



higher education & training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE COVERING THE PERIOD JULY - SEPTEMBER 2015

1. Introduction and background

1.1 The report details progress in terms of the work undertaken in the development of the funding frameworks for Community Education and Training (CET) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges which the Minister mandated the Ministerial Committee to produce. Some of the key deliverables as per the Terms of Reference (ToRs) are as follows:

- ✓ provide the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) with a process map (project plan) indicating the timeframes on the activities to be carried out relating to the scope of work, within two weeks of commencement of the project;
- ✓ conduct comparative analysis of different funding modalities applied in different countries;
- ✓ draft national policy or guidelines on how to recover student debt;
- ✓ submit a draft report to the DHET of the proposed funding framework for CET colleges in September 2015, which is seven months after the commencement of the work of the Ministerial Committee;
- ✓ submit a final report to the DHET with findings, recommendations and proposed implementation steps on the revised TVET Colleges funding norms, one month before the end of the project; and
- ✓ submit draft amendments to the current National Norms and Standards for Funding TVET colleges (NNSF-TVET colleges) and draft the National Norms and Standards for Funding CET colleges (NNSF-CET colleges) after taking the review process into account.

1.2 Professor D Singh tendered her resignation from the committee on 18 August 2015 due to work pressure.

2. Discussion

2.1 The Ministerial Committee conducted fieldwork at Community Learning Centres (CLCs) which are merged under the CET colleges as well as at TVET colleges to gather data that would be useful in the development of the respective funding frameworks. Professor Aitchison conducted a study on post-school systems in the United Kingdom (UK) for comparative analysis and shared the report with the committee.

Student fees

2.2 The deviation between the CET Act, 16 of 2006 and the NNSF-TVET colleges pertaining to the determination of college fees was identified. According to the Act, the College Council determines tuition fees, accommodation fees and any other fees payable by students as well as accommodation fees payable by employees whilst the national funding norms propose standard fees for all the colleges. The committee raised a concern and requested more clarity on employees paying accommodation fees to the college as stipulated in section 5(2)(g) of the CET Act. It was also proposed that guidelines and regulations on the charging of registration fees be developed, if fees are to be charged separately, because most colleges do not distinguish between tuition and registration fees.

2.3 It was realized that it will be difficult to restrict colleges to collect fees as they have their own mechanisms of generating funds which include offering additional programmes. Tuition fees assist the operational running of colleges while waiting for State funding. However, registration fees become an obstacle in terms of affordability to poor students who are eligible for a bursary. On the other hand colleges argue that some students register at the beginning of the year to get a bursary and after receiving learner materials, they disappear.

2.4 The committee resolved that there should be an intervention by the Department to protect the public from failing to access education due to the charging of fees by colleges. The Ministerial Committee indicated that it will make a recommendation on charging of fees as this often becomes a barrier to access education.

2.5 It was proposed that colleges need to have mechanisms in place for collecting student debt. Raising funds by colleges through mainly tuition fees needs to be taken into consideration.

2.6 A strong view was raised for the funding model to be sustainable in order to support the vision of the Department on colleges as cited in the White Paper for Post School Education and Training (PSET).

2.7 A proposal was put forward that an investigation needs to be conducted with regard to the upfront payment of fees and its purpose as well as the amount of such fees. This will also assist in distinguishing between the 20% tuition fee and other fees charged such as registration fees.

Funding for student residences

2.8 The development of separate funding norms for college residences need to be considered, as they are not funded from the college subsidies.

College reserves

2.9 A need exists to develop guidelines or regulations on reserves and/or investments of colleges.

3. Initial findings from the fieldwork conducted at CLCs and TVET colleges

- a number of TVET colleges are being built in urban areas whereas there is a shortage in rural areas. Colleges and new centres need to be built in rural and disadvantaged areas for more access;
- data such as enrolments, examination results, and students who wrote the exams need to be regularly captured and updated;
- student enrolments in Maths and Science continues to deteriorate;
- transport and accommodation is a challenge for students in rural areas;
- NSFAS bursaries allocation is inadequate due to increasing number of enrolments; and
- colleges face infrastructure challenges.

4. Some of the findings from the study conducted in Post-School Systems in other countries

4.1 International studies

4.1.1 Brazil

The Brazilian system is very large with complex arrangements. It is a federal state with twenty-seven (27) states that each make autonomous decisions regarding post-school education.

(a) The Community College model

- ✓ expands access to education through the use of various public resources such as school classrooms, libraries, community centres, etc.
- ✓ curriculum architecture is organised in cycles with progressive modularity. Higher education also assists through the development of technology;
- ✓ curriculum varies from liberal arts programmes to career preparation. Systems mimic both the USA and Canadian Community College models;
- ✓ programmes, admission procedures, and establishment of new institutions and campuses have a heavy input from local communities

4.1.2 USA, UK, Germany, India

(a) Policy and structures

TVET includes programmes providing specific training for young school leavers, skills upgrading of mid-career working adults and those returning to the workforce or shifting careers, as well as a second chance for working or unemployed adults who dropped out of earlier education. The developed and rapidly developing countries have moved into a broader lifelong learning framework, such as in South Korea and the BRICS countries where there has been the development of comprehensive adult education policies and more varied institutional reforms associated with continuing education in a complex society.

Although a number of countries have some kind of constitutional reference to youth and adult education as a right, the international literature examined suggests that it must be

backed by well-articulated, officially ratified, comprehensive adult education policies, if a country is to have a successful adult education system.

The international literature provides little evidence of unique institutional forms for youth and adult education provision. What is different about the institutional forms is how easy it is to access them and how well articulated they are with conventional education and training systems. The following main international trends were encountered:

- ✓ Greater devolution and decentralization both organizational and financial, and even autonomy, accompanied by public consultation, conciliar arrangements and the partnership with civil society; and
- ✓ More certification, quality control regulation and monitoring by central government administrations.

The evidence is clear that healthy youth and adult education systems have good monitoring, evaluation and research and that all of these require efficient flow of accurate data.

(b) Funding frameworks

There are a wide variety of funding mechanisms for post-school education and training, but invariably for vocational and adult education, there are mixes of funding sources that share the costs between the government, employers and individual students.

In most countries, there are some familiar tendencies: declines in real state funding yet at the same time there is pressure to increase access to post-school education and training, increased tuition fees, increased funding for politically driven special initiatives and targets, and a reduction to funding for adult and community education in times of austerity. There is no reason to believe that pressure to follow these same trends will operate in South Africa for the foreseeable future.

In recent decades the funding by the state reflects both a centralization of funding decisions to central government allied to a more contractual relationship by government, with the increasingly independent privatized providers. There are two interesting specialized funding agencies, one for academic education for children and young people and the other for post-school vocational education and skills development for adults. The

portion of what can be expected to be paid by tuition fees has tended to increase in recent times. Central and state government regulates the fee structures.

For public literacy and adult basic education programmes in many countries, there are no fees charged. The international literature is replete with assertions that flows of accurate, up-to-date data are essential for planning of funding and accountability. Some countries have norms for the percentages of expenditure on teaching, administration and other costs. Grants and loans to students for study are found in many systems so that they can pay for the tuition component. In addition, in some places students who do not get grants are only required to pay the unweighted base rate for particular programmes or only a percentage of the overall tuition fees.

4.2 Literature review

4.2.1 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Report: *A Skills beyond School Review of South Africa, 2014*

In many countries the post-secondary system involves many agencies, several ministries, public and private providers, relatively autonomous post-secondary institutions, and employer and union stakeholders.

The OECD Skills beyond school synthesis report notes three key elements of high quality post-secondary programmes, namely:

- ✓ All programmes should involve some work-based learning as a condition for receiving government funding. The work-based learning should be systematic, quality assured and credit-bearing;
- ✓ Vocational teachers need both teaching skills and up-to-date industry knowledge and experience. The teachers in training institutions benefit from a strong blend of pedagogical skills, industry experience and academic knowledge. Vocational teachers need both pedagogical skills and practical professional expertise and keeping practical knowledge of the workplace up-to-date is also a major challenge; and
- ✓ Basic literacy and numeracy skills are critical both for labour market success and to support further learning.

The OECD recognized that many students leave compulsory school with weak core academic skills and that the current vocational education system is not organized in a way to identify such learners and address their problems. Therefore technical and vocational education programme should ensure adequate literacy and numeracy skills among their students alongside occupation-specific competencies. This means assessing basic skills at the outset of programmes, addressing weaknesses, and integrating basic skills development into professional programmes.

Whilst, there is expanding access and opportunities, there is also bewildering complexity of choices that learners have to make. Good career guidance and information is needed both before entering and during vocational programmes.

Programmes must be accurately categorised and new indicators developed to evaluate the effectiveness of professional education and training. The collection of data on industry-led professional examinations needs to be improved.

5. Programme of Action

5.1 Some of the activities that the committee planned to undertake are as follows:

- ✓ writing a concise historical background about CET colleges in the USA;
- ✓ completion of the draft report on CET colleges by end of January 2016;
- ✓ working on provincial disparities per student;
- ✓ conducting policy analysis in terms of the provisioning norms;
- ✓ investigating different funding models applied by the private sector;
- ✓ investigating issues regarding reserves in colleges;
- ✓ establishing the difference between CET and TVET colleges programmes;
- ✓ conducting research on staff and management needs at the colleges. The task was allocated to Prof Singh who resigned; and
- ✓ Investigating and proposing on how to deal with fees charged to international students for the programmes offered in colleges i.e. whether to fund the full cost fee inclusive of state funds or only the student fee portion.

6. Challenges

6.1 The committee identified the following challenges and areas of concern when conducting fieldwork at CLCs and TVET colleges:

- ✓ student enrolments on Maths and Science continue to deteriorate;
- ✓ transport and accommodation are a challenge for learners in rural areas;
- ✓ NSFAS bursaries allocation is inadequate due to the increasing number of enrolments;
- ✓ colleges face infrastructure challenges; and
- ✓ lack of resources such as learning and teaching materials.

7. Recommendation(s)

7.1 The committee indicated that they will consider making recommendations in the following areas:

- ✓ new CET and TVET colleges or campuses be built in rural areas to increase access to post-school education;
- ✓ the need for regular capturing and updating of data at CET and TVET colleges;
- ✓ introduction of bridging programmes; and
- ✓ measure to deal with poor performance by colleges and avoid punishing students by reducing the number of enrolments at colleges because of the college mismanagement or lack of capacity to manage.

Noted/Noted with comments



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