

## **Teacher education and development – DBE resource!**

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Teacher quality and performance are rightly raised as matters of key concern in discussions on the schooling system in the country. This has been recognised by government and stakeholders alike.

This recognition led to the holding of a milestone Teacher Development Summit in mid-2009 with the participation of all stakeholders, the Departments of Higher and Basic Education, provincial departments, all 5 teacher unions (SADTU, NAPTOSA, SAOU, PEU, NATU), Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), Education, Training, Development and Practitioner Sector Education Authority (ETDP-SETA), South African Council for Educators (SACE), Higher Education South Africa (HESA), and School Governing Body Associations.

The Summit recognized the fragmented and unequal history of teacher education and development in the country, the changes that have taken place in the teacher education landscape, and the impact which these had on teacher education and development, and on the quality of teaching and learning. Some of the key challenges that were highlighted at the Summit included the substantial teacher supply-demand gap, the inability of the system to achieve improvement in teaching and learning at schools despite the significant investments that were being made, the lack of quality development opportunities for practising teachers, and a teacher education and development system that needed to improve cohesion and co-ordination.

The Summit produced a national plan for teacher education and development, The *Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011-2025 (ISPFTED, 2011)*. The Plan focuses on the entire teacher education and development continuum from the point of recruiting potential new teachers to career-long professional learning and development. Its primary outcome is to improve the quality of teacher education and development in order to improve the quality of teachers and teaching.

The recently released National Development Plan (NDP) takes this further and makes a number of recommendations with regard to teacher education and development.

The two education departments, the Basic Education (DBE) and Higher Education and Training (DHET), in collaboration with provincial education departments and stakeholder partners have been driving forward the implementation of the teacher education and development plan as well as the recommendations in the NDP.

### **Recruiting and supporting new teachers:**

In 2007 the Department introduced the Funza Lushaka bursary programme with the overall goal of providing well-qualified teachers who are able to teach in nationally identified priority areas, and who, upon completion of their funded studies, will be placed in public school posts to fulfil their contractual obligation by teaching for the same number of years as they received the bursary.

The beneficiaries are students recruited from schools, unemployed youths, unemployed graduates and students studying at universities who decide to change to the teaching profession. During the period 2007 to 2012 a total of 48 292 bursaries have been awarded at a total cost of more than R1, 9 billion as at the end of the 2012/2013 Financial Year. The programme funds students enrolled in BEd and PGCE programmes at 22 Higher Education Institutions across the country. The introduction of this scheme, notwithstanding implementation challenges, resulted in under-enrolments at Higher Education for teaching in 2007 turning into over-subscription for places to study teaching.

The Department employs various recruitment strategies for the Funza Lushaka bursary programme. In 2012 a District-Based Recruitment Campaign was introduced that targets learners coming from rural and poor communities to assist them to access the bursary and to attract well qualified teachers to teach in rural areas. 1173 Learners were recruited from quintile 1-3 schools and are registered to study for the 2013 academic year with Higher Education Institutions across the country. By recruiting bursars on a district

basis selection can be done in accordance with the perceived need of the district, with the understanding that learners supported by the bursary will return to teach in the district upon graduation.

In 2013 we have introduced a Community-Based Teacher Recruitment campaign that focuses on unemployed youth. The Programme focuses on unemployed youths with a National Senior Certificate who qualifies for Bachelor's studies; unemployed graduates and youth with only a National Senior Certificate. Through the pilot programme in the Alexandra Township in Gauteng 317 applications were received.

The Department has also entered into a partnership with the Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa (ISASA) to deliver a ground breaking teacher training model called the DBE-ISASA Internship Programme. The Programme is a response to the challenge of recruiting and training more mathematics and science teachers. The Programme involves school-based training and completion of a university degree by distance education through UNISA by trainee teachers hosted in the independent schools that are members of ISASA. Teacher interns are recruited on an annual basis. The first cohort of twenty interns was registered with UNISA for the 2013 academic year. For 2014, an additional fifty interns have been selected and will register with UNISA. This number will then increase annually until 2020.

### **Supporting In-Service teachers**

Working with and through provinces, the DBE has supported the implementation of the national curriculum (CAPS) through training 6 633 subject advisors over the last three years and orientated over 300 000 teachers in all phases. In addition, considerable support has been provided to teachers in the last two years to use the Annual National Assessments (ANA) and National Senior Certificate (NSC) diagnostic reports which provide detailed information on areas where learners have demonstrated strengths and shortcomings in their assessments and examinations. Teachers have also been supported to use the 105 million workbooks that have been distributed to learners, and more support is on its way through Teacher Guides. 190 Subject Advisors and 70 lead teachers were trained on a Certificate in Primary English Language Teaching programme developed in partnership with the British Council.

Through the Teacher Union Collaboration project initiated by the DBE, approximately 80 000 teachers have been trained in focus areas, and the establishment and strengthening of union teacher development institutes have been supported.

The DBE has facilitated partnerships with VODACOM, MINDSET, UNISA and CISCO to strengthen the functionality of the 112 stand-alone teacher centres in the country. To date 9 centres and 570 schools have been equipped with ICT facilities and trained on their use, and another 40 centres and 600 schools are targeted to benefit by March 2014 and another 82 centres by end 2014.

It has been possible to raise the qualification profile of South African teachers from 54% at matric + 3 years of tertiary education in 1990 to 95% at matric +3 at present; however, there are issues with the ability of the system to produce corresponding results in the classroom. The Committee for Higher Education (CHE) report of delivery of education programmes by Higher Education, identified skewed take-up of courses by teachers away from subject based qualifications as one of the issues contributing to this situation; other reports cite difficult socio-economic conditions, shortages of and inappropriately qualified teachers in critical subjects as factors. Both DBE and DHET have engaged the higher education institutions on the need to match qualifications with classroom competence in relation to the national context, and considerable work has been done to fill existing teacher vacancies.

Regarding the focus on teacher quality, a new qualifications policy, the *Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (2011)* has been put in place. This policy firmly foregrounds the development of teacher knowledge and practice. All higher education institutions are required to redesign their teacher education programmes to align with the new policy. We will have stronger teachers being prepared as a result of qualifications that meet the minimum requirements stipulated in the new policy.

The DBE, SACE and provincial education departments have done ground work to initiate a professional development management system which will have 40 000 principals and deputy principals participating in

earning 150 PD points over a 3 year cycle starting in 2014. This will be followed by the sign up of 55 000 Heads of Departments in schools during 2014 and sign up of L1 teachers during 2015.

The DBE, working with provinces, statutory bodies, and social partners annually celebrates the contribution of teachers to social development through the internationally celebrated World teachers Day on October 5, and the National Teaching Awards. In 2013, the largest national World teachers day celebration so far was held in KZN with 2000 teachers attending the event, and numerous localized events took place in the provinces. The National Teaching Awards recognizes excellent performance of teachers in several categories in a process that involves all schools and teachers, and climaxes in at least 3000 teachers receiving recognition at district level, 220 at provincial level, and 90 teachers at national level.

### **Producing new teachers**

The Department of Higher Education has implemented a three-step strategy to increase the number of new teachers that the public universities are able to provide. These steps involved firstly ensuring that universities' existing capacity to train teachers is fully utilized; secondly expanding existing capacity through the provision of additional infrastructure; and thirdly, establishing new campus sites for teacher education linked to existing universities.

The first step has largely been driven through the enrolment planning process that the Department conducts with universities. During this process, teacher education has been identified as one of several national priorities for higher education, and universities have been encouraged to expand enrolments in teacher education without compromising quality of provision, to the extent that expansion fits with each university's own vision of its ideal size and shape. By and large, universities have responded positively and have increased enrolments in initial teacher education programmes.

The second step has been driven through the provision of ring-fenced funding for new teacher education infrastructure at universities. Since 2010, the Department has allocated just over R1, 1 billion to universities for teacher education infrastructure projects, and universities have added a further R300 million of their own funds to this amount. University campuses are being revitalized through new infrastructure.

The establishment of new teacher education campuses has also begun. The former teacher college sites are being surveyed with a view to identifying which ones are not currently being utilized for education purposes, and which could potentially be productively used for the expanding post-school education and training landscape – as FET college campuses, community education and training centres, and as *university* campuses for teacher education and/or other higher education programmes. The first new teacher education campus, the Siyabuswa Campus for Teacher Education in Mpumalanga Province has been established using the former Ndebele College of Education site. The campus is now a campus of the new University of Mpumalanga. Other former college sites which are shown through feasibility studies to be suitable for post-school education and training purposes will also be utilized.

These initiatives are bearing fruit. The number of headcount enrolments in initial teacher education programmes in public universities has increased from a 2008 baseline of 35 275 to 94 637 in 2012, which represents an absolute increase of 168%. The number of new teacher graduates has increased from 5 939 in 2008 to 13 740 in 2012, an increase of 131% over five years. The Funza Lushaka Bursary Scheme, which provides full-cost merit bursaries for initial teacher education students, and which is managed by the Department of Basic Education, has contributed significantly to this growth. The country is on track to supply 20 000 new teachers annually by 2019. It is also recognized that within these gross numbers, we have to ensure that specific subject specializations and school phases are adequately catered for.

The availability of new Foundation Phase teachers who are able to teach effectively in African mother-tongue contexts has been identified as a specific challenge. With support from the European Union, R141 million has been utilized to implement a programme to Strengthen Foundation Phase Teacher Education with a focus on research, material development and programme development that will enable the training of quality teachers who are able to teach effectively in African mother-tongue language contexts. This programme has resulted in the number of universities involved in Foundation Phase teacher education

increasing from a 2008 baseline of 13, to 21 universities in 2013, and has also allowed for a large increase in the number of African language students in Foundation Phase teacher education programmes.

It is clear that we have to get our planning to a point where we more effectively align the type of teachers that graduate with the phase and subject specializations in which teachers are needed. To assist with greater coordination in teacher education and development planning at the local level, provincial teacher education and development committees have been established in each province, comprising of high-level representation from the provincial education department, the universities active in the province, the teacher unions, the ETDP SETA and the Departments of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training.

Since this phase of work began in 2009, it is evident from the steadily improving results in ANA and NSC in the recent period, that the system is incrementally turning the tide favourably, having started from a very low and stormy base; but there is still quite a way to go.

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**Written By:** WebMaster WebMaster  
**Date Posted:** 1/31/2015  
**Number of Views:** 3329