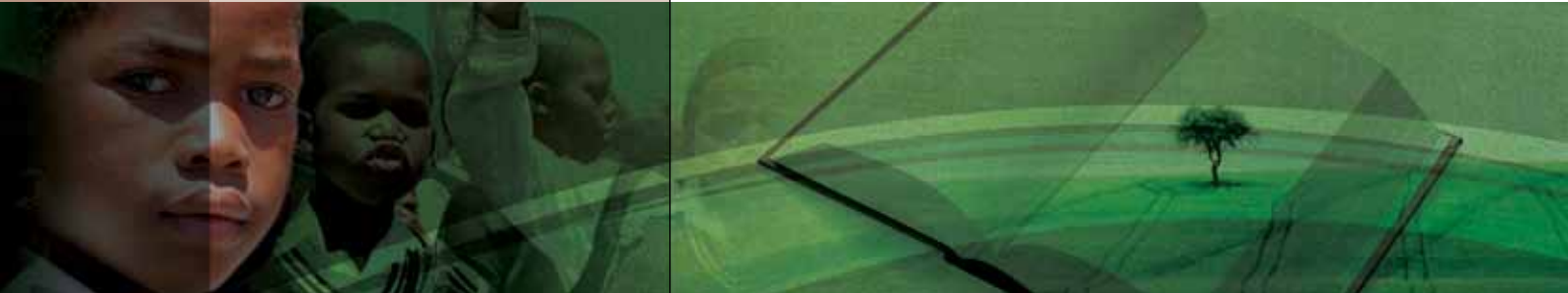


HUMAN CAPITAL

Programmes and Projects



The case for sustainable and improved quality across the education spectrum in South Africa is clear. In one way or another, our goals for sustainable economic growth, global competitiveness, poverty alleviation and equity depend on high quality, accessible education and education institutions. Research consistently highlights the pivotal link between human capital development, starting from a foundation phase in education and underpinning lifelong learning, and sustained growth and development. Key national initiatives confirm the crucial link between education, economic growth and improved living standards.

COLLEGE-INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

The case for building a strong public Further Education and Training (FET) colleges system in South Africa rests on the need to ensure that the country produces sufficient middle to higher level technical skills.

Responsible collective action by business and government to contribute to further education through a modern, high quality, responsive public FET system will ensure that a pool of talented, knowledgeable individuals can exit the education system and move into the workplace. FET colleges are a critical factor in the skills pipeline and the business case for developing responsive vocational education institutions becomes increasingly relevant.

The NBI currently facilitates partnerships across the construction and engineering sectors, including manufacturing, mining and petrochemicals.

Through industry partnerships companies can collaborate with colleges to increase the capacity to deliver the skills that business requires. These partnerships provide a platform for bridging the gap between education and the world of work in South Africa and ensuring relevant curricula for the benefit to the country.



Ekurhuleni West College Students.

In terms of the Construction FET College Partnership, the construction companies (Aveng, Basil Read, Group Five, Murray & Roberts and WBHO) have agreed to assist the FET colleges in a number of areas, including the appointment of a specialist to manage the curriculum input and review process of the new National Curriculum Vocational (NCV) programmes related to their industry. The companies also fund the training of lecturers on the revised curriculum annually. To date approximately 200 lecturers have been trained. The training is endorsed by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and is open to all colleges delivering the NCV Building and Civil Construction programme. The partnership also creates linkages between the college and the workplace, during studies and after students have qualified

The NBI's key role is to guide and support the partnership, ensure the sustainability of the initiative and ensure that the strategic engagement and dialogue is ongoing to empower the partnership at all levels. This includes ongoing engagement with the DHET where such partnerships have been welcomed.

TECHNICAL SKILLS BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

The Technical Skills Business Partnership (TSBP) emerged as one of the key business collaborations in response to the national request to ramp up the training of technically skilled people to industry. The partnership has, since 2006, comprised of the following partners:

- Anglo Platinum (Platinum mining)
- ArcelorMittal (Manufacturing, steel and engineering)
- Eskom (State Owned Enterprise: Energy)
- Gold Fields (Gold mining)
- Sasol (Petrochemical)
- Transnet (State Owned Enterprise: Transportation)

Top level industry role players have agreed to implement actions and systems towards:

- Shaping and improving the capability and capacity of South Africa to develop technical/engineering competence;
- Ensuring timeous delivery of competence requirements in these skills areas; and
- Implementing sustainable competence development capability to meet current and future South African competency needs.

The contribution of the collaboration focuses on narrowing the gap in the national supply and demand of critical and scarce skills, with the primary focus being on artisans and FET support. There have also been efforts towards increasing the numbers of bursaries awarded for engineers, technicians and technologists, which are ongoing. The delivery agreements are framed in a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2007.

Progress to date includes:

- Researching the past and present contribution of member companies in the training of engineers, technologists, technicians, artisans, operators and miners.
- Determining the capacity of the collaboration in terms of facilities, equipment and training of staff in order to understand the supply side better.
- Analysing technical skills training in SA and scarce skill categories (in collaboration with Business Leadership South Africa Artisan Working Group).
- Sharing best practices in the training pipeline (from recruitment through to certification and funding).
- Setting a target to train 5 400 artisans, operators and miners over the next three years. To date, the intake stands at 2 877 with partners confirming that the various companies are on track to achieve the identified target of 5400.
- Companies have provided the funding for the training of 2 877 artisans, operators and miners, on an over and above basis towards the national pool.

The NBI has recently presented a "Proposed Framework for Enhanced DHET/Industry Engagement" to both the CIP and TSBP companies who have given an in-principle agreement for the NBI to roll-out Phase 1 of the plan. This will include the following activities:

- Expand the mapping of the NCV to the broader range of trades.
- Profile each of the identified colleges and identify key obstacles to effective teaching and learning.
- Provide a consolidated plan and budget for supporting the target campuses over a two-year period.

EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PARTNERSHIPS

After fifteen years of managing the implementation of the Education Quality Improvement Partnership (EQUIP) programme, a public private partnership between business, education departments and schools, the NBI is concluding the programme in its current form. A close-out report that captures the lessons learnt from the programme is available on the NBI website.

The EQUIP programme supported government in the implementation of its education quality improvement programmes and policies, by building the capacity of schools to develop into strong and viable institutions with sound and strategically designed development plans.

It strove to make state funding more effective by drawing resources and skills from both business and service sector providers in education development. These partnerships offered schools access to “best practice” in school leadership, governance and curriculum delivery. The programme also provided a forum for strategic dialogue between government, educationalists and business to address general educational challenges. The EQUIP programme embraced sustainability by ensuring that schools took responsibility for their own development. EQUIP worked in partnership with the education departments at various levels.

The programme has had a nationwide reach and was supported by 46 national and international companies and funded to the amount of more than R50 million over the last 15 years. More than 550 000 learners, 15 000 teachers and support staff, 5 000 principals, deputy principals and heads of departments as well as 4 500 school governing body members have benefited from the programme.

Since its inception in 1995, the programme achieved a number of significant long-term improvements which are captured in the close-out report that can be found on the NBI website. This will serve as a foundation for the NBI’s new initiative, the Learning Partnership for Schooling.

A LEARNING PARTNERSHIP FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

According to research commissioned by the NBI, business in South Africa is estimated to spend in the region of R1,3bn per annum on Corporate Social Investment (CSI) in schooling. Yet the same research indicates that monitoring and evaluation of this enormous and critically important social investment is weak, and that companies sometimes make their investments with only limited knowledge or consideration of what their competitors or potential partners are doing, and with limited reference to government plans and initiatives. Consequently, although information on CSI spending patterns is limited, the evidence that does exist points to potential gaps and anomalies in the allocation of resources, as well as to duplication.

Respondents to the survey generally acknowledged that there was an urgent need for better information, better analysis, and more effective and sustained dialogue and strategic engagement, both between the sponsoring companies and between business and government.

From this analysis, and after extensive engagement with actors in the private sector, the education departments and the education community, as well as the lessons learnt from the implementation of the NBI’s EQUIP programme over 15 years in all eight provinces, the NBI has developed the concept of a Learning Partnership for School Improvement. The NBI believes the Learning Partnership could constitute a critical departure for sponsoring companies and for government redefining the way in which they do business, in the vital area of school improvement.



EQUIP recipient at Rietenbosch Primary in the Western Cape

RESEARCH INTO FET AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Employment Promotion Programme has provided financial support to three systemic FET studies, each aimed at measuring key elements of effectiveness and output in the sub-system. These studies are being managed by the NBI and follow on from similar studies that were undertaken in 2009. The project builds on the foundation laid down in 2009 and seeks to expand the knowledge base considerably. The three studies are as follows:

Educator Supply, Utilisation and Development

A detailed systemic study of educator supply, utilisation and development to measure the quantity and quality of educators across priority learning sub-fields.

Survey of FET college students

This studies survey students in the colleges towards the end of the academic year and then track their transition into the labour market.

A survey of employer engagement with FET colleges

This survey seeks to monitor the quality and output of FET colleges, as well as the take up of students into workplace training in its various forms (internships, learnerships, apprenticeships etc.), particularly for 'vulnerable sectors'. The research will be completed at the end of June 2011.

DHET FET SUPPORT PROCESS

The NBI was involved in a Task Team process of support to the public FET colleges throughout 2010 under the management of DHET. The various focus areas included policy analysis, funding, programmes and examinations, as well as the provision of short-term assistance to the DHET in supporting colleges with their operational planning for 2011, focusing on programme offerings, learner recruitment, staffing and funding.

The NBI has secured funding through the Employment Promotion Programme to extend the DHET FET Support process into 2011. The workstream process currently underway addresses in-college support, planning support, organisation development, workplace interventions through a structured industry partnership and research being undertaken by the NBI. The DHET has appointed NBI as overall project manager for the workstream process.

Minister Blade Nzimande held a Ministerial roundtable discussion on artisan development in November 2010 between business and DHET. The discussion has laid a foundation for continued engagement between the department and CIP, Technical Skills Business Partnership and the BLSA Artisan Working Group on the matter of artisan training.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR SOUTH AFRICA (FORMERLY JIPSA)

The NBI acted as Secretariat to the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) from March 2006 to March 2010.

In March 2009, Cabinet approved the revised Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa (HRD-SA). Cabinet's decision marked the migration of work initiated under JIPSA into the HRD-SA from April 2010.

The NBI currently is a member of the Human Resource Development Council Technical Working Group as well as the Task Team on Artisan Development. The NBI chairs the FET Colleges Task Team.

For more information, on any of these programmes and projects, contact hc@nbi.org.za