was developed by institutions and the other was developed through SAQA structures. This distinction is not immediately apparent – looking at the framework, one would simply see a list of qualifications. However, this distinction is important in understanding the different effects of the NQF on vocational education and skills training, as opposed to schooling and higher education.

The new qualifications that were created and registered on the framework have resulted in very few programmes and very few learner awards. By 2009, of the 787 new unit standards-based qualifications registered, only 172 qualifications had awards made against them to a total of 37 841 individuals. Of the over 10 000 unit standards that had been developed, 2 211 had awards

made against them to 562 174 learners (many of these will be to the same learners – the figures reflect the total number of awards, not the number of awards per learner).[1] In other words, while many qualifications and unit standards had been developed by standards generating bodies, and registered on the NQF, they were not actually used by anyone. This means that many hundreds of qualifications and thousands of unit standards were developed but have never been taught, assessed against, or awarded. One hundred and thirty qualifications registered on the NQF were allowed to lapse after their official term ended, signalling that no one was interested in offering them and 2 013 unit standards similarly elapsed (although some were replaced).

SAQA's 2007/2008 Annual Report states that there are 20 million qualification awards recorded on its National Learner Records Database. Only 27 425 of these are against new qualifications, submitted by 16 sectoral quality assurance bodies. In other words, most qualifications offered and awarded to learners were not the new unit standards-based qualifications designed through the standards generating bodies of SAQA, but rather, old qualifications, linked to specific institutions, and rewritten into outcomes-based formats. In the main, therefore, education and training in South Africa has not used the new qualifications designed according to NQF 1.0.

The Department of Education, as is well known, implemented its own version of an outcomes-based curriculum in the primary and junior secondary system with disastrous effects. Introduced in 1997, outcomes-based education (OBE) was reviewed and modified five years later in 2002 when it was replaced with the Revised National Curriculum Statement for Grades R to 9, which defined learning outcomes and assessment standards for Grades R to 9. In doing so, the Department of Education attempted to clarify the key principles and values that underpin the curriculum, but notionally retained the concept of OBE. The senior secondary system continued to have a specified syllabus and a national examination which was modified in 2005 with the introduction of the National Curriculum Statement for Grades 10 to 12. Today OBE has been completely abandoned.

Distinctly different quality assurance models also emerged for skills training and for education. On the one hand the SETAs, accredited by SAQA to conduct quality assurance for training in different sectors, attempted to accredit large numbers of providers and register assessors, verifiers and moderators. On the other hand, quality assurance for the formal education system was developed through the creation of two quality assurance bodies under the Minister of Education: Umalusi was created for general and further education and training (that is, all education below tertiary education) and the Council for Higher Education, with the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC)

1 Data supplied by the SAQA National Learner Records Database.

as its permanent standing committee, was created for the higher education sector. These bodies were constituted as independent statutory bodies through dedicated parliamentary acts. They were constituted directly under the Minister of Education. While they were *supposed* to comply with SAQA's accreditation requirements, they had the power to do their work independently. Significantly, Umalusi was created on the basis of an existing institution, the South African Certification Council, and although the act[2] through which Umalusi was created envisaged that it would gradually assume many new roles, Umalusi's work was initially dominated by its monitoring and certification of national examinations. The latter continues to be a major feature of Umalusi's work although it has now assumed many other responsibilities. The important point for the purpose of the argument here is that Umalusi inherited an institutional base and logic that was part of the existing education system, and continued to work within this logic.

The decision that assessors must be registered on the basis of having their competence assessed against the assessment unit standard generated, in certain quarters, a rush to get registered, correspondingly produced a flurry of income generating opportunities for institutions offering 'assessor training' against the standard. In particular, people working in private providers, people wanting to generate an income through conducting assessments, and people working in FET colleges attended assessor training courses in order to become qualified assessors. People working in schools and universities, however, did not pursue this route, despite the official SAQA policy.

What became apparent very quickly was that the decentralised assessment model was unable to maintain any kind of standard despite the registration of assessors, as well as the registration of verifiers and moderators who verified and moderated assessor judgements.

Umalusi's research has demonstrated that despite the proliferation of specifications and the use of detailed unit standards, standards among different *quality assured* providers were dramatically different (Allais *et al.* 2007). Quality assurance agencies responded with a proliferation of assessment specifications, making the work of educational institutions even more difficult. Another problem was the configuration of quality assurance bodies. Any vocational, technical or professional qualification or unit standard would fall under two quality assurance bodies – one under the Minister of Labour and one under the Minister of Education. And, unless an educational provider offered only one type of learning programme, it could potentially be obliged to deal with up to 26 different quality assurance bodies.

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2 Umalusi, Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, was established by an Act of Parliament, the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act No. 58 of 2001 in December 2001. The Higher Education Quality Committee was established in terms of the Higher Education Amendment Act No. 23 of 2001.

What are the underlying problems?

The problem with the qualification model

Internationally, various researchers have pointed out the problems of over-specification and over-elaboration that result from attempts to specify learning outcomes separately from educational institutions and curricula (Hall and Woodhouse 1999, Wheelahan 2008). The author's own research has shown how this problem manifests in South Africa (Allais 2007).

If standards are not already widely understood within the community of professionals – the teachers and specialists who are teaching and assessing learners – and trusted by members of the public – in other words, in the absence of teachers and assessors already having a good sense of what the standard is – outcome statements are open to very different interpretations. In an attempt to contain these differences, outcome developers make outcome statements more and more specific, but in the process the statements become narrower and longer and, consequently, more difficult for curriculum designers, teachers and assessors to work with. The author's research demonstrates the extreme form which this took in the South African NQF, down to the much-quoted learning outcome with 15 assessment criteria for washing hands (see extract below).

Assessment criteria for specific outcome 'Wash hands effectively'

ASSESSMENT CRITERION 1: Applies soap or hand-washing detergent.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 2: Explains why soap and water needs to be used for washing hands.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 3: Lathers hands for a minimum of ten seconds.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 4: Explains why the lather needs to be on the hands for at least 10 seconds.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 5: Washes palms, backs of hands, between fingers and under jewellery.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 6: Explains the areas where most of the dirt and germs can collect on hands.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 7: Rinses and dry hands.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 8: Closes taps after use.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 9: Dries his/her hands thoroughly after washing.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 10: Explains why hands need to be dried.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 11: Explains why hands should not be dried on clothing.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 12: Explains why hand washing is important.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 13: Gives 3 examples of when one needs to wash hands.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 14: Explains the proper hand-washing techniques.
ASSESSMENT CRITERION 15: Gives an example of health problems that can be prevented by hand washing.

Like the unit standard below (and note that the 15 assessment criteria above are only for one of the specific outcomes of the unit standard 'Maintain Personal Hygiene, Health, and Presentation' (Level 1, four credits), many of the unit standards registered on the South African NQF are extremely narrow,

and nearly all of them are lengthy. This can be seen as one explanation for the low uptake of the NQF-designed qualifications – the sheer practical difficulty of working with such a system. So one problem is that the specification of outcomes in order to 'create' standards led to unworkably complex policy documents without accompanying improvements in practice. This in turn undermined the integrity of curricula and the work of educational institutions.

Attempting to use this type of approach in general education leads to knowledge being fragmented or undermined, as disciplines and knowledge areas cannot be captured in outcome statement, and cannot be read off them (Allais 2007, Taylor 2000, Muller 2004). Craft knowledge can be similarly undermined by being fragmented into learning outcomes (Gamble 2002, 2004a, 2004b), and a narrow outcomes or competency-based approach can lead to workers getting very narrow training for specific tasks, with no holistic conception of an occupation (Gamble 2005).

While some argue that there can be good and bad unit standards (e.g. French 2009), there is a considerable body of research that suggests that both the problems of over-specification and the fragmentation of knowledge are inherent to unit standards. Even in countries where there are strong institutions and groupings of professionals, and where there are shared understandings of what the competency-standards or outcomes *mean*, critiques have emerged of standards-based models. For example, Australian training packages, widely seen as an example of a successful competency-based training system, have been criticised for being too detailed and unwieldy (Guthrie 2009, Wheelahan 2010). One of the main justifications for outcomes or competency-based qualifications is to create closer linkages with workplaces. Australia is the country where competency-based training has been most extensively implemented, and yet its vocational education system has extremely weak workplace linkages (Cooney and Long 2010) (see Allais [in press] for a discussion of why this is the case).

Besides the downward spiral of specifications into ever tighter and narrower specific outcomes, assessment criteria and range statements, etc., there was an upward spiral of specifications into assessment, moderation and verification specifications – which could only be conducted by individuals assessed and registered against the assessment, moderation and verification unit standards.

The problem with the quality assurance model

The quality assurance regime set up through the NQF has proved to be complex and costly and ultimately did not demonstrate its capacity to improve or maintain quality. A key problem is the decentralised assessment model and, related to this, too much reliance on bureaucratic accreditation processes.

The NQF model promised the possibility of national qualifications being awarded on the basis of decentralised assessment. The idea was that accreditation

would provide evidence that education institutions were equipped to teach and that the training and registration of assessors, moderated and verified accordingly, would ensure that assessment would be of an appropriate standard.

Decentralised, institution-based assessment can only work when education institutions are strong and there is an internalised and shared sense of standards amongst teachers and trainers. The lack of these factors in the school system is evidenced by the collapse of OBE, as well as the extreme unreliability of continuous assessment (Van den Berg and Shepard 2009). These factors are even less likely to be present in the occupational training, skills development, community development and adult education sectors, which are weaker and far more diverse. The only place where decentralised assessment is really viable in South Africa is higher education, which has specific checks and balances, and of course even within higher education there are problems, such as when some institutions and/or disciplines feel that others' standards are inadequate.

Accrediting a large number of providers became an important part of the system. There are serious practical problems with a quality assurance system that over-emphasises accreditation, particularly in a system with a large number of small providers. Even for a highly resourced quality assurance body staffed with skilled professionals, making substantive judgments about the quality of a large number of educational institutions is incredibly time consuming. Spending one week visiting an institution would probably be insufficient to make such a judgement, depending on its size and range of programmes.

Many SETAs deal with *hundreds* of providers applying for accreditation (Marock 2011). What made the system even more complex is that providers were supposed to be accredited for each learning programme against each qualification and/or unit standard. The logical response from SETAs is to introduce a paperwork-heavy system, which demands large amounts of information from providers. The system is therefore unable to substantively establish the quality of a provider, but at the same time makes the work of providers (particularly small ones) very difficult. Accreditation systems may have some role to play in an education system, but they are costly, time consuming and ultimately ineffective as indicators of quality in the absence of more traditional quality measures such as prescribed curricula and centrally set assessments (outside of the university system).

Reviewing the NQF: 'NQF 1.2'

Problems with the first version of the South African NQF were widely recognised. Between 2000 and 2008, a period referred to here as 'NQF 1.2', the NQF faced an official review that was widely commented on and contested (Departments of Education and Labour 2002, Departments of Education and Labour 2003,

Departments of Education and Labour 2007, Allais 2007, Lugg 2007).

In this period SAQA mainly continued to develop the NQF according to its original design. 'Standards' were 'generated' and qualifications and unit standards were registered on the framework. Because the learnership system was premised on the new qualifications based on unit standards, every attempt to develop a learnership had to start with the development of unit standards and new qualifications. This quickly became a major source of funding for the work of standards generating bodies, as well as a major source of work for consultants.

But some changes to the original design of the NQF were also implemented during the NQF 1.2 period. In contradiction to its earlier deadlines, SAQA once again postponed the period for the registration of 'interim' qualifications to June 2006 (SAQA 2004). In 2005, SAQA started referring to 'provider' qualifications instead of 'interim' qualifications, suggesting a shift in how these qualifications were conceptualised and perhaps signalling an acceptance that they become a permanent feature of the NQF (SAQA 2005a). A major new 'provider' qualification was developed and registered on the NQF – the National Senior Certificate, one of the most important qualifications in South Africa. As a commentary on the NQF published by SAQA admits, this qualification in many ways operates without reference to the NQF – with no regard to the national standards bodies and standards generating bodies of SAQA (French 2009). It is based on curricula developed by the Department of Education and not on learning outcomes, and is assessed through a national examination system.

Similarly, changes occurred in the further education and training (FET) colleges: the Department of Labour announced the end of the apprenticeship system, which by implication signalled the end of the qualifications offered in FET colleges (the 'Nated' or 'N' courses, which were designed as the theoretical component of the apprenticeship system).[3] In response the then Department of Education designed a new FET colleges qualification, known as the National Certificate Vocational, which also has a curriculum and an external examination system.

In July 2004 the Ministry of Education released a framework for qualifications in higher education (Ministry of Education 2004). This document introduced a number of changes to the NQF, including that the number of levels of the NQF would be changed from eight to ten, that the HEQC would be the only quality assurance body to operate in higher education, and in addition, that it would assume the function of standards setting. This was a dramatic shift from the original conception of the NQF. The framework of qualifications proposed was

3 A period was set for phasing the 'N' qualifications out, but this in fact never happened, and they, along with the apprenticeship system, are still going, and in fact currently being revitalised.

a register of qualification *types*,[4] which is also very different to that envisaged by the original NQF 1.0.

SAQA started implementing some changes to its systems and structures during this time, such as disbanding the national standards bodies (SAQA 2005b). The number of levels of the NQF was officially increased from eight to ten (SAQA 2006).

The 'NQF 2.0': Three linked frameworks

Late in 2008 a set of acts were passed to create substantial changes to the NQF (Republic of South Africa 2008a, 2008b, 2008c). The NQF was split into three linked frameworks, and three quality councils were created, one for each framework: Umalusi, the HEQC and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). This signified a dramatic policy shift, and the introduction of what is called 'NQF 2.0' in this chapter. SAQA now has the substantially reduced role of coordinating developments between the three quality councils, which now oversee three separate qualifications frameworks (Heitmann and Mummenthey 2009).

The power of SAQA to 'set' standards was removed, and was instead located in the three councils, each of which seems set on operating in ways that are not only substantially different from SAQA's outcomes-based qualifications, but also different from each other. Umalusi, in general and further education and training, works predominantly with qualifications that are broadly specified in terms of numbers and types of subjects, and are accompanied by a curriculum. It monitors the work of assessment bodies, which set and administer external examinations. It sees 'standards' as a combined result of the quality of the curriculum, the quality and standards of the examinations used to test learners on the curriculum, and the quality of the educational institutions offering the curriculum (Umalusi 2007). Under the HEQC, higher education institutions will continue to issue their own qualifications and design their own curricula, possibly against broad competency statements. They will be subject to emerging and still contested quality assurance procedures, but retain their autonomy. Both these bodies are not new bodies, but are built on existing institutions that have reputations as well as established relationships, modes of operation and systems. In other words, in these two areas, the new NQF by and large seems to have moved more to a model that describes what *exists*, as opposed to a model that tries to propose what *should exist*.

4 Qualification types refer to, for example, 'Advanced diploma' or 'Bachelors degree'. The actual qualifications awarded would be linked to the awarding institution, based on their prescriptions for subject choices, and their curriculum and assessment policies.

The QCTO was initially created as a structure under the Minister of Labour. After changes in cabinet in 2009, this council was moved to a newly created Department for Higher Education and Training (DHET).

The establishment of the QCTO creates the basis for a separate set of 'trades and occupational' qualifications. What is not yet clear from the initial documents that are publicly available is the qualification and quality assurance model, which the QCTO will implement. It remains to be seen whether or not a substantially new policy direction will emerge, or whether the new QCTO, laden with associated experts and consultants in 'standards-setting' and 'quality assurance', will drive a reformed version of the same flawed model. What does seem to be emerging is a model in which the state agency (in this case the QCTO) has legislative and oversight responsibility, but will contract out many functions to accredited entities outside the state. In the absence of strong capacity to manage and evaluate these contracts, the risk is that a heavy focus on accreditation is maintained without increasing the operational responsiveness and effectiveness of the system.

'NQF 1.0' continues for vocational education and skills training

Schools have not been affected by the problems of the qualifications and quality assurance regime (although the repeated attempts to develop quality assurance and inspection systems for schools have had their own share of problems, and the problems with the curriculum have already been mentioned). In higher education, quality assurance has been contested and criticised, but did not get caught in the complicated systems of the NQF 1.0. Furthermore, as discussed above, neither of these sectors (with a few exceptions) used the new qualifications generated by standards generating bodies. However, for learnerships and other forms of workplace-based training, the new outcomes-based qualifications registered on the NQF were the only qualifications officially available. Private providers and community-based providers, including organisations that wanted to do youth development work, were forced to deal with NQF 1.0. FET colleges had the worst of it, as they worked within the Department of Education systems, with its qualifications and examinations, but also, in so far as they offered learnerships and skills programmes, they were obliged to deal with various SETAs and the prescribed accreditation and decentralised assessment processes.

The end result was an elaborate system of qualifications development and quality assurance, based on the development of outcomes-based qualifications and unit standards, and the accreditation of providers against outcomes-based qualifications and unit standards. However, this immensely complex system operated only for the small, disparate and mainly weak 'system' of provision

for workplace-based training, occupational training, continuing professional development, community development, adult education, etc. Instead of a public policy focused on building a coherent system that strengthened the capacity of state providers and supported the capacity of private and community-based providers, the policy focus was on regulating weak provision through a complex web of quality assurance mechanisms.

In these sectors of the education and training system, where provision is diverse, ranging from the public FET colleges to large private distance-education providers and individuals offering packages to workplaces or enterprise-specific training centres, it is much harder to locate anything like a 'community' or 'professional group'. Consequently the standards as written down then came to have a much larger force, and much more weight was accorded to them. In South Africa this diverse and heterogeneous group of organisations obviously has never had a single qualifications system. The trade test system could perhaps be seen as the strongest centre of gravity, but this accounts for only a fraction of all vocational education. Perhaps this made providers of these areas of education and training particularly vulnerable to the problems of the NQF – particularly when funding was substantially linked to the adoption of the new qualifications, and in many instances was also linked to accreditation by one of the new quality assurance bodies, which was often also based on the use of the new qualifications. (Funding here includes getting back workplace levies, getting funding through official government channels such as the National Skills Fund or from the SETAs, but also getting funding from independent donors, even international donors, who wanted to comply with what was perceived to be the official qualifications and quality assurance system.)

There are many other unresolved issues and ongoing problems. A point of contention is the separation of 'vocational' education (largely under Umalusi) and 'occupational' education under the QCTO. Another potential problem is that if very different qualifications and quality assurance models are developed for the three frameworks, the gulf between occupational and other qualifications may increase, and the dream of an integrated system will be more elusive than ever. It is hoped that moving the trades and occupational framework to the DHET can bring two of these councils closer together, but this will take more than functioning in a common ministry: it needs the qualifications and quality assurance models to be rethought.

Another important issue that must be addressed is which education, training and development programmes *need* to lead to qualifications. One of the reasons for the introduction of the NQF was to foster the recognition of prior learning, and the NQF was designed to encompass *all* learning in all sectors at all levels. Many programmes that require considerable flexibility to address the specific needs of employers or communities have been forced

into a straitjacket through the unit standard system (Marock 2011). This makes the work of providers more difficult, and also makes it less likely that they will meet the needs of their clients and communities. The priority should be to open up the quality assurance and qualifications system, recognising that not all learning and education has to lead to qualifications or part qualifications. This should be accompanied by strengthening external assessment and centralised curriculum systems for programmes leading to national qualifications.

It's not over yet

It is possible that we will see more changes to NQF 2.0, creating version 2.1, or even more substantial changes, which could produce an NQF 3.0. A recently released Green Paper (DHET 2012) provides a set of options for changes, some of which would entail substantial simplification of the model. There is a strong suggestion in the Green Paper that the unit standards-based model be abandoned entirely, and, which is very welcome, a pronouncement that no provider should be forced to use unit standards. There are also proposals for tightening of quality assurance of national qualifications through centralised assessment, and loosening quality assurance of education and training which does not necessarily lead to a qualification, enabling providers to offer programmes without having to be accredited, and without registered assessors and moderators. Of the various options for improving the NQF, one suggests doing away with levels on the NQF, and simply creating a clear relationship between the main national qualifications on offer – in other words, which qualification can lead to which other qualification. If these changes are accepted, it will be far easier for community-based organisations to develop responsive programmes, including training programmes, for young people. However, there are powerful stakeholders who have vested interest in the current systems, and it remains to be seen how much change the Department will be able to achieve. The Green Paper also suggests a substantial expansion of FET colleges and the building of new institutions for adult education, both of which would dramatically increase the educational options available to out-of-school and unemployed youth. However, the Green Paper is weak on practicalities, and it remains to be seen how this is going to be put into action.

Even if problems with quality assurance and qualifications policy are resolved in the best possible manner, many problems will remain for young people who are not in employment, education or training. Policy-makers hope that education can solve unemployment and many other socio-economic problems through vocational education reform, but education cannot compensate for society or address *all* of society's needs. Employers in industry also often

have unrealistic expectations, particularly in terms of expecting educational programmes to produce completely 'workplace-ready' graduates who have good communication skills, can read and write well, can work in teams, take initiative, lead, follow, and at the same time have high levels of technical expertise. Nonetheless, improving the nature and quality of vocational education, skills training, community development and adult education programmes will contribute to improving the situation of the young people who are currently not in education, training or work. This will be difficult to do without substantially changing the qualifications and quality assurance model that has been used to date in these parts of the education system.

THE IMPACT OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Chapter 2

THE CHALLENGES UNEMPLOYMENT IMPOSES ON YOUTH

Cecil Mlatsheni

Introduction

The current generation of youth in South Africa have arguably the greatest opportunities of any past generation; however, they are also confronted by many challenges. Often when discussing the youth unemployment issue the tendency, albeit inadvertently, is to depersonalise the topic. Discussion usually encompasses what the statistics are, followed by general policy recommendations. This seems then a useful platform to highlight the challenges youth face as a result of unemployment.

In a well-functioning society, youth should be afforded the opportunity to be youth. The rights of young people are well articulated elsewhere, but a good measure of society's performance is in the first instance a successful transition to adulthood. For this to happen youth must of course remain alive until adulthood (which is not a given in some societies), make a decent livelihood as a young person (very much dependent on schooling) and later form and support a family. So many of these outcomes depend, firstly, on labour-market conditions facing the parents or guardians raising these young people and, secondly, on the labour-market conditions faced by young people when they enter the labour market.

Young South Africans face a number of societal challenges, with issues of causality and interrelationships manifesting in complex ways. These include the threats of compromised health (both physical and mental), teen pregnancy, gangsterism and crime. Furthermore, once youth have left school they face the challenge of labour-market entry. Among the demand-side constraints, the issue of aggregate demand (job availability) is the chief constraint, followed by the nature of labour demand (the types of jobs available). On the supply side,

youth labour-market success is influenced by capabilities such as education levels, social capital and 'soft skills'. Failure in the labour market may also be caused by premature entry and thus insufficient schooling. The consequences of an unsuccessful transition from schooling to work may lead to a long duration of unemployment, which in turn may cause depression.

This chapter will provide a concise view of the challenges facing youth in the labour market, the concepts that have to be considered when dealing with the problem of youth unemployment, and the opportunities that do exist for youth who are willing to take them up.

Demand-side factors that influence labour-market success

A major influence on youth employment is the extent of job availability, while another related influence is the nature of that employment. Economic conditions and the structure of the labour market have an important bearing on the probability of securing employment. In this regard this section discusses the role of aggregate demand together with the nature of labour demand, the effects of relative wages and the size of the youth cohort.

Chief among the macroeconomic determinants of youth unemployment is aggregate demand (O'Higgins 2001). When an economy is in a slump or is not growing at a sufficiently fast pace, employment creation tends to be dampened. Under such circumstances any attempts to increase the extent of youth labour- market preparedness and employability would fail to increase overall youth employment significantly in the short term. Unemployment under such circumstances would best be termed cyclical. One could argue that inadequate aggregate demand is as much an obstacle to adult employment as it is to youth employment because a fall in aggregate demand would lead to a general increase in the number of lay-offs and a fall in the hiring of new individuals. However, to the extent that the nature of the employer–employee relationship is different for youth and adults, the influence of aggregate demand on employment would be different for youth and adults. The opportunity cost to employers of firing youth is lower than that of firing adults, partly because young people are less likely to be unionised or protected by legislation (Rees 1986) and past investment in them by the employer is likely to have been less.

The nature of labour demand is another factor that should be considered. In South Africa, for example, the role of the level of aggregate demand in employment outcomes is well appreciated (there has been a fair deal of speculation about the rate of GDP growth that would lead to a significant reduction in unemployment). However, the nature of unemployment in South Africa is widely considered to be structural for the most part, with the notable feature of a mismatch between the skills endowments of the majority of the

labour force and the nature of skills demanded by employers (Bhorat and Hodge 1999, Kraak 2003). It follows then that the higher the skills level of the labour force, the greater the likelihood of increased labour demand, and the greater the potential of multiplying the effects of that increase in labour demand through increased aggregate demand, holding other influences constant.

Theoretically, youth wages relative to adult wages can also influence youth employment outcomes. Higher youth wages ought to provide less incentive to employ youth relative to adults if the two groups are close substitutes in production, that is, if the effects of experience and skill are not high. Saget (2001) found in a study of developing countries that minimum-wage legislation (which tends to narrow the gap between youth and adult wages) generally had little effect on employment. There was, however, great variation between countries.

In sum, combating youth unemployment does not just depend on producing a highly skilled labour force, but also depends on the extent of employment availability and the nature of the available jobs.

Supply-side factors that influence labour-market success

General health

In a study of youth in Cape Town, Lam *et al.* (2007) found that youth who report fair to poor health as opposed to good health have significantly lower probability of being employed. Good health is as important to successful transition to adulthood as any other desirable objective. It underpins not only the ability of young people to secure employment, but impacts on their ability to fulfil their goals in general. However, physical changes in the transition to adulthood are accompanied not only by opportunities, but also by risks that can affect health (both physical and mental) significantly.

Transition to healthy adulthood depends very much on the context in which it is happening (Steinberg and Morris 2001), that is the relationship between young people and their parents, family, peers, teachers, significant others and communities. Furthermore, cultural norms pertaining to gender also have a bearing on the choices that youth make, which affect their health. Differential treatment by gender exists from birth in most societies, but becomes starker in the teen years (World Bank 2007). With respect to physical health first, young women, in a sense, often lead sheltered lives and seldom confront some of the common threats to the health of young men, such as work dangers, violence and military conflict. However, young women are at risk of early pregnancy and childbearing, as well as contracting HIV/Aids (common to both genders) and addiction to tobacco and alcohol.

The teen years mark a period of increasing responsibility for one's own health. However, they also mark a potentially perilous period of experimentation and identity formation. A young teen growing up in a financially challenged home in one of South Africa's townships, for example, would be particularly at risk. Lack of positive role models and the absence of a certain outlook for the future can create room for negative influences. Experimentation with tobacco and alcohol can result in long-lasting addiction that impacts negatively on adult health. Furthermore, experimenting with drugs and alcohol can impact on the mortality of teens. Alcohol in particular is found to be a danger regardless of age. In a study by Peden *et al*. (2000), for example, 61 per cent of patients admitted to trauma units of South African hospitals were under the influence of alcohol, including 74 per cent of violence cases, 54 per cent of traffic accidents, and 30 per cent of trauma from other accidents.

The risks of gang membership and criminal activity

Gang involvement and criminal activity is a reality across many countries. It jeopardises young people's prospects of successful labour-market outcomes while often at the same time being the result of unsuccessful attempts at finding sustainable employment. Youth who are marginalised and grow up in environments of poverty are at risk of forming or joining gangs in order to obtain a sense of identity, status and a sense of belonging. However, the dynamics of gang membership are not straightforward, as youth are sometimes coerced into joining gangs under the threat of physical injury. Others come from relatively secure homes (in a financial sense), but join gangs to rebel against authority. Gang membership provides others with an increased sense of self-esteem, control, competence or optimism and can reduce symptoms of depression (discussed below) and anxiety (Levine 1999, Maclure and Sotelo 2004). Gang membership can also provide an income and create opportunities denied to members by prevailing social structures.

Global evidence on the risk factors for gang involvement suggests that in the first instance community characteristics play an important role. The risks are increased in communities where there is weak social integration, violence and drugs (World Bank 2007). Family characteristics such as poverty, poor parental supervision or parental absence also increase the risks of gang involvement. Depression, poor commitment to school, illicit drug use and peer pressure are also risk factors.

Youth who are involved in gangs are likely to be missing out on vital human-capital acquisition, a factor that will disadvantage them once they enter the labour market in earnest. Intervention is therefore necessary to discourage young people from joining gangs. Most interventions aim to criminalise and suppress gangs, but these methods tend to be least effective. Successful

intervention requires addressing the underlying factors of marginalisation, discrimination, lack of opportunities and hopelessness that face many young people (Shaw 2001).

Discouragement from the labour market

Discouragement is a common feature in the South African environment of mass unemployment and typically long periods of unemployment. What is often overlooked is that this discouragement can be self-sustaining. Depression can result directly from negative labour-market experience, as evidenced below. Once depression sets in, the ability of a young person to function can be severely hampered. Although detailed studies on this topic have not been conducted in South Africa as yet, there is abundant international evidence of the link between unemployment and depression.

Hammarstrom and Janlert (1997) found that amongst Swedish youth, unemployment correlated positively with changes in nervous complaints and depressive symptoms, even after controlling for initial psychological health and background factors. In a study of Australian youth, Morrell *et al.* (1998) found a strong association between youth unemployment and depression, loss of confidence and even suicide. These findings are echoed by Dooley *et al.* (2000) who found that amongst American youth, changes from what the respondents regard as adequate employment to what they regard as inadequate employment, as well as from employment to unemployment, resulted in significant increases in depression. As discussed earlier, lack of self-esteem and the need to feel a sense of control and competence encourages criminal activity and gang association. The way to break this vicious cycle is by engaging unoccupied youth in activities such as training, community projects and peace education (World Bank 2007).

The allure of money and teen pregnancy

The allure of money can in some instances lead teenage girls to early sexual activity. Literature suggests, however, that the adolescents who find themselves in this position are usually influenced by other socio-economic factors. Hallman and Diers (2004), in a study of South African adolescents in KwaZulu-Natal, found that social isolation was associated with higher risk of early sexual activity and that among girls there was a risk of economically motivated sexual encounters. With this comes the risk of teen pregnancy and all the challenges that accompany it.

Grant and Hallman (2006), in a study on KwaZulu-Natal schoolgirl pregnancy, found that prior school performance – defined as instances of grade repetition or non-pregnancy-related temporary withdrawals from school – was

strongly associated with a young woman's likelihood of becoming pregnant while enrolled in school, dropping out of school if she becomes pregnant, and not returning to school following a pregnancy-related dropout. Varga (2003) found that traits that reinforce poor sexual-negotiation dynamics and behavioural double standards within South African society placed adolescents at risk of early pregnancy.

These findings paint a rather gloomy picture. However, a useful lesson that prevails from this literature is that the risk of isolation and depression has to be addressed early and that timely intervention can help reduce teen sexual activity and pregnancy. The key is that the school environment should be used to identify girls who are at risk. Furthermore, when pregnancy has occurred, the availability of support structures that can share childcare responsibilities within the home play an important role in ensuring that teen mothers return to school (Grant and Hallman 2006).

Education

Global evidence confirms that generally the higher the level of educational attainment of youth, the better their probability of finding employment (World Bank 2007). In the case of South Africa the strongest effects are observed post-matric. However, even youth who have completed secondary schooling do not necessarily perform well in terms of finding employment. This weak outcome should send a signal to youth that they must aim to acquire as much education as possible in order to improve their chances of finding decent employment. Furthermore, education plays an important role not just in finding employment, but also in the ability to create employment.

The 2006 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor reports that in South Africa the potential of tertiary-educated adults to create employment is two and a half times greater than those who only completed secondary education, and eleven times greater than those who have not completed secondary education. However, many youth quit studying and enter the labour market prematurely for various reasons. This premature labour-market entry is a cause for concern, especially given that unemployment plagues even youth with post-secondary school (tertiary) qualifications. These findings suggest that there is a problem with youth work-readiness upon entering the labour market and that close attention needs to be paid to education and training policies in order to address this problem. The rate of completion of secondary schooling is a cause for concern, so are the grades achieved in matric, and also the limited success achieved by training initiatives (Mlatsheni and Leibbrandt 2011).

In the South African context, many youth see the value of education, but are faced with limited resources to pursue post-secondary schooling qualifications. Even those individuals who are able find ways of financing further education

may opt for earlier entry into the labour market, and thus enter a low-paying, mediocre job because of pressures to supplement family income, particularly when there are younger siblings in need of support.

This premature labour-market entry is a serious challenge for youth in many developing countries (ILO 2006). Working while at school can be beneficial when done in moderation and is to be distinguished from premature labour market entry, which is quitting school in order to look for work. Working while at school can foster such positive traits as dependability, self-confidence, punctuality, an increased understanding of consumer and money matters, and can generally ease the transition from school to work (Meyer and Wise 1982). It may also help finance secondary and tertiary education. However, the danger with working while at school is that if it is not carefully managed, it can lead to youth prematurely dropping out of school. In the South African context, premature exit out of schooling does not happen on a large scale, but failure to complete secondary schooling satisfactorily (with good grades for example) and to advance to further studies is widespread. This failure affects later productivity, while the lost earnings and lack of skill accumulation may make it difficult to escape poverty. The benefits of schooling are recognised worldwide, as international evidence suggests that across 61 developing countries the average return per year of schooling is 7.3 per cent for men and 9.8 per cent for women (World Bank 2007).

Policy considerations

The vulnerability of youth to the challenges mentioned above – challenges that are in large part either brought about or exacerbated by unemployment – points to a need for a holistic approach to youth development. Indeed, in the face of a scarcity of jobs one major policy should be to ensure that youth do not lose touch with the labour market. Unemployment duration in the region of three years is not an uncommon feature amongst many of the unemployed youth. Such a long duration in unemployment results in discouragement, depression and the susceptibility to delinquent behaviour. It is perhaps useful to consider youth by degree of vulnerability, where youth who are neither studying nor employed should be regarded as the most vulnerable and in most need of assistance. Young people should be encouraged to remain active either through further studies or through labour-market interventions that encourage interaction with potential employers. With respect to the latter, the imminent youth wage subsidy is a measure that, if successful, would achieve this contact with employers.

Without delving into a discussion of whether the youth wage subsidy is the most effective way to proceed in dealing with youth unemployment, it

is certainly apparent that such an intervention would alleviate the plight of unemployed youth. For many unemployed youth, job search is costly as it often involves using public transportation to get to areas of potential employment. The likelihood of actively searching for a job depends on both the cost of searching and the probability of finding a job. A youth wage subsidy should increase the probability of youth employment as relatively more employers would be willing to hire given the reduced cost of doing so. It is important though that a youth wage subsidy incorporate a training clause. Employers should be required to impart skills to the youth they hire through the subsidy scheme as there is the risk that employers would hire youth and relegate them to menial tasks that offer no potential for growth.

Furthermore, there is no denying that special focus must be given to school-level interventions. It is understandable that youth who have recently left school may not immediately possess the skills that are in demand in the labour market, and for this reason post-schooling studies should be encouraged. However, it is worrying that when school-leavers pursue post-schooling studies many of them are ill-equipped to cope with the demands of the curricula of tertiary institutions. The logical conclusion is that the quality of school-level learning has to be improved, and research by educationalists indicates that this should begin at primary school. Learners who have not had a solid foundation at the primary level are likely to struggle through high school and beyond. Furthermore, career guidance at school should be monitored as it is evident that learners sometimes receive poor advice and thus shut the doors to possible career opportunities even before they leave school.

In addition, further education and training (FET) colleges are arguably the most important providers of intermediate-level technical and vocational skills. However, they are in the first instance reported to be under-resourced and often not situated where they are most needed. Furthermore, they have traditionally offered little career guidance to students, and learners sometimes leave with the same level of qualification they arrived with. FET colleges have a poor image with employers and therefore only a minority of their graduates, aggregated across all fields, finds employment. Most of this employment is in engineering and commerce. However, there are areas that achieve excellent results. The majority of graduates in service occupations such as cookery, hairdressing and hospitality finds employment. The reason for this is that the skills they acquire very closely match labour demand. However, research by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) reports that technical skills acquisition has declined since the introduction of the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) system and that apprenticeships have also declined because employers mistakenly believe that they have been replaced by learnerships. The decline in apprenticeships impacts on youth

disproportionately, because youth make up the bulk of the unemployed and unskilled. Furthermore, learnerships are more suited to workers employed in the formal economy, whereas the most vulnerable youth are either unemployed or engaged in survivalist micro-enterprises. In addition, the learnership contract requires a willing employer, but many employers are discouraged by the heavy administrative burden involved in the process. This is something that deserves more emphasis in the *Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training*.

South African policy-makers have, in the course of the past decade or so, attempted to tackle the youth unemployment issue through a number of interventions. Currently, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) is trying to ensure coordination across interventions that aim to address youth unemployment and foster youth development. The need for such coordination cannot be overemphasised, as it will result in greater impact. Coordination of youth development and employment policies should in the first instance be present amongst government departments so that a centrally located inventory exists of interventions across provinces. Haphazard provincial introduction of youth interventions makes it difficult to share learning and gain a broader picture of achievements. Ensuring such coordination, however, is not a costless exercise. The NYDA is a readily identifiable vehicle for heading up such a policy, but currently it is under-resourced for such an undertaking. Emphasis should be placed on building capacity that will allow the NYDA to offer guidance on how stakeholders can best intervene in the youth-development sphere. Hands-on programme implementation by the NYDA should however continue, as this enables the organisation to keep in touch with what the practical needs of young people are.

Past interventions include a learnership programme that aimed to provide youth with theoretical training in identified areas through accredited training service providers. In addition, youth would be placed in a structured workplace in order to gain experience. The National Youth Service Programme (NYSP) is another initiative that aims to increase the quality and scope of government service delivery by harnessing the potential of young people. Youth are trained in a technical skill (e.g. in an HIV/Aids-related field) and then given an opportunity to apply and reinforce the learning by doing community service. Although the goals of the NYSP are well articulated, competition for funds among programmes has resulted in a diversion of funds from the NYDA's NYSP into the rural youth service corps run by the Department of Rural Development. Whether this is an overall improvement in the effectiveness of fund usage is not certain as, besides the fact that the rural programme has some 7 000 recruits, little is known about it at this stage. The NYSP has always struggled with linking young people to exit opportunities, and thus struggles to expand its offering to more than approximately 20 000 to 30 000 young

people a year. These developments suggest that increased allocation of funds towards youth development needs to be a serious consideration.

As discussed above, the urban environment is characterised by fragmentation, isolation, violence and a struggle for survival. In order to lessen the impact of these factors, from a labour-market perspective, youth advisory centres (YACs) have been set up where youth can access a combination of employment-related skills and resources. These centres are supposed to promote contact, information and counselling services to young people. However, there needs to be monitoring of YACs to determine whether they are offering their services in the prescribed manner. From a social perspective, a promising intervention comes in the form of the loveLife organisation, which was started by the South African government and private funders in 1999. The focus of loveLife is on HIV/Aids education and prevention as well as sex education. An intervention of this kind has a direct bearing on challenges to health posed by unemployment. Youth who are unemployed and thus discouraged are at risk of making decisions that could place their health in jeopardy. The loveLife programmes aim to educate youth in order to empower them and avoid risky behaviour, including teen pregnancy and substance abuse.

Public-works programmes are also in place and aim to be a short-term mechanism to increase employability, provide work experience and create value chains through entrepreneurship. These programmes have tended to focus on rural areas, using task-based payment systems. The focus on rural areas is appropriate for South Africa, because of the absence of the rural agriculture safety net that is present in many other African countries. Furthermore, public-works programmes work well in rural areas, but there may be difficulty in applying the same principles in urban areas. The main problem in urban areas is that there tends to be pressure exerted on the wage-setting process and a demand that project workers receive formal-sector wage rates. Trade unions oppose task-based payment, especially on long-term projects, and want the government to be the employer, providing its normal benefits package and conditions of employment.

In assisting young people to overcome the challenges discussed above, policy-makers also face conceptual challenges of their own. There are a number of concepts that have to be considered. Youth are not a homogenous group. Even within a single country young people who are between the ages of 16 and 19 exhibit differentiated labour-market performance when compared to young people who are between 20 and 24. Policy-makers have to consider carefully where to target interventions. Furthermore, cross-country comparisons are made difficult by the fact that there is huge variation across countries. This variation may be found in the definition of youth, the size of the informal sector as compared to the formal sector, the prominence of the agricultural

sector, as well as the rural–urban distinction. Policy-makers can, however, take heart from the fact that within the context of the current climate of uncertainty, no country can claim to have the recipe for solving the problem of high youth unemployment. The stage is set to chart innovative ways to at least mitigate the negative effects of unemployment on youth, if not eliminate the problem completely.

Chapter 3

THE CHALLENGE OF YOUTH-TO-WORK TRANSITIONS: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Tia Linda Zuze

Introduction

This chapter provides insights into global responses to youth unemployment with the aim of providing policy direction for South African planners in this critical area. Although the length of formal schooling can vary from country to country, the term 'young adults' generally refers to young people aged between 15 and 24.[5] Definitions of youth-to-work transitions range from the general to the specific. Perhaps the most comprehensive classification includes young adults who are neither working nor studying. Other definitions tend to focus on specific areas such as the nature of the labour market for young people and the quality of jobs available to them.

The effects of educational qualifications on the ability to access employment are universally recognised (Bradley and Nguyen 2004, Keswell and Poswell 2004, OECD 2008, Schultz 2003, World Bank 2006). It is also known that young adults are over-represented in the unemployment pool. In developing countries the size of the youth population continues to grow, which means more and more young people will be searching for work in the future. In 2010, 42 per cent of the population in sub-Saharan Africa was under the age of 15 years. Projections to 2030 indicate that the percentage of young adults in this

5 South Africa's National Youth Policy defines young adults as individuals aged between 14 and 35. The African Youth Charter refers to youth as people who are between 15 and 35 years of age.

region will remain the largest in the world (Economic Commission for Africa 2011). South Africa is no exception to this trend. Although population growth is below projections for the rest of Africa, a third of the population is under the age of 15 (World Bank 2011).

Pressure of the youth cohort on the labour market is compounded by a declining interest in supporting family businesses and local agriculture. Youth in poor countries are showing a preference for what they perceive to be more lucrative labour-market opportunities in the formal and informal sectors (Lloyd 2005). To add to the complexity of the situation, the effect of remaining out of employment for an extended period seems to reduce the likelihood of securing well-paid employment at a later stage. Job opportunities for young adults are particularly sensitive to business cycles because of their relative lack of experience. During economic downturns, accessing the labour force becomes even more difficult. Put together, this implies that the prospects for poorly educated young adults with no work experience are increasingly precarious.

The extent of the youth unemployment problem is highly dependent on the local setting. The pace of a country's economic development is a key factor in determining the type of policies that can be considered. For this reason, this chapter draws on evidence from as many relevant sources as possible. In a very real sense, policy innovations for South Africa require broad reflection. In terms of its macro-economic outlook South Africa displays the traits of a middle-income economy, but many of the country's developmental indicators (in particular those related to education and poverty) more closely resemble developing economies.

This chapter presents an overview of international trends in labour market transitions to illustrate the scope of youth activity. The policy review begins with a summary of past and present practices in South Africa. This is followed by an assessment of policy alternatives in different geographical locations. Because of the particular importance of context in describing transitions from school to work life, the assessment is arranged separately for developed and developing countries. Essentially the interventions described can be grouped into three broad categories. The first refers to policies and programmes that promote on-the-job training either during or after formal schooling. The second category represents public policy interventions that improve market conditions for young employees.[6] The final cluster (and possibly the least explored) covers policies that create opportunities for young entrepreneurs (Betcherman *et al*. 2007). The chapter concludes with a discussion of whether or not the reviewed policies could realistically find a place in the South African policy toolbox.

6 This category is sometimes referred to as active labour-market policies.

International trends in labour-market transitions

Trends in industrialised countries

It has been suggested that where a country's population is relatively young (i.e. when youth occupy a large share of the national population), an increase in unemployment amongst youth is almost inevitable (Betcherman *et al.* 2007). Evidence from Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries between 1960 and 2004 found that no systematic pattern existed between the size of the youth cohort and their access to the job market (World Bank 2006). What seemed to have the most consistent impact on youth employment were fluctuations in business cycles with youth experiencing greater hardships during periods of economic decline. The time spent by the youth finding a permanent job after leaving school varies considerably among industrialised countries. In a 2008 survey of job-searching behaviour in a five-year period, finding a permanent job took less than two years in the United States, the United Kingdom, Korea and Ireland. In Italy, Greece and Germany at least three years were spent in search of a permanent job (OECD 2008).

The international literature suggests that an essential ingredient in youth labour-market participation is the length of time that young adults remain out of work. In other words, the longer the period spent outside the labour market, the weaker the chances of accessing stable, paid employment (Bradley and Nguyen 2004). In eight of the thirteen countries surveyed by the OECD in their 2008 employment outlook, the most vulnerable group of young adults were those who were neither in employment nor attending school. This group was also the most likely to lapse into spells of unemployment throughout their working life. There are of course additional consequences of failed youth transitions related to social and psychological setbacks, such as substance abuse, vagrancy and criminal activity (Hammarström 1994, Moore 2003, *The Economist* 2009).

Training in less-developed countries

We have already indicated that the size of the youth cohort is the largest in the developing world and is set to continue growing in sub-Saharan Africa (Garcia and Fares 2008b). Unlike industrialised countries, unemployed youth in developing countries who are out of work have completed fewer years of schooling than their counterparts in developed countries. Table 1 shows the enrolment rates for 15- to 24-year-olds in a selection of developing countries including South Africa. It is worth pointing out that the data are sourced from surveys conducted in different years. Nonetheless, the table provides a useful overview of participation in formal schooling. Up to age 17, South Africa's

enrolment rate of 90 per cent is among the highest in the group. Thereafter there is a dramatic shift in enrolment among the older cohort, which is to be expected given the limited access to tertiary education. About 40 per cent of South African youth aged between 18 and 24 were enrolled in an educational institution in 2000. This estimate exceeds most Latin American and Asian countries and greatly surpasses the figures for African countries.

Table 1: Enrolment rates in a selection of developing countries

Country	Survey year	12- to 14-year-olds (%)	15- to 17-year-olds (%)	18- to 24-year-olds (%)
Angola	1999	55	45	18
Argentina	2001	97	86	46
Brazil	2001	95	81	34
Cambodia	2004	88	61	15
Cameroon	2001	83	63	28
Chile	2003	98	91	40
Colombia	2000	85	66	27
Egypt	1998	84	69	26
India	2000	71	51	16
Kenya	1997	92	77	22
Lesotho	2002	86	60	19
Malawi	1997	90	80	33
Mozambique	1996	58	37	10
Namibia	1993	94	84	40
Nigeria	2003	64	58	36
Panama	2003	92	76	35
Paraguay	2001	87	64	28
Peru	2002	94	73	29
South Africa	2000	96	90	43
Swaziland	2000	90	76	25
Tanzania	2000	78	49	9
Uganda	2002	92	72	20
Zambia	2002	84	69	24

Source: World Bank (2006:272)

The higher drop-out rates in developing countries like South Africa are a result of a host of factors. Part of the blame lies in information failures that may distort views about the value of schooling. For many poor households, the long-run gain of schooling may be overshadowed by the immediate need for additional labour in the home or in a family business (Mlatsheni and Rospabé

2002). Low levels of education among parents, poor quality schooling and inaccessible schooling facilities also contribute to high drop-out rates (Bergeson 2006, Hanushek *et al*. 2006, Lee and Bowen 2006). This severe lack of skills makes it much more difficult for developing-country youth to find formal-sector employment.

In Table 2, we examine whether the out-of-school youth are entering the labour force. Without exception the percentage of females who are neither working nor in school is higher than the percentage of males in the same category. It is quite surprising that youth unemployment estimates for South Africa are higher than values for countries like Tanzania and Uganda. Because there is no distinction made between waged employment and labour on family farms, we need to interpret these measures with a degree of caution.

Table 2: Percentage of 15- to 24-year-olds not in the labour force and not in school

Country	Survey year	Total	Male	Female
Angola	1999	30.7	26.9	34.1
Argentina	2001	13.1	6.8	19.4
Brazil	2001	13.5	5.8	21.0
Cambodia	2004	9.8	6.3	13.2
Cameroon	2001	17.0	8.4	24.8
Chile	2003	14.4	7.8	21.1
Colombia	2000	14.2	5.6	22.4
Egypt	1998	18.7	12.2	25.8
India	2000	29.2	5.1	55.3
Kenya	1997	24.7	15.9	33.0
Lesotho	2002	21.2	18.5	23.8
Malawi	1997	31.3	17.4	44.2
Mozambique	1996	16.9	13.8	19.6
Namibia	1993	14.7	9.9	19.1
Nigeria	2003	35.4	30.9	40.1
Panama	2003	15.9	5.4	26.8
Paraguay	2001	16.3	6.2	26.9
Peru	2002	13.3	7.4	19.4
South Africa	2000	16.2	13.4	18.9
Swaziland	2000	22.8	14.3	30.9
Tanzania	2000	12.7	6.8	17.5
Uganda	2002	8.6	5.5	11.3
Zambia	2002	26.2	21.0	31.2

Source: World Bank (2006:274–275)

In sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 60 per cent of the unemployed are youth (World Bank 2008). Of those who are employed, the majority work in the informal sector (Garcia and Fares 2008b). Recent reports of South African youth unemployment are in line with the region. It has been reported that nearly 60 per cent of young adults without a matric qualification face unemployment (Lam *et al*. 2008). Stable employment in the South African informal sector is especially problematic for young adults, as is transferring from the informal to the formal sector (Levinsohn 2008). In Latin America, youth unemployment is as high as 38 per cent. This value is slightly inflated owing to high turnover as young workers move from one type of employment to another in search of an ideal position (Cunningham 2009). For women in developing countries, the situation is compounded by cultural barriers that make it difficult to work far from home. Women (particularly in rural areas) tend to get married and have children at an early age. These added responsibilities further limit their employment prospects. The question of youth unemployment tends to be quite distinct when rural and urban areas in developing countries are compared. Gender differences are less apparent in urban areas (Leibbrandt and Mlatsheni 2004) and youth in urban settings tend to be better educated. So far the discussion has focused on global trends. In the next section we focus specifically on the South African situation and efforts to reduce youth unemployment.

Policy alternatives for out-of-school youth

South Africa's record on youth interventions

Over two-thirds of South Africans aged between 16 and 34 have never worked (Department of Public Works 2009). Furthermore, an estimated three million South Africans between 18 and 24 are neither in education or training nor participating in the labour market (Department of Higher Education and Training 2011). In this section we summarise youth interventions carried out in South Africa.

In 1996, the government's first attempt at formalising national youth policy took the form of the National Youth Commission (Republic of South Africa 1996a). It was widely criticised for being poorly staffed and for its inability to synthesise activities across government departments. In June 2009, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) was launched to coordinate youth programmes. It remains to be seen whether the new agency represents a break from the past or whether it will continue along the same lines as earlier efforts. There are a number of non-governmental organisations involved in skills development among young South Africans. Notable among these are

the Youth Development Network (YDN) and the Youth Development Trust. Although a few independently delivered programmes are included in this assessment, the emphasis is on larger state-sponsored schemes. Because so many South African programmes have features of training, industry access and entrepreneurial support, our discussion is centred on features of programmes rather than groups of activities.

Further education and training and adult basic education and training

The compulsory phase of schooling in South Africa is reached at Grade 9 or age 16 (Republic of South Africa 1996b). As already noted previously in this chapter participation in education programmes remains relatively high among South African youth up to this age. Young adults who have dropped out, but who wish to pursue the equivalent of a senior school certificate, can enrol in a further education and training (FET) college.[7] In response to the high levels of illiteracy in South Africa, mass literacy campaigns have been launched through tuition at adult basic education and training (ABET) centres across the country.

A learnership is a form of apprenticeship that was launched as part of the National Skills Development Strategy (HSRC 2008, Kraak 2008). Coordinated by the Department of Labour, learnerships are intended to provide the equivalent of a national qualification in the mainstream schooling system. Courses are delivered at 23 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). Enrolment patterns are highly stratified. The majority of African and coloured learners enrol in learnerships at low skill levels while Indian and white learners tend to participate in learnerships at higher levels. Racial disparities persist when trainees enter the workplace, with a lower percentage of African graduates securing jobs upon completion. Whether this is due to the quality of their chosen programme, deficiencies in their basic education or a mismatch between industry demand and programme supply is unclear. The quality of teaching and the suitability of programmes has been the subject of recent criticism (CIDB 2007, Kraak 2008).

The Department of Education has designed a three-year vocational certificate called the National Vocational Certificate as an alternative route into higher education. It is administered at FET colleges (CIDB 2007). The scheme covers 11 vocational areas and also includes literacy and numeracy courses throughout. Engineering-related courses are the most popular, but criticism has begun to emerge around the ability of the selected learners to cope with the programme's demands (Watters 2008). A key issue appears to be how to bridge the gap between programmes that have market potential and the skills set of learners who enrol.

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7 FET colleges have recently been renamed Vocational and Career Colleges.

The Umsobomvu Youth Fund

The Umsobomvu Youth Fund (UYF) was introduced in 2001 and includes aspects of training, entrepreneurial development and career counselling. Youth advisory centres (YACs) are the centrepiece of the fund, where training and career guidance are the focus. The UYF has also designed a series of school-to-work programmes that serve as a link between graduates and the workplace. Training in running small businesses is available through the UYF Business Development Unit in conjunction with the Small Enterprise Development Agency (Morrow *et al*. 2005). The UYF was merged with the National Youth Commission in 2009 to form the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and the NYDA continues to run the YACs.

The National Youth Service Programme

The National Youth Service Programme (NYSP) is a joint effort of the UYF, the Department of Labour and the Department of Public Works (Department of Public Works 2009). It is a community-focused youth intervention that intersects key government departments, including health and education, to provide short-term training for unemployed youth between 18 and 35. Areas covered include painting, plumbing and carpentry. There is also a component of life-skills training and small business development for participants who intend to set up their own businesses. Training usually lasts between 12 and 18 months. Between 2007 and 2008, 3 654 youth benefited from the programme. Job placement following a period of training has been a serious challenge.

The Expanded Public Works Programme

The Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) was launched in 2004, partly in response to high levels of youth unemployment. Much fanfare has been made about the potential for the programme to reduce the structural unemployment that is pervasive in South Africa.[8] The EPWP would achieve this by providing workers with practical training and experience that eventually leads to further job opportunities or self-employment. There is an additional social benefit because projects target communities and are designed to upgrade facilities in neglected areas. The EPWP focuses on infrastructure, the environment, and the social and economic sectors (Nzimakwe 2008). There are a limited number of learnerships available in the economic and social sectors, but training is generally limited to a few days of intensive work. One of the main criticisms of the EPWP is its inability to meet market demands for labour and its failure to stimulate growth in the informal sector (McCord 2005). This is not to say that all attempts at EPWPs in South Africa have been unsuccessful. The essential

8 Structural unemployment refers to the gap between the skills that workers can provide and the needs of employers.

elements of a successful programme are clear targeting, cost effectiveness and the public benefit of the end product (ODI 2004). Young adults benefited from nearly 40 per cent of the work opportunities created by the EPWP in 2005 and 2006.[9]

An example of a successful EPWP cited in a recent Overseas Development Institute (ODI) report is the Zibambele project in KwaZulu-Natal. It distinguishes itself from other programmes because (a) it provided participants with a stable source of income; (b) participants were targeted based on poverty status and gender (with preference being given to female-headed households); and (c) income earned by the female participants tends to be channelled back into households and communities, thus improving the health and welfare of a larger share of the population (ODI 2004). Even with these benefits, it is still evident that EPWPs are fairly short-term and limited in the number of individuals that they can target. Most importantly, success differs dramatically from programme to programme.

Wage subsidies

Research into the potential for wage subsidies to alleviate unemployment in South Africa has gained momentum recently, with the goal of implementing the programme by April 2012. Recent estimates suggest that a youth wage subsidy could create as many as 133 000 sustainable jobs (National Treasury 2011). A youth wage subsidy has the advantage of encouraging employers to take a risk with younger, less-experienced employees because it reduces the cost of hiring young workers. In instances where unemployment is voluntary (because young workers perceive that the minimum wage on offer is too low), wage subsidies that are supplied to the unemployed can encourage this group to enter the labour market (Go *et al.* 2009).

Central to the success of a wage-subsidy scheme in South Africa is ensuring that it can be effectively administered. Levinsohn (2008) has proposed the use of a voucher system that targets specific groups, such as South African school leavers. There are a number of advantages to his programme design. First, because the subsidies would only be made available to South Africans when they turn 18, this reduces the likelihood that it will encourage already high drop-out rates among young schoolgoers. This proposal also recommends that the subsidy remains available for a period to youth who opt to remain in school after 18 (and be adjusted for inflation). Second, the evidence suggests that young workers who find a job in the formal sector are likely to remain employed for longer. Therefore, the subsidy eases that critical transition into a

9 A recent breakdown of work opportunities consisted of: 107 571 (38 per cent) in infrastructure, 1 833 (52 per cent) in the economic sector, 81 185 (39 per cent) in the environment sector and 18 308 (38 per cent) in the social sector.

first job by encouraging registered firms to absorb young employees. Third, it provides employers with a breathing space by including a probationary period when a young worker can be dismissed. To counterbalance the employer advantage, it also recommends a time frame that ensures that employees are given a chance to prove themselves while still having time to transfer the subsidy elsewhere should they be dismissed. The duration of the youth employment subsidy will depend on an individual's age (National Treasury 2011). Subsidies will either be paid directly by employers (who will claim the subsidy from government) or paid by government to employees who are employed in registered firms.

A number of questions remain (related to the cost implications, potential abuse and the age distribution to target given the pervasiveness of unemployment among youth). Because young people who are already employed would also be eligible for the subsidy, concerns about efficiency have also been raised (National Treasury 2011). It has been suggested that the administration of this programme would be more effectively carried out through a tax rebate, given the relative efficiency of the revenue service (CDE 2009). In principle there is tremendous potential for introducing a youth wage subsidy in South Africa, particularly if it is targeted to specific industries and accompanied by a training component (Burns *et al*. 2010) (see the international evidence described in the section below).

Evidence from industrialised countries

The challenge of youth transitions in industrialised countries (particularly those in Western Europe) is complex. On the one hand, many Western European countries are confronted with high and rising numbers of immigrants who require integration into society and the economic mainstream (Riphahn 1999). On the other, established labour-protection legislation particularly in continental Europe renders it difficult for young adults to access the labour market, irrespective of their background or training. In the United States, particular concern is directed at the prospects of unemployed non-white youth (Ryan 2001). According to the OECD (2008) employment outlook, the number of youth who are not in education or training fell between 1996 and 2006. However, gains were primarily in the form of youth who were temporarily employed rather than those who secured stable and permanent jobs.

Training initiatives

There are a handful of European countries with established records of vocational training from very early stages in a student's educational career. Notable among these are the Austrian, German and Swiss systems. Courses are tailored to meet the specific needs of the job environment. As such, they tend

to be less theoretical and more practical (Ryan 2001). Part of the curriculum also involves spending considerable periods of time in a work setting. Studies show that work transitions in countries that incorporate apprenticeships tend to be much smoother. However, this advantage is eroded if prospective employers cannot commit to hiring their trainees at the end of the training period (OECD 2008).

Improving industry access

One popular option among industrialised countries is relaxing labour-protection laws for the youth, thereby making it easier to hire and fire young workers. Worker productivity is difficult to assess upon recruitment, especially for young workers with little or no experience. A firm may hire workers who prove to be unproductive, but be forced to retain them because of labour protection (Levinsohn 2008). Thus, companies minimise their risk by hiring fewer workers and only those few who have a proven track record. In addition, businesses are more inclined to expand their workforce in economic upturns if they are confident that they can reduce their payroll during downturns. Making it easier to lay off young workers is thus an incentive for firms to hire more young workers (Jimeno and Rodriguez-Palenzuela 2002). Such policies are less popular in parts of Europe where there are strong union traditions that protect workers in all sectors (Betcherman *et al.* 2007, *The Economist* 2009).

To reiterate the theory, such policies are designed to encourage employers to take a chance on youth, knowing that they need only retain those who work out well. Those that are not retained at least get the benefit of some initial labour-market experience and, perhaps, a better idea of further training that they may require to make them more employable. However, there is an ongoing debate about whether temporary employment leads to better and more permanent work or whether it will only result in underemployed young people finding themselves permanently trapped in temporary jobs.

There is also scepticism about whether lower youth labour standards actually lead to job creation. Critics argue that many young workers would have been successful in their job search, and the permanent positions that they would ordinarily have received have been replaced by temporary ones (ATTAC France 2006). Lower labour standards may lead to permanent employment if there are productivity gains from job experience. For example, if a worker becomes significantly more productive over time, the firm is likely to retain the worker. However, in certain unskilled positions, the productivity gain from work experience will be so low that the firm could replace workers quite easily. Easing youth labour protection has proven to be an effective avenue to employment in Canada, Australia and a handful of other European countries, although the nature of employment varies (Maas and Herrington 2008, OECD 2008).

Promoting temporary employment has met with its fiercest resistance among countries with some of the highest youth unemployment rates. During the 1990s, the Spanish government introduced legislation that made it easier to hire and fire young workers. Although the number of temporarily employed increased, there was no shift in the number of permanently employed youth. France's attempt at similar policy reforms were equally shortlived. In 2006, legislation was proposed to encourage employment among young adults under age 26. Employers could hire this group and fire them within two years without cause (ATTAC France 2006). Unsurprisingly, the legislation was widely opposed and was subsequently withdrawn.

There have also been attempts to reduce youth unemployment by encouraging early retirement by older workers, but these have been unsuccessful. From a productivity perspective, it would appear that older and younger workers contribute to productivity in different ways and cannot be substituted for one another (World Bank 2006). While this is disappointing, it also holds the important corollary that policies directed at making youth employment easier are unlikely to lead to the displacement of older workers.

Besides making it easier to fire youth workers, governments have also relaxed labour standards by reducing the minimum wage. Although this has led to greater employment among youth in Europe (Jimeno and Rodriguez-Palenzuela 2002), it has also fuelled income inequality (World Bank 2006) because employers maximise their profits by withholding benefits from young workers. A possible middle ground would be to provide some flexibility in terms of the minimum wage, while preserving acceptable labour standards. This would mean that although a compromise would be made in terms of wages, the youth would still enjoy a degree of job security.

Another popular measure in Europe (particularly in Central and Eastern Europe) has been the wage-subsidy option. Because this is a relatively costly alternative, it has been more widespread in industrialised countries than developing countries. It is worth repeating that like the proposed subsidy design for South Africa, these subsidies essentially require government to pay employers who agree to hire unemployed young adults. Governments also cover basic living costs for young workers. One of the criticisms of wage subsidies in Europe is that although they improve participation, there are no real gains in earnings (Betcherman *et al.* 2007). Wage subsidies tend to be more successful when their size is contained and if they are targeted to a specific group. In Britain, a successful subsidy scheme forms part of 'Britain's New Deal for Young People'. Youth who have been unemployed for over six months are given a series of options to choose from, including a job subsidy. Other alternatives include support for further studies, volunteer work and government work. The programme has been credited with increasing the employment potential among males by as much as 20 per cent (Van Reenen 2003).

The record of public works programmes in South Africa has already been discussed earlier in this chapter. As in South Africa, the viability of these programmes largely depends on whether the end-products are tailored to be of particular public use. Public works programmes have received some attention in Bulgaria, France, the United States and Poland, particularly for providing employment for acutely disadvantaged young adults.

Policies to promote entrepreneurship

Youth entrepreneurial activity varies greatly among high-income countries. It is highest in Honk Kong, Iceland and the United States and lowest in Austria and Belgium (Bosma *et al.* 2008). Promoting youth enterprise is slowly gaining momentum as a viable economic alternative for unemployed youth. Some of the most successful ventures involve nurturing entrepreneurial culture at an early age (Chigunta 2002). The REAL enterprise project in the United States provides practical entrepreneurial training to young people living in rural communities (Kapitsa 2002). Among the skills that students gain are market research, compiling business plans and sourcing financing. In a few countries, such as the United Kingdom and Canada, the situation has been formalised by integrating entrepreneurial courses into the general curriculum. In France, the focus has been on promoting youth innovation through public–private partnerships (Chigunta 2002). For the youth who are already out of school, a handful of community and national programmes exist. Generous funding is available through Portugal's *Sistema de Apoio jovens Emresarios*. The Prince's Trust Business Programme provides seed money and marketing grants for young entrepreneurs (Schoof 2006). In general most schemes begin at grassroots level before gaining momentum. There are few nationally coordinated schemes, but currently entrepreneurship is not yet recognised as central to resolving youth unemployment.

Evidence from transition and developing countries

The previous sections have shown that the nature of youth unemployment in developed and developing countries differs considerably. The size of the youth labour market is much larger in developing countries and in many cases the youth share continues to grow. The basic skills and training with which the youth enter the labour market are more limited in developing countries. Links between the education sector and industry are stronger in developed countries, making it easier to develop relevant training programmes and to adjust these programmes when required. In the following section the record of youth policies in developing countries and which initiatives have been most effective are discussed.

Training initiatives

Training initiatives are by far the most popular youth employment ventures in developing countries. Because drop-out rates tend to be much higher in developing countries, any integrated programme must address basic literacy and numeracy needs. Latin American countries have led the way in implementing broad-based programmes that incorporate job training, career counselling and job placement with industry-specific incentives such as wage subsidies. This is the approach that has been applied to the *Jóvenes* programmes in Latin America for low-income youth aged between 16 and 29. According to one programme evaluation of the Columbian version, salaries of women and men who received training were 18 and 8 per cent higher respectively compared to the untrained group (Attanasio *et al*. 2008). The *Entra* 21 project has been successfully implemented in 18 Latin American countries with a specific focus on training youth for work in the information technology (IT) industry. Interestingly, employers value the life-skills training that youth receive as much as the technical training (World Bank 2006).

It has been difficult to integrate formal vocational training into mainstream education systems in developing countries. Part of the problem is the poor quality of administrative structures required for these programmes to operate successfully. Egypt attempted to develop a dual education system based on the German model, but it ran into difficulties when the government tried to secure support from local industries (Betcherman *et al.* 2007).

In Kenya, an innovative approach to training was introduced by the World Bank in partnership with the Micro and Small Enterprise Training and Technology Project (MSETTP). Rather than focusing on the formal sector, attention was turned to the thriving informal sector. Vouchers were distributed to small business leaders to upgrade their skills and equipment with the intent that the benefits would be extended to their trainees (Betcherman *et al.* 2007). Courses could be completed on a part-time basis. This flexibility enabled trainees to continue earning an income. Initially women were not benefiting from the programme, but they were directly targeted in later phases (Antoine 2004). Because of limited programme evaluation, it is unclear how effective these schemes have been.

Improving industry access

Owing to cost constraints, wage subsidies and public-works programmes are less widespread in developing economies. They have enjoyed some success in South Africa as mentioned earlier, but the track record is greatly varied. Where they are implemented, they form part of more broad-based youth support and when implemented in this manner, they have been relatively successful. In Argentina, the *Trabajar* programme is a combination of wage subsidies and training that has dramatically improved access to private-sector opportunities

among the youth and other groups (World Bank 2006). Beneficiaries work on infrastructure projects in poor regions of the country. All projects are subject to extensive evaluation to ensure that they are technically sound. In addition, the size of projects is limited to one hundred individuals, making it easier to monitor. The distribution of project funds depends on the extent of poverty in an area, with more funds allocated to the poorest communities. To ensure transparency, details of project funding are made publicly available (Subbarao 2003). One of the *Trajabar* initiative's strengths is its cost effectiveness. It is able to target 350 000 at a cost of 0.25 per cent of GDP (Islam 2005).

Elsewhere in the developing world, public-works programmes have been designed to target areas including infrastructure development and emergency food relief. For example, the World Food Programme runs food-for-work projects in acutely impoverished rural communities (ODI 2004). According to Islam (2005), to ensure that only the most disadvantaged groups benefit from a public-works initiative, wages need to be set low enough to attract only unskilled manual workers. This is the thinking behind India's *Maharastra* Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and more recently the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. The aim of these rural public-works programmes is to provide basic subsistence to poor rural households through guaranteed work at a fixed minimum wage. Beneficiaries register for a job card with a local authority and are guaranteed work within 15 days. If work is not provided, then they are entitled to an allowance. Part of the funding for the programme is raised through a tax on professionals in urban areas (ODI 2004). Some of the challenges that the scheme faces are corruption among local officials and gender and caste discrimination (CDE 2009).

Policies to promote entrepreneurship

Given the size of the informal sector in developing countries, there is vast potential for growth in entrepreneurship (Garcia and Fares 2008a). Providing technical and financial support for young entrepreneurs remains difficult. Programmes to support young entrepreneurs differ considerably across developing countries in terms of their design and scope. In Latin American countries, aspiring entrepreneurs tend to be wealthier and better educated with parents who are already successful entrepreneurs. Young entrepreneurs rely on these family networks to develop their own projects. Sources of funding also favour the elite in Latin America. Three apt examples are the Endeavor programme in five Latin American countries, the Softex programme in Brazil and the CORFO initiative in Chile (World Bank 2006). The Endeavor programme provides additional funding for enterprises that have started to show promise. The Softex and CORFO programmes focus on university students

in fields such as IT. One successful example of an enterprise programme is the Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative that was introduced in India in 1995. This initiative was multi-faceted and provided participants with access to training, mentorship and credit. An added benefit is that the majority of participants were women. As in industrialised countries, the principle of entrepreneurship is lauded by policy-makers, but there is still a degree of unease in terms of committing resources to small business ventures.

Conclusion and key issues

In this brief chapter on global youth transition policies an array of alternatives for addressing this crisis have been presented. Table 3 provides a summary of the policies discussed. In this concluding section, the evidence from youth policies is drawn together and possible lessons that can be applied to the South African context are discussed. There are several points that are worth highlighting. The first point is that one of the weaknesses of many interventions discussed is the lack of careful evaluation. This has made it difficult to assess the effectiveness of projects worldwide. As mentioned previously the launch of the South African NYDA in June 2009 made the need for systematic evaluation all the more important.

In a sense, there is a level of quality assurance that comes from using the National Qualifications Authority (NQF) as a benchmark for equating programmes, but more attention must be given to how market-worthy these programmes are. A useful starting point would be to evaluate past and present projects in South Africa. Previous schemes such as the National Youth Commission and the Umsobomvu Youth Fund have been criticised in general terms for being poorly managed, but further study is needed to establish where the schemes failed to achieve their objectives and where they were effective. That so many youth who complete training fail to find work suggests that some programmes need to be redesigned or phased out entirely.

Project evaluations should assess whether or not a scheme improves the chances of youth accessing employment in the medium and long term. Particular attention needs to be paid to the scope of projects and to their sustainability. Evaluating the quality of programmes independently also increases the likelihood of gaining support from the private sector. This review has shown that smaller, well-targeted programmes that expand gradually and are careful to identify industry needs are more likely to produce results. The immense costs involved in training initiatives are another reason why the scale of any scheme needs to be considered carefully.

Table 3: Summary of policy alternatives for youth employment

Programme	Description	Strengths	Drawbacks
Training	» Long-term vocational skills training within the schooling system and equivalence programmes for school leavers » Short-term training for public-works programmes » Supplementary training in work-life skills	» Well-established programmes can lead to smooth school-to-work transitions » Broad-based programmes that include job placement have a good track record » Flexibility in course delivery is beneficial	» Requires industry support » Monitoring and quality assurance essential » Difficulties in matching industry demand with student entry-level skills in developing countries with poor schooling systems
Labour market policies	Public works	» Proven success when carefully targeted » Can be cost effective if scope is reasonable » End-product benefits local communities » More effective when combined with other schemes such as wage subsidies and comprehensive training	» It is a short-term solution » Skills transfer is limited » It has not led to access to permanent employment or to growth in the informal sector
	Wage subsidies	» Increases incentive for hiring young workers » Raises chances of first entry into labour market	» Administrative difficulties (can possibly be overcome through voucher system or tax rebates) » Costly » Potential for abuse among registered firms
	Relaxing labour protection for young workers, lowering the minimum wage for young workers	» Reduces the risk of hiring young workers » Provides capable young workers with an opportunity to prove themselves	» Difficult to implement in countries with strong union traditions » May lead to more temporary job creation » Evaluation is essential » Fear of displacement effects (young workers replacing older workers)
Entrepreneurial development	» Entrepreneurial training as part of school curriculum » Public–private partnerships » Seed funding	» Cost effective and sustainable » Flexible	» Requires access to local networks » Benefits for already-advantaged youth

The second point is that certain promising policies with potential for South Africa would require creative thinking to circumvent trade union opposition. Trade union opposition to reducing labour standards has been fierce and emphatic. This would apply particularly to lowering the minimum wage and to introducing wage subsidies. Opposition is likely to centre on labour protection and the rights of the youth labour market. There would also be fears of displacement effects if the minimum wage for youth were lowered, with young workers crowding out older ones. It is slightly encouraging that there is no evidence of organised opposition to the conditions of work that are applied to South Africa's public-work schemes, possibly because these programmes are predominantly rural and targeted at desperately poor communities. Much depends on the scale of the projects and where they are implemented. The other side of the coin is the fiscal feasibility of introducing a wage subsidy on a large scale. Successful pilot projects would help to establish whether the benefits outweigh the costs of implementation.

The third point is that given high school drop-out rates and sharp differences in educational quality, attention needs to be given to levels of literacy and numeracy among South African job seekers. Any intervention requiring skilled labour needs to take account of this deficit. Entry-level skills also have effects on other training initiatives because success in learnerships and vocational training require a firm grounding in basic maths and language. In developing workplace-preparation programmes in South Africa, it would be worth exploring how programme designs can be enhanced to improve professionalism among young job seekers. The much anticipated youth wage subsidy programme also needs to consider the training needs of potential employees. It would be useful to further unpack why life-skills training in Latin America is valued by employers.

The last point that needs to be emphasised in the South African context is that youth unemployment is part of a broader structural unemployment problem. Any policies targeting youth unemployment need to consider the impact of persistent unemployment on individuals and communities. There are those who would go as far as arguing that the youth cohort should not be targeted in the first place, because the country's history renders the adult unemployed equally vulnerable. As long as chronic unemployment exists, policies targeting youth workers will merely scratch at the surface of a deeper crisis. Finally, it is tempting to use broad brushstrokes when shaping policy for unemployed youth. Recognising the differences that exist among this group and targeting their strengths and weaknesses are useful first steps in any policy intervention.

THE FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING LANDSCAPE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Chapter 4

A STATISTICAL OVERVIEW OF FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGES

Charles Sheppard and Ronaldo Sheppard

Introduction

Further education and training (FET) colleges are expected to play a significant role in addressing the acute shortage of middle-level skills. The colleges are also well positioned to widen access since they are distributed across all nine provinces and have wider geographic reach than universities (DHET 2010). A significant increase in access can be achieved with less investment than a corresponding increase in university enrolment due to the much higher cost of university education.

The FET college sector is currently highly inefficient in terms of throughput and retention rates as well as low pass rates. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (2010) noted that a well-planned and managed transition is required towards a high-quality FET college system with expanded access. This requires that resources be deployed in a targeted manner with sound evidence-based priorities. The appropriate planning of the improvement of the efficiency as well as increased provisioning are plagued by a lack of reliable data on the shape and size of the sector. The DHET (2010) acknowledges that the data presently available is not adequate, and is not analysed in sufficient depth. Increasing the expansion through appropriate planning, and improving the retention and throughput rates, depends on reliable data for the FET sector.

The lack of data is one of the key challenges in the sector. The National Development Plan (NDP) indicates that problems in the FET sector include fragmented data systems, which lead to poor planning (NPC 2011). This chapter analyses available data sets in an attempt to obtain the best picture possible of

the FET sector, taking into consideration the deficiencies in the available data. A brief overview of the legal framework for public and private FET colleges is provided, followed by an overview of the data sources as well as problems experienced with the data used. An outline is provided of the shape and size of the public as well as private FET sector within the limitations of the available data sets. First, the data for the 2007 to 2009 period are discussed followed by a separate discussion of the 2010 data. This was necessary due to the fact that the 2007 to 2009 data were sourced from the examination statistics database which included data on the public as well as private FET providers. This was found to be the most reliable data source for these years. The 2010 data are based on the 2010 FETMIS (Further Education and Training Management Information System) which was the only available data source at the time of publication, but only includes data on the public FET colleges. In the last section two possible future growth scenarios for post-secondary enrolments in the FET sector is provided. This is a response to the vision that FET college enrolment needs to expand to address the large numbers of unemployed but educated youth that are not studying further and to increase the number of study certificates awarded exponentially to address the skills shortage in South Africa.

Legal framework for public and private FET colleges

South Africa's 50 public FET colleges were created in 2002 in terms of the FET Act No. 98 of 1998 with the declaration of former technical colleges, colleges of education and training centres into 50 merged FET colleges. The reason for the merging of various former institutions into 50 larger FET public colleges was to combine smaller and weaker colleges into stronger institutions, which would result in economies of scale and create capacity within colleges to teach more students and offer a wider range of programmes. This could ultimately position them better to meet social and economic demands (Pretorius 2007). One of the intentions of the mergers was that the FET college sector had to become a central feature of the government's strategy to tackle skills shortages, job creation and economic growth. The public system is expected to respond to the national agenda for skills development within a context of equity, and to engage with human resource supply issues, while private providers concentrate on 'demand-side' imperatives (Akoojee 2005).

Private institutions offering FET programmes must register with the DHET in accordance with the Further Education and Training Colleges Act No. 16 of 2006. They have to comply with the following three requirements for registration: financial sustainability, accreditation by Umalusi, and occupational health and safety requirements. There is a realisation that the private sector

has an important complimentary role to play, but the DHET indicates that there is a need to ensure that providers deliver programmes of acceptable quality and that students have to be protected from 'fly-by-night' operators delivering poor-quality programmes.

Akoojee (2005) argues however that in South Africa, the legitimacy of private provision appears inconsistent with principles on unfettered educational access enshrined in the Freedom Charter. McGrath and Akoojee (2007) also argue that the complexity and diversity of private FET providers in South Africa that are targeting the more vulnerable learner cohort where sustainability is less certain, are already negatively affected by an insecure enrolment context, targeting students who have to fund themselves. They argue that regulation needs to be much more supportive than is currently the case and that the state needs a better understanding of the diverse nature of private provision. The state needs to strategically take advantage of where private provision can support growth and equity, whilst being able to limit the risks to the more fragile and potentially exploitative segments of our society and institutions (McGrath and Akoojee 2007).

Data used and data problems/constraints

The following data sets were analysed to attempt an overview of the FET colleges in South Africa:

- the FETMIS data sets for the years 2007 to 2009
- the FETMIS data set for 2010
- the FET College Examination data sets for 2007 to 2009
- the list of registered private FET colleges
- the list of public FET colleges.

All the above data sets were made available by the DHET.

Unfortunately at the time of writing, the 2010 examination data for the FET colleges had not yet been signed off by the minister and could thus not be obtained. It was found that the data available from the FETMIS 2007 to 2009 data sets do not seem to be correct because the data sets appear to be incomplete. In 2008 no FET college data were captured for the Mpumalanga Province. Comparisons between the FET examination database and the FETMIS data sets for 2007 to 2009 revealed various inconsistencies. Examples of these are that the number of candidates registered for the FET examinations were in many instances higher than the enrolments in the FETMIS data sets for 2007 to 2009, which leads to the conclusion that the FETMIS 2007 to 2009 data sets are incomplete and unusable.

The following analysis demonstrates the inconsistency in the 2007 to 2009 FETMIS data compared to the 2007 to 2009 examination registration data sets.

Table 1 shows the student enrolment data obtained from the FETMIS FET student data set and the number of candidates registered for the FET examinations for the years 2007 to 2009. The examination data sets contain separate records for each examination candidate. The multiple entries for the same candidate were converted to single records for each student to ensure than no double counting took place. It is evident from the table that the FETMIS 2008 data set does not include any FET data for Mpumalanga. In many instances the FETMIS enrolment data are much lower than the examination registrations, revealing that the FETMIS data are incomplete and unreliable (e.g. Mpumalanga and Western Cape for 2007). For this reason the examinations data are assumed as much more reliable for the establishment of enrolment trends for the 2007 to 2009 period.

In 2010 the FETMIS data were collected by the DHET and the quality of the data appears to be much better, making the data more reliable. The 2010 FETMIS data will be discussed separately, because they are not directly comparable with the examinations data. This is because a degree of student drop-out occurred between their registration at FET colleges and registrations for the FET examinations. The examinations data set is valuable because it includes private FET college data as well as public FET college data.

The FETMIS 2010 dataset appears to give a much better reflection of the size and shape of the FET college sector and the data quality appears to be of a much better standard than the previous FETMIS data sets. Unfortunately the FETMIS 2010 data set only contains data for the public FET colleges and thus does not provide a comprehensive picture of the size of the sector.

In an attempt to provide the best possible overview of the FET colleges sector the following data sets were used:

- The FET college examination data sets for 2007 to 2009 were used to provide an overview of data trends for both public and private FET colleges. It must be noted that the enrolment data deducted from these data sets will be lower than the actual enrolments in the colleges as a result of students who dropped out during the year and who did not register for the examinations. It was assumed that the March examinations of the following year still accounted for students who enrolled during the previous year, but wrote special examinations. This assumption made the data much more sensible and revealed expected enrolment trends. The fact that students were registered on the database for several subjects and that there were several records per student was accounted for. A unique record per student was created to ensure that there was no double counting.

Table 1: Comparison between the FETMIS and FET examinations enrolment data for public FET colleges, 2007 to 2009

	2007		2008		2009	
Province	Enrolments	Examination	Enrolments	Examination	Enrolments	Examination
Eastern Cape	25 580	22 301	22 222	23 409	22 042	25 629
Free State	27 308	20 902	25 827	21 749	12 224	20 636
Gauteng	84 895	81 713	59 144	80 183	94 644	82 667
KwaZulu-Natal	52 614	41 944	34 862	45 574	67 139	51 719
Limpopo	17 770	17 975	10 195	20 913	21 472	25 313
Mpumalanga	11 887	17 531	–	17 898	20 010	18 144
North West	18 367	12 354	16 200	15 180	20 575	16 979
Northern Cape	9 471	4 219	2 741	5 104	7 898	4 797
Western Cape	16 592	27 036	28 884	28 589	23 714	30 975
Total	**264 484**	**245 975**	**200 075**	**258 599**	**289 718**	**276 859**

	2007		2008		2009	
Qualification type	Enrolments	Examination	Enrolments	Examination	Enrolments	Examination
N1–N6	245 230	203 154	178 086	182 758	183 444	161 604
NCV	19 254	22 256	21 989	57 590	96 059	101 985
Skills Programme	–	3 523	–	5 210	–	7 262
NIC NCOR NSC	–	17 042	–	13 041	10 215	6 008
Grand total	**264 484**	**245 975**	**200 075**	**258 599**	**289 718**	**276 859**

Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2007–2009), FET examination data (2007–2009)

Notes: Non-DoE programme enrolments have been excluded from the FETMIS 2007 to 2009 data set, to make a more appropriate comparison with the FET examination data, since these students do not enroll for the examinations.

- The FETMIS 2010 data set was found to be of good quality and appears to give a good reflection of the public FET college sector. It was used to provide a recent overview of the public FET colleges.
- The public and private FET colleges' registers were used to give an account of the number of FET colleges per province.
- The databases do not account for non-accredited programmes and short courses, and these are thus not reflected in this chapter.

Since none of these data sets (except for the registers) covers the full extent of public and private FET college provision and since they are not comparable, the research only provides an estimated overview of the public and private FET colleges sector. Since the FET college sector will become a national competency, it is trusted that in future years a full and reliable statistical picture of public and private FET colleges will emerge.

Institutional landscape and programme distribution of the FET sector

Institutional landscape – public compared to private

Table 2 shows the number of public FET colleges, the public FET college campuses and the private FET colleges registered with the DHET head office per province. It also shows the number of other registered private FET colleges that are active in the province, but which have their head offices in another province. There are a total of 50 public FET colleges with 248 campuses spread across the provinces as indicated in Table 2. There are 429 private FET colleges registered with the DHET that are operating across the provinces. The public FET college provisioning is evenly spread across provinces in relation to the provincial population. The highest number of private FET colleges were operating in Gauteng (237), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (103) and the Western Cape (80).

The actual number of public and private FET college examination registrations per province for the years 2007 to 2009 is given in Table 3. Private examination registrations were 59 416 in 2007, increasing to 62 955 in 2008 and 71 196 in 2009. In total private registrations increased by 16.5 per cent over these three years compared with a total increase of 11.2 per cent in public registrations. Although the private registrations thus account for a much smaller portion (20.5 per cent in 2009), their registrations have been increasing at a higher rate. It is notable that the Free State showed a decrease in both private examination registrations (from 465 to 155) as well as in public examination registrations (from 20 902 in 2007 to 20 636 in 2009). Private

enrolments had the highest total increases over the 2007 to 2009 period in KwaZulu-Natal (37.3 per cent), Limpopo (23.2 per cent), and the Western Cape (18.0 per cent). The largest declines in private registrations in total were in the Free State (-200.0 per cent), North West (-37.3 per cent), and in the registration of foreign students (-36.5 per cent). Regarding registrations, the largest increases in total over this period were in Limpopo (29.0 per cent), North West (27.2 per cent), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (18.9 per cent).

Table 2: Number of public FET colleges and campuses, and number of registered private FET colleges

	Public FET colleges	Public FET colleges campuses	Private FET colleges registered with the DHET (head office in the province)	Other registered private FET colleges active in province (head office in another province)
Eastern Cape	8	36	10	12
Free State	4	18	9	12
Gauteng	8	49	231	6
KwaZulu-Natal	9	49	84	19
Limpopo	7	24	17	17
Mpumalanga	3	15	16	13
Northern Cape	2	7	1	5
North West	3	12	5	13
Western Cape	6	38	56	24
Total	**50**	**248**	**429**	**121**

Source: DHET (2010). Public FET colleges retrieved from website. Private FET college address list provided by Dr Buthelezi in the course of 2011

The public–private distribution of FET examination registrations are shown in Figure 1. Over the 2007 to 2009 period the private-sector registrations increased slightly from 19.5 per cent in 2007 to 20.5 per cent in 2009. The public–private distribution of FET examination registrations for the year 2009 shows huge differences per province (see Figure 2). In the Northern Cape the public and private FET examination registrations are almost of the same size, with 57.5 per cent public and 42.5 per cent private registrations. This is a function of the small size of the FET college sector in the Northern Cape, which is very sparsely populated. There are only two public FET colleges with seven campuses and one private FET college based in the Northern Cape; five other registered private colleges are active in the province (see Table 2). There were

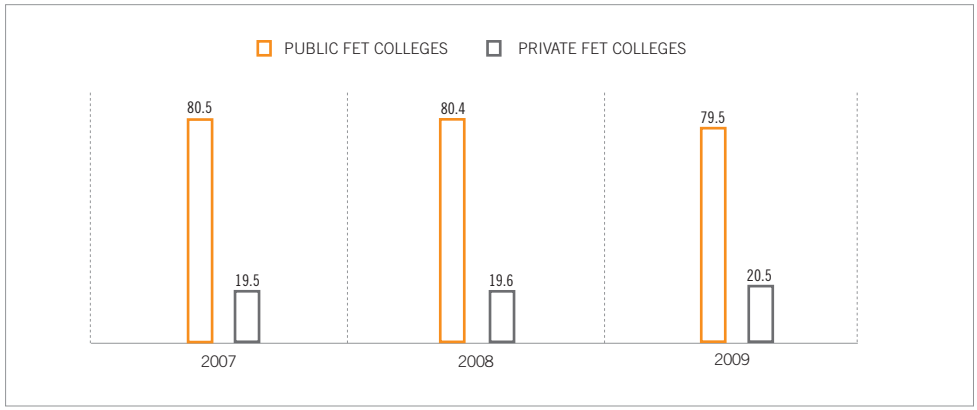
Table 3: Number of public and private FET colleges examination registrations per province, 2007 to 2009

	2007			2008			2009		
Province	Private FET	Public FET	Total	Private FET	Public FET	Total	Private FET	Public FET	Total
Eastern Cape	3 833	22 301	26 134	4 158	23 409	27 567	4 591	25 629	30 220
Free State	465	20 902	21 367	616	21 749	22 365	155	20 636	20 791
Gauteng	17 595	81 713	99 308	16 907	80 183	97 090	20 233	82 667	102 900
KwaZulu-Natal	8 829	41 944	50 773	11 110	45 574	56 684	14 081	51 719	65 800
Limpopo	12 181	17 975	30 156	13 536	20 913	34 449	15 866	25 313	41 179
Mpumalanga	5 412	17 531	22 943	5 073	17 898	22 971	6 202	18 144	24 346
Northern Cape	3 541	4 219	7 760	4 116	5 104	9 220	3 541	4 797	8 338
North West	3 807	12 354	16 161	4 103	15 180	19 283	2 773	16 979	19 752
Western Cape	2 064	27 036	29 100	2 051	28 589	30 640	2 517	30 975	33 492
Foreign	1 689	–	1 689	1 285	–	1 285	1 237	–	1 237
Grand Total	**59 416**	**245 975**	**305 391**	**62 955**	**258 599**	**321 554**	**71 196**	**276 859**	**348 055**

Source: DHET (2011), FET examination data (2007–2009)

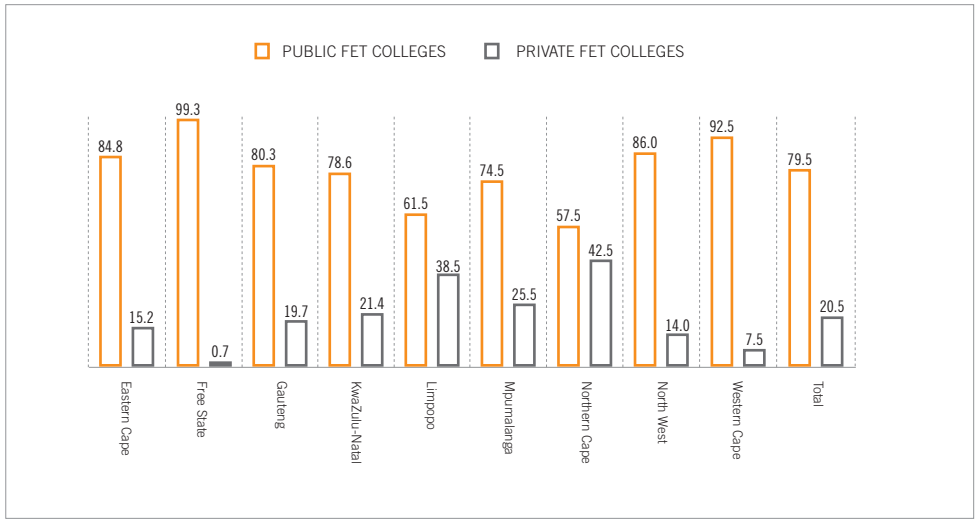
considerable percentages of private registrations in Limpopo (38.5 per cent), Mpumalanga (25.5 per cent), KwaZulu-Natal (21.4 per cent), and Gauteng (19.7 per cent). Private FET registrations were lower in the Eastern Cape (15.2 per cent), North West (14.0 per cent), Western Cape (7.5 per cent), and the Free State (0.7 per cent).

Figure 1: Percentage of public and private FET college examination registrations, 2007 to 2009



Source: DHET (2011), FET examination data (2007–2009)

Figure 2: Percentage of public and private FET college examination registrations per province, 2009

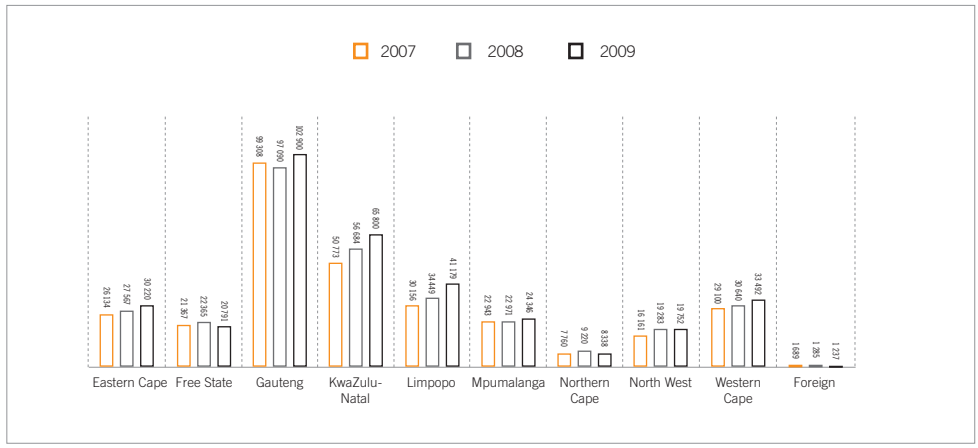


Source: DHET (2011), FET examination data (2007–2009)

Institutional landscape – total public and private

In Figure 3 the total FET examination registrations for both public and private institutions are shown per province for the period 2007 to 2009. The respective total examinations registrations were 305 391 in 2007, 321 554 in 2008, and 348 055 in 2009. This represents an average annual growth rate in examination registrations of 6.8 per cent per annum. In terms of provinces, the highest number of examination registrations in 2009 were for Gauteng (102 900), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (65 800,) and Limpopo (41 179). There were 1 237 foreign students in 2009 that registered for the examinations. It is interesting to note that the number of examination registrations for foreign students declined on a year-to-year basis over the 2007 to 2009 period. In 2007 a total of 1 689 foreign students were registered for FET examinations, declining to 1 285 in 2008 and 1 237 in 2009.

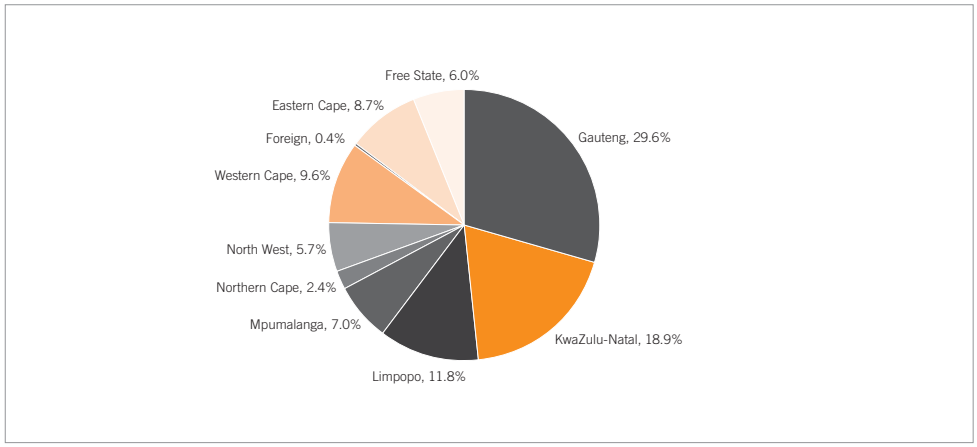
Figure 3: Examination registrations for public and private FET colleges, 2007 to 2009



Source: DHET (2011), FET examination data (2007–2009)

The percentage distribution of public and private FET college examination registrations per province for 2009 is shown in Figure 4. The respective percentage of registrations per province were Gauteng (29.6 per cent), KwaZulu-Natal (18.9 per cent), Limpopo (11.8 per cent), Western Cape (9.6 per cent), Eastern Cape (8.7 per cent), Mpumalanga (7.0 per cent), Free State (6.0 per cent), North West (5.7 per cent), and Northern Cape (2.4 per cent). Foreign examination registrations represented 0.4 per cent of the total.

Figure 4: Percentage distribution of public and private FET college examination registrations per province, 2009



Source: DHET (2011), FET examination data (2007–2009)

Institutional landscape – public and private FET colleges growth rates

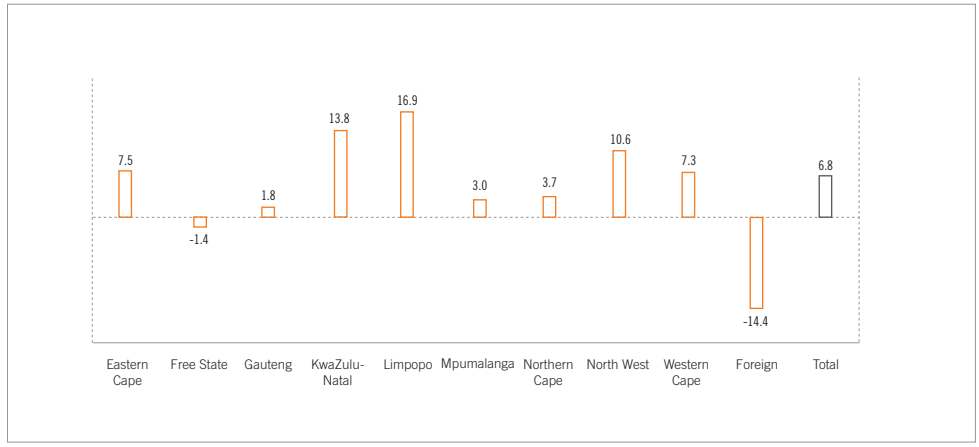
Figure 5 shows the average annual growth rates in examination registrations for the period 2007 to 2009 per province. In Limpopo (16.9 per cent), KwaZulu-Natal (13.8 per cent), North West (10.6 per cent), Eastern Cape (7.5 per cent) and Western Cape (7.3 per cent) examination registrations grew annually on average at a much higher rate than the average for the sector (6.8 per cent). FET examination registrations in the Northern Cape (3.7 per cent), Mpumalanga (3.0 per cent) and Gauteng (1.8 per cent) grew at a much lower rate on average for the period 2007 to 2009. Examination registrations in the Free State declined on average by 1.4 per cent per annum and foreign student examination registrations declined by 14.4 per cent on average per annum.

Programme distribution

The following instructional programme categories are offered by FET colleges:

- National N Certificates: N2–N6
- National Integrated Certificate
- National Intermediate Certificate (NIC)
- National Senior Certificate (NSC)
- National N Diplomas
- Non-National Certificates
- National Certificate (Vocational) Level 2–4 (NC[V])

Figure 5: Average annual growth rates in examination registrations per province, 2007 to 2009



Source: DHET (2011), FET examination data (2007–2009)

Programmes at FET colleges are classified according to National Qualification Framework (NQF) levels for the purpose of submitting information as required by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (DHET 2009). The NQF levels are as follows:

- *NQF Level 2*: All instructional offerings at a level usually associated with Grade 10 or N1. The National Certificate (Vocational) Level 2 qualification has been added to this level.
- *NQF Level 3*: All instructional offerings at a level usually associated with Grade 11 or N2. The National Certificate (Vocational) Level 3 qualification has been added to this level.
- *NQF Level 4*: All instructional offerings at a level usually associated with Grade 12 or N3. The National Certificate (Vocational) Level 4 qualification has been added to this level.
- *NQF Level 5*: All instructional offerings at a level usually associated with the first year after Grade 12. These are the N4, N5 and N6 programmes.
- *NQF Level 6*: All instructional offerings at a level usually associated with the third year after Grade 12. The National N Diploma is issued to a student after a minimum of three years. The student must comply with the requirements of NQF Level 5, including a prescribed period of experiential training.

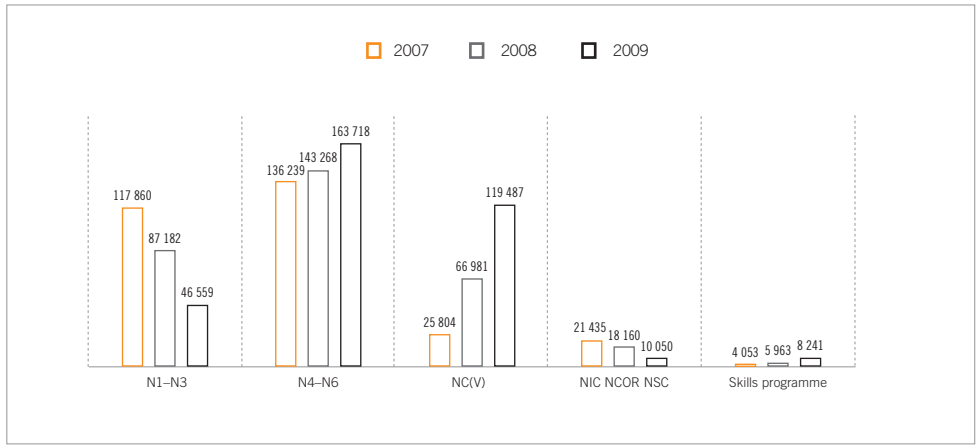
Table 4: Examination registrations by province and qualification type, 2007 to 2009

	2007						2008						2009					
Province	N1-N3	N4-N6	NC(V)	NIC NCOR NSC	Skills pro-grammes	Total	N1-N3	N4-N6	NC(V)	NIC NCOR NSC	Skills pro-grammes	Total	N1-N3	N4-N6	NC(V)	NIC NCOR NSC	Skills pro-grammes	Total
Eastern Cape	7 645	12 044	2 804	3 442	199	26 134	5 438	11 936	6 829	3 073	291	27 567	2 341	12 553	12 127	2 708	491	30 220
Free State	5 592	12 197	1 515	1 841	222	21 367	4 530	12 523	3 221	1 791	300	22 365	1 724	13 638	4 692	376	361	20 791
Gauteng	41 763	42 097	7 350	6 812	1 286	99 308	31 062	42 030	16 525	5 684	1 789	97 090	16 718	49 073	30 762	3 929	2 418	102 900
KwaZulu-Natal	23 160	21 895	3 416	1 589	713	50 773	16 887	25 976	11 219	1 333	1 269	56 684	8 212	34 886	20 220	656	1 826	65 800
Limpopo	10 198	15 132	3 265	1 205	356	30 156	7 915	14 850	10 115	971	598	34 449	4 223	16 082	19 237	720	917	41 179
Mpumalanga	11 088	8 882	1 763	846	364	22 943	7 971	8 960	4 977	648	415	22 971	5 707	8 842	8 944	269	584	24 346
Northern Cape	1 895	3 943	698	1 116	108	7 760	1 511	4 440	2 192	962	115	9 220	621	4 825	2 445	353	94	8 338
North West	6 211	6 994	1 772	963	221	16 161	5 260	7 828	5 050	783	362	19 283	2 659	7 136	9 206	163	588	19 752
Western Cape	8 826	12 907	3 221	3 595	551	29 100	5 700	14 413	6 853	2 885	789	30 640	3 660	16 238	11 854	827	913	33 492
Foreign	1 482	148		26	33	1 689	908	312	0	30	35	1 285	694	445	0	49	49	1 237
Grand total	**117 860**	**136 239**	**25 804**	**21 435**	**4 053**	**305 391**	**87 182**	**143 268**	**66 981**	**18 160**	**5 963**	**321 554**	**46 559**	**163 718**	**119 487**	**10 050**	**8 241**	**348 055**

Source: DHET (2011), FET examination data (2007–2009)

In terms of the distribution of registrations by qualification type (Figure 6), the number of registrations in N1–N3 have declined sharply from 117 860 in 2007 to 46 559 in 2009. This was a direct result of the introduction of the NC(V), which was meant to replace the N1–N3 qualifications. The N4–N6 qualifications increased by 17 per cent in total over the 2007 to 2009 period.

Figure 6: Number of public and private FET college examination registrations per qualification type, 2007 to 2009



Source: DHET (2011), FET examination data (2007–2009)

In 2008 it was envisaged that the National N Certificate (N4–N6) and National N Diploma qualifications offered at FET colleges would be phased out by 2012 and 2014 respectively (date of last examination). Although the Minister of Education had published a notice to this effect, the Minister of Higher Education and Training had extended the award of the National N Diplomas to December 2016 (DHET 2010). This extension means that colleges have been permitted to continue registering students for N courses where there is demonstrable industry support. The DHET intends to undertake a rigorous process to assess which N courses have the necessary support to be offered at specific colleges across the country, and will amend their planning frameworks while urgent curriculum work is undertaken.

This was the period of the introduction of the NC(V), which started off with a first intake of 25 804, increasing to 66 981 in 2008 as a result of continuing students and a new intake, and reaching a total enrolment of 119 487 in 2009. The NC(V) enrolments thus increased in total by 78 per cent over this period because of new intakes and continuing students. Some of this high growth is offset by the consequent drop in N1–N3 registrations. Enrolments in the NIC, NCOR (National Certificate Orientation) and NSC programmes dropped from

21 435 in 2007 to 10 050 in 2009 since they were being phased out and replaced by the NC(V). Skills-programme registrations increased sharply from 4 053 in 2007 to 8 241 in 2009, which represents a total increase of 51 per cent. By 2009 total registrations had increased by 12 per cent in comparison with 2007.

Table 5 clearly shows the role that private and public FET colleges fulfil with regard to the various qualification types. Private FET colleges show large numbers of N1–N3 as well as N4–N6 registrations. In 2007 private FET colleges registered 3 548 NC(V) students for examinations. By 2009 the number of NC(V) registrations of private FET colleges had risen sharply to 17 502.

Table 5: Examination registrations by institution type and qualification type, 2007 to 2009

	2007			2008			2009		
Qualification	Private FET	Public FET	Total	Private FET	Public FET	Total	Private FET	Public FET	Total
N1-N3	29 111	88 749	117 860	23 708	63 474	87 182	16 966	29 593	46 559
N4-N6	21 834	114 405	136 239	23 984	119 284	143 268	31 707	132 011	163 718
NC(V)	3 548	22 256	25 804	9 391	57 590	66 981	17 502	101 985	119 487
NIC NCOR NSC	4 393	17 042	21 435	5 119	13 041	18 160	4 042	6 008	10 050
Skills programme	530	3 523	4 053	753	5 210	5 963	979	7 262	8 241
Grand Total	**59 416**	**245 975**	**305 391**	**62 955**	**258 599**	**321 554**	**71 196**	**276 859**	**348 055**

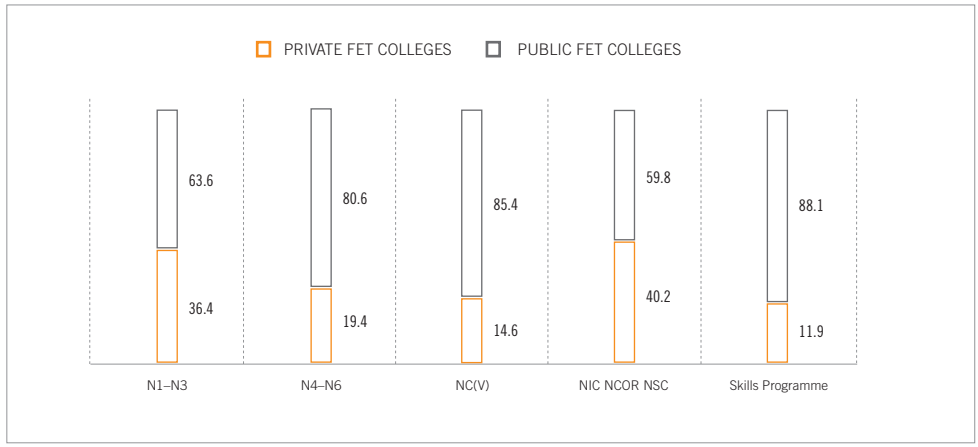
Source: DHET (2011), FET examination data (2007–2009)

Figure 7 shows the respective roles public and private FET colleges played in the registrations of various qualification types. Private FET colleges registered considerable percentages of N1–N3 (36.4 per cent) and NIC, NCOR and NSC (40.2 per cent) of the total private and public registrations in 2009. With regard to the NC(V), the private FET colleges played a significantly smaller role (14.6 per cent of total) compared to the public FET colleges (85.4 per cent). The private FET colleges are, however, playing an important role in N4–N6 offerings (19.4 per cent) considering that the total private FET college registrations for all qualifications amounted to 20.5 per cent.

The changes that occurred in the qualification type registrations for public and private FET colleges combined over the period 2007 to 2009 are shown in Figure 8. The introduction of the NC(V) during this period impacted strongly on the changes observed. Skills-progamme registrations increased from 1.3 per cent in 2007 to 2.4 per cent of the total in 2009. The NIC, NCOR and NSC registrations declined from 7.0 per cent in 2007 to 2.9 per cent in 2009 as a result of these qualifications being phased out. The NC(V) registrations increased from 8.4 per cent in 2007 to 34.3 per cent in 2009 as a result of the new intakes and the accumulation of students moving on to levels 3 and 4 of

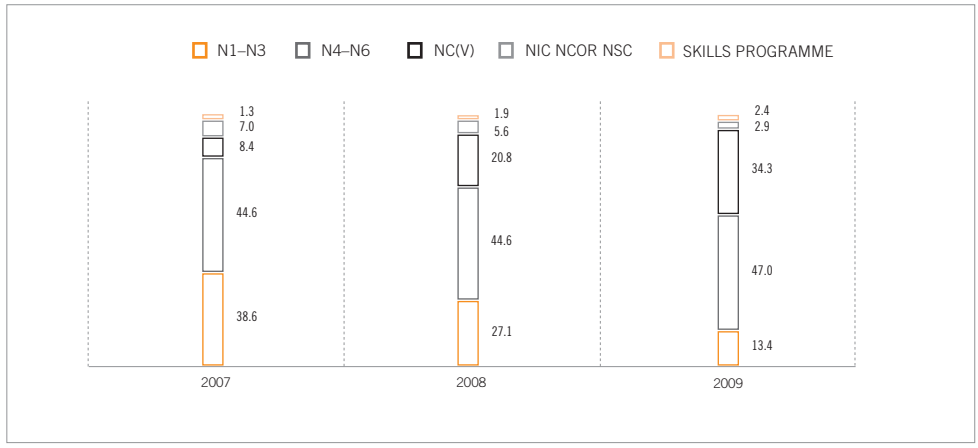
the NC(V). Due to the fact that the N4–N6 registrations were not affected by the introduction of the NC(V), the registrations of N4–N6 qualifications increased from 44.6 per cent in 2007 to 47.0 per cent in 2009.

Figure 7: Percentage of public and private FET college examination registrations per qualification type, 2009



Source: DHET (2011), FET examination data (2007–2009)

Figure 8: Percentage changes in qualification type of the examination registrations per province, 2007 to 2009



Source: DHET (2011), FET examination data (2007–2009)

Main findings and trends for the period 2007 to 2009

- By 2009 the private FET colleges represented 20.5 per cent of examination candidates and this figure was growing annually at an average rate of 9.5 per cent compared to the average annual growth rate of public FET college examination candidates of 6.1 per cent.
- The provincial spread of FET college provisioning is not proportional to the population numbers in the provinces. This uneven provincial provisioning needs to be addressed in future expansion of the FET sector.
- Foreign student examination registrations in public and private FET colleges have also been declining sharply (14.4 per cent on average per annum) over the 2007 to 2009 period.
- Over the 2007 to 2009 period, examination registrations in the N1–N3 programmes decreased sharply as a result of the introduction of the NC(V) 2, 3 and 4 programmes, whilst the N4–N6 registrations increased in total by 17 per cent over this period. Examination registrations for skills/occupational programmes increased in total by 51 per cent over this period. In total the public and private FET college examination registrations increased by 12 per cent, revealing a high student number growth rate for the FET sector.
- If the relative size of the public and private FET colleges sectors are considered, it appears that the private FET colleges are playing a significant role in the provisioning of the N programmes whilst the public FET colleges are playing a more dominant role in the offering of the NC(V) programmes.
- By 2009 the N4–N6 examination registrations were still much higher (47.0 per cent of total) than the NC(V) registrations (34.3 per cent of total) for the public and private FET colleges. This clearly signals that there is definitely a clear and continuing demand for the N programmes and that the DHET should revise previous considerations of phasing these programmes out. Curriculum renewal of these programmes might be a better option.
- The high number of examination registrations for N4–N6 programmes also indicate that the FET college sector is well placed to play a more meaningful role in the provision of higher education at the lower levels of the NQF such as NQF Level 5 Higher Certificates.
- The percentages of N1–N6 students that were successful in their studies is very low (approximately 40 per cent on average) and there is ample room for improvement in the efficiency of the sector.

In the next section the data trends observed within the 2010 FETMIS will be discussed to provide an overview of the current institutional landscape and programme distribution. The 2010 FET examination data were not available for analysis at the time of writing.

Enrolments in 2010 – public FET colleges

It was noted earlier that the quality and completeness of the 2010 FETMIS data were much better than the 2007 to 2009 FETMIS data. The 2010 FETMIS data collection was done by the DHET whereas the previous data sets were collected by the provincial education departments. It must be borne in mind that the data cover only the public FET colleges since private FET colleges, data are not captured in FETMIS.

Institutional landscape – public FET colleges 2010

The public FET sector consists of 50 FET colleges with 248 campuses spread throughout the nine provinces. In 2010, the public FET enrolments were the highest in Gauteng (85 268), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (62 691), and the Western Cape (47 371). A total of 8 126 lecturing staff were employed at public FET colleges out of a total of 14 470 staff members.

Table 6: Number of public FET colleges, enrolments, lecturing staff and total staff, 2010

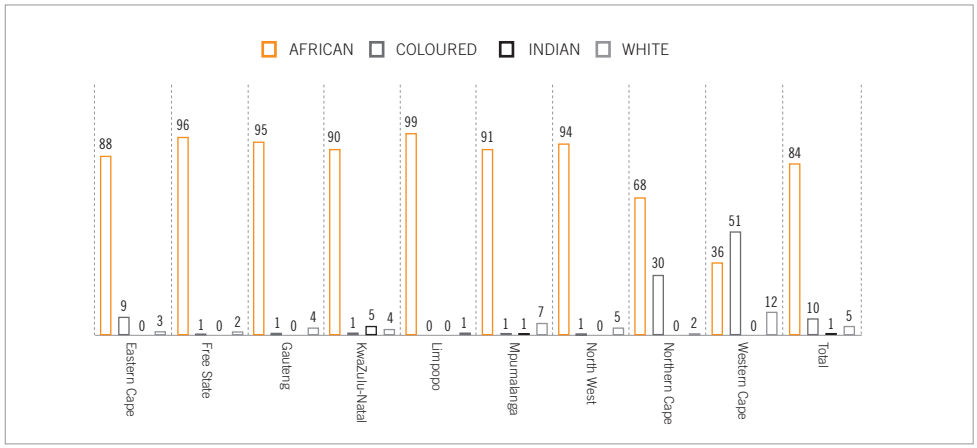
Province	Public FET colleges	Public FET colleges campuses	Enrolments	Lecturing staff	Total staff
Eastern Cape	8	36	31 346	994	1 688
Free State	4	18	23 410	522	986
Gauteng	8	49	85 268	2 077	3 509
KwaZulu-Natal	9	49	62 691	1 404	2 540
Limpopo	7	24	33 222	853	1 570
Mpumalanga	3	15	19 368	441	836
Northern Cape	2	7	6 466	163	320
North West	3	12	17 747	412	867
Western Cape	6	38	47 371	1 260	2 154
Total	**50**	**248**	**326 889**	**8 126**	**14 470**

Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2010)

The race profile of public FET students per province for 2010 is shown in Figure 9. Africans constituted 84 per cent of enrolments, followed by coloureds (10 per cent), whites (5 per cent) and Indians (1 per cent). In six of the nine provinces

African enrolments were more than 90 per cent. Coloured enrolments were 30 per cent in the Northern Cape and 51 per cent in the Western Cape, which is in line with the race profiles in these provinces. The Western Cape had the highest percentage of white enrolments (12 per cent) and the lowest percentage of African enrolments (36 per cent). The race profile of the enrolments in the FET sector is very representative of the race profile of the population.

Figure 9: Percentage distribution of public FET college students by province and race, 2010



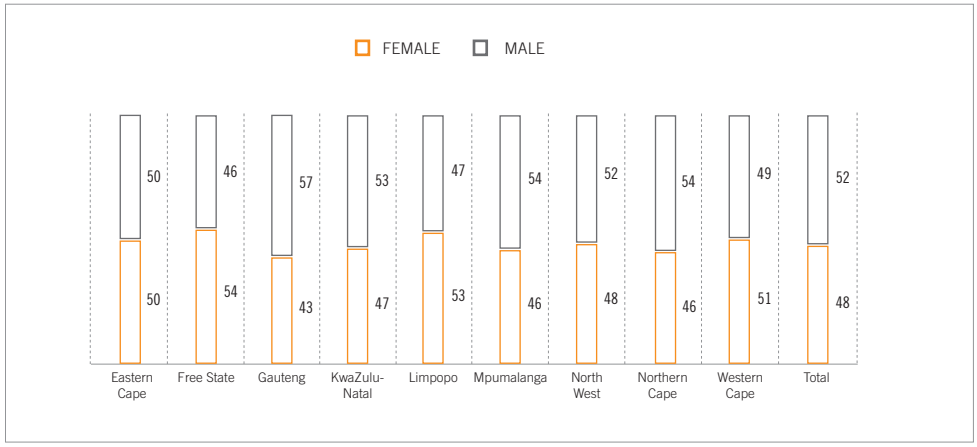
Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2010)

Whereas in higher education female enrolments represent a higher percentage, the public FET enrolments reveal the opposite trend. The gender profile of public FET colleges is 52 per cent male and 48 per cent female. In Gauteng males represented 57 per cent of enrolments compared to 43 per cent female enrolments. In Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape 54 per cent of enrolments were male and 46 per cent female. The Free State (46 per cent), Limpopo (47 per cent), and the Western Cape (49 per cent) had lower percentages of males enrolled compared with females (see Figure 10).

Table 7 gives the number of public FET enrolments per province and age group, and Figure 11 shows the percentage distribution of public FET students by province and age group for 2010.

Of the 326 889 total enrolments in public FET colleges in 2010, 18 562 (5.7 per cent) were between the ages of 15 to 17, 220 111 (67.3 per cent) were aged 18 to 24, 70 212 (21.5 per cent) were aged 25 to 35, and 18 004 (5.5 per cent) were 36 years of age or older. Except for KwaZulu-Natal (20 per cent) and the Eastern Cape (6 per cent) very small percentages of enrolled students were in the 15 to 17 age bracket. The percentage of 15- to 17-year-olds ranged between 1 per cent to 3 per cent in the other provinces.

Figure 10: Percentage distribution of public FET college students by province and gender, 2010



Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2010)

The majority of students were between the ages of 18 and 24 in all the provinces, ranging from the lowest in KwaZulu-Natal (51 per cent) to the highest in Limpopo (82 per cent). The percentages of 25- to 35-year-olds ranged between 15 per cent in Limpopo to 27 per cent in Mpumalanga and North West. Limpopo had only 1 per cent students in the age group 36 years or older, which is reflective of the small number of students enrolled for occupational programmes. The Western Cape had the highest percentage (12 per cent) of students that were 36 years of age or older, which correlates with its very high number of students enrolled for occupational programmes (13 986).

The mid-year population estimated for 2010 by Statistics South Africa estimated the 15- to 17-year-old population as 3 065 008, the 18- to 24-year-old population as 6 903 794 and the 25- to 35-year-old population as 8 825 415. Comparing the students enrolled in public FET colleges with these population numbers means that 0.6 per cent of the 15- to 17-year-olds, 3.2 per cent of the 18- to 24-year-olds, and 0.2 per cent of the 25- to 35-year-olds of the population were enrolled in public FET colleges.

Programme distribution – public FET colleges 2010

Table 8 provides a summary of the headcount enrolments for individual public FET colleges per province and qualification type. The total enrolment of 326 889 in public FET colleges in 2010 were made up of 23 160 enrolments in occupational programmes, 3 916 in NSC, 24 937 in N1–N3, 130 039 in NC(V), and 144 837 in N4–N6.

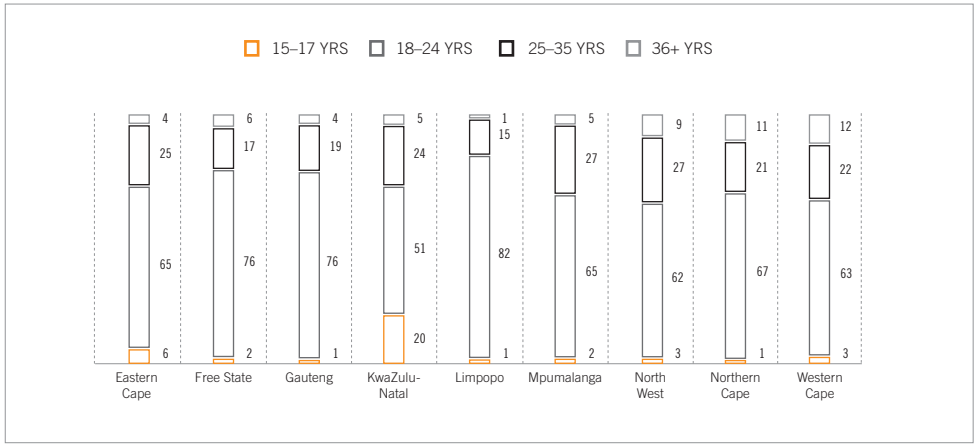
Figure 12 provides a summary overview of the 2010 public FET enrolments per qualification type. The skills programmes referred to in the previous section were labelled occupational programmes in this data set. Gauteng had the highest enrolments in public FET colleges (85 268), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (62 691), and the Western Cape (47 371). What is surprising is that the Eastern Cape, which is one of the provinces with a very high population, had only 31 346 students enrolled in public FET colleges. Similarly, Limpopo, which is also a province with a high population, only had 33 222 enrolments in public FET colleges in 2010.

Table 7: Public FET college students by province and age group, 2010

Province	15–17 years	18–24 years	25–35 years	36+ years	Total
Eastern Cape	1 933	20 427	7 697	1 289	31 346
Free State	486	17 689	3 941	1 294	23 410
Gauteng	1 097	64 445	16 511	3 215	85 268
KwaZulu-Natal	12 379	32 214	15 254	2 843	62 691
Limpopo	276	27 371	5 113	461	33 222
Mpumalanga	477	12 622	5 211	1 058	19 368
North West	446	10 963	4 802	1 536	17 747
Northern Cape	96	4 330	1 345	695	6 466
Western Cape	1 561	29 638	10 350	5 822	47 371
Grand total	**18 562**	**220 111**	**70 212**	**18 004**	**326 889**

Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2010)

Figure 11: Percentage distribution of public FET college students by province and age group, 2010



Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2010)

Table 8: Headcount enrolments for public FET colleges per province, college and qualification type, 2010 (continued)

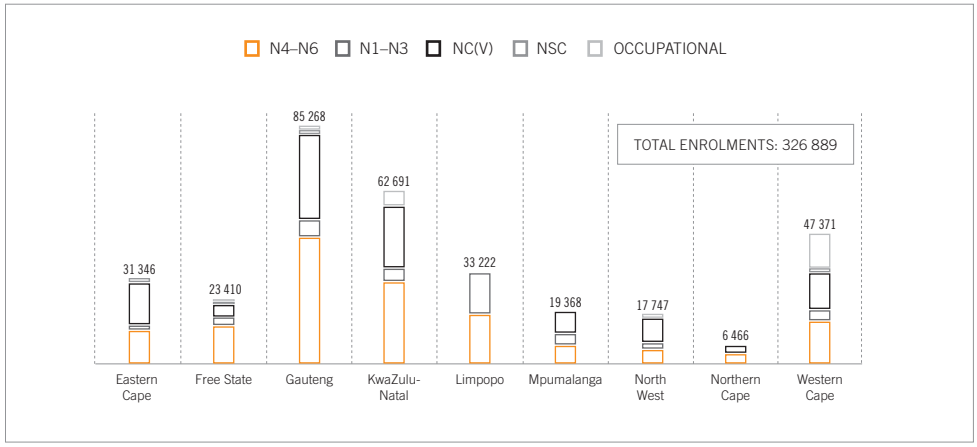
Province	Public FET college	N1-N3	N4–N6	NC(V)	NSC	Occupational	Total
	Umfolozi FET College	231	3 514	2 380			6 125
	Umgungundlovu FET	369	4 820	1 273			6 462
KwaZulu-Natal total		4 446	29 942	22 951		5 352	62 691
Limpopo	Capricorn FET College		1 692	5 001			6 693
	Lephalale FET College	558	1 231	1 056			2 845
	Letaba FET College		146	2 663			2 809
	Mopani South East FET	131	845	3 964			4 940
	Sekhukhune FET College		2 590	1 968			4 558
	Vhembe FET College	13	4 534	4 013			8 560
	Waterberg FET College		24	2 769		24	2 817
Limpopo total		702	11 062	21 434		24	33 222
Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni FET College	41	704	2 733			3 478
	Gert Sibande FET College	685	1 834	2 809		192	5 520
	Nkangala FET College	3 287	3 964	3 048		71	10 370
Mpumalanga total		4 013	6 502	8 590		263	19 368
North West	Orbit FET College	853	2 126	4 549		305	7 833
	Taletso FET College		859	2 076			2 935
	Vuselela FET College	832	2 398	3 065		684	6 979
North West total		1 685	5 383	9 690		989	17 747
Northern Cape	Northern Cape Rural FET College	130	1 702	1 516			3 348
	Northern Cape Urban FET College	78	2 114	926			3 118
Northern Cape Total		208	3 816	2 442			6 466
Western Cape	Boland FET College		3 887	1 842	20	1 925	7 674
	College of Cape Town FET College	589	3 525	2 580		2 314	9 008
	False Bay FET College		386	1 722	197	694	2 999
	Northlink FET College	2 913	7 351	2 192	606	7 823	20 885
	South Cape FET College		284	1 921		907	3 112
	West Coast FET College	100	336	2 934		323	3 693
Western Cape total		3 602	15 769	13 191	823	13 986	47 371
Grand total		**24 937**	**144 837**	**130 039**	**3 916**	**23 160**	**326 889**

Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2010)

Table 8: Headcount enrolments for public FET colleges per province, college and qualification type, 2010

Province	Public FET college	N1–N3	N4–N6	NC(V)	NSC	Occupational	Total
Eastern Cape	Buffalo City FET College	19	3 453	2 280	621	54	6 427
	East Cape Midlands FET College	447	1 746	1 406	183	326	4 108
	Ikhala FET College		504	1 415			1 919
	Ingwe FET College	71	413	2 161	264		2 909
	King Hintsa FET College		646	1 864			2 510
	King Sabata Dalindyebo FET	229	3 326	1 826	70	66	5 517
	Lovedale FET College		462	1 047			1 509
	Port Elizabeth FET College	376	1 994	3 393	684		6 447
Eastern Cape total		1 142	12 544	15 392	1 822	446	31 346
Free State	Flavius Mareka	904	3 755	805	77	331	5 872
	Goldfields FET College	0	1 489	830		174	2 493
	Maluti FET College	186	2 317	1 476	325	585	4 889
	Motheo FET College	2 073	6 437	1 487	105	54	10 156
Free State total		3 163	13 998	4 598	507	1 144	23 410
Gauteng	Central JHB		8 357	1 953			10 310
	Ekurhuleni East FET College	46	2 121	4 927		130	7 224
	Ekurhuleni West College	1 203	8 381	4 525		560	14 669
	Sedibeng FET College	0	1 003	4 467		182	5 652
	South West FET College	973	4 565	4 724			10 262
	Tshwane North FET College	81	6 464	4 599	764		11 908
	Tshwane South FET College	1 650	12 620	4 918		53	19 241
	Western College FET	2 023	2 310	1 638		31	6 002
Gauteng total		5 976	45 821	31 751	764	956	85 268
KwaZulu-Natal	Coastal FET College	225	6 673	5 769		172	12 839
	Elangeni FET College	0	664	2 359		78	3 101
	Esayidi FET College	17	2 044	1 825		527	4 413
	Majuba FET College	3 356	6 082	5 419		4 450	19 307
	Mnambithi FET College		524	1 443			1 967
	Mthashana FET College	248	2 597	838			3 683
	Thekwini FET College		3 024	1 645		125	4 794

Figure 12: Headcount enrolments in public FET colleges per province and qualification type, 2010



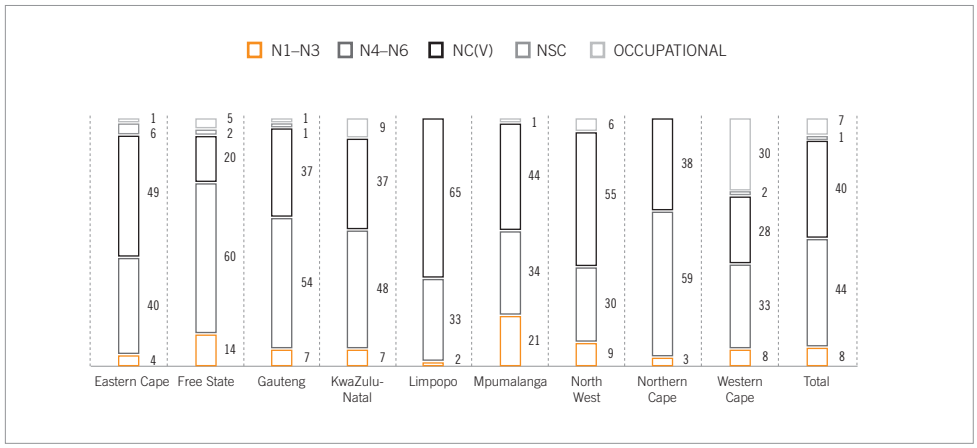
Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2010)

Very different qualification type enrolment patterns can be observed per province (see Figure 13). Occupational-programme enrolments represent very small percentages of enrolments in the provinces except for the Western Cape where they account for 30 per cent of the programme enrolments, which is an even higher percentage than for the NC(V) in the Western Cape. The occupational-programme enrolments represented 9 per cent of all enrolments in KwaZulu-Natal, followed by 6 per cent in North West, and 5 per cent in the Free State. Enrolments in occupational programmes represented 7 per cent of all enrolments in all provinces in 2010. The advanced stage of the phasing out of the NSC is evident in the fact that it only represented 1 per cent of enrolments in 2010.

A notable pattern is the comparative enrolment patterns of the NC(V) versus the N4–N6 enrolments. At national level N4–N6 enrolments represented a higher percentage (44 per cent) of the total enrolments compared to the NC(V), which represented 40 per cent of all enrolments. In only four provinces enrolments in the NC(V) programmes were higher than the N4–N6 programme enrolments, namely: Eastern Cape (49 per cent versus 40 per cent), Limpopo (65 per cent versus 33 per cent), Mpumalanga (44 per cent versus 34 per cent), and North West (55 per cent versus 30 per cent). In the Free State only 20 per cent of enrolments were in the NC(V) programmes compared to 60 per cent of enrolments in the N4–N6 programmes. In the remaining provinces enrolments in the NC(V) programmes were also lower than in the N4–N6 programmes: Gauteng (37 per cent versus 54 per cent), KwaZulu-Natal (37 per cent versus 48 per cent), Northern Cape (38 per cent versus 59 per cent), and the Western Cape (28 per cent versus 33 per cent). Enrolments in the

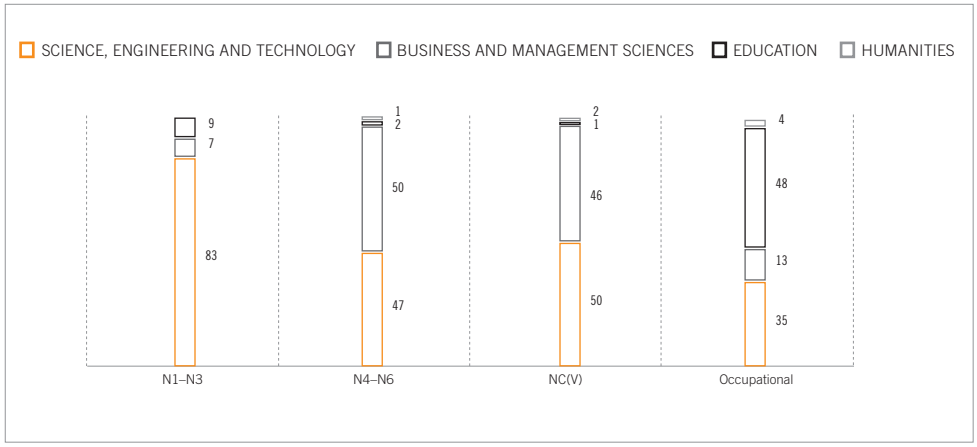
N1–N3 programmes were relatively low as a result of the intended replacement of these programmes by the NC(V). At national level 8 per cent of all enrolments were still in the N1–N3 programmes. The highest were in Mpumalanga (21 per cent of provincial enrolments) and the Free State (14 per cent of provincial enrolments).

Figure 13: Percentage enrolments in public FET colleges per province and qualification type, 2010



Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2010)

Figure 14: Percentage distribution of public FET college students by major field of study and qualification type, 2010



Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2010)

The percentage of public FET college students by major field of study and qualification type is shown in Figure 14. The major fields of study used in this analysis are science, engineering and technology; business and management sciences; education; and humanities. NSC qualifications were left out of the analysis since these qualifications cannot be classified into these four major fields of study. The various programme enrolments were classified into these fields of study as discussed below.

For the N1–N6 certificates the followings fields of study were included in the major field of studies:

- Science, engineering and technology include studies in agriculture, engineering and utility studies.
- Business and management sciences include business studies.
- Education includes educare and social services.
- Humanities include art and music.

For the NC(V) the followings fields of study were included in the major field of studies:

- Science, engineering and technology include studies in civil engineering and building construction; drawing office practice; electrical infrastructure and construction; engineering and related design; process plant operations; information technology and computer science; mechatronics; primary agriculture; and process instrumentation.
- Business and management sciences include studies in finance, economics and accounting; hospitality; management; marketing; office administration; and tourism.
- Education includes education and development.
- Humanities include safety in society.

For the occupational/skills programmes the followings fields of study were included in the major field of studies:

- Science, engineering and technology include studies in agriculture and nature conservation; manufacturing, engineering and technology; health sciences and social services; physical, mathematical, computer and life sciences; and physical planning and construction.
- Business and management sciences include studies in business, commerce and management sciences.
- Education includes studies in education, training and development.
- Humanities include studies in human and social studies; law, military

science and security; culture and arts; communication studies and language; and services.

The total distribution per major field of study for the N1–N3, NC(V), N4–N6 and occupational qualification registrations was as follows:

- science, engineering and technology – 50.4 per cent
- business and management sciences – 42.7 per cent
- education – 5.3 per cent
- humanities – 1.5 per cent.

By and large the public FET colleges are a significant player in the offering of science, engineering and technology as well as business and management sciences programmes, which account for 93.1 per cent of all programme enrolments.

In 2010, 83 per cent of the N1–N3 enrolments were in science, engineering and technology, with 7 per cent in business and management sciences, and 9 per cent in education. In the N4–N6 enrolments, 47 per cent were in science, engineering and technology, and 50 per cent in business and management sciences. In the NC(V), 50 per cent of enrolments were in science, engineering and technology, and 46 per cent in business and management sciences. The spread of enrolments in occupational programmes shows that the highest enrolments were in education (48 per cent) and science, engineering and technology (35 per cent), followed by business and management sciences (13 per cent) and with only 4 per cent in humanities.

Staff distribution – public FET colleges 2010

Table 9 provides the headcounts of the lecturing, management and support staff at public FET colleges per province, college and staff category. In 2010 there were a total of 14 470 staff members at the public FET colleges with 445 (3.1 per cent) employed at managerial level, 8 126 (56.2 per cent) as lecturing staff, and 5 899 (40.8 per cent) as support staff members. Figure 15 shows the percentages of full-time and part-time staff at public FET colleges per province, college and staff category.

In all provinces the number of lecturing staff members amounted to more than 50 per cent of the staff employed, except in North West where 47.5 per cent of the staff members were classified as lecturing staff. The highest percentages of lecturing staff were in Gauteng (59.2 per cent), followed by the Eastern Cape (58.9 per cent) and the Western Cape (58.5 per cent).

These data provide an overall picture of the number of staff per college and province as well as the distribution of staff across the three staff categories of staff. In order to get an appropriate overview of the adequacy of lecturing

Table 9: Lecturing, management and support staff at public FET colleges per province, college and staff category

Province	Public FET college	Lecturing staff	Management staff	Support staff	Grand total
Eastern Cape	Buffalo City FET College	167	4	92	263
	East Cape Midlands FET College	167	2	60	229
	Ikhala FET College	64	6	46	116
	Ingwe FET College	82	24	61	167
	King Hintsa FET College	90	3	73	166
	King Sabata Dalindyebo FET	127	4	71	202
	Lovedale FET College	78	9	118	205
	Port Elizabeth FET College	219	3	118	340
Eastern Cape total		994	55	639	1 688
Free State	Flavius Mareka	123	2	83	208
	Goldfields FET College	77	3	59	139
	Maluti FET College	140	19	103	262
	Motheo FET College	182	37	158	377
Free State total		522	61	403	986
Gauteng	Central JHB	237	4	170	411
	Ekurhuleni East FET College	246	2	159	407
	Ekurhuleni West College	313	3	231	547
	Sedibeng FET College	237	3	84	324
	South West FET College	187	17	204	408
	Tshwane North FET College	343	4	226	573
	Tshwane South FET College	364	50	174	588
	Western College FET	150	3	98	251
Gauteng total		2 077	86	1 346	3 509
KwaZulu-Natal	Coastal FET College	342	3	239	584
	Elangeni FET College	167	26	111	304
	Esayidi FET College	177	16	148	341
	Majuba FET College	64	3	57	124
	Mnambithi FET College	81	3	58	142
	Mthashana FET College	93	1	82	176
	Thekwini FET College	166	6	104	276
	Umfolozi FET College	150	1	136	287
	Umgungundlovu FET	164	21	121	306
KwaZulu-Natal total		1 404	80	1 056	2 540

Table 9: Lecturing, management and support staff at public FET colleges per province, college and staff category (continued)

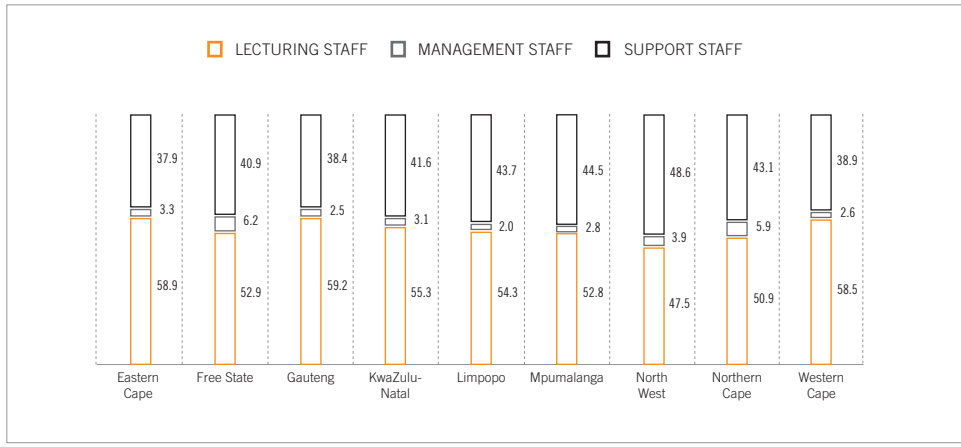
Province	Public FET college	Lecturing staff	Management staff	Support staff	Grand total
Limpopo	Capricorn FET College	241	1	153	395
	Lephalale FET College	53	1	40	94
	Letaba FET College	86	4	97	187
	Mopani South East FET	130	1	56	187
	Sekhukhune FET College	98	2	91	191
	Vhembe FET College	146	21	158	325
	Waterberg FET College	99	1	91	191
Limpopo total		853	31	686	1 570
Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni FET College	106	13	128	247
	Gert Sibande FET College	140	10	148	298
	Nkangala FET College	195	0	96	291
Mpumalanga total		441	23	372	836
North West	Orbit FET College	151	3	160	314
	Taletso FET College	108	6	139	253
	Vuselela FET College	153	25	122	300
North West total		412	34	421	867
Northern Cape	Northern Cape Rural FET College	91	6	55	152
	Northern Cape Urban FET College	72	13	83	168
Northern Cape total		163	19	138	320
Western Cape	Boland FET College	165	8	161	334
	College of Cape Town FET College	265	8	98	371
	False Bay FET College	194	4	131	329
	Northlink FET College	363	6	213	582
	South Cape FET College	161	4	139	304
	West Coast FET College	112	26	96	234
Western Cape total		1 260	56	838	2 154
Grand total		**8 126**	**445**	**5 899**	**14 470**

Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2010)

staff, the student:staff full-time equivalent ratios would have to be calculated. Unfortunately this was not possible with the available data.

In essence, a 'full-time equivalent' converts all subject enrolments in contact, distance, full-time and part-time mode in a particular year into 'full-time students that are enrolled for a full year curriculum'. A student that is enrolled for the full curriculum for a particular year of study will be equal to one full-time equivalent. A student enrolled for subjects that only equal half the credits of the full curriculum for the year will be half a full-time equivalent. A lecturing staff member that is employed full-time for a full academic year will be one full-time equivalent lecturing staff member. A part-time lecturing staff member will be equal to the *pro rata* fraction of a full workload of a full-time employed lecturing staff member.

Figure 15: Percentages of full-time and part-time staff at public FET colleges per province, college and staff category



Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2010)

The 2008 National Plan for Further Education and Training Colleges was followed by the introduction of programme-based funding geared to the NC(V). The National Norms and Standards for Funding of Colleges provided for the funding of NC(V) enrolments only (DHET 2010). The funding of N courses was excluded from the Norms and Standards for Funding of Colleges. Colleges that believed that the offering of the N courses was what industry wanted, and especially those that had large numbers of N enrolments, had to find their own funding to appoint staff to offer these courses. Staff salaries outside the NC(V) framework have been excluded since the number of students on the NC(V) determine the number of posts that can be funded using the Funding Norms. The impact of this can be seen in the following tables.

The percentage distribution of staff at public FET colleges per province, staff category and appointment type is given in Table 10.

Table 10: Percentage distribution of staff at public FET colleges per province, staff category and appointment type

	Lecturing staff		Management staff		Support staff	
Province	Permanent (%)	Temporary/ contract (%)	Permanent (%)	Temporary/ contract (%)	Permanent (%)	Temporary/ contract (%)
Eastern Cape	67.4	32.6	90.9	9.1	69.3	30.7
Free State	61.7	38.3	98.4	1.6	73.2	26.8
Gauteng	70.7	29.3	76.7	23.3	75.5	24.5
KwaZulu-Natal	66.5	33.5	88.8	11.3	75.7	24.3
Limpopo	89.0	11.0	100.0	–	91.3	8.7
Mpumalanga	84.6	15.4	100.0	–	90.6	9.4
North West	84.7	15.3	97.1	2.9	86.0	14.0
Northern Cape	35.0	65.0	78.9	21.1	44.9	55.1
Western Cape	56.1	43.9	67.9	32.1	72.6	27.4
Total	**69.4**	**30.6**	**87.0**	**13.0**	**77.1**	**22,9**

Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2010)

Table 11 provides Percentage distribution of staff at public FET colleges per province and by remuneration type. It shows that the state paid 67.4 per cent of lecturing staff salaries and the colleges contributed 32.6 per cent. In North West, the state paid only 29.6 per cent of the lecturing staff salaries compared to 70.4 per cent of lecturers whose salaries was paid by the colleges. Similarly, in the Northern Cape, the state paid only 35.0 per cent of lecturing staff salaries whilst 65.0 per cent of lecturing staff salaries were paid by colleges. The highest percentage of state paid lecturing staff was in Limpopo (97.4 per cent), followed by Mpumalanga (92.7 per cent) and Gauteng (80.2 per cent).

The state paid the salaries of most of the management staff in all provinces. In 2010, the state paid 86.5 per cent of the management staff salaries, whilst 13.5 per cent of the management staff salaries were paid by the colleges. In Mpumalanga the state paid the salaries of 87.4 per cent of the support staff, followed by Limpopo where the state paid 84.5 per cent of the support staff's salaries. In KwaZulu-Natal the state paid 54.1 per cent of all the support staff members' salaries. In the remainder of the provinces the state paid less than half of the support staff's salaries. In total the state paid 48.9 per cent of all the support staff members' salaries, whilst 51.1 per cent of the support staff members' salaries were paid by the colleges.

Table 11: Percentage distribution of staff at public FET colleges per province and by remuneration type

Province	Lecturing staff		Management staff		Support staff	
	College (%)	State (%)	College (%)	State (%)	College (%)	State (%)
Eastern Cape	39.0	61.0	9.1	90.9	57.0	43.0
Free State	45.2	54.8	4.9	95.1	53.8	46.2
Gauteng	19.8	80.2	24.4	75.6	55.9	44.1
KwaZulu-Natal	47.6	52.4	15.0	85.0	45.9	54.1
Limpopo	2.6	97.4	–	100.0	15.5	84.5
Mpumalanga	7.3	92.7	–	100.0	12.6	87.4
North West	70.4	29.6	5.9	94.1	69.8	30.2
Northern Cape	65.0	35.0	21.1	78.9	53.6	46.4
Western Cape	39.4	60.6	23.2	76.8	80.7	19.3
Total	**32.6**	**67.4**	**13.5**	**86.5**	**51.1**	**48.9**

Source: DHET (2011), FETMIS (2010)

Certificates awarded

The number of certificates awarded by qualification type is provided in Table 12. Note that the data for the number of NSC students from FET colleges that had successfully completed their certificates is not available. Table 12 shows the percentage of N1–N3 and N4–N6 students that have successfully completed their certificates. The percentages of N1–N3 students that successfully completed their studies for the years 2007 to 2009 were 36.1 per cent, 26.7 per cent and 40.8 per cent respectively (Table 13). The percentages of N4–N6 students that successfully completed their studies for the years 2007 to 2009 were 39.2 per cent, 41.0 per cent and 40.4 per cent respectively. These are low rates of completion indicating an inefficient system.

The success rate in FET colleges is extremely low, which is demonstrated by the 4 per cent throughput rate in 2009 of the cohort that started the new National Certificate (Vocational) in 2007 (NPC 2011). Throughput in the National Certificate (Vocational) programme was as low as 4 per cent in 2009 and the graduation rate for the remainder of the N1–N6 programmes was about 40 per cent over the period 2007 to 2010. The throughput rate for the National Certificate (Vocational) refers to the percentage of students who entered this programme and successfully completed it in the minimum time of three years. The graduation rate of the N1–N6 programmes refers to the percentage of graduates produced in a particular year as a percentage of the enrolments in that particular year.

Table 12: Certificates awarded by FET colleges, 2007 to 2009

Year	NC(OR)	N1	N2	N3	N4	N5	N6	NC(V) Level 2	NC(V) Level 3
2007	284	5 848	19 367	17 320	29 213	15 277	8 980	–	–
2008	11	605	7 555	15 140	32 916	15 821	9 986	–	–
2009	10	433	2 867	15 696	34 872	19 061	12 153	8 216	789

Source: DHET (2009), *Report on the Conduct of National Examinations 2009*

Table 13: Percentage of N1–N6 candidates that were successful, 2007 to 2009

	Examination registrations		Certificates issued		Percentage obtaining certificates	
Year	N1–N3	N4–N6	N1–N3	N4–N6	N1–N3	N4–N6
2007	117 860	136 239	42 535	53 470	36.1%	39.2%
2008	87 182	143 268	23 300	58 723	26.7%	41.0%
2009	46 559	163 718	18 996	66 086	40.8%	40.4%

Source: DHET (2009a), *Report on the Conduct of National Examinations 2009*

Possible future growth scenarios for post-secondary FET enrolments and graduates

The National Development Plan (NDP) envisages a further and higher education and training system that enables people to fulfil their potential (NPC 2011). The NDP indicates that the FET sector is too small and the output quality is poor. It is acknowledged that there are not enough public institutions providing learning opportunities in this sector, despite the millions of young people who are eager to learn. Currently, public FET colleges enrol an equivalent of one-third of the learners enrolled in higher education when ideally the situation should have been the other way round. One of the major contributing factors to the current small FET college sector is that the private FET institutions, including non-governmental organisations, struggle to operate in the post-1994 policy environment due to a lack of funding and the existence of a regulatory system that does not support the development of institutions (NPC 2011). The NDP foresees that the overarching goal in the first five years is to increase the system's effectiveness. Improving throughput in FET as well as in higher education will deliver far more positive results than merely expanding access.

The DHET has also called for the expansion of the FET sector in South Africa so that it can be capacitated to absorb more young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs). This is in the context

of a study done by Sheppard and Cloete (2009) which determined that in 2007 a total of 2.8 million people (41.6 per cent) in the 18 to 24 year cohort who had completed nine years' education were not employed and not in education or training. Nearly 700 000 of the 2.8 million NEETs qualified to participate in some form of post-secondary education and higher education (either certificate/diploma or degree study). It can be assumed that this figure has increased since 2007. There is therefore an increased demand for both opportunities for a second chance to complete secondary education as well as a demand for post-secondary education expansion. In this section two possible scenarios for the expansion of specifically the post-secondary FET programmes are discussed to address the problem of the NEETs who qualify for entry into post-secondary programmes. The university sector has reached its capacity in terms of enrolments. Undue pressure is being placed on universities to enrol more students. What is needed more urgently is for the FET sector to expand its post-secondary enrolment capacity in particular to produce more middle-level skilled individuals.

One way of achieving this would be to allow selected FET colleges to offer NQF Level 5 Higher Certificates in fields such as science, engineering and technology or business and management.

The South African post-secondary education system is also highly inefficient as a result of the fact that students from the secondary education system are poorly prepared to cope with the demands of post-secondary education programmes, and higher education in particular. This results in high failure rates, high drop-out rates and low graduation rates. The graduation rate is defined as the percentage of graduates expressed as a percentage of the total enrolled headcount students. Although it is a crude measure of student success, which is influenced and skewed by radical changes in enrolment growth patterns, it is a generally recognised measure of student success. It is also closely linked to throughput of students. The higher the graduation rate, the higher the throughput rate.

There is thus a twofold need with regard to the post-secondary offerings by FET colleges. Firstly, the efficiency of the system needs to be improved to ensure that more students can be successful in obtaining their certificates annually. Secondly, the capacity of the FET sector requires expansion to be able to enrol more students in their post-secondary programmes.

Two possible scenarios for the expansion of the post-secondary FET programmes are:

- *Scenario 1:* Enrolments continue to grow at recent rates, but with improvements in efficiency measured through graduation rates. This scenario shows the extent of increases in qualifications awarded as a

result of increased efficiency in the system, accompanied by steady growth.

- *Scenario 2:* This scenario shows the extent of improved efficiency accompanied by higher than current growth rates in the post-secondary provisioning by FET colleges.

Scenario 1: Steady growth with improved efficiency

Current post-secondary provisioning for FET colleges include the N4–N6 programmes. Despite recent ideas to phase them out, the ministry recently decided to postpone the phasing out of these programmes owing to needs expressed by industry and pending the development of new programmes to replace them, or curriculum renewal. The projections made in these two scenarios could then either be seen as N4–N6 enrolments with new curricula or qualifications replacing them in the future, or higher certificates that are offered in conjunction with universities, or a combination of these approaches. Owing to very low percentages of students that pass and obtain their certificates per annum, there is ample room for improvement.

For Scenario 1 the current average annual growth rate of 2.1 per cent is assumed up to 2030. To increase the efficiency of the outputs for these qualifications, the pass rate of 40.4 per cent in 2009 is assumed to increase to 70 per cent for the N4–N6 enrolments by 2020 and to further increase to 80 per cent by 2030. Figure 16 shows the expected programme enrolments and certificates awarded for the period 2007 to 2030 based on these assumptions.

The enrolments in these programmes are projected to increase from 167 093 in 2010 to 204 903 in 2020, and to 251 271 in 2030. Qualifications awarded are projected to increase from 70 909 in 2010 to 143 433 in 2020, and to 201 017 in 2030. If these efficiency improvements can be realised, the number of graduates is projected to grow at an average annual growth rate of 5.3 per cent over the period 2010 to 2030.

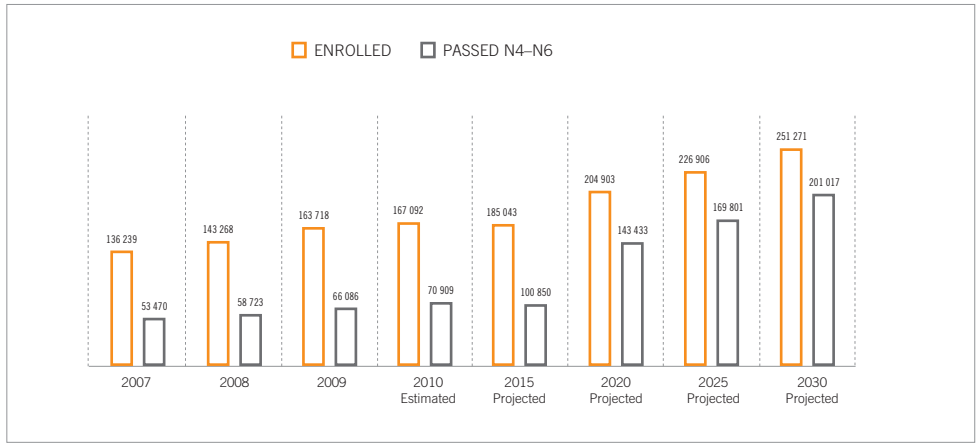
Scenario 1 conclusions

- This scenario will not make any major impact on addressing the problem of the NEETs who qualify for entry into post-secondary programmes, although it will deliver much better value for money than is currently the case.
- This scenario is based on the assumption that this represents the maximum expected and possible improvements in efficiency.
- The biggest challenge for the improvement of the efficiency of the post-secondary system is inadequate preparedness of students to cope with the skills needed to complete post-secondary education programmes. Whilst the preparedness of students is being improved incrementally,

huge investments for academic support would be needed to ensure that the success rate, graduation rates and throughput rates can be improved to realise these results from the post-secondary education system.

- Student financial support for needy but deserving students has to be adequately provided to prevent students from dropping out for financial reasons.
- The only other means to increase graduates further is to increase enrolments as well. This is shown in Scenario 2.

Figure 16: SCENARIO 1 – FET colleges, post-secondary programme enrolments and certificates awarded, 2007–2030



Note: Percentage of enrolled students that completed their N4, N5 and N6 certificates is shown on the graph above the bars.

Source: DHET (2011), National Examination Database (2007–2009), FETMIS (2010)

Scenario 2: Accelerated growth accompanied by improvements in efficiency

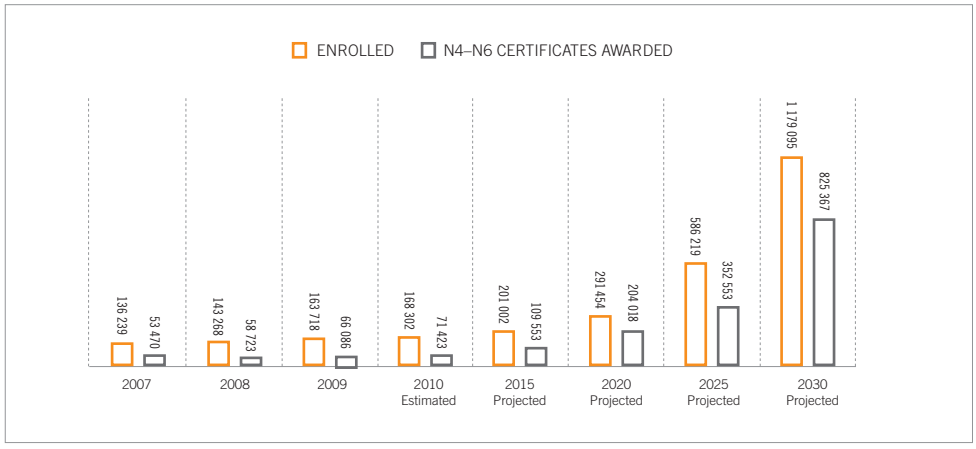
Although Scenario 1 is based on maximum anticipated improvements in efficiency, it still leaves a significant challenge for addressing the NEET problem. The NEET problem cannot be seen as an education and training problem only: more jobs need to be created to ensure that the NEET problem does not grow even further. It is assumed that the schooling system will deliver adequate numbers to feed into the post-secondary education system. This appears to be sustainable based on the increases in pass rates in recent years, the large numbers of NEETs that qualify for entry into post-secondary education, and the fact that approximately only 20 per cent of those that qualify for entry into post-secondary education actually continue their studies after secondary school. Although policy indications are that the FET colleges are being seen as the sector most likely to expand rapidly, physical and human constraints in the FET sector

as well as poor throughput rates necessitate considerable additional investments. Due to the fact that a lead time of at least four to five years is required to create additional capacity in terms of facilities and staff, lower increases in growth are projected in the first few years, followed by a steeper growth rate in later years.

As a result of the policy increasing the growth rate in FET colleges more rapidly, the following growth scenarios have been assumed (keeping in mind the lead time needed for increased capacity, both physical and human): increasing the current average annual growth rate gradually from 2.06 per cent for the period 2007 to 2010 to 5.00 per cent in 2015, and then the average annual growth rate from 10.00 per cent in 2020 to 15 per cent by 2030. The same efficiency improvements as in Scenario 1 are assumed, namely increasing the qualifications awarded from 40.4 per cent in 2009 to 70.0 per cent in 2020 and 75.0 per cent in 2030.

This scenario will result in 168 302 enrolments in 2010, 291 454 enrolments in 2020, and 1 179 095 enrolments in 2030. Graduates are projected to increase from 71 423 in 2010 to 204 018 in 2020 and 825 367 in 2030 as a result of increased growth rates and improved efficiency.

Figure 17: SCENARIO 2 – FET colleges, post-secondary programme enrolments and certificates awarded, 2007–2030



Source: DHET (2011), National Examination Database (2007–2009), FETMIS (2010)

Scenario 2 conclusions

- This scenario addresses a substantial part of the problem of NEETs who qualify for entry into post-seondary programmes, but still not adequately. It does, however, demonstrate that a huge effort and investment will be required to prevent the scale of the NEET problem increasing.
- This scenario will need major investments in infrastructure development,

training of appropriately qualified staff, strong industry–FET collaboration agreements, increased state subsidies for the post-secondary education system, as well as sufficient student financial aid to ensure the attainment of the efficiency and growth-rate scenarios.

Main findings and trends

Planning the expansion of access to post-secondary programmes – which needs to be deployed in a targeted manner with sound evidence-based priorities and interventions to improve retention and throughput rates in the FET colleges sector – is dependent on the availability of reliable data. The lack of reliable data is one of the key challenges in the sector and the current DHET initiative to establish a centrally hosted management information system for the sector is vital as this will result in the availability of much more reliable data.

The institutional landscape shows that by 2011 there were 50 public FET colleges with 248 campuses. There were 429 registered private FET colleges and many of them had offices or sites in various provinces. These figures indicate that the private FET sector plays a vital role in providing access to further education and training and that policy frameworks should be developed that enable the private FET college sector to reach its full potential.

Based on a total of 71 196 private FET college examination candidates in 2009 and adding a growth rate of 9.5 per cent produces an estimated 77 960 private FET college enrolments for 2010 on the assumption that most enrolled students registered for the examinations. Adding this to the 326 889 FETMIS 2010 public enrolments gives a total estimated enrolment of 404 849 students in public and private FET colleges in 2010. This estimate is based on the available data sources. It indicates that the private FET college sector comprises roughly 20 per cent of the total FET college sector compared to a figure for private higher education of approximately 10 per cent. A greater investment in private FET college education through forms of 'state aid' to private FET colleges (as is currently the case with private schools) would represent a possible way of strengthening this sector without passing the full cost on to the public purse.

The majority of public FET college students in 2010 were enrolled in science, engineering and technology (50.4 per cent) and in business and management sciences (42.7 per cent) programmes. The FET college sector thus plays a major role in the provision of middle level skills in fields vital for economic growth.

The planned phasing out of the N4–N6 programmes was not realised due to industry demand, and by 2010 the N4–N6 enrolments were still higher than the NC(V) enrolments. The fact that the staff employed and paid for by the colleges to offer the N programmes were fewer in number than for the NC(V) programmes provides a clear indication of the under-resourcing of public FET

colleges for quality offerings of N4–N6 programmes. This phenomenon also provides a clear example of public policies that do not match societal needs – in this case, the discrepancy between industry demand for workers that are holders of N4–N6 certificates and the supply thereof.

The FET colleges are very inefficient in terms of success and throughput rates. Throughput in the National Certificate (Vocational) programme was as low as 4 per cent in 2009 and the graduation rate was about 40 per cent over the period 2007 to 2010. Before the planned rapid expansion of the FET sector can happen, major improvements are needed with regard to the quality of the programmes as well as in throughput and success rates.

The actual capacity of the intake that FET colleges can handle is not available and needs to be established through research. This should include various models of provisioning and maximum utilisation of available facilities including possible industry-owned training facilities.

Future growth scenarios show that a combination of accelerated growth as well as efficiency improvements are needed to expand the FET sector's contribution to the desired levels of access and skills development for economic growth. The shortening of the lead time for accelerated growth is possible through the fast-tracking of staff expertise if there is much closer collaboration between FET colleges and industries of various kinds and in different parts of the country. Trainers from industry could also help shore up the teaching quotas in FET colleges, at least temporarily, whilst cementing closer engagement between colleges and industry. That way there is no need to wait for lecturers to re-qualify themselves.

The regulatory system for private FET college providers needs to be revised and funding support considered to establish a much more enabling environment for private FET college providers to ensure that they can play a more meaningful role in the expansion of the FET college sector.

A more differentiated FET college sector needs to be established in which some colleges focus on NC(V) 2–4 and occupational programmes, other colleges offer this as well as N4–N6 programmes, while a selected number also offer NQF Level 5 Higher Certificates in certain fields.

South African Post-Secondary Education Data Online

The data on the South African post-secondary eduation sector presented in this chapter is available on the website of the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET). Go to *http://www.chet.org.za/data* for selected graphs drawn from the data and to access the full data set on Google Public Data.

Chapter 5

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF FET COLLEGES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Rolf Stumpf, Joy Papier, Timothy McBride and Seamus Needham

Introduction

Can former further education and training (FET) colleges respond to the needs of large numbers of young people in South Africa who are between the ages of 18 and 24 and not in education, employment or training (NEETs)? What models of provision are FET colleges currently using and what is their capacity? Can they offer a diverse range of higher education qualifications as well as occupational and workplace training? And can such provision be increased?

These and other questions were the focus of a study undertaken by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) and the Further Education and Training Institute (FETI) of the University of the Western Cape in 2009.[10] The report identifies five models of FET colleges that are operating in South Africa:

- *Model 1*: FET colleges offering some higher education programmes on a franchise basis
- *Model 2*: Designated FET colleges offering some higher education programmes in their own right

10 FETI and CHET wish to express their appreciation to the Ford Foundation (South Africa) for its generous financial support of this project, without which it would not have been possible to embark on this research. Our appreciation also goes to all the FET college participants who so willingly participated in the survey. They did so voluntarily and with commendable commitment and dedication to the role that FET colleges play in the provision of education and training.

- *Model 3*: Designated FET colleges being given permission to have up to 50 per cent of enrolments in non-NC(V) (National Certificate [Vocational]) programmes
- *Model 4*: Transforming selected FET colleges into 'community colleges', which also cater for transfer students into universities
- *Model 5*: Expanding the number and role of private FET colleges.

Following the publication of the 2009 report, the Department of Education and Training expressed support for further work to be done in analysing the capacity of FET colleges with respect to Models 2 and 3 in particular, as an initial and partial response to the needs of young people not in employment, education or training. A survey of selected FET colleges was therefore undertaken to analyse the capacity of FET colleges to offer: (1) NQF Level 5 higher education programmes as set out in the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF); and (2) significantly larger numbers of short-term occupational and workplace training programmes. The survey data form the basis of this chapter.

The NQF Level 5 Higher Certificate is a 120-credit learning programme, which in HEQF terms is primarily an industry or vocationally-oriented qualification that usually includes a period of work-integrated learning (WIL). In this respect the Higher Certificate provides a natural continuity for the NC(V) 4 programmes at FET colleges and forms a potential bridge for existing FET college post-NQF Level 4 programmes such as their N4–N6 programmes. The difficulty with the N4–N6 programmes, however, is that their status as higher education programmes has always been unclear. Universities differ widely in their levels of recognition of learning credits of these N4–N6 programmes for higher education diploma and degree study in terms of the HEQF.

Completion of the Higher Certificate would enable students to proceed to the NQF Level 6 Advanced Certificate or to a Diploma on the basis of accumulated credits in the Higher Certificate or Advanced Certificate being recognised for diploma studies. The minimum entry requirement for the Higher Certificate is presently a National Senior Certificate obtained in traditional schooling or an NCV4, qualification subject to certain conditions.

An occupational qualification is defined in the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 as: 'a qualification associated with a trade, occupation or profession resulting from work-based learning and consisting of knowledge unit standards, practical unit standards and work experience unit standards'. A full occupational programme (i.e. one which covers knowledge, practical work and actual work experience) can lead to a national occupational award, while shorter skills-based programmes are focused on mastering a set of skills that are required to perform a specific job and are therefore occupation or job-specific, leading to the issuing of national skills certificates.

It is particularly the granting of the right to offer Higher Certificates, and in time, Advanced Certificates to selected FET colleges and the expansion of occupational programmes as potential avenues for NEETs, that is the focus of this enquiry into FET colleges.

Specifically, this chapter does not address challenges faced by FET colleges in respect of NC(V)2–4 programmes, but it assumes that the extension of the offering of N1–N6 programmes, particularly the N4–N6 programmes at FET colleges granted by the Minister of Higher Education and Training in 2010, albeit under strict conditions relating to industry support, signals a willingness to consider so-called higher education/further education mixed models (internationally usually referred to as mixed HE/FET economy models).

Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that existing FET college programmes do not offer viable alternatives to holders of the NSC. This is due to two main factors. Holders of the NSC wishing to transfer to a NC(V) programme at a FET college instead of following a diploma or degree at a university are expected to start at NC(V)2 and receive no credits for their school education. Patently this translates to repeating three years of already-completed schooling – hardly an attractive option to most school leavers. The other factor being the uncertain status of the N4–N6 programmes with respect to their longer-term continuation as well as their higher education status, coupled to varying practices amongst universities in recognising learning credits from these programmes for diploma or degree study at their institutions.

Developments in the field of education and training in South Africa since 2009

Since the 2009 publication of *Responding to the Educational Needs of Post-School Youth*, a number of positive developments have occurred in the field of education and training with regard to finding workable solutions for the NEET problem, specifically involving FET colleges. Some of these developments are briefly discussed in this section.

The establishment of a Department of Higher Education and Training

A new department, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), was established in April 2009, comprising the higher education component of the former Department of Education and the training component of the Department of Labour. This meant that the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) as well as the training centres of the Department of Labour and its National Skills Authority were transferred to the new DHET. At the same time agreement was reached that FET colleges would be located

under the new DHET and steps taken for FET colleges to become a full national competence rather than a shared national/provincial competence, as was the case in the past.

Clearly bringing FET colleges, the SETAs and higher education all under one roof establishes a much better basis for solving the NEET problem through expanding the role of FET colleges in occupational training and linking these colleges to prospective university studies.

The development of a post-school education and training system

The Minister of Higher Education and Training has on a number of occasions stressed the importance of developing an integrated post-school education and training system (PSETS). Very recently a Green Paper (*Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training*) on such a system was published for comment as a prelude to a formal White Paper to be published in 2012. While this clearly still represents work in progress, such a cohesive PSETS would constitute an important integrated base for enhancing the role of FET colleges in offering NQF Level 5 qualifications and in offering an increased number of workplace training/occupational programmes.

Admission into higher education through the NCV4

In 2009 the Minister of Higher Education and Training announced a new set of admission requirements for admission to higher education for holders of the NC(V)4 issued by the Council for General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi). Inter alia, admission to study for a Higher Certificate (NQF Level 5) at a university requires that college learners be in possession of a NC(V)4 certificate issued by Umalusi, and comply with the requirements of the language of learning and teaching in the higher education institution at which studies are to be pursued.

This development is crucial in expanding the role of FET colleges in solving the NEET problem, as it means that FET colleges designated to offer a limited number of Higher Certificates in their own right, could ensure that the language of learning requirement is incorporated into their NC(V)4 curriculum for those students wishing to pursue higher education studies. This would allow for a fairly effortless progression route into higher education for students at FET colleges who wish to avail themselves of this opportunity.

The re-introduction of N4–N6 programmes

The introduction of the NC(V)2–4 programmes in 2007 was accompanied by an announcement that all so-called NATED programmes (official college curricula

or N1–N6 programmes as they were more commonly known) would be phased out. Specifically, the last enrolments for the N4 programme were envisaged to be in 2010, implying that 2012 would mark the last of the N6 enrolments. Due to widespread representations from FET colleges and industry alike, the Minister of Higher Education and Training rescinded this decision in 2010 until such time as new policy on matters concerning occupational qualifications has been developed. One of the pre-conditions for the re-instatement and/or continuation of the N programmes is that of tangible and demonstrated industry support.

Although the N4–N6 programmes do not form part of the HEQF's bouquet of formally acknowledged higher education programmes, this decision clearly recognises the potential role which FET colleges can play in post-NQF4 programmes.

A revised framework for SETAs

In 2010 and 2011 the Minister of Higher Education and Training announced far-reaching changes affecting the role and functioning of the SETAs in South Africa. Apart from a restructuring exercise to reduce the number of SETAs, a new dispensation, though controversial in some quarters, was launched recently, aimed at strengthening the impact of SETAs on skills training. In addition to addressing governance issues at the SETAs, these changes are intended to significantly improve the utilisation of resources available in the National Skills Fund. The linkages between SETAs and FET colleges stand to be strengthened considerably through these measures.

Finding 1: Since the publication of *Responding to the Educational Needs of Post-School Youth* in 2009, a number of positive developments in the field of higher education and training have occurred which have contributed to an enabling environment in which to advance proposals on the possible role of FET colleges in addressing the NEET problem.

International approaches towards mixed higher education/further education and training models, and occupational and workplace training

The NEET problem is not unique to South Africa. It arises in many other countries, although the size and extent of the problem varies depending on the level of development of the countries concerned. This section provides a brief

overview of developments in other countries where so-called mixed higher education/further education and training models are used, and goes on to mention some international initiatives for increasing the role of occupational and workplace training. Strengthening the higher education/further education and training interface is hampered by four kinds of barriers, namely:

- *attitudinal barriers* relating to perceptions of the academic and professional status of further education and training by higher education
- *institutional barriers* relating to the differing missions of FET colleges and higher education institutions such as universities
- *curricular barriers* relating to differing emphases on the role of theoretical, applied and direct job-related knowledge in programmes between higher education institutions and FET colleges
- *structural and financial barriers* relating to different government funding regimes and different levels of institutional autonomy.

Ways of overcoming these barriers were discussed in the 2009 CHET/FETI report and are not repeated here. Instead, some examples are given of countries where so-called mixed-model approaches link higher education and FET in one institution or campus.

Australia

The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) provides for cross-sector qualification linkages to be established between any of the qualification titles in the AQF. This is supported by a set of AQF guidelines on developing cross-sector qualification linkages. In addition Australia has recently started an initiative aimed at the establishment of multi-sector campuses or 'education precincts' where, for example, a university and an FET college would operate from the same campus, thus stimulating greater inter-institutional cooperation as well as the exchange of educational programmes.

Furthermore, Australia has for a number of years had so-called 'dual-sector universities' in which both further education and training as well as higher education programmes are offered. Contrary to perceptions, these dual sector universities tend to be quite active in research and in community service. In 2005 Bachelors degree admissions at these dual-sector universities on the basis of an FET college qualification amounted to 18 per cent – a figure considerably higher than was the case for other universities, illustrating the powerful role which such institutions can play in advancing access to forms of higher education. In 2005 some of these dual-sector universities had as much as 25 per cent of their total student enrolments in their further education and training programmes (Moodie 2009:69).

New Zealand

Within New Zealand's education system, credit recognition had its basis in the introduction of a common framework for qualifications, which resulted in the development of a Register of Quality-Assured Qualifications to ensure that opportunities for 'pathways and staircasing' are in place. The Register's provisions are supported by a policy on credit recognition and transfer entitled: Supporting Learning Pathways: Credit Recognition and Transfer Policy.

United States of America

The community college model in the USA is a well-known example of a higher education-further education and training, mixed-model approach. Students at community colleges can follow a further education and training vocational or vocationally orientated programme, but can also obtain a two-year associate baccalaureate degree from the community college and transfer to a four-year college or university to complete the last two years of a liberal arts baccalaureate degree. Recently some community colleges in the USA have started offering four-year liberal arts degree programmes in their own right.

An increasingly popular mechanism to further facilitate collaboration between community colleges and universities is the *university centre* model. This is a university centre on a community college campus, working in partnership with the community college to offer Bachelors degree level courses for students from the community college.

United Kingdom and Canada

In the UK, education and training institutions that combine the teaching of further education and training and higher education are termed dual-sector or mixed-economy providers since, from a governance perspective, they belong to one sector, though some of their programmes are the primary responsibility of another sector. The number of such institutions has grown significantly during the past decade and approximately 300 further education colleges also offer some higher education qualifications, while approximately 40 universities also offer further education programmes. A large number of these further education colleges are funded directly by the higher education funding council for their prescribed programmes in higher education, including undergraduate degree programmes. A similar development has occurred in Canada (see Fleming and Lee 2009:93–109).

In a research paper published by the Department for Education and Skills (2003), the following findings were recorded for further education colleges which also offered some higher education programmes:

- while futher education student numbers in these mixed economy colleges remained fairly constant, the level of higher education provision showed a steady annual increase
- mixed economy colleges experienced good rates of progression from futher education programmes to higher education programmes in their institutions
- mixed economy colleges reported that significant numbers of futher education enrolled students who would not have considered higher education at all, were successfully encouraged to do so.

In the UK, the offering of higher education programmes in the futher education college sector is also seen as a means of achieving higher participation rates set by the British government for higher education. In this respect a publication by the Learning and Teaching Support Network (2003), states that it is clear 'that much of the growth in higher education to achieve participation rates will be through vocational and foundation level programmes, delivered by further education colleges'.

Finding 2: While community colleges in the USA have for many years been playing a vital role in strengthening the further education and training/higher education interface as an intermediary type of institution, Australia, and particularly the UK have of late accelerated the development of so-called 'dual sector institutions' which bridge the traditional higher education/further education and training divide. While the emphasis in Australia has largely been on universities which also offer further education and training, the emphasis in the UK has been twofold: on further education and training institutions which offer selected higher education programmes, and on higher education institutions which offer some further education and training programmes.

In the report prepared for the Centre for Development and Enterprise (Stumpf and Niebuhr 2011), a number of initiatives aimed at advancing the role of vocationally orientated and vocational education and training in overseas countries such as Australia, Switzerland, Israel, Chile and South Korea were analysed. The findings of that report are not represented here, save for mentioning a very interesting and seemingly effective initiative in Australia, which could play a decisive role in enhancing the role of occupational and workplace training in solving our NEET problem.

The transition of school learners wishing to move into technical and further education is facilitated by a national programme specifically designed for

this purpose, the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, which aims to equip learners with the requisite information and knowledge to make informed choices on their further education while at school. Under this programme the federal government is providing funds over a four-year period for improving youth engagement, attainment and transition arrangements within the various states (Council of Australian Governments 2009:7).

These arrangements include:

- Funding for the provision of services through the Youth Connections Programme, which is available to young people who are most at risk of disengaging, or have already disengaged from education, family and/or the community and are in danger of not attaining a year 12 school education qualification or technical and further education qualification. Service delivery is characterised by flexible and individualised case management of young people to encourage continued engagement or re-engagement with school education and/or technical and further education, and in general, to improve their ability to make positive life choices (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2009c).
- Under the overall programme, National Partnerships on Youth Attainment and Transitions, funding is also provided for the School Business Community Partnership Brokers Programme, aimed at building community capacity and infrastructure and improving community and business engagement with schools to extend learning beyond the classroom, increase student engagement, deepen learning experiences, lift attainment and improve educational outcomes. Under this programme, partnerships between and among schools, business and industry, parents and families and community groups are brokered, to support student engagement and improve education and transition outcomes (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2009b).
- A further programme funded under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions Programme is the Compact with Young Australians, which comprises a set of requirements for participation to the overall programme, an entitlement to education or training places for 15- to 24-year-olds (this entitlement scheme commenced in 2009); and changes to the schedules governing youth allowances and family tax benefits, which make some form of participation in education and training a precondition for these payments. In particular, the Compact is aimed at promoting young people's participation in education and training, providing protection from the anticipated tighter labour market, and ensuring that young people would have the qualifications needed to take up jobs as the economy recovered (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations 2009a).

- Finally, the overall programme on National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions supports a sub-programme aimed at supporting a number of career development initiatives in order to equip learners with the information on careers required for making informed choices.

Finding 3: Unlike South Africa where learners at the end of Grade 9 have to make choices regarding their future school or further education and training college studies, largely in the absence of any immediate and future support and guidance systems, Australia has invested heavily in assisting students to make appropriate choices. A striking feature of the Australian initiatives in this regard, is the involvement of schools, technical and further education colleges, local communities, industry and the learners themselves in these initiatives. Australia seems to have realised that merely creating opportunities for strengthening vocationally-oriented and vocational education is insufficient unless accompanied by strong support, guidance and decision-making information initiatives. South Africa could do well by taking a leaf out of Australia's book in this regard.

The capacity of FET colleges to offer higher education programmes and/or to increase their occupational and workplace training programme enrolments

Against the background of models in countries such as the USA, Australia and the UK presented in the previous section and the post-2009 education and training developments in South Africa discussed earlier, the capacity of some FET colleges to offer NQF Level 5 (and possibly even Level 6) higher education programmes in terms of the HEQF and/or to increase their occupational and workplace training programmes, are examined in this section of the report.

Criteria for selecting FET colleges to participate in a capacity assessment survey

Practically it was not possible to include all 50 FET colleges in a survey of their capacities to offer NQF Level 5 higher education programmes and/or larger numbers of occupational programmes. For this purpose ten FET colleges were selected in six of the nine provinces so that the following types of FET colleges were included:

- FET colleges with large enrolments, as this was deemed to be indicative of capacity to increase educational and training programmes
- FET colleges likely to be directly affected by the proposed establishment of new higher education institutions in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape
- FET colleges with some experience of offering post-NQF Level 4 programmes and/or in offering workplace training/occupational programmes.

In addition, it was deemed important to include FET colleges from a variety of geographical locations such as urban, semi-urban and rural locations. In terms of the above criteria, some specific FET colleges were selected if they were, for example, already involved in higher education institutional partnerships.

Based on the above, the following ten FET colleges were selected for participation in a survey aimed at assessing their capacity to offer NQF Level 5 higher education and/or increased numbers of workplace training programmes:

- Gauteng: Tshwane FET College in Pretoria (urban)
- KwaZulu-Natal: Coastal FET College in the Durban/Amanzimtoti area (urban)
- Mpumalanga: Ehlanzeni FET College in mBombela (semi-urban) and Gert Sibande FET College in Secunda, Bethal and Ermelo (rural)
- Western Cape: Northlink FET College in Cape Town (urban) and South Cape FET College in George (semi- urban)
- Northern Cape: Northern Cape Urban FET College in Kimberley (urban) and the Northern Cape Rural FET College in Upington (rural)
- Free State: Motheo FET College in Bloemfontein (urban) and Maluti FET College in Putjaditjaba (rural).

Survey instrument for assessing capacities of FET colleges

In order to assess the capacity of FET colleges to offer NQF Level 5 Higher Certificates and a larger number of workplace training programmes, a comprehensive questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire covered three sections:

- *Section A*: The FET college's context in respect of matters such as the number of campuses, the proximity of universities to the college, headcount student numbers for the period 2008–2010, and some information on its teaching staff.
- *Section B*: The college's capacity to offer NQF Level 5 Higher Certificates in respect of issues such as type and characteristics of existing post-

NQF Level 4 qualifications, student headcount per N4–N6 programme, qualifications of teaching staff for N4–N6 programmes, additional number of N4–N6 students that could be enrolled within the limits of existing staff and infrastructural provision, additional staff and infrastructure required to expand existing N4–N6 programmes, possible new post-NQF Level 4 programmes in order of priority, existing higher education linkages, and funding arrangements for post-NQF Level 4 programmes.

- *Section C*: The college's capacity to offer a larger number of occupational or workplace training programmes in respect of issues similar to those listed in Section B above, but applicable to their occupational offerings.

In spite of site visits to the various FET colleges to ensure good quality and useable data, as well as numerous follow-up efforts to improve data quality, the data supplied by FET colleges was cause for concern in a number of the fields covered by the questionnaire. While reasonable explanations could be offered in most cases for the difficulties experienced by the FET colleges in supplying the required information, with one or two exceptions, it was clear that management information systems capacity was sorely lacking in the FET colleges surveyed. In addition it would seem that the present management information system for FET colleges has not been fully implemented, or may require amendments.

Analysis of survey data

In this part of the report the data returns from the selected FET colleges are analysed. Based on the analyses, some conclusions are drawn.

General characteristics of selected FET colleges

Table 1 presents information in respect of the location, number of campuses, number of universities in close proximity, and the student headcount at the FET colleges. A graphic illustration of the total number of students appears in Appendix A.

From Table 1 it appears that the selected FET colleges generally have a fairly large number of campuses and that only two have no universities in close proximity. The selected FET colleges vary in size, measured in student headcount numbers, from large (more than 12 000 students), to medium (between 12 000 and 4 000 students), to smaller (less than 4 000 students). The selected FET colleges also display a satisfactory urban, semi-urban and rural distribution.

Table 1 suggests, though, that the large colleges are in urban areas. Given that South Africa's rural population is large, possibly larger than its

urban population, the rural coverage of the college sector merits further examination. It is possible that the national college model has an urban bias which inadequately caters for rural participation amongst NEETs in the rural areas.

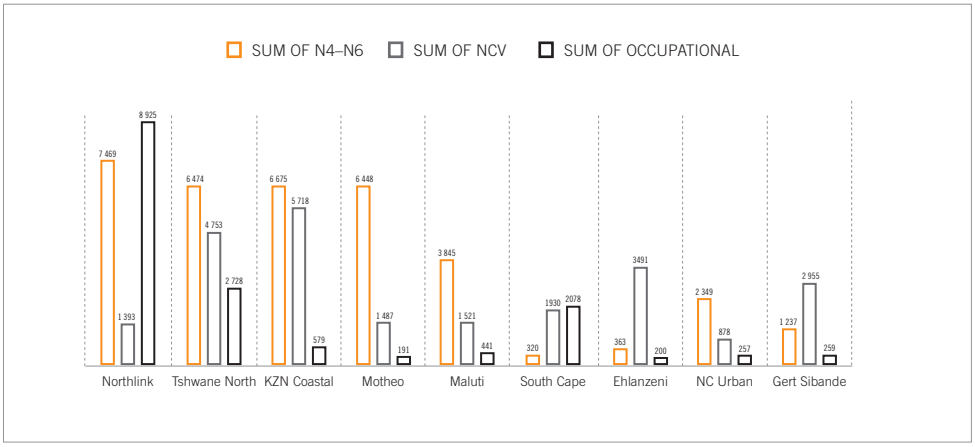
Table 1: FET colleges included in study by number of campuses, nearby universities and size

College	Location	Number of campuses	Nearby universities	Total number of students
Ehlanzeni	Semi-urban	Five or more	One	4 054
Gert Sibande	Rural	Four	None	4 451
KZN Coastal	Urban	Five or more	Four or more	12 972
Maluti	Rural	Five or more	One	5 807
Motheo	Urban	Three	Two	8 126
NC Urban	Urban	Two	None	3 484
Northlink	Urban	Five or more	Four or more	17 787
South Cape	Semi-urban	Five or more	Two	4 328
Tshwane North	Urban	Five or more	Four or more	13 955
Total				**74 964**

Figure 1 gives the student headcount distribution according to programme type in 2010, while the data from which this figure was compiled are given in Appendix A. Some FET colleges found it difficult to compile this information, especially for the N4–N6 programmes, as headcount student numbers are normally recorded against the various subjects making up these programmes and not for programmes as a whole. In addition it may be that the distinction between an 'occupational programme' (SETA-based and -funded) and a 'non-occupational programme' (DHET-funded official curricula) (see category 'other' in Table A1 in Appendix A) was somewhat unclear, and could have resulted in varying interpretations by different FET colleges.

Given the uncertainty surrounding the future of the N4–N6 programmes, the high number of N4–N6 enrolments in many of the selected FET colleges is striking. This could be indicative of FET colleges already meeting a very real need for some form of 'higher education' study. Equally striking are the medium to low (with two exceptions) enrolments in occupational programmes. In fact, for this group of FET colleges, N4–N6 programmes make up 47 per cent of all enrolments, while occupational programme enrolments only make up 11 per cent of all enrolments. This implies that NC(V) and any remaining N1–N3 programme enrolments make up 42 per cent of all enrolments.

Figure 1: Student headcount for 2010 by programme type

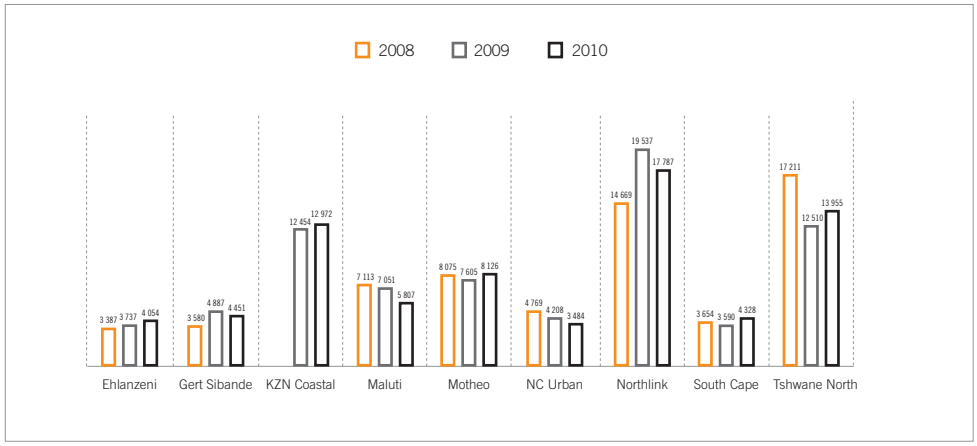


Finding 4: Some FET colleges already seem to be playing a significant role in providing some form of higher education (as represented by the N4–N6 programmes). Formalising this role for some FET colleges by allowing them to offer NQF Level 5 Higher Certificates and possibly even NQF Level 6 Advanced Certificates in selected areas, subject to certain conditions being met, appears to be a logical next step. With one or two exceptions where this is not the case, the low enrolments in occupational programmes are cause for concern. The reasons for this are not immediately obvious but this could be partly due to tight economic conditions at present, the lack of clarity on the funding of such programmes, and difficulties experienced by FET colleges in establishing longer-term partnerships with industry to secure workplace experience for students on these programmes. It seems however that incentives are urgently required to stimulate FET colleges to increase levels of enrolment in these programmes.

Finding 5: The FET colleges surveyed, with one or two exceptions, displayed fairly low enrolment levels for occupational programmes. This is surprising given the mandate of FET colleges to meet training needs through appropriate occupational and workplace training programmes. The reasons for this are not immediately clear, but ways to increase this enrolment have to be found urgently if FET colleges are to fulfil their potential in this regard.

In Figure 2 the total headcount student enrolments for the period 2008–2010 are represented while the data from which this figure was compiled are given in Appendix A

Figure 2: Student headcount enrolments for 2008 to 2010

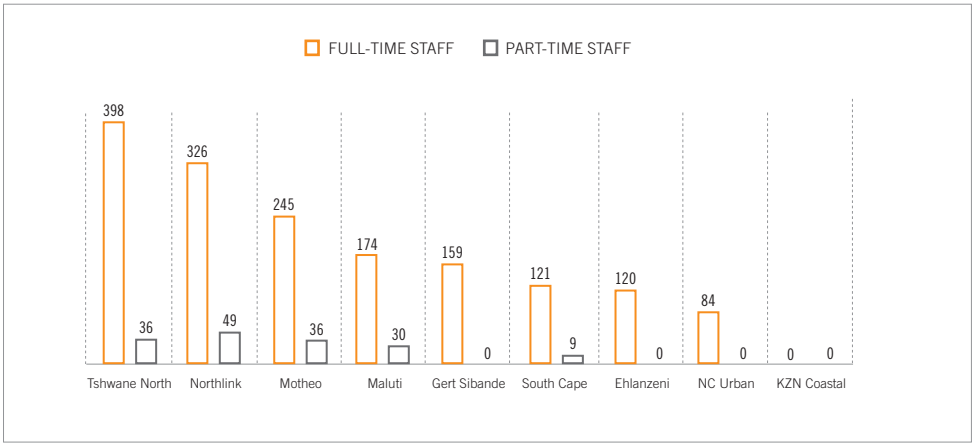


No discernible trends are visible from the data which gave rise to this figure. The fact that quite a few of the selected FET colleges displayed negative growth rates, as high as -17 per cent year-on-year in one case during this period, indicates that the projections of accelerated growth in the FET college sector to reach a figure of one million students by 2014 are highly unlikely to be realised. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that overall, for all the FET colleges in the survey, total aggregate enrolments in 2010 are actually lower than in 2009.

This could be due to the unstable policy environment in which FET colleges have been operating during the past few years, but is in stark contrast to the widely held imperatives articulated by policy-makers in the field of education and training, for FET colleges to meet our country's training needs.

Figure 3 depicts the number of full-time and part-time teaching staff in 2010 while the data from which this figure was derived are given in Appendix A. The graphic presentation in Figure 3 needs to be interpreted with caution since at some FET colleges full-time staff also teach 'evening classes' as part-time staff, thus some double counting may have occurred. Nevertheless, none of the FET colleges has a significant number of part-time teaching staff compared to full-time teaching staff. Of significance is the fact that three FET colleges report having no part-time staff at all. This is surprising as one would expect the strong 'service' and 'community' orientation of FET colleges to result in significant numbers of programmes designed specifically for 'after-hours' study which normally requires the use of at least some part-time staff.

Figure 3: Total teaching staff by FET college in 2010



Student:staff ratios vary from 28:1 to as high as 47:1 with an average for the FET colleges included in the survey of 34:1. This is quite high, but not alarmingly so, given that the student:staff ratio in higher education (including Unisa) is now approximately 26:1. It should also be borne in mind that workshops in occupational programmes often have a lower student:staff ratio due to health and safety regulations, whereas lecturers in for instance Business Studies could teach larger classes and hence have a high student:staff ratio.

Figure 4 shows the distribution of teaching staff on higher education programmes and on occupational programmes. Once again the data in this presentation has to be interpreted with caution since some staff members may teach on both higher education as well as occupational programmes.

Figure 4 illustrates that about 42 per cent of the teaching capacity in these FET colleges is devoted to N4–N6 programmes and about 11 per cent to occupational programmes. This means that at the moment about 47 per cent of the teaching capacity is devoted to NCV programmes. This distribution is somewhat out of line with the enrolments in these categories reported earlier as 47 per cent in N4–N6 programmes, 11 per cent in occupational programmes and 42 per cent in NCV programmes.

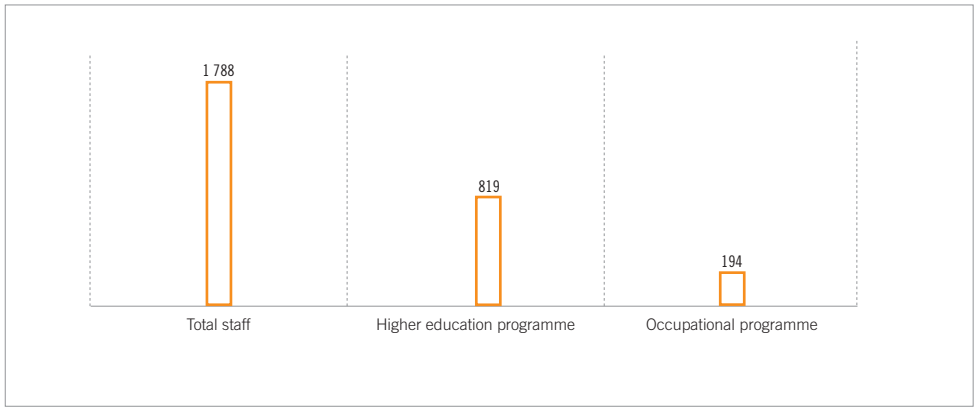
FET colleges and post-NQF Level 4 programmes

In this part of the report, data on the delivery of post-NQF Level 4 programmes by FET colleges are analysed in greater detail.

N4–N6 programme areas: Although the data on student headcount enrolments for each year of the period 2008–2010 for the various post-NQF Level 4 programmes offered by the FET colleges is somewhat patchy, it nevertheless

appears that management-type programmes such as Business, Financial, Human Resources, Marketing and so on; engineering-type programmes like Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Chemical; Public Relations; and Early Childhood Education attract the largest numbers of students at the N4–N6 level.

Figure 4: Proportion of teaching staff on higher education and occupational programmes in 2010



Finding 6: With the exception possibly of Early Childhood Education, the study areas covered on the N4–N6 level correspond very well with study areas offered by universities of technology in particular, and to some extent with the programme areas of comprehensive universities. This means that formalising the offering of HEQF-aligned programmes such as the Higher Certificate at FET colleges could open the way to an articulation route at a university of technology or a comprehensive university for students who wished to follow such a pathway.

Qualifications of staff teaching N4–N6 programmes: As might be expected, an analysis of the types of academic as well as teaching qualifications held by FET college staff teaching N4–N6 programmes yielded a large variation of qualification types. In addition some staff members may be in possession of more than one qualification resulting in some double counting. Nevertheless the following qualifications in order of prevalence are held by teaching staff in N4–N6 programmes: 3-year First Bachelors degree, 3-year National Diploma, N1–N6 Diploma, BTech or Higher Diploma, BEd Degree, Honours Degree, 4-year First Bachelors Degree, etc. Approximately 25 per cent of the teaching staff involved in teaching N4–N6 programmes have at least a 3-year First

Bachelors Degree and/or a 3-year National Diploma. Masters and Doctoral qualifications amounted to less than 1 per cent of all the N4–N6 teaching staff's qualifications.

Finding 7: One of the CHE/HEQC's prerequisites for accreditation of HEQF-aligned programmes is that those teaching the programme must have an appropriate qualification at least one level higher than that of the programme being delivered. In the case of a Higher Certificate it thus means an appropriate NQF Level 6 or higher qualification. On the face of it, those FET colleges qualifying to offer a Higher Certificate should be able to meet this particular accreditation criterion quite comfortably.

Ability to enrol more N4–N6 students (1) within existing capacities and (2) with additional capacities: The FET colleges included in the survey indicated that they could accommodate up to about 1 600 additional students within the limits of their existing capacities in respect of human resources, infrastructure and equipment. They felt that if additional capacities in the form of human resources, infrastructure and equipment were to be made available, they would be able to accommodate an additional 2 800 students in N4–N6 programmes.

The FET colleges surveyed indicated that the main areas of additional student uptake in higher education programmes would be Management (Business, Financial, Accounting, Sport, Hospitality and Human Resources), Engineering and ICT. The emphases on Sport, Hospitality and ICT represent a strengthening of their existing programmes.

Additional resources required would mainly be that of teaching staff (as well as additional administrative staff) in which a total of 57 additional teaching staff members were specified as necessary if an additional 2 800 students were to be enrolled. Fifteen additional staff members would be required for the various courses in Management Studies, 13 additional staff members for Engineering, ten for Hospitality and Tourism, and smaller numbers for some other study fields. Infrastructure required would predominantly consist of classrooms, workshops, computer laboratories and IT equipment, while accommodation facilities for students were also specified.

Finding 8: It is significant that for the colleges surveyed, about 1 600 additional students could be enrolled without providing any additional capacity in the form of human resources, infrastructure and equipment. This implies that if arrangements could be formalised for some FET colleges to offer Higher Certificates in a limited number of areas, a reasonable

number of additional students could be accommodated without any additional capacities being provided. Similarly the FET colleges surveyed indicated that additional staff members and infrastructure would allow them to accommodate an additional 2 800 students. This suggests that FET colleges could become important partners in the provision of higher education by concentrating on initial HEQF qualifications, particularly in fields in which universities of technology/comprehensive universities are already active.

Linkages with higher education institutions: Although only nine FET colleges participated in this survey of which two had no universities within close proximity, a surprisingly high number of higher education–FET college linkages exist. These colleges reported linkages with universities such as the Central University of Technology, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, University of Pretoria, Tshwane University of Technology, University of the Western Cape, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Unisa and the University of the Free State.

These linkages no doubt consist of a variety of types and formats and may not represent formal institution-to-institution agreements, but they nevertheless indicate that a good basis exists for strengthening higher education and FET college interaction.

Funding arrangements for post-NQF Level 4 programmes: From the responses of FET colleges participating in this survey, it is apparent that the funding of post-NQF Level 4 programmes is one of their greatest obstacles. Funding seems to be fairly ad hoc – arrangements with some SETAs and the National Business Initiative were mentioned. Tuition fees form an important funding source and some FET colleges reported that students received financial assistance from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme.

FET colleges: Occupational and workplace training programmes

In this section of the report, the data on FET colleges' delivery of occupational and workplace training programmesare analysed in greater detail. While occupational training may be defined differently elsewhere, in this report occupational programmes are taken to mean those programmes that fall within the SETAs' domains or are workplace-specific, and which are not programmes in terms of official FET college curricula (i.e. NC[V] or NATED) funded by the DHET.

Occupational and workplace training areas: Although the data on student headcount enrolments for each year of the period 2008–2010 for the various

occupational programmes offered by the FET colleges included in the survey are somewhat patchy, it appears that programmes in the following fields dominate enrolments: Electrical, Mechanical, Welding, Early Childhood Education, General Engineering, Civil Engineering, Boilermaking, Auto Electrician, Diesel Mechanic and Business Studies.

From the above it would seem that programmes in the 'harder' industries and manufacturing-related areas dominate, with fewer programmes in the 'softer' service-related areas.

Finding 9: With the exception of Early Childhood Education and Business Studies, occupational programmes seem to be geared towards harder industry and manufacturing-related areas, rather than the softer service-related areas such as Tourism, Hospitality, etc. This is to be expected given South Africa's past emphasis on mining and manufacturing, but is not in line with new economic plans for the country which emphasise a knowledge economy and service industries.

Qualifications of staff teaching in occupational programmes: As might be expected, an analysis of the type of academic and teaching qualifications held by FET college staff teaching on occupational programmes yielded a wide variety of qualification types. In addition, some staff members may be in possession of more than one qualification, resulting in possible double counting. Nevertheless two particular qualification categories, viz. Artisan (Apprenticeship) qualifications and an N1–N6 Diploma, make up 65 per cent of all the qualifications recorded by staff teaching on these programmes at the FET colleges in the survey, with the majority of these two types of qualifications consisting of Artisan qualifications. This emphasises the importance of artisan qualifications for teaching staff on occupational programmes.

Finding 10: Artisan qualifications as well as N1–N6 Diplomas constitute the major qualification types for FET college staff at FET colleges in the survey who were responsible for occupational and workplace training programmes. The fact that artisan training has been under severe pressure and has actually declined during the past few years may partly explain the relatively low numbers of workplace training programmes offered by the FET colleges surveyed.

Ability to enroll more students in occupational programmes (1) within existing capacities and (2) with additional capacities: The FET colleges included in the survey indicated that they could accommodate up to about 1 400 additional students within the limits of their existing capacities in respect of human resources, infrastructure and equipment. They felt that if additional capacities in the form of human resources, infrastructure and equipment were to be made available, they would be able to accommodate another 1400 students in occupational and workplace training programmes.

Colleges surveyed indicated a wide number of learning areas that could accommodate additional student uptake in occupational programmes such as in End-user Computing, Plumbing, Plant Production, Animal Production, Engineering, Electrical, Panelbeating, Early Childhood Education, Boilermaking, Carpentry, Welding, Financial Management, Hygiene and Cleaning and Bricklaying. Increased student uptake in occupational fields such as End-user Computing and Hygiene and Cleaning would require significant additional human and physical resources. Moderate additional human resources were required for a large number of programmes while FET colleges indicated that expanded intakes in Engineering would require additional staff members.

Infrastructure required predominantly consisted of classrooms, workshops computer laboratories, IT equipment, tools and welding equipment.

Finding 11: Although the findings of this analysis cannot summarily be extended to all 50 FET colleges, it is nevertheless significant that for the colleges surveyed, about 1 400 additional students could be accommodated in occupational programmes without providing any additional capacities in the form of human resources, infrastructure and equipment. This means that significant capacities exist in the FET college system for increasing occupational and workplace training programmes without additional resources to offer these programmes. Similarly the FET colleges surveyed indicated that the provision of additional staff members and infrastructure would enable them to accommodate a further 1 400 students. This suggests that FET colleges have the potential to play a more incisive role than they are at present in the offering of occupational and workplace training programmes. It should however be noted that although FET college capacity exists to expand occupational training, the scale of expansion is limited in terms of providing a solution for post-school NEETs, currently estimated at 3.5 million young people. FET colleges are therefore only part of the solution to the NEET crisis in South Africa.

Linkages with industry/public or private enterprise: Although only nine FET colleges participated in this survey, a number of linkages with respect to their occupational programmes were reported. These included many private sector companies, local government authorities, SETAs, some non-governmental organisations and national government departments. Of course these linkages occur in a variety of types and formats and may not consist of formal agreements, but they nevertheless suggest that a good basis exists for strengthening the role of FET colleges in the area of occupational and workplace training programmes.

Funding arrangements for occupational programmes: From the responses of the FET colleges in this survey it is apparent that the funding of occupational programmes presents an obstacle to their growth and development. Funding seems to be fairly ad hoc and arrangements with some SETAs and some private-sector companies were mentioned. Some college representatives commented that occupational programme delivery could be strengthened if arrangements ensuring more consistent funding were made.

Recommendations

From the analyses in this report a number of recommendations can be made, but it must be borne in mind that these recommendations are based on the responses of a selected number of FET colleges. Care should be exercised in extending these conclusions to the whole FET college sector.

Three basic recommendations are made in respect of selected FET colleges being given permission to offer programmes leading to the award of Higher Certificates on the HEQF, and extending their involvement in occupational and workplace training programmes as part of a set of solutions towards resolving the country's NEET problem. These recommendations assume that:

- Capacity for maintaining management information systems and strengthening the use of concomitant management information in national and institutional decision-making will be strengthened appreciably.
- New and adequate funding arrangements will be made which enable affected FET colleges to plan better for the long-term offering of such programmes.
- The DHET will accept the need for a differentiated system of FET colleges as it seems as if some FET colleges are struggling to cope with the extent of their multi-focused mandates.

Clearly the DHET would have a fundamental role to play in ensuring that these assumptions are met.

The recommendations are as follows:

Recommendation 1: That the DHET, in line with the establishment of a Post-Schooling Education and Training System, formalises the role which FET colleges that comply with set criteria developed in this respect can play in higher education, through the offering of HEQF-aligned Higher Certificates in fields that correspond with those in which universities of technology/ comprehensive universities are active.

Criteria could cover issues such as satisfactory experience in the offering of N4–N6 programmes, a proven record of student enrolments in N4–N6 programmes, adequately qualified staff for teaching programmes leading to the award of Higher Certificates, adequate equipment and facilities required by Higher Certificate programmes, proof of HEQC accreditation of intended Higher Certificate programmes, adequate capacity to maintain accurate and up-to-date information on student and staff issues in relation to such programmes, and proof that an appropriate university, preferably a university of technology or a comprehensive university, would act as the certifying authority until alternative arrangements have been made.

This recommendation is made on the assumption that such approvals will be granted on the basis that no additional capacities in the form of human resources, equipment and facilities beyond that which can be funded from normal annual allocations to FET colleges will be needed. In due course consideration can be given to permitting some FET colleges to offer programmes leading to the award of NQF Level 6 Advanced Certificates.

Recommendation 2: That the DHET, in response to the training needs of a South African economy moving from a predominantly manufacturing-based economy to a service and knowledge-based economy, develops appropriate supporting policies and incentives by which selected FET colleges could extend their involvement in occupational and workplace training programmes appreciably. Apart from better planned funding arrangements, supporting policies and incentives should lead to a greater collaboration between SETAs and industry in the provision of such programmes by FET colleges. Such occupational and workplace training programmes, while predominantly at levels on or below NQF Level 4, could possibly also be set at NQF Level 5 or 6.

This recommendation is also made on the assumption that such an extension of involvement in occupational and workplace training programmes will largely occur within the limits of existing FET college capacities in the form of human resources, equipment and facilities.

Recommendation 3: That the DHET develops a national programme similar to the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions Programme

devised in Australia, aiming at supporting existing young learners at school and those who have dropped out of school already after completing their basic school education in a variety of ways in making informed choices about their future education and training.

The success of FET colleges in playing a constructive role in solving our NEET problem will be heavily dependent on introducing innovation and partnership-supported initiatives such as the above aimed at achieving higher education and training attainment rates. At present too many students either drop out of school education due to a lack of information and corresponding guidance on viable alternatives, or too many of those who complete their school education view a university education as the only viable route for any further education and training.

Appendix A

Figure A1: Total student headcount in 2010 by FET college

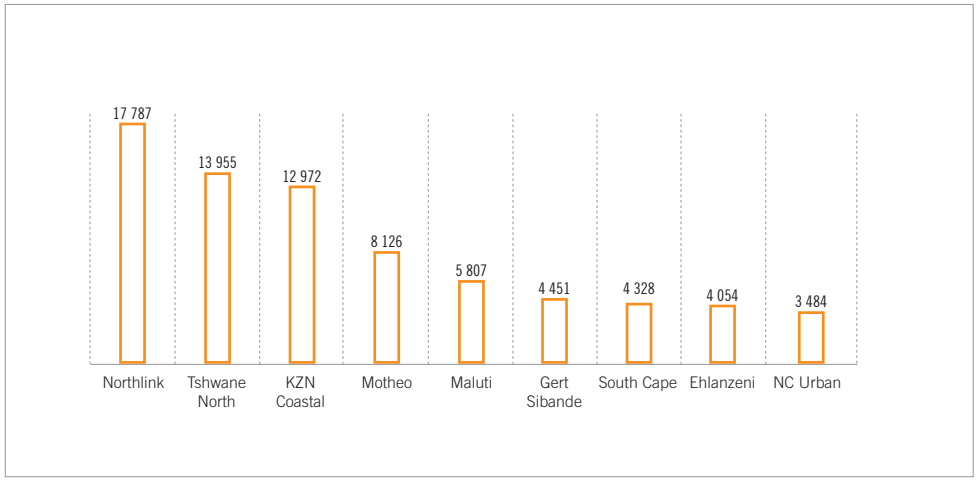


Table A1: FET college enrolments in headcounts by programme for 2010

College	NCV2	NCV3	NCV4	N4	N5	N6	Occu-pational	Other	Total
Northlink	962	287	144	3 379	2 538	1 552	8 219	706	17 787
Tshwane North	3 443	938	372	2 290	2 121	2 063	450	2 278	13 955
KZN Coastal	3 477	1 682	559	2 794	2 224	1 657	579	0	12 972
Motheo	1 002	382	103	3 331	1 935	1 182	191	0	8 126
Maluti	975	385	161	1 808	1 032	1 005	0	441	5 807
Gert Sibande	1 579	1 079	297	605	313	319	259	0	4 451
South Cape	1361	423	146	0	56	264	1 400	678	4 328
Ehlanzeni	1 991	995	505	363	0	0	200	0	4 054
NC Urban	577	241	60	1 416	503	430	216	41	3 484
Total	**15 367**	**6 412**	**2 347**	**15 986**	**10 722**	**8 472**	**11 514**	**4 144**	**74 964**

Table A2: Student headcount enrolments for 2008 to 2010

College	2008	2009	% increase	2010	% increase
Ehlanzeni	3 387	3 737	10%	4 054	8%
Gert Sibande	3 580	4 887	37%	4 451	-9%
KZN Coastal	0	12 454		12 972	4%
Maluti	7 113	7 051	-1%	5 807	-18%
Motheo	8 075	7 605	-6%	8 126	7%
NC Urban	4 769	4 208	-12%	3 484	-17%
Northlink	14 669	19 537	33%	17 787	-9%
South Cape	3 654	3 590	-2%	4 328	21%
Tshwane North	17 211	12 510	-27%	13 955	12%
Total	**62 458**	**75 579**	**21%**	**74 964**	**-0,8%**

Table A3: Total teaching staff by FET college in 2010 (no data submitted by KZN Coastal FET College)

College	Full-time staff	Part-time staff	Total
Tshwane North	398	36	434
Northlink	326	49	375
Motheo	245	36	281
Maluti	174	30	204
Gert Sibande	159	0	159
South Cape	121	9	130
Ehlanzeni	120	0	120
NC Urban	84	0	84

Chapter 6

HIGHER EDUCATION AND AN EXPANDED POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM

Trish Gibbon, Johan Muller and Heather Nel[11]

Introduction

As part of its Strategic Framework for 2010 to 2020, Higher Education South Africa (HESA) committed itself to developing a 'shared conceptual view on the character, form and content' of a reconceptualised post-school education (PSE) system and the position and distinct role of universities in such a system.[12] To this end, the HESA board commissioned Professor Peliwe Lolwana to produce a discussion document on the subject and subsequently appointed an expert task team with the responsibility, among other things, to:

- propose a set of principles and policy options to underpin a reconceptualised post-school system
- spell out the distinct role of the higher education sector in such a system, including the development of a set of practical commitments or undertakings to be considered by the HESA Board in support of a reconceptualised post-school system
- spell out the role and relationship between the further education and training (FET) colleges sector and higher education institutions

11 This chapter is based on the report of the Task Team on Post-School Education commissioned by Higher Education South Africa (HESA) and finalised for HESA in September 2011. The authors were all members of the task team.

12 Terms of Reference for the HESA Post-School Education Task Team, May 2010.

- suggest possible models for the capacity development of the FET colleges sector by higher education institutions.

This chapter therefore addresses two overlapping concerns. The first is the *form* that such a post-school education system might take, and its governing principles; and the second is the specific *role* that could be performed by higher education institutions in helping to build such a system and their *relation* to other institutions within such a system in the future.

An expanded post-school education system

Shape, size and character of the current post-school education sector

Context

Post-apartheid South Africa inherited a horizontally differentiated PSE system consisting of universities, technikons, technical colleges and colleges of education, police, nursing and agriculture. Through a variety of restructuring processes much of this differentiation has been lost. But this has not just been a loss of differentiation among institutions, it has also been a fundamental loss of places and spaces – of educational opportunities for school-leavers. This has had a number of serious consequences for the post-school landscape.

The first is an exacerbation of the already top-heavy structure of the post-school system. As early as 1996, the National Commission on Higher Education (1996:93) lamented the 'inverted pyramid' structure of post-school education and this situation has worsened, not improved. University is 'first-choice' and 'only choice' for many school-leavers. As Lolwana (2010:14) puts it:

> Post-secondary education in developing countries takes the form of an expanding and widening pyramid, with a widening college system at the base and a somewhat smaller university sector, each growing as more and more progression routes are made available. In the South African education system, the widening college base has disappeared, leaving the university system to cater for all post-secondary education needs.

But even if it were appropriate for them to do so, universities have limited scope for expansion. Their total enrolment nationally has grown slowly to just under 900 000 and the minister's target for growth of the sector by 2013 sees it expanding to 935 710. This will provide only a marginal answer to the access demand. As Bunting and Cloete (2008) argue, it is not more universities that are needed but more post-school options at pre-university level. This is not only an access issue, but also one of human resources. There are just not

enough appropriately trained and experienced academic personnel available to properly staff a significant expansion of the university sub-sector.

The second consequence is that there are hardly any institutions offering the kinds of qualifications in intermediate skills in technical and vocational fields that are sorely needed in the labour market. This is not the domain of the universities, and it is only very partially the domain and level of FET colleges in their present form (Cosser 2010). In so far as this need is being met at all, it is by the colleges in the private sector.

Another factor of great significance in this context is the huge social crisis that has been given measurable dimensions in the 2009 CHET study that estimates the number of youth not in employment, education or training at about 2.8 million (Cloete 2009). In the midst of immense skills shortages in the labour market, this is unconscionable.

There are, in other words, both supply and demand issues to which the present form of the sector is unable to respond adequately. There is no doubt that change is needed: the question is what form the change should take, and to what ends?

Interests of higher education in an expanded post-school system

It is legitimate to ask why higher education, particularly in the form of the public universities, should feel the need to express a collective view on the expansion of the post-school system and the form it should take. What are its interests in this regard? Higher education speaks from the experience of receiving many applications for university places from learners who are perhaps not best suited to university study, but who have no other options. But more importantly, higher education has a public role and responsibility in relation to the sound intellectual health of post-school educational institutions, and therefore of the nation.

One of the primary roles of universities is to create new knowledge and ensure its incorporation into courses and curricula so that students may proceed into the job market from a knowledge base that keeps pace with the demands of the changing knowledge economy. The non-university post-school education sector is not required to do research and produce new knowledge, but it is tasked to produce graduates with up-to-the-minute, functional skills that are immediately useful in the economy. How are they to maintain the contemporary relevance of their course offerings? In part it will be done through their industry linkages, but industry itself needs to be fed with new knowledge. To be vocational, college qualifications must develop employment-related knowledge and skills in specific occupational fields *and* provide access to the disciplinary knowledge that has been involved in the transformation of different occupations and sectors and in the development of new occupations. Here the role of the universities becomes evident. It is the

public responsibility of the universities, as society's primary new knowledge producers, to be directly concerned with the health of the post-school sector as a whole, particularly with those institutions, the colleges, that require this assistance to remain renewed and viable on an on going basis.

The universities are, and should be, responsible for ensuring that the new knowledge filters down to the colleges in a way that can be assimilated by teaching staff, and through the curriculum, by students. The only way they can do this is by entering into strategic partnerships with colleges, to safeguard the continuing probity of their qualifications, to make sure that learners are not locked into dead-end qualifications, and that the college sub-sector is appropriately linked into the post-school sector as a whole, and thereby to the knowledge economy.

Long-term, future possibilities

The form that a future post-school education sector might take, and that underpins this chapter, is of a properly articulated *system* in which the university sector is a relatively small component in relation to a strong base that offers a wide range of education and training opportunities to school-leavers, and is attuned to social and economic needs, particularly those of the labour market, in ways that are not apparent in the present configuration. For school-leavers, it would offer a range of different programmes that might include second-chance opportunities to complete the National Senior Certificate (NSC) or National Certificate (Vocational) (NC[V]), or bridging programmes that would give access to other colleges or universities, as well as vocational and career-oriented programmes that would lead straight to the job market. For working and adult learners, it would offer opportunities to deepen or extend their current proficiencies, or branch out into new fields. And for local communities, it would offer both contextually relevant and personally enriching learning possibilities.

These could be offered in a variety of institutional settings, including colleges of different types, work-place training sites and universities. For Lolwana (2010), 'It means a diverse and differentiated institutional base that functions as an integrated whole with meaningful learning pathways across institutional and workplace education and training forms.'

Institutions within this system would be differentiated by level (some offering up to NQF Level 4 qualifications and others in the higher education band above 4), and by purpose (single and multi-purpose institutions). They could include technical colleges, specialised colleges offering intermediate qualifications for mid-level workers in a number of fields such as health, social work and education, and community colleges.

This is an ambitious ideal and its realisation is constrained by some serious limitations that it will be the business of this chapter to elucidate, as they have a very specific bearing on the contribution that universities can make to

bringing about a reconfigured post-school education system. But first, some matters of principle should be addressed.

For such a reconfigured post-school education system:

- What should its governing principles be?
- What should its goals and objectives be?
- What are the strategies and mechanisms to achieve these?
- What would the relationships be between its constituent parts, and particularly, what would the role of universities be?

Governing principles for a post-school education system

Equity of access. The fundamental governing principle for a post-school education system must be to enable access to educational and training opportunities further to the level of basic education achieved by any school-leaver irrespective of race, gender, or social and economic circumstances.

Quality provision for success. The quality of educational provision in terms of facilities, infrastructure, student support and staff capacity should establish the optimal conditions for student success.

Operation as a system. The institutions offering post-school education and training should operate together as a *system*. This is a *relational* requirement – the parts cannot operate as a system unless they relate to one another in clearly defined ways that also indicate the respective roles and responsibilities of the constituent parts.

Public and private provision. Post-school educational opportunities should be offered by both public and private providers, with private colleges seen as complementing the public system and subject to the same quality and other regulatory mechanisms as are applied currently to private higher education institutions.

Mobility and progression. In order for post-school education to operate as a system, the mobility of students between and among institutions should be ensured through the development of articulation pathways and a credit transfer mechanism. Curricula for programmes should be constructed with a sufficient academic foundation to allow for further progression, not leading to dead ends.

Geographical distribution. Institutions should be sufficiently widely distributed geographically to allow for relatively easy access to some form of PSE in most

parts of the country. Establishing landmark institutions in rural areas would be especially important, with staff trained for and attuned to the needs of rural communities.

Differentiation. A post-school education system would need to be differentiated both vertically and horizontally. Vertical differentiation would be determined by accreditation to offer qualifications up to certain levels, while horizontal differentiation would enable the creation of a 'differentiated-for-purpose' college sector with some single and some multi-purpose institutions.

Goals and objectives

Extend access and opportunity

The fundamental goal for a post-school education system must be to offer access to education and training opportunities further to the level of basic education achieved by any school-leaver. This goal implies addressing the needs of a number of target groups:

- those who have left school without completing the NSC or NC(V)
- those who have left school with the NSC or NC(V), but without meeting university entrance requirements
- those who have achieved the NSC or NC(V) and meet the minimum legal university entrance requirements, but do not find a university place
- those who meet admission and selection criteria for university study and are admitted
- working and other adults.

Expand offerings

The inadequacy of the current form of the post-school education sector to meet the needs identified above requires that it should be expanded. The possible forms that such an expansion might take will be discussed below, but a primary objective would be to offer post-secondary educational opportunities and qualifications that lie somewhere between those presently offered by schools and FET colleges on the one hand, and universities on the other. In particular, something akin to the N qualifications (4–6) and National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 5 certificates in technical and vocational fields, including those in the social sciences and humanities such as social work, performing arts, design and media studies would be required. A second objective would be to offer education and training opportunities to young adults who are unemployed and currently not in education or training. Some of these may be able to access the opportunities mentioned above, but many may well lack the basic educational platform needed for post-*secondary* education.

These two needs are not identical and should not be confused, even though there may be some overlap.

Offer training and education relevant to labour market needs

The majority of learners entering the post-school education system at pre-university level will be seeking a qualification that will improve their employment opportunities and life prospects. This requires a high level of alignment of qualifications with labour market needs and the relevance of curricula to contemporary employment destinations.

Expand the range of institutional types

For a post-school education system to meet the many needs that have been identified, it is almost inevitable that, in the long run, new institutional types would have to be introduced. The policy options here would be to go for a 'big bang' approach and build a whole new stratum of institutions, or to go for a phased approach that would aim to build on existing strengths in the FET colleges and selectively expand their scope and change their character in ways that will be determined by capacity, regional, local and community needs. Given existing capacity constraints, the first of these options is simply unrealistic. As Lolwana (2010) puts it, 'Whilst it is the non-university institutions that present a serious opportunity to expand access [to] higher education, it is also this sub-system that presents many challenges.' A phased approach, however, implemented in a concerted and planned manner, would have the potential to build the sector relatively quickly towards the goal of a fully fledged, differentiated and massified system.

Develop linkages for articulation and progression

A key objective for a post-school education system, and critical to its operation as a system, would be the building of formal linkages between and among all the sub-sectors of the system. In particular, there needs to be better alignment between the FET and higher education sectors. For students who choose to do so, and who demonstrate the requisite levels of competency, it should be possible to move horizontally between institutions and progress vertically to higher-level qualifications. Such movements, however, cannot be automatic or seamless. To work properly, they depend on having a number of things in place such as:

- coordinated quality assurance and funding systems
- formal articulation agreements between institutions
- careful alignment of curricula in common fields
- a review of NC(V) curricula and restructuring of subject combinations for the certificate to enable strong articulation with the labour market

on the one hand, and easier articulation with higher education on the other. The second of these objectives may also be facilitated by the development of customised foundation or bridging programmes.

The experience and evidence from pilot projects conducted in this area will be discussed in greater detail in the section on the role of universities, but it is important to note at this point that these initiatives take considerable time to initiate and develop.

Strategies and mechanisms

Expansion and building of capacity

The single largest challenge to any expansion of the post-school sector at pre-university level is that of capacity, both academic and leadership/managerial. Muller (2011) argues in a paper prepared for the task team that the principal characteristic of the current FET colleges, barring a handful of them, is their poor quality and their sub-optimal delivery of the new upgraded FET curriculum. This underlines the *capacity problem* in the colleges. Neither the universities nor the private colleges (some of which have their own quality problems) are in a position to release any spare capacity, and in many respects are still struggling to meet their own academic human resource needs. Compared to the time needed for the erection of buildings or installation of infrastructure, building human resource capacity takes a long time. Nonetheless, the universities could make a significant contribution in this regard (see below). The point that needs to be emphasised is that any expansion at this level of the post-school sector, whether of the range of qualifications or the forms of institutions, will be dependent on first meeting the fundamental condition of building capacity.

Formation of 'federations' or regional consortia of linked institutions

As part of system-formation, Lolwana (2010) recommends the development of regionally based sub-systems or 'federations' that would bring institutions from different sectors into relation with one another around a variety of activities and issues. These could include the franchising of university programmes (e.g. certificate programmes at NQF Level 5) to FET colleges, the offering of access or bridging (foundation) programmes, the co-teaching and assessment of higher education programmes in colleges, the development of articulation pathways, the building of capacity, collaborative research, and common links to communities, businesses and industries. Such strategic partnerships can also be used for the purpose of planning in order to meet particular regional needs.

In relation to articulation, she warns that the existence of the NQF is not a sufficient mechanism to ensure articulation. The differentiation of knowledge

in post-school education, especially in vocational education, means that it is difficult to grasp the connectivity of the different kinds of knowledge in different programmes and institutions. Addressing this issue requires long-term relationships and careful work.

Governance arrangements

Differences in *policy and funding regimes* for higher education institutions and FET colleges complicate the emergence of boundary-spanning interventions, such as offering joint qualifications or implementing collaborative access/bridging initiatives. Limited financial incentives exist for collaborative ventures between universities and FET colleges to compensate institutions for the time and resources that must be invested to set up cross-sectoral interventions. This raises the question of whether there is a need for a more structured and systematic approach to the funding, quality assurance and enrolment planning arrangements for higher education–FET collaboration.

Funding

The funding for post-school education should be reviewed to take the new system requirements into account. In particular, funding should be used to incentivise cooperation among institutions, and to help build capacity in colleges. SETAs, companies and businesses should all be urged to contribute to the building of the sector through incentives such as tax-breaks. Bursaries should also be provided to poor students to help them access the system.

Quality assurance

Rigorous and coherent quality assurance mechanisms need to be in place to engender trust and confidence in the quality and relevance of post-school qualifications and establish a sound platform for articulation and progression. Quality councils with oversight responsibilities for different sectors should base their accreditation and regulation of qualifications on an understanding of all the types of institutions in a regional 'federation'. The NQF Act No. 67 of 2008 establishes three separate quality councils (HEQF, QCTO and Umalusi) and questions need to be asked about whether this will facilitate or hinder articulation between the various education and training sectors in our country.

Transfer arrangements

Curricular barriers may make it difficult for students to transfer from FET to higher education institutions or vice versa. Students moving between the FET and higher education sectors often experience difficulties centred on the sudden changes in the depth and detail of subject knowledge, pedagogical approach and assessment, and the level, genre and independent nature of academic research and writing. This suggests that FET–higher education

collaboration raises fundamental issues of what is regarded by educational providers and employers as appropriate curriculum design and pedagogical approaches in a vocational context. These debates need to be informed by a set of coherent national guidelines and policies advancing higher education–FET college collaboration.

Strategy for higher education

A phased approach

The primary recommendation of this chapter is that expansion of the post-school education sector needs to occur at the pre-university level, but for this expansion to be successful it should be:

- approached in a phased manner
- predicated on an initial concerted effort to build capacity in selected FET colleges
- rapidly expanded outwards to other colleges
- supported in the long term by specific training of teachers for this sector.

The strategy proposed, in a context of great need, but also of resource and capacity constraints, is one of initial expansion of capacity leading to an expansion of scope through targeted partnerships.

Targeted partnerships

Synergy between FET colleges and higher education institutions cannot be assumed automatically, and even where the potential for such synergies is identified, it has to be consciously developed, as the examples of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) and others demonstrate (see section on 'Examples of existing partnerships and collaborations'). There are three objectives that may be realised through appropriately targeted partnerships between universities and FET colleges.

The first is the building of academic capacity through the partnering of universities with FET colleges in capacity-building and mentoring roles. However, as Muller (2011) argues, 'epistemic support has to be informed by knowledge of the vocational/professional milieu of the respective qualifications'. In this respect, comprehensive universities and universities of technology are likely to find a greater 'fit' between their programmes and those offered in neighbouring colleges, although, again, this cannot be assumed and would

have to be explored. The advantages to be gained from this kind of partnership lie in the potential to ensure that the college curriculum is better calibrated to progression on the one hand, and together with the broader regional role of the mentor institution, to help ensure that the college offers curricula in tune with regional needs. The second is the building of leadership and managerial capacity, and in this respect, a wide pool of higher education institutions could be drawn into partnerships to share their expertise in capacity-building and mentoring roles. The third is the development of articulation and progression pathways between institutions, bearing in mind the following considerations:

- Articulation is knowledge field /qualification specific, it is not across the board.
- The main articulation/pathway is from Level 4 in (some) FET college programmes to a Level 5 qualification at a university (see examples of CPUT and NMMU).
- It rests on substantial prior work to match curriculum (and admission) requirements and accomplishments.
- In some instances, tailored access or bridging courses could be developed (see the CPUT example) to improve students' chances of success.

Not all FET colleges will offer the kinds of curricula match that will enable smooth articulation. The ones that can, or have the potential to do so, should be identified as a first step. These should be partnered with a neighbouring university in a formal mentor–partnership relationship.[13] The mentor institution can also then develop qualification paths for FET lecturing staff to consolidate and develop their capacities while establishing articulation pathways for FET learners that could include academic and career counselling.

When stable articulation routes have been developed, these can be transferred to other potential college–university partnerships. In other words, successful partnerships can be expected to mentor new partnerships in their region on the basis of 'what works'. In time this should lead to the development of a national framework to regulate it (Muller 2011).

These objectives should all be pursued in the context of a clear understanding of regional development priorities with other linkages developed to schools, SETAs and local industry.

Teacher training for FET and other colleges

University education faculties need to develop and expand specific training programmes for teachers for the post-school college sector in collaboration

13 See Stumpf *et al.* (2009) for a similar proposal.

with faculties that have the specialised content knowledge (in Engineering, ICT, Business Management, etc.) needed to augment existing capacity and provide a steady long-term supply of personnel.

Stages in a phased approach

Partnerships are the basis of the following stages that are recommended to HESA:

1. A *preliminary model-testing phase* where a limited number of college/university partnerships are identified on the basis of known 'fit', and the model is developed further.
2. When a workable model can be identified, it can be *rolled out rapidly* to a larger set of congruent institutions. In this respect, it must be noted that interventions are needed at a systemic level to overcome the barriers to articulation and progression of learners from FET to higher education. The review of the Higher Education Funding Framework should make provision for incentives for higher education institutions that build on good practice in respect of admission, credit accumulation and transfer (CAT), and articulation arrangements for FET learners, since this could go a long way towards fostering closer partnerships between the further and higher education sectors. Other funding arrangements for FET capacity-development initiatives also need to be explored through partnerships with SETAs and industry.
3. When the college/university quadrant of the emerging PSE sector has been stabilised, extend the scope of some colleges to enable them to *offer NQF Level 5 (Higher Certificate) qualifications* as distinct from other colleges that are licensed to offer up to Level 4.
4. Where there is proven capacity, begin to build a new educational sub-sector through the designation of *some single purpose colleges* that operate exclusively at the post-secondary level (NQF Level 5 and upwards).
5. Designate other colleges as *community-based and multi-purpose with more relaxed entry requirements*. This step is not consequent upon achievement of the preceding steps and could be initiated wherever there is sufficient capacity. Such colleges could provide a first chance for youth wanting to access higher education to achieve university endorsement, a second chance for others to complete their NSC or NC(V), and an opportunity for youth (and adults) wanting to re-enter formal education to access education and training opportunities in other (single-purpose) college types (Cosser 2010).

Examples of existing partnerships and collaborations

Collaboration between universities of technology and FET colleges

The tables below provide a summary of areas of collaboration that exist at the time of writing between universities of technology and FET colleges. The collaborative activity has been categorised according to the areas of cooperation identified in the memorandum of understanding between the South African Technology Network (SATN) and the South African College Principals' Organisation (SACPO).

Table 1: Areas of collaboration between universities of technology and FET colleges: Articulation and access

CPUT	» **Northlink Engineering Access Project** » In terms of the MoU between CPUT and Northlink FET College, students who have been rejected on initial application to CPUT can apply to undergo a further year of training at Northlink College. On exit from Northlink, students who meet the criteria (a minimum of 50 per cent on all Access subjects) are accepted into Engineering departments at CPUT. The project was initiated and run successfully in 2010 and continues in 2011. » **Collaborative agreement with Northlink FET College** in Food Technology with support of FoodBev SETA and the Food Technology Advisory Committee. » Students who have been rejected on initial application to CPUT can apply to undergo a further year of training at Northlink College to improve their Mathematics and Physics marks.
DUT	» **Collaboration in Civil Engineering with Umgungundlovu FET College (PMB)** » The FET college makes provision for students who do not meet the DUT minimum entrance requirements (>50 per cent for N4 Mathematics and Science). Students from the FET college who only have passes for N3 Maths and Science are admitted to the DUT Engineering Access Programme. Recognition of credit for Mathematics 1 is given to students with >50 per cent pass in N5 and N6 Mathematics. » **Collaboration in Electronic Engineering with Berea Technical College** » FET college students progress into the DUT programme (N4/N5/N6). There has been collaboration around the upgrading of college lecturer qualifications (National Diploma required), improvements in retention and throughput, and curriculum analyses have been conducted to ensure smooth progression from FET to DUT. There has been collaboration with regard to career guidance. » **Collaboration with Northdale campus of Umgungundlovu FET College in OMT** » The NC(V) programme is approved for progression into the diploma programme at DUT.
MUT	» A pass at an N4 level is set as an entry requirement into a relevant National Diploma. Programmes in the fields of Agriculture, Business Studies and Engineering award credits for subjects passed by at least 50 per cent at N4 and N5 levels.
TUT	» **Collaboration in Building Science with Tshwane South College FET (Atteridgeville Campus)** » Building Science first-year students spend one week doing building practicals at TSC. Applicants that do not satisfy the minimum requirements in this department are referred to the FET colleges. N6 Quantity Surveying students are recruited for progression in the Building Science Department.

Table 2: Areas of collaboration between universities of technology and FET colleges: Upgrading college lecturers' qualifications

CPUT	» **Offering of the Vocational Education Orientation Programme** (VEOP), a 30-credit qualification aimed at improving teaching skills of FET lecturers in collaboration with UWC/Further Education and Training Institute. 32 students are enrolled in the programme. » Enrolment of FET college educators (who already have a degree) in **Post-Graduate Certificate in Education** (approximately 20 per year). » Enrolment of FET college educators without a degree in the **National Professional Diploma in Education** (approximately 40 per year). » Sole regional (Western Cape) provider of college lecturer qualifications.
CUT	» **Goldfields FET College** – staff members are included in discussions about a PG Diploma in Higher Education. » **Motheo FET College** – the School of Teacher Education is offering a PGCE on a part-time basis. In the last five years, many lecturers of the college have completed the certificate, improving their competence in teaching and learning. » **Maluti FET College** – conversations are currently in progress about the extension of the PGCE to this institution.

Table 3: Areas of collaboration between universities of technology and FET colleges: Curriculum analysis and development

CPUT	» Participating in a national consultative consortium and reference group coordinated by ECSECC (Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council) and UWC/FETI developing curricula for the college lecturer development framework. » Discussions on collaboration in Design programmes with Cape Town FET College in planning stages.
MUT	» Staff members, especially from the KZN Coastal FET College, serve on the advisory committees of some of the departments within the institution. This engagement provides a platform for curriculum analysis and areas of emphasis.

Table 4: Areas of collaboration between universities of technology and FET colleges: Other

CPUT	» **Signed memoranda of understanding** (December 2009) with Boland FET College, West Coast FET College, South Cape FET College, Northlink FET College, False Bay FET College and Cape Town FET College. Areas of cooperation include: articulation for college students with CPUT, bridging programmes, upgrading of lecturer qualifications, recognition of prior learning (RPL) for FET college sector, partnerships aimed at improved retention and throughput rates at NQF Level 5, curriculum analysis and development as well as career guidance. » **Collaborative agreement with South Cape FET College, Oudtshoorn** in Tourism and Public Management came to an end in December 2010. Placement of BEd and PGCE students at FET colleges for teaching practice. » The Department of Mechanical Engineering co-teaches CNC programmes with Northlink FET College. » The Department of Maritime Studies has an arrangement with Northlink FET College to use laboratories on their Wingfield Campus.

CUT	» **Motheo FET College** – discussions took place at the end of 2010 to investigate areas of mutual interest. It is envisaged that this process will continue in 2011.
DUT	» **Collaboration in Industrial Engineering with eThekwini FET College.** DUT staff act as external examiners for FET colleges and communicate with other examiners on a regular basis. » **Collaboration in Quality Management with Berea Technical College**. A proposal is being formulated with regard to articulation for FET students. There has also been collaboration around short courses and a one-year certificate programme.
MUT	» Some staff members from KZN Coastal are teaching in the bridging programmes and, in some instances, they are used as tutors for senior classes. This could provide an opportunity for formal collaboration in the offering of the bridging programme and possibly a higher certificate programme through an FET college.
TUT	» Currently there is collaboration in Mechanical Engineering with Tshwane South FET College (Centurion Campus) on the offering of in-service training in Basic Hand Skills. » The ICT faculty had a meeting with a delegation from the Tshwane North FET College (Mamelodi Campus) to discuss a number of potential areas for collaboration.

The engineering faculty at CPUT turns away approximately 2 000 applicants every year. Many of this group meet minimum admission requirements, but are displaced by students with higher NSC scores. The objective of the Northlink Engineering Access Project is to create an alternative access channel whereby these students can undergo further preparation in technical subjects through the FET stream, rather than being lost to the system.

Ideally, these students could have been referred to the FET college to complete the final year of the NC(V)4. However, articulation from the academically focused NSC to the vocationally focused NC(V) remains problematic. Hence there is a need for a purpose-designed access programme which focuses on developing competencies in Mathematics, Science and Engineering Drawing.

Collaboration between NMMU and FET colleges in the Eastern Cape and the southern Cape

As a comprehensive university, NMMU has worked to facilitate access and articulation pathways for learners from the FET sector who fulfil the admissions criteria for career-focused university qualifications in the field of study for which they obtained an FET qualification.

Activities have been in three main focus areas:

1. *Refined access and articulation opportunities for FET learners* who have obtained an FET qualification and fulfil NMMU admission criteria to pursue career-oriented university qualifications in scarce skills areas. The Centre for Access and Admissions Research at NMMU has mapped NC(V) learning programmes on to cognate qualifications in vocational fields of study such as Engineering, ICT, Finance and Accounting,

Management, Marketing and Tourism, and produced a brochure to guide FET staff and learners in respect of the admission requirements for NC(V) learners to obtain access to vocational qualifications offered at NMMU. NMMU is also conducting detailed curriculum analyses in Engineering and ICT to facilitate articulation into higher education for FET learners in these scarce skills areas.

2. *Professional development opportunities for FET lecturers and managers*: The Faculty of Education at NMMU is in the process of implementing the credit-bearing pilot Vocational Education Orientation Programme (VEOP) for FET lecturers. NMMU's Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology has been partnering with the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA (merSETA) in providing capacity-development programmes for Engineering FET lecturers at three colleges in the Eastern Cape. Furthermore, NMMU's Business School offers customised credit-bearing leadership development programmes for FET college principals and other managers.
3. *Policy advocacy and systemic interventions* required at regional and national levels to expand post-schooling educational opportunities for South African youth. A significant innovation is an analysis of existing data sets for the purposes of GIS mapping to pinpoint the location of existing universities and FET colleges in the Eastern and southern Cape, their programme offerings, and their student enrolments in relation to the location of youth who are currently not in education, employment or training (NEETs).

The *Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training*

The position paper for HESA on which this chapter is based was developed in advance of the release by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) of the *Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (DHET 2012). The Green Paper, by its very nature, is wide in scope whereas the focus in this chapter is on potential relationships between the university sector and other parts of the system rather than on the development trajectory of the university sector itself, which is addressed in the Green Paper. But in terms of fundamental perspectives, there are many points of congruence in the positions taken in the two papers, and some differences, that will be touched on briefly here.

The most obvious point of agreement is the primary need for expansion of the pre-university college sector to address the education and training needs of youth, similarly identified in both papers. In terms of governing principles, the Green Paper focuses on equity, access and affordability, but some of the other principles in the HESA paper are embedded in other parts of the text such as

geographical accessibility and differentiation. Differentiation is perhaps dealt with more precisely in the HESA paper in terms of levels and purposes. It is here that the need for new institutional types is expressed, some of which could be developed out of existing FET colleges such as, 'technical colleges, specialised colleges offering intermediate qualifications for mid-level workers in a number of fields such as health, social work and education, and community colleges'. In the Green Paper there is only one new form that is proposed, the Community Education and Training Centre (CETC) where the focus it seems would be on adult basic education and some vocational training. There is also an emphasis in both papers on the operation of post-school education as a system and how this necessitates coordination of governance, particularly in relation to quality assurance councils, if mobility and articulation among sectors is to be realised.

The HESA paper, however, takes a much stronger position on the need for the provision of post-secondary education opportunities outside the universities. At least a third of the three million young people who are out of school, but not in employment or any form of training, have already passed the NSC or its equivalent and there are also the many youngsters who drop out of their university studies and then find that they have nowhere to go. In other words, there is a large pool of young people with a relatively high level of academic achievement for whom FET colleges in their present form and with their current offerings are not attractive. This is a potentially rich source from which to develop mid-level/intermediate skills that are desperately needed, but it receives scant attention in the Green Paper. The Green Paper options for post-secondary learners include a shortened version of the current NC(V) and the possibility of developing an NC(V) at Level 5 (DHET 2012:23). This is indicative of a significant difference in perspective: the Green Paper has a very strong focus on relatively low-level vocational training whereas the HESA vision of the post-school sector is of a much broader range of educational opportunities extending into the so-called higher education band on the NQF. For HESA, 'a primary objective would be to offer post-secondary educational opportunities and qualifications that lie somewhere between those presently offered by schools and FET colleges on the one hand, and universities on the other'. In the Green Paper, these possibilities are reduced to one short paragraph in which the possibility of colleges becoming 'sites of delivery of Higher Certificates, under the auspices of universities' is mentioned, but this is not quite the rich array of offerings that would significantly alter the range of opportunities for post-secondary learners or tap into their potential. This would be a regrettable missed opportunity.

Perhaps the last point that should be made in this comparison is that the Green Paper sees little potential for the universities to contribute to the building of the post-school education system although it is acknowledged to be the strongest and most coherent sector. Its contribution is seen to be

primarily in offering training programmes in faculties of education for FET college lecturers and conducting 'research' into the colleges (DHET 2012:14). There is nothing akin to the detailed strategy set out in the HESA paper but instead an extensive list of actions that are to be taken on by the the DHET itself, and one is constrained to ask where the capacity will be found for that enormous undertaking.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the universities can make a significant contribution to the reconfiguration and expansion of the existing post-school education sector. In part, however, this will depend on arriving at a shared vision with other role-players and stakeholders, particularly the Ministry and DHET, of the form that this sector should take in the long run. A key objective is to enable many more young people to acquire the education and training qualifications that will allow them to become economically active citizens with decent life prospects. The vision that underpins this chapter is of a properly articulated *system* in which the university sector is relatively small in relation to a strong base that offers a much wider range of education and training opportunities to school-leavers than is presently the case, and is attuned to social and economic needs, particularly those of the labour market, in ways that are not apparent in the present configuration.

As a *system*, it will require forms of governance that are also articulated, such as close collaboration between quality councils in the matter of accreditation of qualifications, admission criteria and credit transfer. Enrolment planning in all sectors of the system would need to be powerfully cognisant of regional needs and capacities. Arriving at this goal is likely to be fairly arduous, but in terms of the greatest challenge to realising this goal, namely the lack of capacity in the system, higher education has much to offer. A *phased approach* is recommended:

- identification of existing working partnerships and high-capacity FET colleges (for example, by using the data on the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) audit of FET colleges)
- building on existing working partnerships between higher education, FET and industry (curriculum alignment, articulation pathways, stable links, and capacity development of academic and managerial staff)
- generalising the model outwards by establishing the building blocks upon which an expanded PSE system can be built that is differentiated by both purpose and levels

- extending the model to other regions/institutions – towards the development of a national framework
- establishing new types of colleges with multiple purposes.

The model or mechanism recommended for higher education is *targeted partnerships*. Specific contributions that higher education can make include the following:

- academic, leadership and managerial capacity building
- teacher training for the college sector
- curriculum alignment
- quality assurance of assessment practices such as joint setting and moderating of NC(V) examinations
- development of articulation pathways.

A cautionary note must be sounded in relation to articulation. Articulation is not a solution to the major problems currently besetting the post-school sector, nor can it be considered to be a key driver in the reconfiguration of the sector. higher education will only be able to absorb a small proportion of the students who will enter the sub-sectors of the system, and progression pathways are necessarily 'bounded' in the ways spelt out above. Nonetheless, this is an important element in creating a *system* out of the sector through linking the qualifications offered by different institutions, and offering potential progression routes to students.

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SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Chapter 7

TRENDS IN TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA

Nicola Branson

Introduction

Research shows that only a small proportion of South Africans further their education post-schooling (Breier and Mabizela 2008), even given the high returns of tertiary education in the labour market (Keswell and Poswell 2004). Training presents an alternative channel through which individuals can acquire skills to increase their productivity and improve their prospects on the job market (Department of Basic Education 2011).

Training questions were asked of all adult respondents in each of the biannual Labour Force Surveys (LFSs) between 2000 and 2007. The training questions had three parts: respondents were asked whether they had received any training in skills that could be used for work, how long their last training session was, and in which field. The questions were identical in each of the survey instruments and therefore present the opportunity to assess both levels of training in South Africa and whether there have been any changes in the characteristics of individuals acquiring training as well as the type of training received, over time.

This chapter briefly compares the characteristics of three categories of individuals – those with school education only, those with post-school training, and those with tertiary training – before documenting the levels and trends of training in South Africa. The report shows that while skills training levels are higher than tertiary training levels, only 20 per cent of the adult population acquires some post-schooling training. Those receiving skills training are more educated and hence have better labour market outcomes than the general population, but fair worse than those with tertiary training.

The following broad trends are evident from the data. Levels of training decreased between 2000 and 2007, with much of the decrease taking place between 2000 and 2004. Since 2004 levels of training have fluctuated between

12 and 14 per cent. The popularity of training fields has fluctuated over the period. In 2000 the fields of business, the humanities and law, military science and security held equal shares, dominated only by the manufacturing, engineering and technology fields. By 2007, however, over a quarter of those individuals who had received training were trained in the fields of law, military science and security, with large decreases in the humanities and manufacturing fields. Length of training also appears to have decreased. While the majority of training sessions take place over a period of six months in each year, the share of shorter courses increased during the period, with the result that by 2007 41 per cent of training courses were under six months in duration. Within the youth sample, the decline in longer training was offset by an increase in training of less than one month.

There have been some shifts in the characteristics of individuals receiving training over time. In particular, the share of trainees who are African has increased steadily between 2000 and 2007 from 56 per cent in 2000 to 68 per cent by 2007. There have also been increases in the proportion of trainees employed, although this could be a consequence of the increase in educational attainment over the period.

Who receives training in South Africa?

Table 1 presents average characteristics from pooled LFS data[14] for adults (25–50) and young adults (25–29) separately. Around 19 per cent of South Africans receive some form of post-schooling training, either training in skills required for work, formal tertiary training, or a combination of both. Training in skills is more prevalent than formal tertiary training, especially in the young adults sample where 10 per cent of youth aged 25–29 receive skills training and 6.22 per cent receive formal tertiary education.

Training appears to be more common for males than females for both the adult and youth samples. Focusing on young adults, while 53 per cent of the population is female, the share with skills training is only 41 per cent. On the other hand, females hold a dominant share in formal tertiary training. The population group shares within the training group are fairly similar to the overall population group shares, with whites holding a slightly larger share at the expense of Africans. The distribution in training is far more equitable than is evident in the tertiary group.

14 The 2000 to 2007 data was pooled to form one large data set. A pooled sample weight was constructed so that each survey was given equal weight.

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents by whether they received training and/or tertiary education

	Adults 25–50					Youths 25–29				
	All	Training	Tertiary	Both training & tertiary	Neither training nor tertiary	All	Training	Tertiary	Both training & tertiary	Neither training nor tertiary
% with		9.74	7.20	2.37	80.70		9.98	6.22	2.12	81.67
Female	0.53	0.40	0.52	0.50	0.54	0.52	0.41	0.55	0.55	0.53
Age	35.63	35.03	35.91	35.82	35.67	26.96	27.09	27.11	27.12	26.92
African	0.76	0.69	0.53	0.44	0.80	0.81	0.74	0.61	0.54	0.84
Coloured	0.10	0.11	0.06	0.07	0.10	0.09	0.11	0.06	0.07	0.09
Indian	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.06	0.05	0.02
White	0.11	0.17	0.36	0.44	0.07	0.08	0.13	0.27	0.34	0.05
Completed years of education	9.11	10.38	14.07	14.14	8.20	10.09	11.05	13.87	13.88	9.48
Matric	0.36	0.48	1.00	1.00	0.25	0.43	0.59	1.00	1.00	0.34
Economically active	0.87	0.94	0.95	0.94	0.85	0.89	0.95	0.93	0.93	0.87
Employed	0.65	0.74	0.90	0.89	0.60	0.52	0.66	0.78	0.77	0.46
Self-employed	0.15	0.15	0.11	0.15	0.15	0.11	0.11	0.07	0.10	0.12
Unemployed	0.35	0.26	0.10	0.11	0.40	0.48	0.34	0.22	0.23	0.54
Observations	267 654	26 058	19 258	6 348	215 990	63 705	6 358	3 963	1 353	52 031

Notes: Weighted frequencies on pooled LFS 2000–2007 data presented. Sample includes all respondents (25–50 and 25–29) with information on whether they completed any tertiary education and training.

Completion of schooling is not a prerequisite for skills training, but those with training appear to have more schooling than the average. The average level of education completed in the training group is 11.05 years, just below the 12 years required to complete secondary school and 69 per cent of the group have completed matric. As would be expected, given the higher than average schooling, the odds of employment are higher in the training group than the overall average: 66 per cent of those with training are employed compared to 52 per cent on average.

The training group is, however, far outranked in educational attainment and job market wellbeing when compared to those with formal tertiary education or a combination of both. Since tertiary study requires matric completion, the average level of education in the tertiary group is close to three years higher than that of the training group. This is likely the main reason for the much higher levels of employment within the tertiary group: 78 per cent of tertiary trained are employed. There is some evidence that those with skills training are more likely to be self-employed than those with tertiary training.

Trends in training over time

Tables 2a and 2b present information on the three training questions, for the full adult sample and for young adults respectively. The proportion of people reporting training is similar between the adult and youth sample in each year. Over 10 per cent of the sample population report having been trained in skills that can be used for work in each year. The data show a possible decline in the percentage reporting training between 2000 and 2004; thereafter the proportion fluctuates between 12 and 14 per cent.

The field of training question originally contained 18 categories. These have been condensed into the fields presented in the tables.[15] In 2000 the manufacturing, engineering and technology category held the largest share of trainees, with the business, commerce, law, military science and security and services holding equal shares. By 2007, the distribution across training field had shifted dramatically: 27 per cent of respondents who reported training had trained in the law, military science and security field with large decreases in the shares held by the humanities and manufacturing fields. The length of training also appears to have decreased on average, with much of the decline taking place between 2003 and 2007. In 2003, 64 per cent of respondents reported receiving training for over six months. By 2007, this percentage had decreased to 59 per cent, offset mainly by an increase in intermediary length training (1–5 months) in the adult sample and short training (<1 month) in the young adult sample.

15 See Table 2 footnotes for details on which fields are contained in each category.

Table 2a: Training over time – adults (25–50)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Training (%)								
All adults 25–50	16.8	15.0	12.9	12.4	11.4	12.5	13.9	12.6
Of those with training, distribution across fields:								
Business, commerce and management services	15.8	16.7	17.9	14.9	12.6	11.0	13.5	14.0
Humanities	16.8	13.5	14.0	14.7	12.4	13.0	13.1	12.9
Law, military science and security	16.2	20.2	18.6	18.6	22.0	26.1	24.2	27.3
Services	10.1	10.5	12.1	10.4	12.3	10.8	10.3	8.9
Manufacturing, engineering and technology	19.4	16.1	16.8	16.7	13.8	14.3	13.3	14.1
Other	21.6	23.0	20.6	24.6	26.9	24.8	25.7	22.8
Length of training								
< 1 month	15.7	14.4	15.0	14.2	15.7	17.6	19.3	16.9
1–5 months	20.4	21.7	20.5	21.9	22.8	24.1	26.3	24.3
≥ 6 months	63.9	63.9	64.5	63.9	61.5	58.3	54.4	58.8
Sample size (Training=1)	5 136	4 844	4 089	3 905	3 519	3 786	3 925	3 357

Table 2b: Training over time – youths (25–29)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Training (%)								
25–29 year olds)	16.5	14.1	12.8	12.8	10.2	13.2	13.6	12.7
Of those with training, distribution across fields:								
Business, commerce and management services	15.7	17.2	16.3	16.8	10.8	9.9	12.9	13.7
Humanities	12.6	12.0	12.6	10.7	10.7	11.3	9.8	8.8
Law, military science and security	23.2	26.5	26.8	26.1	31.1	31.9	27.0	32.0
Services	10.3	8.7	11.6	9.7	10.6	9.9	10.5	7.3
Manufacturing, engineering and technology	18.0	13.1	13.5	12.2	10.8	10.4	12.5	14.7
Other	20.3	22.6	19.2	24.5	26.0	26.6	27.3	23.5
Length of training								
< 1 month	16.3	18.1	18.8	15.8	18.8	17.5	21.5	23.1
1–5 months	24.6	23.8	21.8	25.9	27.8	26.4	28.5	24.4
≥ 6 months	59.0	58.1	59.3	58.3	53.4	56.0	50.0	52.6
Sample size (Training=1)	1 225	1 166	1 002	903	788	947	883	820

Notes to tables 2a and 2b: Weighted numbers presented. Humanities include: communication studies, language, education, training, development, human and social studies, culture, arts. Services include: services and health sciences and social services. Manufacturing, etc. includes: manufacturing, engineering, technology and physical planning and construction. Other includes: agriculture and nature conservation, physical, mathematical, computer and life sciences.

Tables 3a and 3b show mean characteristics of trainees between 2000 and 2007. While the age of trainees has remained fairly constant, there has been an

increase in the share of female trainees (especially in the young adult group) and Africans between 2000 and 2007. There are also increases in the level of educational attainment and employment within the trainee group.

Table 3a: Characteristics of individuals with training over time – adults (25–50)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Respondents with training – all adults (25–50)								
Female	0.40	0.41	0.43	0.43	0.41	0.41	0.42	0.43
Age	35.29	35.45	35.47	35.47	35.32	34.73	35.25	34.84
African	0.56	0.60	0.62	0.62	0.63	0.69	0.71	0.68
Coloured	0.12	0.10	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.08	0.09
Indian	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.03
White	0.29	0.25	0.24	0.23	0.24	0.20	0.18	0.21
Educational attainment	11.06	11.04	11.19	11.25	11.40	11.22	11.21	11.34
Matriculant	0.56	0.56	0.58	0.61	0.63	0.59	0.60	0.61
Employed	0.77	0.69	0.70	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.74	0.75
Sample size (Training=1)	5 136	4 844	4 089	3 905	3 519	3 786	3 925	3 357

Table 3b: Characteristics of individuals with training over time – youths (25–29)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Respondents with training – youths (25–29)								
Female	0.40	0.44	0.45	0.45	0.42	0.46	0.42	0.45
Age	27.05	27.08	27.14	27.11	27.16	27.13	27.15	27.02
African	0.62	0.67	0.69	0.68	0.70	0.74	0.77	0.73
Coloured	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.12	0.11	0.09	0.08	0.09
Indian	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.03
White	0.24	0.20	0.17	0.17	0.16	0.15	0.12	0.14
Educational attainment	11.55	11.55	11.65	11.74	11.52	11.56	11.65	11.63
Matriculant	0.66	0.67	0.66	0.71	0.68	0.65	0.69	0.66
Employed	0.69	0.57	0.59	0.65	0.67	0.63	0.66	0.67
Sample size (Training=1)	1 225	1 166	1 002	903	788	947	883	820

Notes to tables 3a and 3b: Weighted numbers presented.

Conclusion

The survey questions present information of the levels and trends of training in South Africa over time. Training is shown to be more prevalent than formal tertiary education, but the vast majority of South Africans receive neither skills nor formal tertiary training.

The report shows that those who receive training are, on average, better off in terms of education and employment. From the cross-sectional data it is, however, unclear whether the increased well-being is a prerequisite for training i.e. the training is initiated by an employer and hence requires employment or requires some prior basic level of skill, or whether it is a result of the training itself. The higher educational attainment of those with training indicates that at least part of the increased well-being is a function of individuals with higher socio-economic status selecting to be trained.

Chapter 8

KEY ISSUES IN THE ASSESSMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S NATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Sean Archer[16]

A culture of evidence has to replace a culture of unexamined assumptions.
– Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) (2009:4)

Introduction

No one is satisfied with the volume of skills training taking place in the South African labour market. There are multiple reasons why a serious deficiency in our 21st century policy array has led to the current skills training deficit, but

16 This chapter is based on *SALDRU Working Paper 52: Key Issues in the Assessment of SETA Performance in South Africa's National Skills Development Strategy* (research initiated and funded by Nico Cloete of CHET, 2010). Numerous individuals provided information and advice in the preparation of the main report including: Friede Downie, Gail Eliot, Mark Henning, Cheryl James, Andre Kraak, Janet Lopez, Paul Lundall, Carmel Marock and Florus Prinsloo. In addition, I am grateful to Nico Cloete of CHET for financing the research and to Murray Leibbrandt for performing a careful edit of an earlier draft of the present main report, *SALDRU Working Paper 52*, 2010. The two appendices attached to the main report on which this chapter is based contain (1) selected assessments and suggested policy reforms for the present training system culled from the available literature; and (2) an analysis of data ambiguities and the forecasting difficulties that are detrimental to South African skills training. The report can be found at www.saldru.uct.ac.za.

two reasons for serious concern will do by way of introduction.

Firstly, we live in an age in which education and training are prominent items that in many countries are accorded legal recognition as every individual's human right. As acquired competencies these are *entitlements* positively valued in social and economic life. Most of us favour their greater abundance for that reason. Secondly, many of us believe strongly that the increased productive capacities that come with skills training have spill-over effects beneficial to ourselves, to others in society and to our future descendents. This implies that, apart from the cultural consequences of new skills that are overwhelmingly positive, one worker acquiring more schooling or additional skills training increases the output of *others* along with a rise in his or her own productivity that normally leads to higher earnings and higher profits. There is copious research backing the existence of such relationships.[17]

The task of sifting the analytical wheat from the rhetorical chaff is demanding because of the sheer volume of documentation generated internationally about education and training, especially in relation to the economic aspects of these forms of *human capital investment*. The latter term carries little visible ideological baggage and its usage here is straightforward. Throughout this chapter *human capital investment* will mean *the accumulation of productively significant skills*. This does not preclude the recognition of all forms of education and training as *cultural goods* that are highly important to human well-being. There is no conflict between these two perspectives.

What demands closer attention are the policy and strategy issues associated with the successful investment in skills development in both the public and private sector spheres.

Critical issues for enquiry

First, our national priorities in skills training should focus on the *strategic gaps* in the evidence base that underlies policy, rather than on marginal adjustments. As argued in the full report on which this chapter is based, ten years after the new skills training strategy was launched we still lack answers to key questions. One of these gaps concerns new institutions like the Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). In particular, what kind and extent of *information* is available to such implementers of policy? For instance, do SETAs know whether their member companies trust one another enough to be both effective reciprocators and abstainers from skills poaching, which inhibits skills investment?

17 Research includes Heckman (1994), Heckman (1999), Blaug (1995), Bassanini and Ok (2004), Bassanini *et al.* (2005) and Stevens (1994).

Second, employers are the *most important* decision-takers in the training sphere. In the last decade there have been no comprehensive enquiries about their use of schooled and skilled labour, nor about their routine training activities, most of which occur on-the-job. Developing a comprehensive view of decision-making about skills investment at the firm level requires extensive interviews with company managers, establishment visits and the investigation of training content and context. These questions are readily informed by the international literature.

An additional cause for attention is that within the body of all employers the sub-divisions are informative. In round figures, 2010 *formal employment* was 9.6 million, of which the private sector share was 7.6 million or 79 per cent, and the public sector share 2.1 million or 21 per cent. *Informal employment* was another 2.2 million and *domestic work* 1.1 million (although these categories are not weighty contributors to skills training volume because of the inherently unskilled nature of productive work in them). So no original insight is needed to see that private companies are the biggest employer sub-group and thus the most potent trainers of skilled labour.

Third, policy-makers need to know with more precision what *skills-employed-in-production* are required for new jobs that are created in expanding enterprises. In practice, only the state can carry out this research satisfactorily. The scale and cost involved in such an enquiry will be high, and a portion of the required information is considered confidential by respondent firms as well as departments of state acting as employers. Reluctant to supply strategic data to private researchers, they should do so to officials under confidentiality agreements. This remains a major gap in the research results essential for policy design.

Fourth, the international literature shows that a *skills-alone* approach to the devising of policy is unlikely to be successful. Many governments attempt to identify which skills are scarce, their quantification and the tactics judged best to expand training. This is carried out by appeals, compulsory levies, penalties, regulation and the fostering of a training culture. The aim is 'stockpiling qualifications' (Payne 2009:489). One advantage is that the latter is easily stated as a goal, although almost invariably the classification used is that of occupations. These too often do *not* specify the skills and acquired aptitudes recognised in production. Occupation categories are blunt and in part proxy measures because they are seldom detailed enough for the range of demand and supply decisions that employers and policy-makers need to make.

An alternative perspective is to cast the policy and its underlying research net wider. Skills training is then interpreted to include job design, work organisation and its innovation, human resource management, and product market strategy.

> [These] are crucial to the ability of organisations to mobilise their human resources and harness them to improved performance. (Payne 2009:489)

The international literature along these lines grows rapidly.

> In the CIS [European Union] organizational innovation is broadly defined as changes in firm structure or management methods that are intended to improve a firm's use of knowledge, the quality of goods and services, or the efficiency of work flows … [We] propose a more specific working definition of organizational innovation for US firms that includes the following components – workforce training, employee voice, work design (including the use of cross-functional production processes), and shared rewards … In addition, as team work becomes more important workers need to acquire additional skills to help them function in a more interactive group environment. How one ***measures*** training investments is critical for examining its impact on economic outcomes such as productivity. Simple incidence measures such as yes and no answers to the question of whether a firm conducts any formal training programs for employees are unlikely to capture adequately organizational innovation (Lynch 2007: 6–7, emphasis added).

Government, SETAs and other participants in the skills training industry operate with an implicit model of the process of skills production, which is questionable. They envisage decisions about training as fully or adequately informed about the variables that determine success, like the complete costs, benefits and knowledge of the productive significance of the acquired skill. But deciding whether this scepticism is justified has to wait until completion of the research called for above.

By way of illustrating what is in question, one generalisation that awaits *testing* is that the closer someone in the skills arena is to the production process the less applicable such a person considers this implicit model of skills training to be. If correct, this indictment is serious.

These conditions, or more accurately constraints, are the source of difficulties that face any state policy aiming to *raise* the quantity and quality of acquired skills in an economy. In South Africa the following issues require investigation if we are to gain greater clarity about the policy actions necessary.

- *Institutions and strategic policies* describe the levy-grant system, as well as the role envisaged for the SETAs as intermediaries within such a system. The result is inevitably a hybrid. Then to understand fully the obstacles facing the use of policy instruments, an awareness of information and trust as peculiar commodities in a market system is essential. These are liable to cause the market's failure.

- *Information issues in the regulation of skills training* concern understanding why information about training intentions is private and not readily shared, and how this is the key to identify the barriers faced by intervention from outside that aims to influence the rate of skills investment. This understanding is not evident in existing assessments of institutions that embody the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS).
- *Context-specific training issues in South Africa* describe the differences between the South African skills system and those found in industrial countries where research has taken place. We can use the international literature to illuminate our own problems if we are reasonably confident that our occupational labour markets and our institutional settings are sufficiently similar. If we do not know whether this is the case, a gap opens up for investigation that we urge government to undertake.
- *Integration of skills training strategies* with initiatives to accelerate industrial growth sets out the difficulties that state agencies face. The call for policy alignment is widespread, but seemingly little dedicated effort has been devoted to the question by researchers and policy-makers.

Institutions and strategic policies

At present no-one can decide whether the presence of state-initiated organisations like SETAs make investment decisions by employers and employees in the skills arena more efficient or not. In other words, do their prescribed activities assist employers, workers, training providers and the state to reach investment outcomes higher in net income or welfare terms for *all* interest groups? Government has to mount the missing research to answer such a question.

Certain features of the NSDS are *new* in the sense that they came into being about ten years ago. A proportion of these were not institutional or policy adaptations of labour market practices drawn from the previous era of apartheid, but had to be devised and instituted from scratch. SETAs are one prominent example.

At present it is not possible to make recommendations about *particular* organisations like the National Skills Fund, South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), SETAs, and others, nor about their amalgamation, nor about possible new and alternative institutional options. Micro-level investigation is essential for such judgements, concentrated particularly on representative private employers of all sizes, including state employers, training providers and organised labour.

For instance, SETAs are labour market *intermediaries*. They exist alongside

bargaining chambers, industry associations and certification authorities, all of which perform intermediary roles. As a group they are designed for *programmatic interventions* in labour market functioning. This conception of their intermediary roles in the system of skills training shows one way they need to be assessed in achieving efficiency and equity goals. Otherwise it is too easy to concentrate attention only on their administrative functions and not on their effect on training volume, on its quality and on the contributions of policy-initiated organisations to matching the supply to the demand for productive skills.

A number of informants working as SETA employees and in their governance bodies have asserted that a process of *mission creep* has added to the task burdens of SETAs in the past dozen years. One example is the widespread expectation of SETA assistance in job placement for newly skilled workers and learnership graduates. This was not envisaged as a founding function.

To increase skills useful in production, intermediary institutions have to *mediate* the different interests of the employer, the worker, the training provider and the state. They do so (1) by compensating for the negative effects of incomplete information; (2) by lowering transactions costs for workers and employers; (3) by providing finance where workers face a capital market failure because they cannot borrow to enter training; and (4) by enabling the benefits of scale to be reaped by individuals and organisations engaged in training. This is a formidable list of compensatory functions not sufficiently recognised.

Whether intermediating institutions, such as SETAs, state departments and accreditation agencies, do counter market failures effectively in practice is a key issue in all economy-wide systems of training. The 'carrot and stick' approach is considered essential for any effective national efforts at correcting defects. The following statement about the United States situation is an illustration.

> The most important of best-practice elements [in active labour market policies] is driven by an understanding that employment and training schemes work best if they connect effectively to both sides of the labour market, that is to employers as well as [worker] clients. In order to accomplish this, considerable effort has to be devoted to gaining knowledge about the human resource needs of the target group of firms and, in some cases, also to understanding how the programme can contribute to the firms' competitive success. In short, such programmes seek to appeal to firms as a business proposition, not as a charity, public relations or welfare effort … A strategy which relied entirely on training and economic development programmes working directly with individual employers or employer groups could achieve a good deal, but it would also be slow and incomplete in its coverage. A strategy which supported increased unionization and better wage and working-time standards would impact a larger number

of employees, but it would lack the tools to help employers meet their responsibilities. Some combination of the two approaches would seem to be optimal. (Osterman 2008:125–6, 132–3)

Information issues in the regulation of skills training

The most serious knowledge problem facing an intermediary institution concerns the *obstacles* to obtaining and dispersing information about the intentions, investment decisions and willing collaboration of decision-takers in a given sector of an economy. This is primarily about the commitments of all or the majority of employers regarding their skills training investments.

The difficulty is pronounced in those training systems where employers do not possess a history of shared or common knowledge about how *other* employers will respond to new offers and incentives to cooperate. What is lacking is a history of prior cooperation. Government then has the difficult problem of devising ways to get private decision-takers to cooperate. In doing this, it is faced with setting up and monitoring the performance of new institutions that are designed to act as intermediaries and clearing houses for information.

In practice a key aspect of the training information problem is knowing the extent to which *non-training* firms will poach skilled workers trained by other firms because they deem it cheaper in cost, time and bureaucratic hold-up. The lack of such information for *all* decision-takers, including in particular intermediaries, causes high investment risk and the potential for *market failures* in every national labour market. Together with loan market barriers that face potential trainees wishing to borrow to fund their training, these failures are the main efficiency rationale for state intervention in the skills arena.

Recall that investment in skill acquisition is *not* at all like investment in a fixed capital asset. Investing in the exploitation of a natural resource or a building or a machine provides the organisation or individual doing the investing with control over the movement, use and location of the physical product. Profitability is not guaranteed, but the risk of loss is relatively lower. This is not the case with an acquired skill that results from investing resources in its production. Skills are *assets with feet* and newly skilled workers respond at will to new incentives and opportunities. Thus outcomes during the investment recoupment period can entail losses for the company or individual source of the resources invested. This is the market failure outcome.

In the international literature there is evidence that the poaching problem is relatively low in the *public* sector in industrial countries like the UK. This may explain why their governments are slow to recognise poaching and its consequences for training behaviour as a major source of market failure. We do

not know whether it is a serious deficiency of policy design and implementation in South Africa, but it warrants full and concerted investigation by government.

> Worker mobility is a much more serious problem for private employers than for the non-tradable public sector, where mobility is low. This may partly explain (but not excuse) why there has been insufficient recognition by government of the need for policies to restore training incentives for employers ... Labour mobility between firms is likely to remain high as it is an integral feature of the British economy. Recent reforms to funding and provision of training have concentrated on exhortation to firms to raise their contribution to training, without redressing the poaching problem through any form of subsidy or inter-firm levy. Further attention must be given to resolving under-investment in training arising from high turnover in the British labour market. (Greenhalgh and Mavratos 1996:141)

Information and trust are the key variables in question because they determine cooperation between all decision-takers, specifically employers concerning their decisions to invest or not to invest in skills training. A large literature on collective action problems has emerged in recent decades. While aspects of it are relevant to our research questions we do not survey it here. But certain observations are pertinent. First, where there is market failure through free riding – poaching skilled labour rather than training it – a collective action dilemma arises. Theoretical considerations lead to the conclusion that no-one will change their behaviour unless an *external* authority imposes enforceable rules that alter the incentives faced by the decision-takers involved (Ostrom 2009). Second, unless information about the intended behaviour of others able to influence the investment decision is available, then decision-takers making up an entire spectrum of organisations tend to defect from cooperation (Liverani 2009). These causes of market failure are key considerations in gaining an understanding of the problem.

> To get the relational information [private knowledge about intentions and trust] that they need to secure decentralized cooperation in skills training, public policy-makers must build links with private networks. The state needs to rely on an organization that actors [decision-makers] in the political economy trust sufficiently to reveal potentially sensitive information about their propensity to cooperate. In other words, the state needs to work with organizations ***it cannot control*** in order to have an interlocutor that is a credible, trusted intermediary and that has access to private information about the identity of waverers [not committed to cooperate] and the problems that make them uncertain about the returns to cooperation. (Culpepper 2003:53, emphasis added)

This obstacle inherent in all levy-grant systems of skills training is the state's inability to access relevant information from the private sector. South African SETAs echo these difficulties. Their primary objectives are to raise (1) the net volume of skills training, (2) its quality and (3) the rate of satisfactory matching between skills demanded and skills supplied in occupational labour markets. As we argue throughout this chapter, but specifically in this section, we cannot make informed judgements about the performance of intermediary organisations without understanding the role of information and trust as the key determining variables in *all* production of skills.

It means that in the absence of coming to know what is inherently *private* information – through appropriate action and institution building by the state aimed at obtaining access to that information – policy-makers are reduced to *'pushing on a string'*. This metaphor describes the inherent problem facing government as well as organisations like the 23 SETAs. Hence, this is one major research task, probably the most important one, to be carried out by state agencies in the pursuit of reform that leads to better performance of the entire system.

Other information obstacles are different, but potentially no less problematic. One is the characterisation and measurement of skills themselves. In South Africa we have a limited choice of data on skills. It is either *occupations* from the Labour Force Survey or it is *education levels* or *years of completed education* from various census takings. There are also hybrids like *occupational levels* which contain skill slots labelled 'top management, middle management, skilled, semi-skilled' and so on (for example, in actual and proposed legislation, like the act aimed at Employment Equity).

But few if any of these measures can identify skills with the precision that can supply answers to the questions important to all interested parties, whether employers, organised labour or policy-makers. Employers are interested in productivity and performance on the job. Unions are interested in wages, earnings and conditions of service. Government is interested in job creation, economic growth, international competition and national welfare levels. Do existing categories of skills when measured meet all these requirements? The international literature provides serious grounds for doubt (see for example Green *et al.*1998; Forth and Mason 2004; Future Skills Scotland 2007; Watson *et al.* 2006; Richardson 2007; Richardson and Tan 2007).

Context-specific training issues in South Africa

Questions about our national, regional and occupational labour markets – what are termed 'country characteristics' – must include the following, although these are by no means intended as a complete set of identifying

characteristics. They show that the research essential to inform skills training policy is particularly wide-ranging.

- Is our training policy pushing *for or against* (1) the dominant trends in domestic as well as imported technology; (2) the differentiation between skills inherent in the markets where skilled labour is offered and acquired; and (3) the political forces that favour social equalisation?

  Firstly, the technological progress in recent decades – the period identified in the research varies by country – has shown a bias towards demand for skilled labour. This widely observed trend is known as *skill biased technical change* (SBTC). Secondly, market forces dictated by rising consumer preferences for greater variety of goods and services in developed as well as emergent economies increase the demand for labour with multiple rather than single skills. Thirdly, given the inheritance from apartheid policies in the South African labour market which systematically favoured trainees drawn from certain racial groups, the pressure now for widening access to training is widely supported.
- *Fully-on-the-job training* refers to the acquisition of skills 'both theoretical and practical – where the majority of training is conducted in the workplace as part of the normal experience of the employee … [In Australia] there is an overall tendency to be in favour of fully-on-the-job training, with major advantages perceived to be financial incentives for employers and flexibility in how training is organised. A further strength is the acquisition of skills relevant to the trainee's workplace, with incidental learning adding to this effect. For trainees, an important beneficial outcome of this kind of training is the increased potential for employment opportunities to be identified in the place of their learning' (Wood 2004:5, 23).

  Is this trend evidenced also in the major sectors of the South African economy? If so there can also be negative dimensions to this method of skill acquisition. Criticism of the "fully-on-the-job" variant of training concerns its effect in limiting the trainee worker's access to a wider range of skills than on offer from individual employers. It also constrains the interaction of the worker being trained with peers; that is, with other workers holding similar skills in branches of the same organisation and in other organisations. In the longer run this is argued to retard the up-skilling process in the industrial or service sector in question. Clearly the need for South African investigation is suggested by evidence from elsewhere (Misko 2008:32).
- An allied research query is posed by a statement summarising the Australian experience: *'Formal learning* continues to be the main route to recognised qualifications required for entry into jobs, especially

regulated occupations. However, informal learning acquired through experience in work and life is the most frequently used of all the learning forms. Employers are mostly interested in results of learning rather than the form of learning. What they want are essential technical skills and knowledge required for jobs and for compliance with legislative requirements' (Misko 2008:4, emphasis added).

We do not know whether this is equally true about South African skills training, but the detailed research urged throughout this chapter should provide the answer already emphasised as the essential ingredient in revised policy that is now missing.

- Does South African skills-training practice follow the established international norm in which two-thirds to three-quarters of completed training is initiated and financed by employers? The latter estimate is applicable to public and private sector employers jointly. It would be highly surprising to find the local situation to be different with lower proportions applicable to employers. There is no reason to think this the case.
- The figures on the sub-categories of employers quoted earlier show that private employers as potential investors in skills training are the predominant interest group. Why government fails to recognise and act on this fact in policy innovation and design is a mystery.

The following criticism of UK policy perspective and practice is salutary for our South African skills development strategy: 'History tells us that no one can predict with any accuracy future occupational skills. The [Leitch] Review is clear that skill demands will increase at every single level [in the UK] … What could be clearer? It does, indeed, beggar belief that any central body can identify the needs and plan the training of a country with over 60 million people. This is a country (and a planet), moreover, where both technical progress and market-driven changes mean that enterprises are constantly in flux, where people's jobs change around them, where employees move frequently within a workplace even when they stay with the same employer, and where the young, in particular, change both jobs and sectors often. Again and again, the Leitch Report argues for a "demand-led" system that could reflect and respond to what people in the workforce recognise as valuable. But the mantra is just that – a repeated set of words that do not connect with reality' (Wolf 2007:111–112).

Within our national context of discussion in South Africa no official statements publicly acknowledge this criticism to be the case.

During an economic downturn, like the one we are experiencing at present, we do not know what the net effect will be on the volume of skills training investment. The following are hypotheses to be found in the literature, but they all require local South African testing.

The employment rate in a national economy experiencing recession declines because the preceding boom sucked labour into activities and sectors no longer at the same level of demand. 'Former employees lose skills, contacts and attachment to working. These losses are permanent' (Giles, *Financial Times*, 24 November 2009).

'Recession may bring with it a "bumping down" process where available jobs go to over-qualified people, while those who would normally have taken those jobs are squeezed out. This process arises because many employers will attempt to retain the skilled element of their workforce in whom they have made an investment [in specific skills]' (Warwick IER 2009:3). If this is true for the South African economy then cyclical inhibition of the volume of skills training is highly likely.

'[Because] the brunt of employment adjustment in the recession falls on reducing recruitment, especially of the young … average training incidence can fall in a downturn as the result of a shift in the composition of employment towards older and more protected workers' (Brunello 2009:2).

'[There] is a real danger that we will see the re-emergence of greater job polarisation … [which] will increase pressure on the government to cut back the rate of expansion in higher and further education on the grounds that the UK has an oversupply of graduates. The recession will indeed change the balance between demand and supply for knowledge-intensive labour – primarily by restricting new jobs for graduate-level entrants. As graduate unemployment rises and more graduates take any job going, the further expansion of further and higher education will look more questionable' (Smith Institute 2009:44).

This argument applies to both intermediate- and higher-level skills training in the UK, but whether it is true for a labour market like South Africa's which has much lower average levels and proportions of such skills in the workforce is an open question. Again, it is an item for deliberate investigation if reliable data on local unemployment amongst higher and further education graduates can be assembled.

- 'It is possible that the crisis may disrupt the steady improvement in qualification profiles observed over recent decades [in the EU]. Initial indications are that the immediate impact of the crisis may be increasing educational participation and qualification acquisition as individuals delay entry into a depressed labour market … [Yet in] the longer term, potential financial constraints may discourage investment in human capital. Policy-makers may need to take proactive steps' (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training [Cedefop] 2009:15). What may be an accurate proposition for the European Union may not be true for a middle-ranking country by per capita income and education

level like South Africa. Once more, specific research is required.

- Is the skills training levy shifted *backwards* on to workers even though payment is by employers in our South African system? Net wages available to workers will then be lower, but it also means that *all* workers are paying for the training of *some* workers. Such redistribution if it occurs is a regressive outcome and therefore undesirable.

Integration of skills training strategies with other policy initiatives: What are the issues?

Numerous written comments on the national skills training system call for an *alignment* or *integration* of skills development policy with industrial policy. None of these sources suggest how this might be done.

So one purpose here in this chapter is to identify the obstacles to such policy integration in practice. These are overlooked in the many calls for *alignment* and *integration* of differing sectoral policies. In particular, the information required for policy-makers to integrate these public initiatives into a single suite that is efficient is formidably detailed, and some might say impossible to obtain.

- We need a policy intervention which asks: '[In] a given workplace in a sector or industry [subject to policy intervention], the enhancement of *what particular* types and levels of skill for *which segments* of the workforce will deliver improved productivity, in conjunction with what other changes or inputs?' (Keep *et al*. 2006:553, emphasis added). This question about UK policy debates alerts us to the level of detail in the information input required by any government's aspiration to intervene jointly in industrial as well as skill dimensions. If the required level of detail escapes the interventionary state in industrial countries then this information deficiency is likely to be of the same high magnitude in South Africa.
- 'Changes in product market conditions are the principal determinant of the strategies adopted by profit-maximising firms. Government policies of encouragement or inhibition operate alongside the market's influences but are almost invariably subordinate. Both influences change the firm's market strategies and therefore their utilisation of skilled labour. But producers (besides firms there are SOEs [state-owned enterprises], government departments and non-profits) are not homogeneous. Some continue on the same strategic path as before, some aspire to compete in higher value-added activities, and some opt to deskill, particularly where the cost pressures are severe. So employers all have a degree of choice on how they use the skills of their workers, and what determines

that choice is difficult to reach by policy steering' (Future Skills Scotland 2007; Almeida 2009).

- There is evidence – mentioned for East Asia in the previous section – that greater openness to international trade, to foreign investment, and to inward technology transfer, *increases* the demand for skills in industrial as well as middle-income countries like South Africa. Yet there is little direct research locally on this question, given the general difficulty of capturing appropriate data and then showing associations between and within this set of variables. That is, associations or linkages in order to be shown as not spurious have to be identified independently. But the calls for alignment between skill policies and introduced measures to encourage industrial growth to shift into targeted sectors (for instance into industries that absorb unskilled labour) require precisely such information at a high level of detail, which is simply not available.
- A general criticism of skills policy interventions is that they tend to be *coarse* and *aggregated* in their terms of analysis and action: 'Thus the role of skills as a "magic bullet" that can address issues of productivity and competitiveness is still being overplayed, and policy continues to operate at levels of aggregation that render interventions clumsy and expensive [in industrial countries]' (Keep *et al*. 2006:554; Asplund 2004; Nicoletti and Scarpetta 2005).

  If correct, the research results that exist in other countries show that the linkage between product market behaviour and choice of skilled inputs in production is a *flexible coupling*. There is both 'within-industry' and 'between-industry' variation. Thus at industry or sectoral level there is probably an average indicator of skill need calculable for the hypothesised link. But that is hardly of use for policy targeting. Because the *types* of enterprises classified by product and skill-use strategy will not be identified with the precision necessary to provide insight into specific skill needs.
- 'The high correlation between the measures of product strategy and skills at sector and establishment levels confirms the existence of some form of correspondence between product strategy choices and skill requirements. However, the sheer *diversity* of such correspondences between and within industries shows that there is *no question* of an entire national economy (or even regional economy) being locked into any single kind of "equilibrium"' (Mason 2004:45, emphasis added).
- One more joker in the pack is the trend towards SBTC already identified in this chapter. It is widely documented internationally on the basis of considerable evidence, including in South Africa (Fedderke 2006). It features the inherent trend towards *skill intensity* in much new technology. Alternatively put, it reflects the complementarity inherent

in production processes that exist between technology advances and the *skill-deepening* character of investment in such new technology.

A number of SBTC implications have been established. Two are noteworthy here. First, recognising the specific features of different industries, 'particularly their intrinsic technology intensity', suggests that in comparing countries the patterns of skills development and deployment may *differ widely* over both time and space, 'depending on the position of the economy in which they operate in terms of the international division of labour' (Perugini and Pompei 2009:124).

Second, a similar but separate question concerns the wisdom of promoting wider and deeper skills investment on policy grounds that propose the pursuit of equity alongside efficiency. Affirmative action in hiring and broad-based economic empowerment (BEE) are local policy vehicles. They entail having to *push against* the tide determined (1) by markets growing strongly in high value-added goods; (2) by technology biased in favour of rising skill intensity; and (3) by the consumer culture seeping in from industrial countries where buyers of consumption goods have per capita incomes on average ten times higher than in South Africa. The formidable difficulties are self-evident.

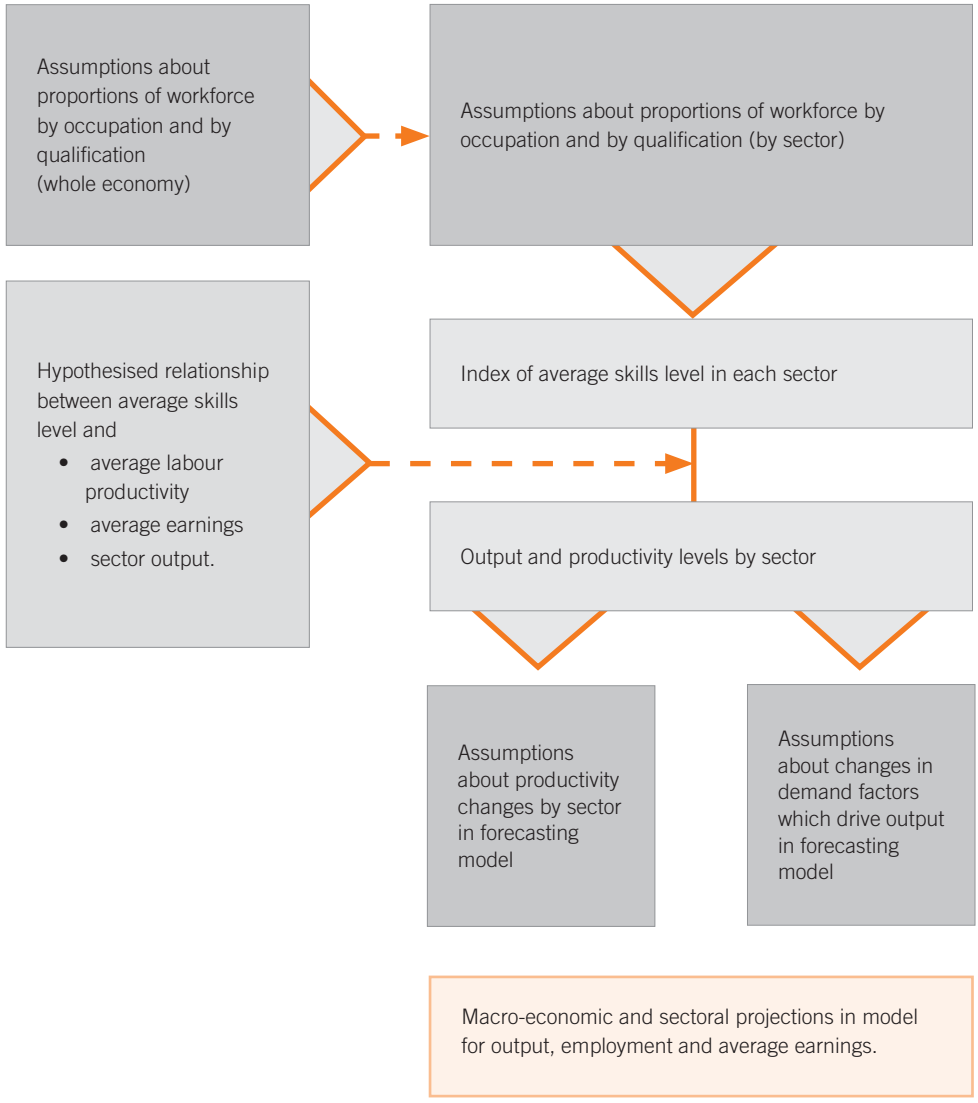
- Finally, the complexity of *forecasting* skills needs at any level in a national training arena can be demonstrated in graphic terms. Figure 1 shows the various steps, the kinds of data, the levels of disaggregation, and the assumptions needed for projecting skills demands. First, while it is adapted from a UK example there is no plausible reason to assume that a South African exercise would be any simpler and less demanding of detailed information. Second, in any policy initiative to link together different policies, unless complex evidence is marshalled and interpreted convincingly, policy-makers simply have to *assume* that, for instance, industrial strategies in *particular sectors* do have purchase and are successful in changing product mixes and production processes.

  Inherent uncertainties like these are major stumbling blocks in the call for policy alignments between industry objectives and skills objectives.

Conclusion

This discussion produces the following messages. First, no policy reform, whether it leads to major or minor changes, is justified without a concerted effort at obtaining answers to specific questions raised by the evidence – or lack of evidence – found for skills training systems in other countries. Such evidence is not available in South Africa because it has not been sought. No informed proposals about changing the roles of existing institutions are forthcoming.

Figure 1: Information requirements and linkages to prepare skills projections (adapted UK example)



Source: Modified version of a figure in Beaven *et al*. (2005: 7)

Second, this research can be conducted successfully only by government. Given the detailed scale and scope of the research, as well as the likely confidentiality of an enquiry that pertains to all employers in private and public sectors, government is in the best position to do it.

Third, linked to the preceding observation, it is more plausible that our training system is *like* other countries rather than different and unique. If so,

we can infer that similar holdups and bottlenecks in the production of skilled labour exist here. By itself this is not a sufficient basis for the assessment and reform of policy. Rather we require detailed information about the incentives to act and thus the behaviour by all groups in our skills arena.

Fourth, policy-makers and the skills training industry operate with an implicit model that does not fit. They project decisions by investors in training as if taken fully, or at least adequately, informed about the relevant costs, benefits and knowledge of the productive significance of the skill that results. This does not appear true in practice. On the contrary, if it were the case then the policy problem would reduce to raising the efficiency of the levy-grant administration.

Similarly, the ancillary functions of training system bodies like SETAs, for instance, in taking responsibility for integrating on-the-job training with institutional learning in FET colleges and industry training institutes, together with quality controls and the certification process for skills, are treated as matters simply requiring more efficient management. Yet, as argued in this chapter, this limited conception ignores the problems inherent in *all* forward-looking investments under uncertainty. These concern *information* flows between the takers of training investment decisions, *trust* amongst potential reciprocators within the same industry or sector, and an understanding of the pre-conditions required for *cooperation*.

Fifth, there is little justification for the present emphasis on skills *planning* at sectoral and national levels. At these levels planning in the sense of skill needs projection plays at best a minor role in (1) raising the volume of investment in training; (2) the matching of skills targets to vacancies on the shop floor; and (3) in anticipating future skill use changes within the production arena as a whole. It follows that such a circumscribed role for planning applies equally to (4) predicting with accuracy the bottlenecks said to result from skill shortages. This is unlikely to be possible, but it must be *tested* given that many policy-makers assume it to be so.

To illustrate, even the most successful SETAs do not claim that their *sector skills plans* contribute to higher volumes of investment in training. Similarly, attempts to identify skill shortages at the *national* level, emphasised as important by politicians and bureaucrats, appear to play no visible role in facilitating investment decision-taking in skills training. It may of course fulfil a political function.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 9

OPENING THE DOORS OF LEARNING? VIEWING THE POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING LANDSCAPE FROM A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

Helene Perold

In January 2012 South Africa was shocked to hear of the death of a mother at the gates of the University of Johannesburg. Gloria Sekwena had returned from her job in the UK to make sure that her newly matriculated son, Kgotsisile, would find a place at the university. Queueing with hundreds of other hopeful late applicants and their parents, she was trampled to death when the gates were opened later than anticipated and the crowd surged forward to get to the front of the late admissions queue.

On that day, Gloria Sekwena joined Hector Pieterson[18] as a symbol of the ongoing struggle for access to education in South Africa. But will this be the last frontier in the development of a high-quality education and training system?

Despite the gains made since 1994 in increasing access to schooling, issues of quality, the 'pipeline' feed from schooling into post-school education and training, the integration between education and skills development have presented significant challenges, particularly in meeting labour market needs

18 Hector Pieterson was killed during the protest march that started the 1976 student uprising in Soweto. He was 13 years old. The march was organised in opposition to the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in all African schools. Afrikaans was regarded as the language of the oppressor.

in an increasingly high-skilled economy. In 2009 government responded to persistent weaknesses in the education and skills development sectors by creating two separate ministries: a Ministry of Basic Education (with a focus on schooling) and a Ministry of Higher Education and Training, the latter combining, for the first time, post-school education and training. In January 2012 the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) published its *Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training*, which outlines a vision for 'a single, coherent, differentiated and highly articulated post-school education and training system' that aims to overcome South Africa's structural challenges by 'expanding access to education and training opportunities and increasing equity, as well as achieving high levels of excellence and innovation' (DHET 2012:4).

The identification of 2,8 million young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) (Cloete *et al*. 2009) provided a reality check in assessing the performance of the education and training system as a whole. While South Africa is not alone in confronting the problem of high levels of youth unemployment, its future is clearly in jeopardy when almost half (42 per cent) of this age group have no prospects of becoming productively engaged in society.

This chapter examines some of the life experiences of young people who are making their transition draws together and examines some of the insights and recommendations presented by the authors in this collection on proposals for a restructured post-school education and training system.

Living without employment, education or training

Meet Thobile, Mashudu, Mathapelo, Rabatho, Rasta, Kgomotso, Thandi, Juliet, Ikanyeng and Thuli[19] – six young women and four young men between the ages of 18 and 29 (hence 'youth' as defined in the National Youth Policy, which defines the youth age range as 14 to 35). At the time of writing most were living in an informal settlement in Gauteng, but Mathapelo, Juliet and Ikanyeng had grown up in rural communities in Limpopo and Mpumalanga, while Thuli had just moved from the Overberg in the Western Cape to Cape Town.

Seven of the group dropped out of school before the end of Grade 12. Mashudu left school in Grade 11 to look for work. Mathapelo moved from Mpumalanga to Gauteng to complete Grade 11, but was excluded from a school because her previous school would not provide a transfer certificate due to non-payment of fees. Rasta became a father at the age of 16 and dropped

19 I am indebted to Lauren A Graham, a PhD candidate at the Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg, for sharing the profiles on these young people, who in 2010 participated in her PhD study.

out of school to find work to support his girlfriend and baby. Kgomotso's parents were divorced when she was very young; she left school during Grade 6 and ran away from her extended family, with whom she had been living in Coronationville. Thandi wrote her matric preliminary examinations, but not her final examinations. Juliet completed Grade 10 in Bushbuckridge and moved to Gauteng, but could not complete her schooling because of pressure to seek work and support her family. Ikanyeng left school in Grade 11 to look after his very ill father.

Only three completed their matric: Thobile, Rabatho and Thuli. Thobile (now aged 25) did not pursue any further studies. Rabatho's matric results were good enough for a university entrance pass, but he could not afford to go to university. Thuli (aged 18) is the only person in this group whose circumstances enabled her to go to university. Although she dreamt of becoming a primary school teacher, her matric results did not meet the admission requirements for a teacher training degree. Through the efforts of the Students Representative Council at a Western Cape university she gained late admission to a diploma in retail management, where she has started her first year, but is still awaiting the outcome of various bursary applications. She is included in this sample as someone whose post-school education future is by no means secure.

Besides Thuli, who has only just enrolled at a university, only Rabatho and Rasta (now aged 27 and 29 respectively) have had any post-school education or training. Rabatho started a business degree at Unisa, but did not complete it. Rasta's post-school learning took quite a different form. Having become a father at the age of 16, he looked for and found work at a seed packaging company, but did not earn enough to build a new home or provide for his child. As a result, he slowly got involved in crime, breaking into houses and robbing people walking home at night. Soon he was arrested, spent seven months awaiting trial and although two of his friends were sentenced to 20 years in prison, he was acquitted. Two years later Rasta was found guilty of possessing drugs and imprisoned for four months. During his time in prison he taught himself various skills, including soccer coaching. His post-school training can thus be considered to be experiential or informal.

Over the years, eight of the young people managed to access employment of various kinds, but these were mostly short-term and poorly paid positions, particularly in the case of the young women. Kgomotso (aged 22) worked for a short time selling chicken door-to-door in the township in which she lives. Juliet (aged 27) worked for a short time as a domestic worker, then fell pregnant and had to leave her job. Mathapelo (aged 25) found her first job as a cleaner for a company at the age of 25. She was thrilled by the opportunity, but disappointed at the low wages. Within three months she had lost her job because the company didn't want to renew her contract. Thandi (aged 19) serves customers in a shebeen and often deals with men and women who are

drunk or using drugs. During her school holidays, Thuli worked at Mr Price and Truworths as a sales assistant, but actually wanted to become a teacher. And, as noted above, Rasta found work at a seed packaging company, but did not earn enough to provide for his family, with the result that he turned to crime.

Two of the young men, Mashudu (now aged 26) and Ikanyeng (aged 25), had more success in finding longer-term employment, despite not having a matric qualification. Mashudu found a job with a company and stayed there for three years, having been placed on permanent staff. He describes this period as the 'time of my life', because he could take out a cell phone contract, had a partying lifestyle, and was able to provide for his family. However, despite being on 'permanent' staff, he lost his job after the three-year period. After Ikanyeng's father died, he went to live with his aunt in northern Limpopo (Venda) and worked for Coca-Cola for three months as a packer. He then moved to Johannesburg and got a job as an assistant on a quantity surveying team with the Bombela concession company building the Gautrain system. This position lasted for three years, but his contract was not renewed once the Gautrain system was completed. He later got a three-month contract as a packer, but at the end of the period the contract was not renewed. Rabatho's work experience is the interesting exception in this group. He worked as an assistant welder in an engineering company for seven years, but left because he never received a pay increase or a promotion.

Features of the NEET youth experience

This small group of young people demonstrates some of the circumstances that characterise the youth experience of not working or studying. Strong gender trends are evident and with the exception of Thuli, the young women are 'stuck'. They have not been able to access further education (even in the case of Thobile who has her matric), have had to accept piece-work in domestic service at low wages, have fallen pregnant at a young age, and lack avenues through which to pursue their aspirations.

Thandi fell pregnant the year after she did not write her matric examinations and now works in the shebeen. She has few friends and apart from her mother, siblings and boyfriend, is very alone. Kgomotso has settled down with her partner and her child in Tembisa. She occasionally looks for work, but without having completed even her primary education, her chances of finding employment are low. Nevertheless, she is athletic, dreams of becoming a professional runner or tennis player, and is looking for opportunities to get back into running. Juliet is HIV positive and her second child was born last year. She dreams of becoming a police woman, but says she would be

happy with any type of job. Mathapelo has two children and is looking for the opportunity to study or work, but has no matric. She would love to obtain her matric certificate and remembers her schooling years when she was known as 'the clever one'.

The young men in this group fare slightly better. All four found work at various stages and two were employed for three and seven years respectively, but in all cases these experiences are characterised by disjointed learning with little opportunity for progression. Mashudu and Ikanyeng both lost their jobs at the end of their contracts. Today Mashudu works in a community vegetable garden, for which he receives a small stipend. Ikanyeng rents out part of his shack to derive an income. Rabatho and Rasta chose to leave their jobs because their needs were not being met. Today, Rabatho, the only young person in the group who gained any post-school training, prefers to lead a youth group in his community and has a wide range of friends and associates whom he hopes can help him find new opportunities. Rasta's prison record and having no matric makes it difficult for him to find work, so he's given up trying to find a job and prefers to mentor youth in his community and run the soccer club as a coach.

Almost all these young people are isolated, out of touch with networks that can guide them into post-school education opportunities or employment options, and lack support to make the transition into programmes or work experience through which they are able to realise their own aspirations and build their lives. Instead of being able to pursue a coherent learning path, their work experience is piecemeal, insecure and survivalist. Generally they take whatever income-generating opportunities they can get and there is no progression from one learning experience to another. As a result, despite being young people who display resourcefulness, courage and resilience, they are unable to build their asset base, and lack the means to find opportunities to nurture their talent, follow their passion and support their movement from schooling into further education, training and employment.

Mlatsheni[20] indicates that these factors increase young people's vulnerability and compromise their prospects of labour market success. Poor health, interrupted education, involvement in criminal activity, discouragement and depression caused by negative labour market experiences and teenage or early pregnancy (which is frequently a function of gender inequality and young women's poor self-esteem) are all factors that are present in the lives of the young people described above and endemic to the condition of youth not in employment, education or training.

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20 Chapter 2

Youth engagement at community level

Young people who have the opportunity to participate in civil society organisations, faith-based organisations or political parties are able to tap into the political and social processes that support their development and could work to their advantage (Southern Africa Trust 2010). In the group of youth discussed above, community-based volunteering emerges as one avenue for alternative engagement in productive activity. Rabatho started and runs a community youth group. Rasta runs a soccer club for youth in his community. Thobile runs an informal crèche along with another community member, both working as volunteers. Thuli volunteered in an orphanage in her home town, which inspired her to apply for entrance to a teaching degree (unfortunately her matric results did not meet the university entry requirements).

While some young people in South Africa view volunteering as a last option for individuals who have no other prospects, the experience of four of the young people in the sample described above indicates that community-based volunteer activity does represent one avenue whereby young people not in education, employment or training, can develop some of their skills and derive a sense of meaning and connection in their lives. This is supported by experience worldwide, which demonstrates that if well-managed, volunteering presents significant opportunities for young people to gain skills that can enhance their transition into further education and employment (UNV 2011).

Research has shown that civil society organisations can contribute to addressing youth vulnerability by virtue of their positioning at the interface between policy and practice (Southern Africa Trust 2010). They are influential by virtue of being rooted in communities and understanding community issues. They also offer spaces for young people to forge bonds and engage in activities that enable them to discover their talents, learn skills and perhaps contribute meaningfully to society. However, this does depend on their level of connectedness to communities. Leoschut and Burton (2006) indicate that factors such as community infrastructure, providing opportunities for youth to participate in activities where they have choices, decision-making power and shared responsibility, and ensuring that young people have a sense of purpose and future, are key in reducing young people's vulnerability.

The question is whether these nodes can be supported to provide marginalised young people with a springboard for their development and for re-entering the social and economic mainstream. Allais[21] points out that throughout civil society there have been many organisations (non-profit and for-profit) that provide youth with access to a variety of qualifications, many of which are customised to the workplace. This access point has, however, been weakened

21 Chapter 1.

by the centralised nature of a flawed qualifications policy that has not been able to foster strong nodes of education provision. She argues that instead of government substantively building or supporting provider institutions in communities (whether these be adult education providers, further education and training (FET) colleges, or providers aimed at workplace-based training), the regulatory environment has made it extremely difficult for community-based organisations to respond meaningfully to the needs on the ground: 'Instead of directly meeting the needs of communities or clients, providers have been forced to design their programmes against unit standards and meet the accreditation requirements of various SETAs.'

A knowledge network seminar convened by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) in 2012 confirms that community-based organisations in many cases provide young people out of school with their only point of access to opportunities for further development, but indicated that they tend to be poorly resourced (NYDA 2012). Although there is evidence that young people who are not working or studying are taking steps to form their own organisations (such as Rabatho and Rasta have done), they are unlikely to be able to access public support. The perception is that government recognises and supports overtly political youth organisations at the expense of civil society organisations that are not aligned to political formations. Seminar participants suggested a range of strategies to recognise and support the efforts of young people serving as volunteers within their communities. In addition, there was a call for civil society organisations to be funded in a sustainable manner, through local government, in order to involve, retain and manage young volunteers effectively and help them access further education, training and employment.

Post-school education and training policy considerations

The chapters in this collection provide a number of insights into policy issues that need to be taken into account in order to scaffold young people's efforts to move out of the margins of society and enhance their holistic development and productivity. Since accessing the labour force becomes even more difficult during economic downturns, the literature suggests that an integrated set of strategies providing young people with varied options is required to alleviate the hardships experienced, particularly during periods of economic decline. The longer young people spend outside the labour market, the weaker their chances of accessing stable, paid employment.[22] Young people out of education or training are also most likely to lapse into chronic unemployment, as is

22 Zuze, Chapter 3.

demonstrated in the examples described above. However, crafting an integrated response is likely to be a challenge. Although improving the nature and quality of vocational education and other forms of skills training will contribute to improving the situation of the young people out of education, training, or work, Allais[23] notes that "this will be difficult to do without substantially changing the qualifications and quality assurance model that has been used to date" in vocational education, skills training, community development and adult education programmes. Furthermore, significant changes are needed at secondary school level to enable young people to follow learning pathways that make sense to them,[24] keep them at school[25] and support them to reach and complete matric. Unless they exit with adequate skills and knowledge, young people are unlikely to benefit from post-school education or training.

Differentiation

The importance of creating a post-school education and training environment that provides a variety of learning pathways and differentiated education and training opportunities emerges strongly in the contributions to this volume. This is of particular significance given the tendency in public debate to describe young people as though they belong to a homogenous group. In the early 1990s a study by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE) was the first to segment the circumstances of young people in South Africa and to provide evidence that there are those young people who are 'fine', those who are 'at risk' and those who are 'lost'. What has since emerged is that those 'at risk' and 'lost' have many different needs and aspirations for their future prospects. Gibbon, Muller and Nel[26] point out that achieving the goal of equity and access to post-school education and training implies disaggregating even further the category of young people who are not in education, employment or training. Some of these distinctions are:

- those who have left school without completing the National Senior Certificate (NSC) or National Certificate (Vocational) (NC[V]) (such as Mashudu, Mathapelo, Kgomotso, Rasta, Thandi, Juliet and Ikanyeng) and who have very few pathways available to get their matric

23 Chapter 1.

24 Stumpf and Niebuhr (2010) argue that the policy focus on general secondary schooling at the expense of vocationally oriented education at secondary school level, has worked to the detriment of young people for whom the academic route has little appeal.

25 Swartz (2009) found that young people in poor communities who are most likely to make successful transitions through school into post-school opportunities are those who are 'in school', 'at home' and 'off the streets'.

26 Chapter 6.

- those who have left school with the NSC or NC(V), but without meeting university entrance requirements (such as Thobile)
- those who have achieved the NSC or NC(V) and meet the minimum legal university entrance requirements, but do not find a university place or could not afford the fees (such as Rabatho)
- those who meet admission and selection criteria for university study and are admitted, but may not succeed (such as Thuli)
- working youth and adults seeking to upgrade their skills through training.

In addition there is a large pool of young people with a relatively high level of achievement who are not attracted to FET colleges or to occupational training offered by Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) in their present form.

Gibbon *et al*. stress that much of the differentiation present in the post-school education system inherited by post-apartheid South Africa has been lost through a variety of restructuring processes. Not only has this reduced the differentiation between institutions (universities, technikons, technical colleges and colleges of education, police, nursing and agriculture), but it has produced a loss of places and spaces through which young people can seek to pursue their talents and dreams. This has produced scepticism about the value of FET college training as well as creating a situation in which university is a first and only choice for many school-leavers. However, as has been shown above, this was an option for only one out of the ten young people in our sample, Thuli, who could not enter a degree programme.

These authors endorse the recommendation made by Bunting and Cloete (2008) that it is not more universities that are needed, but more post-school options at pre-university level, between the programmes offered by schools or FET colleges and universities. To this may be added the need for nodes of specialisation within an array of post-school options, not only to meet the varied interests of young people in a broad range of technical and professional fields, but to produce the skills required throughout all levels of the economy. The authors point out that the Green Paper does not address the need for a rich array of technical colleges and specialised colleges offering intermediate qualifications for mid-level workers in a number of fields such as health, social work and education, and community colleges. Instead it proposes only one new form viz. the Community Education and Training Centre (CETC) where the focus it seems would be on adult basic education and some vocational training. The Green Paper also provides little detail on how universities can support the development of this rich array of post-school learning opportunities, and this is a missed opportunity.

Funding

What emerges strongly from the life experiences described in this group is the impact of poverty in shaping young people's education and training options. Besides the health and psycho-social constraints outlined by Mlatsheni,[27] it is clear from the circumstances in which the ten young people find themselves that a lack of funds is the single largest obstacle for most of the youth who are neither employed nor in education or training. Without access to bursaries, most of the young women in this group have few prospects for completing their schooling or for taking the next step into post-school education or training. Thuli is the only young woman who has managed to enrol for a diploma course at a university of technology, but her prospects of success are largely dependent on accessing a bursary, which will only be decided halfway through her first year.

The Green Paper recognises the need for financial assistance to support students from poor families and notes that assistance from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) was extended to FET colleges in 2011 (DHET 2012). However, it fails to provide sufficient detail of how the scheme will be publicised and administered to ensure that it can meet the needs of young people such as those described in this chapter. For example, it states an intention to increase the provision of loans to eligible university students in their final year of study. This suggests that it is totally out of touch with the realities that are constraining young people at the margins of society from entering institutions of learning in the first place. It assumes that they will find the resources to sustain themselves through the first years of study, which are arguably the most difficult time of transition, and suggests that the state is seeking to contain expenditure by focusing only on those who have alternate sources of support and thus have some prospect of successfully reaching that final year.

Training

How does the group's experiences compare with the trends in training? An analysis of the bi-annual Labour Force Surveys (2000–2007)[28] shows that levels of training decreased during this period. Skills training is more prevalent than formal tertiary training, especially amongst youth where 10 per cent receive skills training and 6.22 per cent receive tertiary education. However, training is more common for men than women and, overall, only approximately 19 per cent of South Africans receive some form of post-schooling training – either

27 Chapter 2.

28 Branson, Chapter 7.

training in skills required for work, formal tertiary training, or a combination of the two.

In the sample of ten youth, Rabatho was the only one who obtained post-school training. His experience is in line with the survey findings, which show that among young people the overall decline in longer training programmes has been offset by an uptake of shorter courses. Although training is more prevalent than formal tertiary education, by 2007, 41 per cent of training courses were under six months in duration. Rabatho's experience may well be typical of others in that his inability to pay for university studies drove him into a range of short business college courses, which may not have added up to any significant skills development for prospective employment. Training preferences also shifted during this period: in 2000 manufacturing, engineering and technology training dominated while the fields of business, humanities, law, military science and security held equal shares. By 2007 over one-quarter of those trained received training in law, military science and security.[29]

Learnerships offered through the 23 SETAs are intended to offer an alternative pathway to training, but Zuze points out that enrolment patterns are highly stratified. 'The majority of African and coloured learners enrol in learnerships at low skill levels while Indian and white learners tend to participate in learnerships at higher levels. Racial disparities persist when trainees enter the workplace with a lower percentage of African graduates securing jobs upon completion. Whether this is due to the quality of their chosen programme, deficiencies in their basic education or a mismatch between industry demand and programme supply is unclear.'[30]

Qualifications

The decreasing levels of training reported above are not unrelated to the complexity of the qualifications system, which may have produced a credibility gap owing to standards and outcomes not being understood or trusted by members of the public (or employers). This is likely to produce a sense of confusion among young people and their families who need to assess where best to invest their very scarce resources in post-school education or training in order to access the labour market.

According to Allais,[31] the policy focus over the past 18 years has been on crafting the qualifications framework in technical and bureaucratic terms, a process that produced narrowly framed and lengthy unit standards and occurred at the expense of strengthening the capacity of state, private and

29 Ibid.

30 Chapter 3.

31 Chapter 1.

community-based providers. This has contributed to the low uptake of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)-designed qualifications, partly because they were so difficult to work with. The other reason for the low uptake was that the process produced little visible improvement in enabling members of the public, and young people in particular, to select preferred lines of study according to their areas of interest and with any real prospect of finding work.

Lack of trust is likely to be exacerbated by what Allais describes as the exclusive use of outcomes as a basis for creating standards, thus fragmenting or undermining knowledge (in both general education and craft knowledge), which can result in 'workers getting very narrow training for specific tasks, with no holistic conception of an occupation'. Weak workplace linkages make it even more difficult for post-school education and training institutions to create a strong vocational education and training system. Such fragmentation is the antithesis of the vision of a holistic education and training system mooted post-1994.

The past decades thus demonstrate a strong public policy focus on crafting the qualifications system without simultaneously seeing the creation of strong education and training institutions as the primary driver of qualifications that have currency in the public domain and are workable in terms of assessment. Allais points out that 'decentralised, institution-based assessment can only work when education institutions are strong and there is an internalised and shared sense of standards amongst teachers and trainers'. She argues that the absence of these factors produced the collapse of outcomes-based education in the schooling system and has worked to the detriment of occupational training, skills development, community development and adult education.

Institutional arrangements

Universities and FET colleges

Gibbon e*t al*. outline a vision of a post-school education and training system with a relatively small university sector in relation to 'a strong base that offers a wide range of education and training opportunities to school-leavers, and is attuned to social and economic needs, particularly those of the labour market, in ways that are not apparent in the present configuration'.[32] Significantly they argue for the provision of a wider range of programmes that would appeal to many of the young people in the sample discussed earlier.

Provided he had a bursary, Rabatho could resume his university studies.

32 Chapter 6.

Thobile has her matric, and for young adults like her, Gibbon *et al*. recommend vocational and career-oriented programmes that could lead straight to the job market. Mashudu, Mathapelo, Thandi, Juliet, Rasta and Ikanyeng all completed Grade 10 or 11 and, given a second-chance opportunity to complete the NSC or NC(V), a bridging programme to aid their transition back into learning as adults and some financial support, would be able to access college or university programmes as mature youth. For working and adult learners the authors suggest that a variety of continuous learning or professional development opportunities should be available to deepen or extend their current proficiencies, or enable them to branch out into new fields. In addition, they argue that for others within local communities, such as Kgomotso who left school in Grade 6 and dreams of becoming a professional sportswoman, it would offer both contextually relevant and personally enriching learning possibilities. Lolwana (2010) describes this vision as 'a diverse and differentiated institutional base that functions as an integrated whole with meaningful learning pathways across institutional and workplace education and training forms'.

What is distinctive about these recommendations is that the institutions offering post-school education and training should operate together as a *system* in which the various parts relate to one another in clearly defined ways. Gibbon *et al*. cite the features of a seamless post-school system as being the following: private colleges complement the public system, students are able to move between and among institutions, students are able to progress without being trapped in dead ends, institutions are differentiated both vertically and horizontally, and institutions are established in rural as well as urban areas. Such a system would be underpinned by coordinated quality assurance and funding systems, formal articulation agreements between institutions, careful alignment of curricula in common fields, and a review of NC(V) curricula and subject combinations to articulate more strongly with the labour market and allow for closer articulation with higher education.

The vision outlined above positions higher education as a small sector operating in close proximity to and supportive of an expanded post-school college education. It envisages working relationships between universities and FET colleges in order, firstly, to build academic, leadership and managerial capacity within the post-school college sector and, secondly, to establish articulation and progression pathways between institutions. Gibbon *et al*. cite a range of partnerships that are already in place, providing evidence of cooperation between higher and further education institutions around issues such as articulation and access, upgrading the qualifications of FET college lecturers, curriculum analysis and development, staff exchanges, and collaboration on the provision of in-service training in mechanical engineering. Initiatives such as these need to be scaled up considerably.

Stumpf, Papier, McBride and Needham[33] examine the possibility of FET colleges offering some form of higher education study and conclude that some of the FET colleges are already doing so in respect of the N4–N6 programmes. Allowing some FET colleges to offer NQF Level 5 Higher Certificates and possibly even NQF Level 6 Advanced Certificates in selected areas, subject to certain conditions being met, would be an important step in achieving the vertical institutional integration envisaged above. The authors point out that there is already considerable alignment between the study areas covered at N4–N6 level and study areas offered by universities of technology in particular, and to some extent with the programme areas of comprehensive universities. They recommend that this should be formalised so that FET colleges can offer Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF)-aligned Higher Certificates in fields that correspond with those in which universities of technology or comprehensive universities are active.

Occupational training

According to the data presented in this volume, levels of training decreased overall between 2000 and 2007, while occupational and artisan training in FET colleges is also in decline. According to Sheppard and Sheppard,[34] enrolments in occupational programmes represented 7 per cent of all enrolments in all provinces in 2010. However, the provincial spread of FET colleges is not proportional to the population numbers in the provinces, which may account for this figure.

The data is reinforced in a survey conducted by Stumpf *et al*. of nine FET colleges, which indicates that, with some exceptions, occupational programme enrolments in these institutions only made up 11 per cent of all enrolments. Artisan programmes also faced declining levels of enrolment, and in quite a few of the selected colleges, enrolments overall were lower in 2010 than in 2009.

While the reasons for low levels of uptake are not clear, the authors surmise that they could be attributed partly to "tight economic conditions at present, the lack of clarity on the funding of such programmes, and difficulties experienced by FET colleges in establishing longer-term partnerships with industry to secure workplace experience for students on these programmes". At the same time, there appears to be a lack of alignment between the occupational programmes offered in the colleges surveyed (with programmes being mostly geared towards harder industry and manufacturing-related areas) and the new economic plans that focus on a knowledge economy and service industries. The authors recommend that there should be a much stronger focus on

33 Chapter 5.

34 Chapter 4.

support (through policy, funding and incentives) for FET colleges to extend their occupational and workplace training programmes more widely.

However, Allais sounds the alarm when she points out that there is no single qualifications system for the provision of vocational education and occupational training and that the current separation of vocational education, largely under Umalusi, and occupational education under the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) does not bode well for the alignment, synergy and articulation envisaged above: 'If very different qualifications and quality assurance models are developed for the three frameworks [HEQC, Umalusi and QCTO], the gulf between occupational and other qualifications may increase, and the dream of an integrated system will be more elusive than ever.'[35]

Prospects for increasing post-school education and training provision

Currently FET colleges show very low levels of enrolment for their target groups. Sheppard and Sheppard note that in 2010 FET colleges enrolled 0.6 per cent of 15- to 17-year-olds, 3.2 per cent of 18- to 24-year-olds and 0.2 per cent of the 25- to 35-year-olds of the population. Gauteng had the highest enrolments in public FET colleges (85 268), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (62 691), and the Western Cape (47 371). Despite high populations in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo, these provinces had low enrolments in public FET colleges in 2010 (between 31 000 and 33 000 in each case).

At national level N4–N6 enrolments represented a higher percentage of the total enrolments (44 per cent) compared to the NC(V), which represented 40 per cent of all enrolments. Nevertheless, in the period 2007 to 2009 the N4–N6 fields of study demonstrated low rates of completion at 39.2, 41.0 and 40.4 per cent respectively. Sheppard suggests that these low completion rates are indicative of an inefficient system. One of the reasons for this could be that students from the secondary education system are poorly prepared to cope with the demands of post-secondary education programmes, both FET and higher education.

The survey conducted by Stumpf *et al*. indicates that there is room for the FET colleges surveyed to expand their enrolment by approximately 1 600 additional students without requiring any additional capacity in respect of human resources, infrastructure and equipment. Should they have the funds to employ additional staff and improve infrastructure, this figure could rise to 2 800 students.

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Sheppard and Sheppard provide two scenarios for the growth of the FET colleges sector. The first assumes that the current rate of growth continues, but that the system becomes more efficient. However, they argue that without significant investments in academic support and student financial assistance, this is unlikely to impact on the numbers of young people unemployed and not in education or training, largely because of their under-preparedness for post-school study. As a result, they estimate that the pass rate of 40.4 per cent in 2009 will increase to 70 per cent for the N4-N6 enrolments by 2020 and will further increase to 80 per cent by 2030. Enrolments in these programmes are projected to increase to 251 271 in 2030, while qualifications awarded are projected to increase to 201 017 in 2030. The second scenario combines increased efficiency with higher enrolments and estimates that this will result in approximately 1.2 million enrolments in 2030. This is far lower than the four million projected by the Green Paper. Graduates are projected to increase from 71 423 in 2010 to 204 018 in 2020 and 825 367 in 2030 as a result of increased growth rates and improved efficiency. While this approach goes some way to meeting the needs of young people who qualify for post-school education and training, it does not cater for the many who need additional bridging programmes to gain access to FET colleges. In addition, it assumes close collaboration between industry and FET colleges all over the country, and fast-tracking skills development among college teaching staff.

The projections made for the growth of the FET colleges sector demonstrate that whatever the strategies followed to upscale FET enrolments, these are unlikely to deal decisively with the extremely large numbers of young people who are presently out of work and not in education or training. Stumpf *et al*. recommend that South Africa learn from Australia's efforts to do more than make improved post-school education and training opportunities available. Recognising that significant numbers of young people are at risk, the Australian government has adopted a policy entitled National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, which aims to help young people re-engage to complete their school experience, deepen the connections between youth, schools and the wider community, provide young people with the information and knowledge they need to make informed choices about their further education and training options, and ensure that they will have the qualifications needed to take up jobs as and when these become available.

The challenge of change

The proposals, research results and scenarios captured in this volume provide some direction for scaling up the FET colleges within the post-school education and training landscape. Nevertheless, policy-makers should be mindful of the

observation that in South Africa planning suffers from 'the presumption that once a goal is stated, usually at a high level of generality, that is enough to generate action' (Archer 2012).

Archer[36] is of the view that skills planning in South Africa is undermined in two key respects (among others): firstly, there seems to be little relationship between skills planning at national and sectoral levels and increased investments in skills training. This is largely because South Africa continues to plead a 'special case' status, is reluctant to learn from countries with comparative experiences, and has not invested in the research required to create an evidence base off which to make sound projections or policy decisions. Secondly, he observes that despite numerous calls for the alignment between skills development policy and industrial policy, 'obstacles to such policy integration in practice include not seeing employers as the starting point for the analysis of the relationship between types and levels of skill and improved productivity'.

To return to the experiences of the young people in the group described earlier, it is interesting that employers emerge as a central point of contact for many of these youth, whether they were in employment for a short or a longer period of time. In none of the ten cases did employers feature as a support mechanism guiding the young people who worked for them, and in Rabatho's case the lack of promotion and recognition spurred him to quit his job. Nevertheless, employers could serve as one avenue through which young people are supported to become work-ready and channelled towards further education and training – if not through learnerships, then through arrangements whereby youth are assisted to access a post-school education and training system.

The youth wage subsidy proposed in a discussion paper issued by the National Treasury in February 2011 and reiterated in the State of the Nation address in 2012 is one aspect of a fleet of measures proposed to address the circumstances of young people not working or studying. Entitled *Confronting Youth Unemployment: Policy options for South Africa,* it proposes a multi-pronged strategy to tackle youth unemployment as a priority in the government's programme of action for 2012/2013. Activities include a focus on youth brigades and other forms of public employment, trialing the proposed youth employment subsidy, improving education performance in schools and in the FET system, improving the services available to aid young people through career guidance, matching their skills to jobs, skills development and job placement, establishing a monitoring system, and strengthening relationships with the NYDA and other youth service agencies (National Treasury 2011).

The strongest opposition to the youth wage subsidy came from the trade union movement, which was concerned about young people displacing older

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workers, as well as about the possibility of young entrants to the labour market being exploited by unscrupulous employers. No doubt this was underpinned by fears that gains made by organised labour in the workplace may be reversed by these measures. However, the resistance by organised labour has largely focused on the private sector and has not extended to the public sector or civil society organisations where opportunities for the introduction of the wage subsidy could also be explored.

In her review of international practice, Zuze[37] points out that Latin American countries have led the way in implementing programmes that incorporate job training, career counselling and job placement with industry-specific incentives such as wage subsidies, particularly among low-income youth aged 16 to 29. She also mentions the *Entra* 21 project that has been successfully implemented in 18 Latin American countries with a specific focus on training youth for work in the IT industry, and notes that employers value the life-skills training that youth receive as much as the technical training. She also mentions an innovative approach to training that was introduced in Kenya by the World Bank in partnership with the Micro and Small Enterprise Training and Technology Project, which focused on the informal sector instead of the formal sector. Small business leaders received vouchers to upgrade their skills and equipment, and the intention was that the benefits of these measures would be extended to their trainees. Since courses could be completed on a part-time basis, trainees were able to continue earning an income during their training. Women were subsequently included as a specific target group in the programme. Zuze cautions, however, that limited programme evaluation makes it difficult to determine how effective these schemes have been.

Conclusion

The contributions in this volume indicate that there is a dire need to foreground young people as a key focus of policy innovation. As a burgeoning majority in the country, young people's needs should be taking centre stage across all facets of public policy. Central to crafting an effective response to a 'youth time bomb' is the need for the integration of youth-focused planning across policy platforms and inter-departmental structures. At present the National Youth Policy represents little more than an isolated statement of the condition of young people in South Africa, while the National Youth Development Agency is ill-equipped and under-resourced to meet the scale of need that only government can address. It is difficult to find any government policy that does not have some effect (often indirect or unintentional) on youth, yet there is

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little evidence that government ministries prioritise youth needs for integrated policy action.

The chapters show clearly that unless the restructuring of the post-school education and training sector takes the perspective and circumstances of the poor as a starting point, efforts to create responsive policies in the schooling and post-school arena are destined to fail. Without adequate and appropriate forms of financial assistance, improved quality of schooling and strengthened post-school education and training provision, young people living in poverty will continue to lack access to the opportunities needed for them to break out of chronic unemployment and poverty. Fast-tracking the implementation of a Central Information and Applications Service for higher education would constitute one small response to Gloria Sekwena's death.

Should policy-makers recognise the urgency of the crisis and find the political will to take the necessary steps to address it, it will be important to communicate clearly and directly with young people throughout the country about new opportunities for their advancement through post-school education and training. South Africa's powerful logistical and communications capacity, deployed in support of numerous peaceful elections over the past 18 years and a very successful census in 2011, needs to be harnessed in order to reach young people wherever they are and engage them in taking the next steps in their post-school development.

Only then will the millions of young people living on the margins of South African society be able to enter the doors of learning quickly enough to take control of their lives and help secure a productive future for us all.

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Appendix

Submission in response to the
Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training

It gives me great pleasure to present to you the first, uncorrected, proof of CHET's latest publication entitled *Shaping the Future of South Africa's Youth: Rethinking post-school education and skills training*.

We are submitting this uncorrected proof as a contribution to the review of the *Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training* ahead of the closing date for comments, which is 30 April 2012. The book will be published in May 2012.

As you know, South Africa has made huge gains in ensuring universal enrolment for children at school and in restructuring and recapitalising the FET colleges sector. However, some three million young people are not in education, employment or training and the country faces serious challenges in providing our youth with the pathways and support they need to transition successfully into a differentiated system of post-school education and training.

This book contains nine evidence-based chapters produced by 17 authors who offer a succinct overview of the different facets of post-school provision in South Africa. I believe that all of these chapters will be of interest to you, your colleagues in the DHET and the Minister of Higher Education and Training. In some cases the authors respond directly to the proposals contained in the Green Paper and for ease of reference I would like to point you to these comments:

- The introduction concludes with a list of recommended actions designed to improve the scale and diversity of post-school provision.
- Chapter 1 analyses the evolution of the National Qualifications Framework over time and concludes with an endorsement of the proposal in the Green Paper for abandoning the unit standards-based model and for tightening of quality assurance of national qualifications through centralised assessment, among other measures. However, the author expresses concern about the powerful stakeholders who have vested interest in the current systems, and comments that the Green Paper is weak on the practicalities of a substantial expansion of FET colleges.
- Chapter 2 outlines the challenges that unemployment imposes on youth and concludes with a number of policy considerations. Here the author notes the decline in technical skills acquisition among young people since the introduction of the SETA system, the decline in

apprenticeships and the fact that learnerships are more suited to people in formal employment than to unemployed youth. He argues that these issues require more attention in the Green Paper and suggests that the allocation of more resources to youth development merits serious consideration.

- Chapter 4 contains a unique analysis of available data sets in an attempt to obtain the best picture possible of the FET sector. It outlines the shape and size of the public as well as private FET sector, taking into consideration the deficiencies in the available data. It concludes with two possible future growth scenarios for post-secondary enrolments in the FET sector. This is a response to the vision that FET college enrolments need to expand to address the large numbers of unemployed, but educated, youth that are not studying further and to increase exponentially the number of study certificates awarded in order to address the skills shortage in South Africa.
- In Chapter 5 the authors note that a cohesive post-school education and training system such as that envisaged by the Green Paper would constitute an important integrated base for enhancing the role of FET colleges in offering NQF Level 5 qualifications and in offering an increased number of workplace training/occupational programmes. They present evidence of the extent to which FET colleges are already offering education and training at Level 5, and argue for a much closer interface between this sector and higher education institutions in order to present young people with clearer and more accessible post-school pathways. The chapter concludes with three key recommendations in this regard and draws particular attention to an Australian policy framework from which South Africa can learn about measures to support of vulnerable youth in transition.
- In Chapter 6 the authors note the congruence between the HESA position paper on which the chapter is based, and the proposals in the Green Paper. However, they point out that issues of geographical accessibility and differentiation are not sufficiently well-articulated in the Green Paper, particularly in view of the fact that at least a third of the three million young people who are out of school, but not in employment or any form of training, have already passed the NSC or its equivalent. There are also the many youngsters who drop out of their university studies and then find that they have nowhere to go. Although this is a potentially rich source from which to develop mid-level/intermediate skills that are desperately needed, it receives scant attention in the Green Paper. The authors argue that the Green Paper has a very strong focus on relatively low-level vocational training whilst the HESA vision of the post-school sector is of a much broader range of

educational opportunities extending into the so-called higher education band on the NQF.

The remaining four chapters do not respond directly do the Green Paper, but contain information extremely relevant to its review.

- Chapter 3 outlines important insights gained from international comparative practice in introducing measures designed to draw disengaged youth into the socio-economic mainstream.
- Chapter 7 shows an overall decrease in training levels and demonstrates that within the youth sample, the decline in longer training was offset by an increase in training of less than one month, raising serious questions about the value of such training.
- Chapter 8 raises significant issues about the poor relationship between skills planning at national and sectoral levels, and increased investments in skills training, and points to the persistent weakness in policy integration that stems from not seeing employers as the starting point for the relationship between types and levels of skill and improved productivity.
- Chapter 9 synthesises some of the key insights from the other eight chapters in the book, but examines these through a youth lens, thereby providing a perspective that is rarely taken into account in public policy formulation.

I trust that these contributions will be helpful to the Department in its efforts to strengthen the policy framework for post-school education and training system, because our future depends on this very important policy work.

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