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Education News

War Room set up to ensure the 2025

Amid concerns over registration and funding challenges, a steering committee made up of key education stakeholders aims to iron out registration issues for a smooth start, writes Edwin Naidu

EDWIN NAIDU

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has activated its War Room for the 2025 academic year to monitor and tackle potential challenges, ensuring a trouble-free start.

The Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Buti Manamela, said that the Department was on track with its planning for the new academic year and that teams will be on the ground to provide leadership and swiftly address potential challenges.

The DHET's University Education Branch will visit universities to observe how the registration processes are unfolding on campuses.

Central to the War Room goal is to ensure a collaborative approach with university management and Student Representative Councils, NSFAS and the DHET to address concerns without disrupting the registration process and the beginning of the academic year.

To ensure stronger accountability, Manamela said the Department has formed a steering committee comprising representatives from the DHET, universities, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), and student leaders established to address challenges and build on the lessons from 2024.

Manamela said the Committee, overseen by the Minister of



Brighter future: DHET wants to ensure a seamless entry into academia for the Class of 2024

Higher Education and Training, Dr Nobuhle Nkabane, will address registration-related matters, including advising on mitigation strategies for potential risks that

may affect the 2025 registration.

"The War Room has been activated to monitor registration. The aim is to ensure timely reporting, coordination, and rapid escalation of decision-making," Manamela told the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education in the National Assembly during a briefing on the state of readiness for 2025.

Manamela, officials from the DHET, Universities South Africa (USAF), the South African Public Colleges Organisation (SACPO), NSFAS, the South African Union of Students (SAUS), and the South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training Students Association (SATVETSA) attended the briefing on preparations and readiness for the 2025 academic year.

On Monday, 2 December, steering committee members heard from University Registrars on their plans aligned to the release of the results via the Monitoring Tool first used by the DHET in 2022.

Manamela said the tool requires universities to provide data on applications received and spaces available for First-Time Entering students (undergraduates) per programme and faculty, emergency accommodation plans in place

to assist students while they are waiting to finalise registration and accommodation placement, and the registration process (online, physical, assisted registration, extension).

The Central Application Clearing House provides an opportunity for learners who have yet to receive a place to study at a post-school higher education institution. It opens for sign-ups on 24 January 2025, a week after the announcement of the National Senior Certificate examinations on 13 January.

NSFAS concerns

When the Department met with University Registrars and NSFAS on 1 October to discuss and assess the readiness of universities and NSFAS to start the 2025 academic year, the Registrars raised concerns about the Scheme's preparation for 2025, stating that the issues that arose during the registration process in 2024 should be addressed before the start of 2025 registration. These include delays in processing applications for funding, issuing confirmations, disbursement of allowance, processing of appeals, and private accommodation-related matters.

Another concern, according to

Manamela, was safety and security, which he said would be a priority, with the DHET's University Branch continuing to participate in the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure to strengthen its relationship and engagement with the Safety and Security cluster. Primarily, the need to ensure "vulnerable" first-year students are housed close to or on university premises and given necessary protection will be paramount.

USAF Chairperson and Vic-Chancellor of the University of Pretoria, Professor Francis Petersen, congratulated all universities for being on track to complete the 2024 year successfully. However, he said although the National Senior Certificate results will be released a week earlier (mid-January 2025 compared to the third week in January 2024), it would still pressure universities, especially in finalising the NSFAS funding list.

In 2025, 16 universities will start their academic year in January and 10 universities in February. According to USAf, the enrolment capacity for universities in 2025 will be 202,000. Most universities' teaching and learning programmes will be face-to-face, incorporating blended methodologies to enhance

Education News

academic year gets off to a good start



Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Nobuhle Nkabane, leads the War Room planning to ensure a trouble-free start to the new academic year.

them. At the same time, all universities have wi-fi on campus and in their residences.

USAF chief executive Dr Phethiwe Matutu told the committee that the enrolment plan capacity for first-time entrants stood at 201,925. At the same time, ten universities will accommodate late applications (CPUT, DUT, MUT, TUT, RU, UJ, UL, UNISA, UNIZULU, VUT), and three universities will accept walk-ins (CPUT, RU, UNIZULU).

Alarmingly, Matutu said 12 universities have indicated a shortage of accommodation. They are CUT, CPUT, NMU, SMU, SUN, UFS, UKZN, UMP, UWC, UP, UNIZULU and WITS.

Dr Matutu added that USAf was concerned about the capacity of NSFAS to manage student accommodation allocations promptly.

"There is a need for NSFAS to

consider university accommodation and university-leased accommodation first before private accommodation to ensure that public infrastructure is appropriately utilised," she said.

The committee heard that NSFAS will continue to pay allowances to universities directly (at least until mid-2025). Still, the key challenges are NSFAS (appeals, accommodation pilot project, late payments, historical debt) and the implications of a real-term university subsidy and infrastructure funding reduction.

By 20 November 2024, there were 465,509 SASSA applicants, of which 428,906 students were provisionally funded. There were 142,179 non-SASSA applications that needed to be processed. To date, about 70,000 of these applications have been reviewed for verification purposes. Over 50,000

require additional documents, and 13,173 non-SASSA students were provisionally funded. NSFAS plans to finish processing all 2025 applications by 31 January 2025, with upfront payments for all students including Health Sciences expected to be paid by early January.

The upfront payment for universities is based on the total amount of the 2024 academic year, which is expected to represent 10% of the total amount paid. One month's payment is equal to this sum, estimated at R3,716,973,899.31. The funding is intended to cover personal care, living expenses, travel, books, and accommodation.

SATVETSA has been working with institutions and serving as a mediator for student conflicts or unrest. However, this year, in the TVET sector, it was noted that there was no major unrest as the association had proactively addressed many issues.

For TVETS, each college receives an annual tuition allocation which stipulates the total amount to be utilised towards tuition payments for qualifying NSFAS students. The upfront to be advanced is based on 20% of each TVET Col-

lege tuition allocation. Therefore, R641,013,350.00 will be paid as tuition upfront to TVET colleges by the 10th of January 2025.

Stakeholder consultations on the NSFAS Student Accommodation Pilot Project were initiated nationwide. About 5,000 stakeholders attended the sessions, including university representatives, TVET Colleges, Student Leadership and Student Accommodation Owners.

NSFAS held a pilot review workshop at Nelson Mandela University in September 2024. It will implement measures from these lessons to improve the management and administration of private student accommodation in 2025.

As the application deadline of 15 December 2024 approached, NSFAS continued leveraging these insights to maximise conversions, assist students in completing their applications, and ensure that as many eligible students as possible receive the financial support they need to pursue their education in 2025.

NSFAS told the committee that the pilot project had ended and the NSFAS Accredited Student Accommodation Programme was being implemented. NSFAS also said it is in consultation to discontinue accommodation disbursements to individual students and that by 2026, it will direct all accommodation disbursements to the accredited or recognised accommodation provider.

SATVETSA, which represents the interests of the students across all 50 TVET Colleges in the country, will be engaging the DHET on implementing the SRC recommendation to ensure the smooth operation of campuses.

SATVETSA has been working with institutions and serving as a mediator for student conflicts or unrest. However, this year, in the TVET sector, it was noted that there was no major unrest as the association had proactively addressed many issues.

However, SATVETSA has noted the following issues, which can end up disturbing the smooth opening of the 2025 academic year:

- Some institutions do not have SRC members, which creates

communication barriers between students and management;

- The issue of campus safety is still a significant challenge at campuses;

- Poor maintenance in the college-owned residences;

- Colleges not supporting SATVETSA and their SRC members (some not affiliating to the structure);

- The delay in phasing out N1 to N3 has been delaying the need to introduce occupational studies; and

- The lack of institutions having partnerships with the private sector for students' placement results in students having to stay home.

SAUS said the registration period is a make-or-break moment for the Higher Education sector. Failure to resolve fundamental matters that hinder access, particularly for low-income and working-class students, creates unnecessary tensions.

Stability in NSFAS and its systems is critical to a smooth and peaceful take-off for the 2025 academic year. Continuous collaboration and communication between key stakeholders such as universities, NSFAS, Financial Aid Practitioners of South Africa, and SAUS should be essential because challenges are addressed collectively. SAUS called on the DHET to provide an administrative budget to NSFAS to ensure enough resources to implement the loan scheme.

Tebogo Letsie, the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education Chairperson, said in a statement that universities should prioritise submitting accurate student registration and enrolment data to the NSFAS at the beginning of the academic year to ensure precise funding decisions.

The committee recommended that problems from the 2024 registration period should not continue in 2025. These problems included delays in processing applications for funding, disbursements of allowances, appeals processing, and matters related to private accommodation.

The committee recommended that the DHET speed up standardising allowances for TVET and university students, recognising their shared experiences. It will undertake oversight visits during the 2025 academic year to assess the readiness of TVETS and community education and training colleges.

"After our engagements, we are hopeful that measures put in place to ensure a successful start to the 2025 academic year have been properly set in motion by stakeholders in the post-school education and training sector," Letsie said.

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DG's Corner

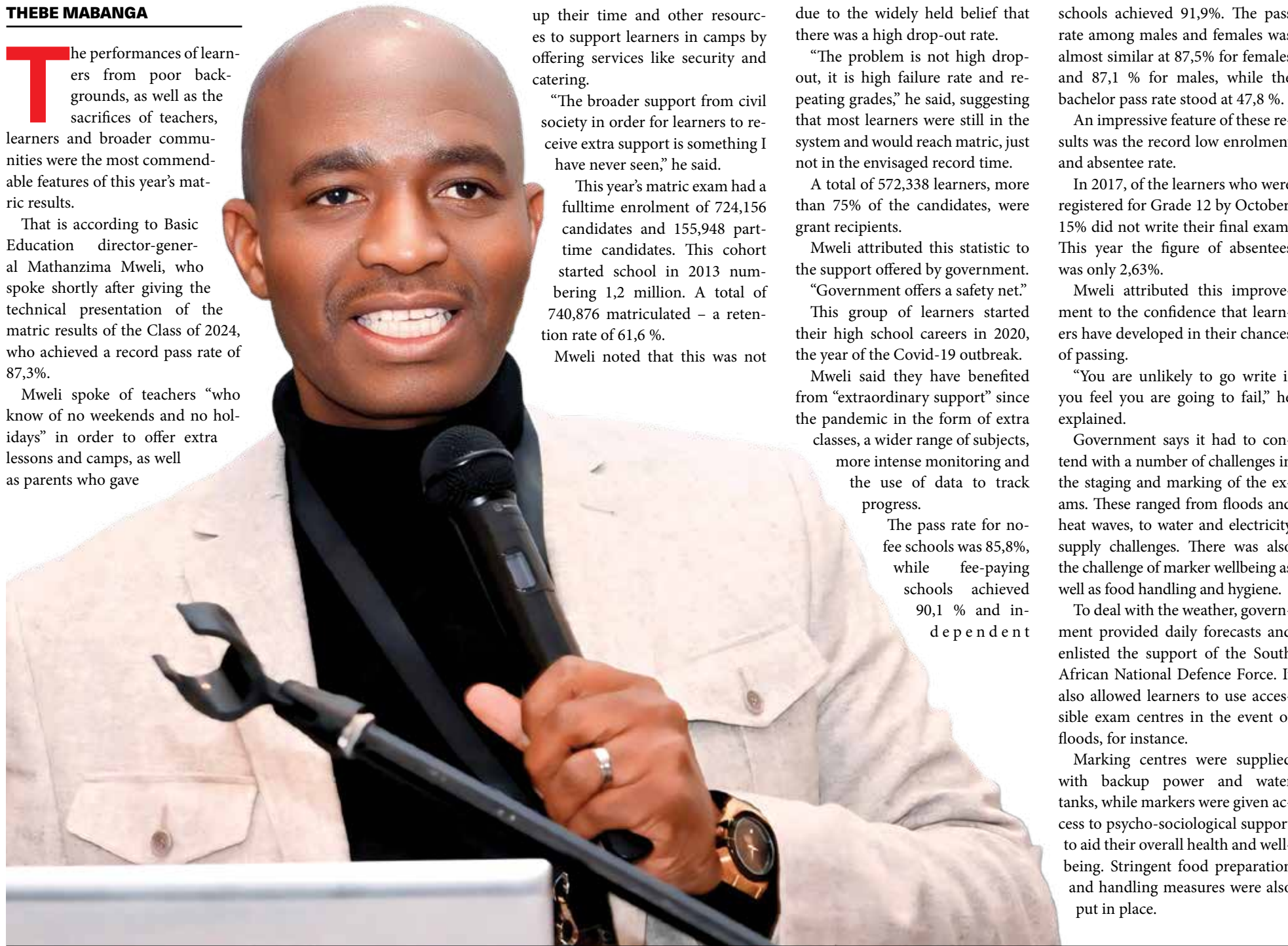
Education DG praises teachers and parents for supporting matriculants

THEBE MABANGA

The performances of learners from poor backgrounds, as well as the sacrifices of teachers, learners and broader communities were the most commendable features of this year's matric results.

That is according to Basic Education director-general Mathanzima Mwelu, who spoke shortly after giving the technical presentation of the matric results of the Class of 2024, who achieved a record pass rate of 87,3%.

Mwelu spoke of teachers "who know of no weekends and no holidays" in order to offer extra lessons and camps, as well as parents who gave



up their time and other resources to support learners in camps by offering services like security and catering.

"The broader support from civil society in order for learners to receive extra support is something I have never seen," he said.

This year's matric exam had a fulltime enrolment of 724,156 candidates and 155,948 part-time candidates. This cohort started school in 2013 numbering 1,2 million. A total of 740,876 matriculated – a retention rate of 61,6 %.

Mwelu noted that this was not

due to the widely held belief that there was a high drop-out rate.

"The problem is not high drop-out, it is high failure rate and repeating grades," he said, suggesting that most learners were still in the system and would reach matric, just not in the envisaged record time.

A total of 572,338 learners, more than 75% of the candidates, were grant recipients.

Mwelu attributed this statistic to the support offered by government.

"Government offers a safety net." This group of learners started their high school careers in 2020, the year of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Mwelu said they have benefited from "extraordinary support" since the pandemic in the form of extra classes, a wider range of subjects, more intense monitoring and the use of data to track progress.

The pass rate for no-fee schools was 85,8%, while fee-paying schools achieved 90,1 % and independent

schools achieved 91,9%. The pass rate among males and females was almost similar at 87,5% for females and 87,1 % for males, while the bachelor pass rate stood at 47,8 %.

An impressive feature of these results was the record low enrolment and absentee rate.

In 2017, of the learners who were registered for Grade 12 by October, 15% did not write their final exam. This year the figure of absentees was only 2,63%.

Mwelu attributed this improvement to the confidence that learners have developed in their chances of passing.

"You are unlikely to go write if you feel you are going to fail," he explained.

Government says it had to contend with a number of challenges in the staging and marking of the exams. These ranged from floods and heat waves, to water and electricity supply challenges. There was also the challenge of marker wellbeing as well as food handling and hygiene.

To deal with the weather, government provided daily forecasts and enlisted the support of the South African National Defence Force. It also allowed learners to use accessible exam centres in the event of floods, for instance.

Marking centres were supplied with backup power and water tanks, while markers were given access to psycho-social support to aid their overall health and wellbeing. Stringent food preparation and handling measures were also put in place.

Minister's Corner

Class of 2024 achieves historic high in NSC results

JOHNATHAN PAOLI

Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube was pleased to announce that the Class of 2024 achieved a historical pass rate of 87.3%. A total of 615,429 learners passed the exams, despite spending two of their years in high school during the height of Covid-19 pandemic, which started in 2020.

The pass rate is up from 82.9% in 2023, with nearly half (47.8%) of the candidates earning a Bachelor pass, a qualification required for university admission. This marks a substantial improvement, with the number of Bachelor passes doubling over the past decade to 337,158 in 2024.

Notably, 67% of these passes came from Quintile 1 to 3 schools in poorer communities, with the minister underscoring education's transformative power.

All provinces recorded pass rates above 84%, with the Free State leading at 91%, while the Northern Cape showed the most improvement, surging by 8.3% from 2023.

KwaZulu-Natal got the second highest pass rate at 89.5%, followed by Gauteng with 88.4 %.

The North West has a pass rate of 87.5%, the Western Cape with 86.6% and Limpopo with 85.01%.

Mpumalanga got 84.99%, the Eastern Cape 84.98% and the Northern Cape 84.2%.

The matriculants earned an impressive 319,651 distinctions, a significant increase from the previous year.

Key subjects like Mathematics saw an improved performance, with the pass rate rising from

63.5% in 2023 to 69.1% in 2024.

However, Physical Sciences showed a slight decline, highlighting the need for targeted interventions in foundational literacy and numeracy.

KwaZulu-Natal led in Bachelor passes (84,470), followed by Gauteng (66,979) and the Eastern Cape (45,662), while schools in rural and under-resourced areas also celebrated top achievers, emphasising the reach and impact of education initiatives.

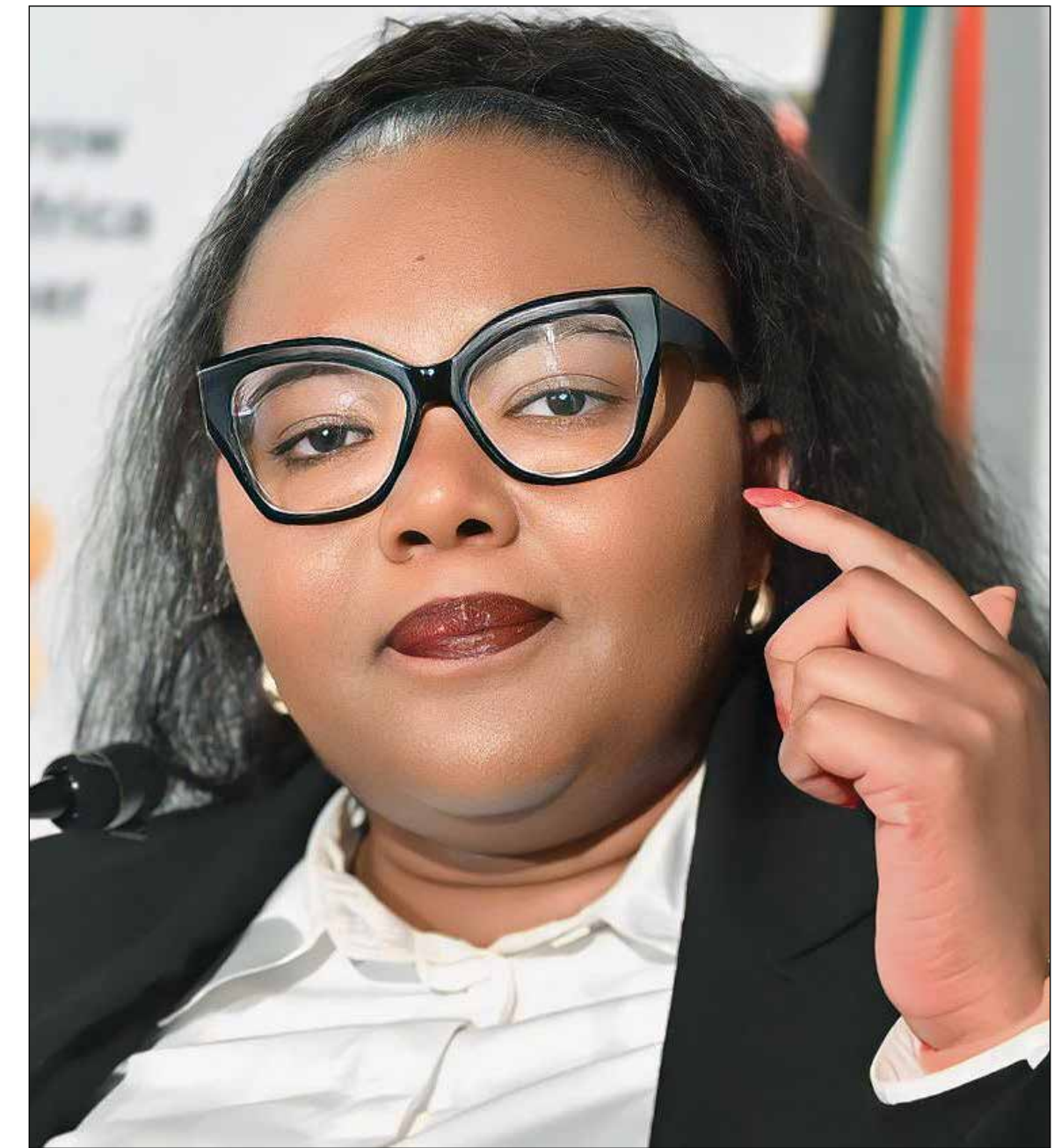
Additionally, no-fee schools improved their pass rates from 81% in 2023 to 85.8%, demonstrating the success of initiatives such as the National School Nutrition Programme.

The National Top Learner Awards were won by Owethu Shange from John Wesley from Kasi Bay Private School and Rayyan Ebrahim Pinelands High School, both from KwaZulu-Natal.

Speaking in Johannesburg, Minister Gwarube highlighted the achievements of the "Covid generation", who overcame numerous challenges to achieve the highest matric pass rate in the country's history.

"This occasion is not only a moment to recognise the accomplishments of our learners, but is also an opportunity for us as a country to reflect on the health of our basic education system at the start of 2025," she said.

She said the department aimed to achieve universal access to quality ECD programmes by 2030 and strengthen curriculum delivery in the Foundation Phase, with investments in early literacy and numeracy will lay the groundwork for



Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube highlighted the achievements of the "Covid generation", who overcame numerous challenges to achieve the highest matric pass rate in the country's history.

long-term systemic improvements.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has praised the matriculants for the results they achieved.

"The achievements of the Class of 2024 are a proud contribution to and evidence of our progress as a nation during 30 years of freedom

and democracy," Ramaphosa said.

He said, going forward, the government must ensure opportunities for the learners, including space and inspiration for the youth to set their own course as entrepreneurs, innovators, inventors and other embodiments of creativity

and self-reliance.

The president also called for a renewal in addressing the challenges facing both the education sector and the economy, stating his confidence that the matriculants themselves might produce solutions to the country's problems.

Free State scores sixth record matric pass

The Free State once again emerged as South Africa's top-performing province in the 2024 National Senior Certificate (NSC) results, marking the sixth consecutive year it has claimed the top spot.

The province's Education MEC Julia Maboya expressed immense pride in a media briefing after the provincial release of the NSC results at the Central University of Technology in Bloemfontein.

"We have always surpassed our targets. As a province we are really proud of learners, teachers, parents, SGBs and teacher unions. I think it is in this province that we

have demonstrated that education is a societal matter," Maboya said.

The MEC attributed this success to relentless hard work, strategic planning and community involvement.

Maboya praised the feat as remarkable given the province's socio-economic challenges, but proudly stressed the Free State's determination.

"We are investing in our people through education. That is the best thing we can do for our people because we happen to be one of those poor provinces," she said.

The Free State achieved an impressive 91% pass rate, a marked improvement from the 89.1% re-

corded in 2023, with key achievements including a notable increase in quality passes.

In addition, 48.2% of learners earned Bachelor passes and 30% achieved diploma passes, reflecting consistent improvement in high-grade results since 2020.

A total of 17,486 learners qualified for university studies, 10,889 for diploma programmes, and 4,621 for higher certificates, underscoring the depth and diversity of academic success across the province.

Among the 355 schools in the province, 67 achieved a 100% pass rate, and 232 exceeded a 90% pass rate.



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Telkom Foundation head prioritises access to technology for learners living with disabilities

DINEO BENDILE

The development of learners living with disabilities and special learning needs is set to become one of the priority areas for the Telkom Foundation, as its new head, Judy Vilakazi, endeavours to broaden the scope of the organisation's focus.

Speaking to Inside Education, Vilakazi expressed her passion for using technology to bring learners living with disabilities up to par with their able-bodied peers.

While this was always an area of interest for Vilakazi, it was during a visit to the Ekurhuleni School for the Deaf last year that her mission to invest in developing learners living with disabilities was solidified.

Vilakazi recognised that many learners were extremely bright but lacked the resources to support their natural gifts. This realisation led to the Telkom Foundation donating coding and robotics kits to the school.

"Deaf learners primarily rely on visual and tactile methods for their education. Equipping them with this skill provides the learners with hands-on experience in manufacturing and engineering," Vilakazi said.

"Beyond the coding skills, the programme also fosters essential soft skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. This contribution strengthens our commitment to closing the digital divide and empowering these students," she added.

"What I am passionate about is ensuring that our reach also caters for learners with special educational needs and those living with disabilities. That is very close to my heart.

"In as much as we are servicing quintile one to three schools, and it's all learners who are coming from disadvantaged communities, my big drive is to say let us also cater for learners living with disabilities who are always placed at a disadvantage simply because of how they are differently abled".

In addition, Vilakazi believes companies have a responsibility to ensure the creation of an inclusive

workforce, by playing a more active role in developing the skills of youths living with disabilities.

"It's easy for organisations to say we are doing this or that, but most of the time they are catering for able-bodied [learners] and we are all fighting for the same goal," Vilakazi said.

The latest studies by the Commission on Employment Equity reveal that disability representation in the South African workforce stands at 1.1%, which falls short of the targeted two percent.

Vilakazi said a transformation of this outlook would only be possible if more companies helped to develop learners living with disabilities to give them an opportunity to participate in the workforce.

"Companies are pushing to make sure they meet the quota of two percent, but if we are not developing learners living with disabilities from an early age, where are we going to get those employees?" she asked.

Since taking the reins at the Telkom Foundation in February 2024, Vilakazi said her focus was on continuing the work of existing programmes that have helped the foundation make its mark as a leading investor in South Africa's education sector.

One such programme is its flagship



Passionate about education: Telkom Foundation Head Judy Vilakazi. Photo supplied

Connected Schools Programme, which was launched in 2009. The programme provides Information and Communication Technology (ICT) support to schools and encourages the integration of technology in teaching and learning.

It comprises several components, which include providing ICT devices and equipment, interactive and gamified educational content, fibre connectivity to schools and teacher training.

The teacher training and support component has upskilled more than 6,000 teachers in the past five years.

"The programme has been able to move the majority of the teachers from level one and two [ICT] skills, and some of them are now sitting at level three to five, which is quite a big achievement," Vilakazi revealed.

"So now those same teachers are able to improve from just being aware of what ICT is and its basic uses, to actually incorporating ICT into their teaching and learning environment."

Since the introduction of the programme, more than 2,000 South African schools have benefited from the ICT support provided by the foundation.

Learner development is also an important area of investment for the Telkom Foundation, particularly as it pertains to providing support in Science, Technology, Engineering and

Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

South Africa has been flagged to expect an increasing critical skills shortage because of the declining rates at which learners are pursuing STEM subjects. To combat this, the Telkom Foundation in partnership with Lightbulb Edtech, provides a zero-rated platform that supplements learning in Mathematics, Science, Accounting and English, among other subjects.

The aim of the programme is not only to improve STEM performance in South African high schools but also to introduce learners to exciting career opportunities available to them in STEM fields.

While Vilakazi believes awareness levels about STEM-related careers are still low, she said the Telkom Foundation was doing all it could to introduce learners to the world of opportunities open to them in the sciences.

For those who have already passed matric, the Telkom Foundation has launched TelkomLearn, a platform that provides quality ICT-related courses through accredited partners.

"Young people have the option of choosing courses they can enroll in and build their careers. Some of these courses – from credible institutions like IBM and Microsoft – are free and some of them need you to pay," Vilakazi said.

The courses can be a means of upskilling existing ICT capabilities, or providing entry-level skills that students can use to get into the world of tech.

Vilakazi has especially encouraged young women to take up opportunities in STEM streams and not to limit themselves for any reason.

As a new digital era takes hold, bringing innumerable changes to the workings of the world, Vilakazi said her overarching goal was to ensure that as many young South Africans as possible would benefit from the digital economy.

"Making sure that everyone can profit from this digital transition and making sure that everyone is informed about the different opportunities that exist within this ICT space... that is my vision," Vilakazi said.

Among the many students the Telkom Foundation is helping to further their studies at institutions of higher learning in 2025 are the four bright sparks featured on this page. Fhatuwani Mudau, Lungile Ncube, Kabelo Monageng and Thandeka Ntuli are beneficiaries of the Telkom Foundation's High School Support Programme (HSSP), which provides academic and psycho-social support to selected learners from Grade 8 until Grade 12. Each year the Foundation awards an all-inclusive bursary to the top matric achievers in the HSSP programme to study towards a qualification in any field. These four top achievers have all demonstrated exceptional dedication and perseverance in their academic careers despite the obstacles they have faced, including the Covid-19 pandemic which peaked at the start of their secondary schooling journey. There is no doubt that these bright young people are going to be great achievers in their chosen fields.

Thandeka Ntuli

A journey of perseverance and optimism

Thandeka Ntuli's story is one of hope, perseverance, and the unwavering belief in pushing towards one's goals. She recently celebrated a milestone in her academic journey, expressing her happiness and excitement over her achievements. However, her success was not without its struggles, especially in overcoming challenges with English during her time at St. Mary's, a Johannesburg school known for its rigorous academic demands.

Reflecting on her journey, Ntuli acknowledges the importance of effort and commitment. It wasn't until she found her strengths in Mathematics that her academic trajectory began to shift. Her aptitude for problem-solving and logical thinking sparked her confidence and became the foundation for her academic success.

In celebrating her achievements, Ntuli expresses gratitude to the role played by the Telkom Foundation in assisting her on her journey. "I would not have gotten where I am today, if not for the Foundation. Telkom has made my dream of studying Computer Science a reality," she says.

Ntuli shares that one of the keys to her progress has been learning to prioritise the important things and advises striking a balance between focusing on critical tasks and challenging oneself to aim higher. Her guiding principle, "always push to your goals," reflects her resilience, even when the path seems difficult.

Her commitment to trying, regardless of obstacles, has paved the way for her to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science at the University of Cape Town – an exciting opportunity to combine her analytical skills with innovation, and she looks forward to contributing to the fast-evolving tech industry.

Ntuli's story is a testament to the power of determination and optimism and demonstrates that while challenges are inevitable, perseverance and a positive outlook can transform obstacles into steppingstones for success. With her focus and drive, Ntuli is poised to make her mark in the world of technology and beyond.



Fhatuwani Mudau

Remarkable success despite numerous challenges

Fhatuwani Mudau, an extraordinary achiever, recently completed his academic journey with remarkable success, earning seven distinctions and an impressive overall average of 89%. His outstanding performance includes scoring 84% in English and Mathematics, 86% in Accounting, 89% in Life Orientation, 90% in Business Studies, 92% in History, and an incredible 98% in IsiZulu.

However, Mudau's journey to success was not without its challenges. He faced significant mental health struggles, primarily stemming from academic and familial pressures, as well as his own relentless pursuit of perfection. But he demonstrated resilience and a commitment to improving his physical and mental well-being. With substantial assistance from the Telkom Foundation, his efforts to maintain a balance between academic excellence and personal health have paid off.

Now pursuing a Chartered Accounting degree at the University of Cape Town, Mudau envisions a future in the corporate world, where his determination and strong work ethic will undoubtedly shine. He emphasises the importance of a conducive working environment, particularly one that fosters meaningful interactions between teachers and learners, as well as the support he received from the Foundation, which he credits as a vital factor in his success.

"Just keep believing in yourself; that has been a guiding principle throughout my journey. I got here through believing in myself as well as support from Telkom to trust in my capabilities, even during the most challenging times," he says.

Mudau's aspirations don't end with accounting. He is also passionate about pursuing an LLB degree, with a focus on criminal law and dreams of becoming a defender of justice, using his knowledge and skills to advocate for those in need.

His story is one of perseverance, self-belief, and resilience. Mudau's achievements inspire many, proving that with determination and the right mindset, it's possible to overcome obstacles and achieve greatness.



Kabelo Monageng

Aspiring attorney overcomes financial challenges

Kabelo Monageng, an 18-year-old from Alexandra township in Johannesburg, is a shining example of perseverance and determination. He recently completed his National Senior Certificate exams with an impressive six distinctions and is now set to pursue a Bachelor's degree in Law at the University of Pretoria.

Throughout his academic journey, Monageng has faced numerous challenges, including financial barriers that could have hindered his aspirations. However, his dedication to excellence and support from the Telkom Foundation and the Alexandra Education Committee bursary programme helped him overcome these obstacles during high school.

"I am thankful that the Foundation not only financed my education, but also shaped me into the determined and passionate individual I am today," Monageng says.

He says diligence, determination and hard work are principles that have carried him, principles that not only enabled him to achieve academic success but have also become the foundation of his future ambitions.

His goal is to become an attorney, a dream he is determined to realise despite the significant financial hurdles that continue to challenge him. Monageng expressed his gratitude for the support he has received from the Telkom Foundation and his commitment to excelling in his studies.

"To be chosen as a worthy candidate is an honour and privilege," Monageng says, "I aim to show that it will not be in vain. With the aid of this programme, the sky will not only be the limit but a platform to reach beyond."

As Monageng embarks on this next chapter, his story underscores the transformative power of education and financial support in breaking barriers for talented young individuals. His journey is a testament to the potential that can be unlocked when determination meets opportunity, inspiring others to pursue their dreams against all odds.



Lungile Ncube

Time management important for achieving results

Lungile Ncube, a recent matriculant, shared insights into her journey through a demanding final school year, highlighting the challenges of balancing academic responsibilities and the importance of support from programmes offered by the Telkom Foundation. Her story sheds light on the broader pressures faced by high school learners and the need for institutional support.

One of Ncube's proudest achievements was earning second place in her matric class, a testament to her dedication and hard work. However, she admits that the journey was far from easy.

"Matric was not like the other grades," she explains. "No matter how hard I tried, it required an immense amount of work in terms of time management and preparing for exams and portfolios. The pressure would have been worse, without the help of the Foundation."

She emphasises the importance of setting realistic goals and warns against putting excessive pressure on oneself. "If you put too much pressure, you don't get the best results," Ncube advises, reflecting her belief in the value of balance and self-compassion. Driven by a passion for helping people, she is now pursuing a nursing degree at the University of the Witwatersrand. Her career choice aligns with her empathetic nature and desire to make a positive impact on others' lives.

Ncube says that schools need to address the heavy workload placed on students and consider strategies that allow learners to focus on quality over quantity. She advocates for better systems and additional support from organisations such as the Telkom Foundation to help students manage their academic responsibilities effectively.

Her message to fellow students is one of encouragement and balance: "Don't be too hard on yourself. Always set goals that are achievable and give yourself the space to grow." Ncube's story highlights the importance of self-awareness and institutional reform in fostering student success. Her journey serves as an inspiration to others navigating the demands of high school and beyond.



Teacher's Corner

Teacher's first novel ideal for Grade 7 and 8 learners

STAFF REPORTER

Pretoria educator Sheila Naidoo has fulfilled a lifelong dream with the publication of her first novel, *Thoriso's Trials*, and hopes it will positively affect young people because it emphasises honesty, inclusion, assertiveness, and embracing one's gender identity.

Naidoo emphasises that the book's treatment of overcoming challenges, tackling stereotypes, and valuing genuine family values will help readers persevere and be resilient in their lives.

Thoriso's Trials is the story of Thoriso, a Grade 8 pupil who wants to play soccer for South Africa. A scout from one of the top soccer teams is coming to watch the U14 soccer match between Thoriso's school and a rival local school.

Tension builds as players for the club's junior soccer league are selected. This is the stepping stone that Thoriso and his soccer mates need to be introduced to playing soccer on a professional level. The critical question is: Does Thoriso, with all his challenges (and trials), pitch for the match?

The novel tells the story of the young soccer player and his friends and the lives of the other Grade 8 pupils. It encompasses the issues faced by young people, including Zee, a fellow Grade 8 pupil, and her friends, as well as that of the English and Social Sciences teacher, Mr Elliot.

The novel is set over three weeks at the beginning of the year and culminates at the Valentine's Day Ball. It captures life in the capital city of South Africa with lively and unforgettable characters, leaving the reader wanting to know more about what happens thereafter.

Thoriso's Trials is an excellent literature study novel for Grade 7 or Grade 8 learners. In addition to the exciting storyline, it includes a glossary of words used in the book, a glossary of literary terminology, and a list of South African slang or colloquial language. It also includes questions on each chapter of the book, group discussion questions, the list of 80 characters, a comprehension guide, and a Guide to Bloom's Taxonomy (a classification of the different outcomes and skills educators set for their students).

The book deals with family and peer relationships. It focuses on peer pressure, bullying, the positive and negative of using cell phones and social media, diversity and inclusivity, stereotyping, and the characters'



Lessons for life: Educator and author Sheila Naidoo

fears, obstacles, and resilience.

It is an ideal book for English literature teachers in a South African setting and relevant to all young teenagers.

"I love reading, and I encourage children to read all genres of reading materials," Naidoo says. "Parents should read to their children from when they are babies and encourage them to play word games or look at the written words, numbers or symbols in everyday life, such as when driving to the mall or at the shops.

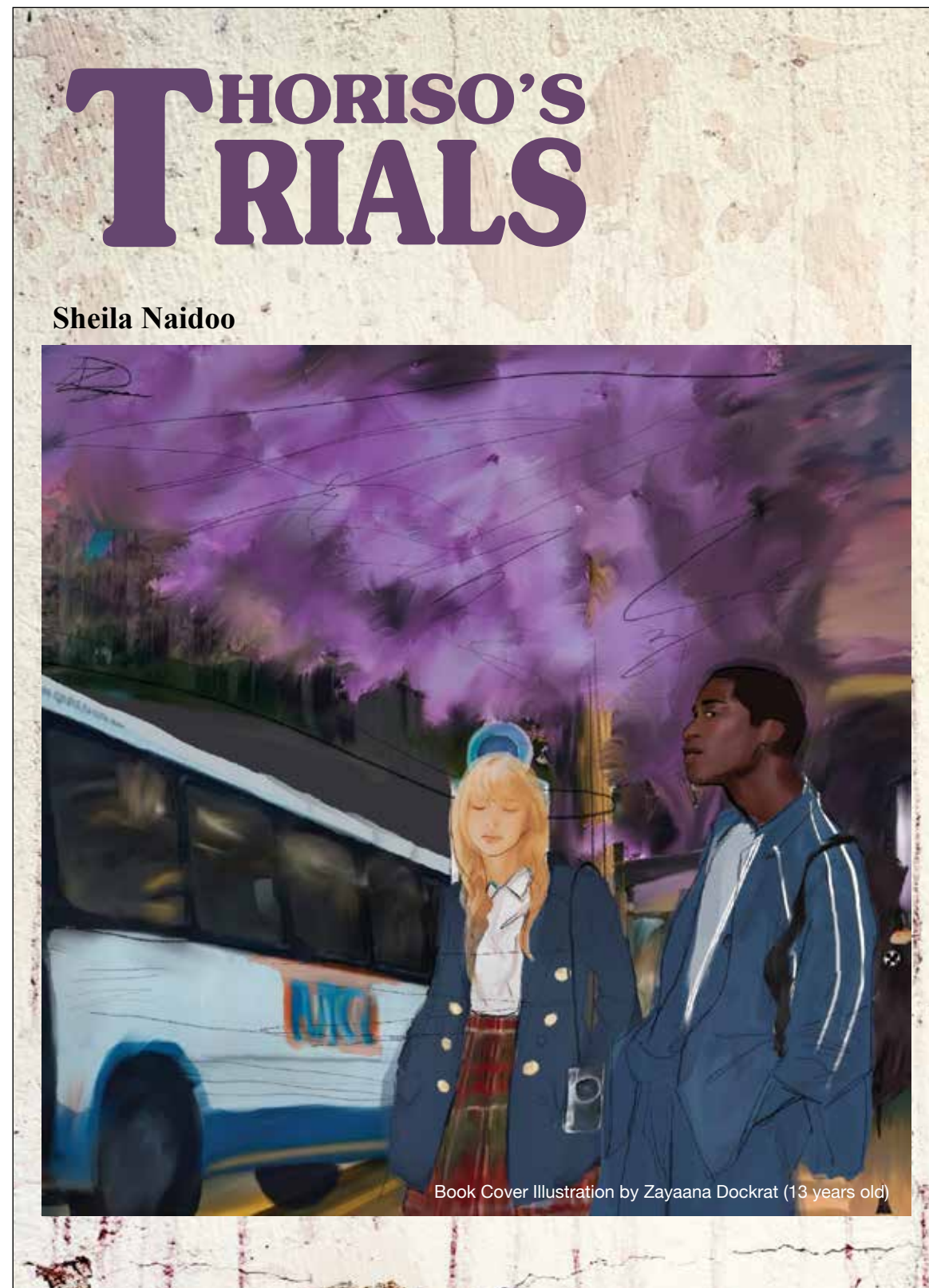
"I would promote reading anything a child loves, be it an interest in sport or music, fiction or non-fiction, comics and cartoons, a new television or book series, etc. This reading can be a physical book or a mobile device – as long as the child reads. I would also recommend that parents should engage with the child about current affairs or news appropriate to the child's age once a child starts school," Naidoo adds.

Although her family is mainly Telegu-speaking, Naidoo's mother was a Tamil teacher, but she never learned to read English. "She was a wonderful storyteller, and I can still remember her imaginative stories or narratives as well as me reading English or my schoolbooks to her. She instilled a love for reading and books in me."

Naidoo says she would love to continue with *Thoriso's* tales at high school, write about wildlife and South Africa's natural beauty and its amazing people. She also loves writing poetry.

Her husband, Babs Naidoo, the former Head of Stakeholder Management and Communication at the South African Government Employees Pension Fund, is a passionate wildlife photographer and author.

"When I was at school, my first career choice was to be a journalist," Naidoo says, "but my father was very conservative and would not



THORISO'S TRIALS

Sheila Naidoo

Book Cover Illustration by Zayaana Dockrat (13 years old)

consider that for me at all. Teaching was a more acceptable option for a daughter."

Naidoo is an enthusiastic and dedicated English educator with over thirty years of experience teaching students from diverse backgrounds. Over the years, she has taught children from pre-school to primary school and Grade 12 learners.

She served as the chairperson of the Pretoria branch of the South African Council for English Education for 15 years, focusing on encouraging young writers to hone their writing skills and have their poetry and prose published each year. She has also co-produced the draft proposal document for an education trans-

formation project for the Eastern Cape Department of Education.

Naidoo says her teaching philosophy revolves around creating a dynamic environment where students are motivated to explore the depths of language, literature and writing. She has a profound passion for the written word and an unwavering commitment to fostering an understanding of the English language.

As an educator and a librarian, Naidoo has designed and implemented various curriculum programmes throughout her career that have significantly improved reading and student literacy rates. She has also been actively involved in the mentoring and professional devel-

opment of teachers and librarians.

"I am retiring at the end of the year to be with Babs, who threatened to spend time without me in New Zealand, where Lerusha, our daughter, lives," Naidoo says. "I also wanted to leave a legacy after my many years of teaching, which has always been my passion, and to give my Grade 7s going into different high schools something relevant to assist them.

"Lastly, I wanted to give my grandchildren and the people I mentioned in my book recognition or a piece of my teachings or lessons of life."

Thoriso's Trials can be ordered by emailing Sheila Naidoo at ssl-naidoo@gmail.com

Advertorial



Gauteng e-Gov MEC Bonginkosi Dhlamini embarked on a roadshow in December to encourage young people within the province to take advantage of opportunities in the ICT sector



e-Gov wants Gauteng youth to claim their share of the digital economy

DINEO BENDILE

The Gauteng Department of eGovernment wants to help young South Africans claim their share of the digital economy through the rollout of a training programme that will provide functional Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills.

The department has announced that the project, first mooted in 2023, will officially be launched in 2025 following a successful pilot in Sebokeng in the Vaal.

The training programme will see scores of Gauteng youth equipped with technical skills to repair digital communication tools such as cellphones, laptops and tablets.

The announcement was made by Gauteng e-Government MEC Bonginkosi Dhlamini, who has called for young residents of the province to prepare themselves to sign up for the programme once the official invitation for registration is made.

Dhlamini spoke during the eGovernment department's Youth ICT Tech Expo in Alexandra in December, where he stressed the importance of South Africans having a piece of the digital economy pie.

"South Africans must occupy this space because ICT is the new gold,"



Dhlamini said. "Most importantly, when we give you these opportunities, you must grab them with both hands," he said.

Since its establishment in 2015, the Department of e-Government has embarked on a number of initiatives to improve the efficiency of provincial government services. This includes the provision of free wi-fi at various public sites across the province.

Alexandra, Johannesburg's oldest township, is the latest area to benefit from the installation of free wi-fi at schools, clinics and community

halls. Dhlamini and his e-Government team visited Alexandra to communicate the department's various initiatives and how they would benefit residents of the area.

The MEC told Alexandra youths gathered at the Alexsan Kopano Resource Centre about the ICT training programme and urged them to seize the opportunity.

The cellphone repairs sector has been identified as an ideal opportunity for job creation, due to its generally low barrier to entry as well as the potential to make good profits.

Dhlamini said participants of the pilot training programme in Sebokeng earned between R15,000 to R20,000 a month from their cellphone repair businesses.

The Gauteng government says the project will stimulate the growth of local economies by creating an opportunity for young people, many of whom are unemployed, to become economically active.

"In the ICT industry, there are a lot of jobs and money to make. We want to train young people to fix iPads, cellphones and laptops," Dhlamini said. "And you don't need a matric to be trained to fix a phone."

The MEC lamented that the cellphone repair industry was dominated by foreign nationals, who saw an opportunity in South Africa and had set up numerous shops across the country.

"It is wrong that the cellphone repair industry is in the hands of Pakistani nationals. It is wrong," he said. "We are not going to chase them away. We just want to train South Africans so they can set up and run their own businesses."

Dhlamini cautioned South Africans against providing inconsistent, poor-quality services once they qualified to start their repair businesses. He emphasised that a strong work ethic was the only way local

youths could penetrate the market and have staying power against an already established network of foreign-owned businesses.

Negotiations are at an advanced stage between the Gauteng Department of eGovernment and local malls and shopping centres in the province, which are being lobbied to house newly graduated repair technicians once they start their businesses.

On completion of the programme, graduates will be allocated shipping containers that they will use to set up shop. These containers will be placed securely at malls and shopping centres to benefit from maximum foot traffic.

In addition to this, 20 people who show exceptional ability and interest in the field will receive specialised training as ICT engineers in China and India.

While the Gauteng e-Government ICT programmes are targeted mainly at youths, Dhlamini said opportunities would be open to any person who was interested and willing to learn, regardless of age or demographic, as "hunger does not discriminate by age".

"We must all work together for the benefit of our country," Dhlamini said.

"Because if South Africa fails, where will we go?"

Advertorial – Skilling Mzansi



Deputy Minister Buti Manamela says INSETA can help reduce poverty and find innovative ways to address South Africa's challenges.

INSETA at the forefront of the skills agenda in the insurance industry

XOLISA PHILLIP

Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) are critical institutions, according to the Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training Buti Manamela, who spoke at the Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority's AGM on 29 November and highlighted its vital role in the South African economy.

"INSETA is critical to the growth of our economy as it falls within the financial services industry – life insurance, non-life insurance and collective investment," Manamela noted.

Challenges

Manamela observed that the sector would continue to be influenced by national policy and targeted interventions to the challenges faced by the country in areas including inequality, poverty, young unemployed people who were not being educated, and small and medium enterprises.

"INSETA is one of three SETAs

I will be working closely with for the next five years," said the Deputy Minister.

"... [This] is a huge honour for me. The insurance sector, the financial sector as a whole, is one of the major sectors of our economy. It touches on the lives of millions of South Africans," Manamela said.

"I can imagine that most households, in one way or another, interface with the insurance and/or financial sector in general. So the impact of this SETA is quite significant. It touches many lives – I think from the minute you decide when you can qualify for a bank account, to have a house, to have some form of property."

INSETA touched many South African lives, directly and indirectly, and "that is why I believe it is one of the important SETAs that we have and we have to make sure it works for South Africans," the Deputy Minister emphasised.

"INSETA contributes to the skills required in the entirety of the financial sector."

Manamela drew attention to the reports presented to the AGM

by the INSETA CEO, Gugu Mkhize, and the CFO, Zanele Malaza, bringing to the fore the interventions and programmes spearheaded by the SETA.

"We acknowledge the progress that has been made, and the initiatives by the CEO and the CFO towards a clean audit," he noted.

Manamela stressed: "Not only should we celebrate the outstanding performance of 97%. We have to applaud the role the board has played in ensuring that we are at 97% of our performance. But we also should have a clean audit. I think that is important."

Manamela said obtaining a clean audit was imperative because "we have rules that we have all agreed to as a country to follow."

He acknowledged that INSETA's interventions and programmes would make a meaningful contribution to South Africa's Medium-Term Development Plan – a roadmap of the government's policy priorities in the next five years.

The goal, he said, is to attain inclusive growth, which has eluded South Africa.

In conjunction with inclusive growth and transformation aspirations, the sector has experienced rapid digital development fuelled by artificial intelligence (AI), big data, blockchain and the Internet of Things.

South Africa's insurance sector, and the wider financial services industry, have been on the cutting edge of the new technology developments, deploying some of these advances in its own operations at the company level.

"This digital transformation is, and should, play an important role and [have an] impact on the sector itself," he said.

"Beyond the sector, I think it is about how we, together with the other SETAs, use high-impact programmes and use the experiences this particular SETA has in terms of digitisation, so we can make a far-reaching impact.

"I think the progress and the innovation in the insurance and the financial sector give me great pleasure. We can use this as an important platform."

Manamela pointed out that these

innovations require a workforce skilled in digital technologies.

In addition to INSETA's existing relationship with Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, the Deputy Minister urged INSETA to establish closer ties with Community Education and Training (CET) colleges.

Community colleges

He encouraged INSETA to "design community-oriented skills and training programmes, whose intention should be to deal with the immediate challenges communities face", adding he was "aware that some of your flagship projects have gone a long way in addressing unemployment. I think working with community colleges will help in making those types of interventions."

Manamela concluded by saying, "I want to appreciate the role played by all employers, and all companies, within the insurance sector for their contribution and being involved in their own way in some form of training or another. We want to acknowledge that contribution and hope you will continue to do that."

Advertorial – Skilling Mzansi

INSETA's collaborations drives real impact for its beneficiaries

XOLISA PHILLIP

As INSETA reflected on the success of its 2023-24 achievements at its AGM in November, Sanlam senior manager Frederick Stroebel told the gathering of the many people whose lives have been transformed by the authority's education and training programmes.

"We saw all the figures, all the measurements," he said. "But I think very often we only look at the quantitative, so I am sharing examples with you because we sometimes forget the wonderful stories happening in collaboration with the SETA."

Looking back on Sanlam's journey with INSETA, Stroebel said the financial services company had a multitude of successful case studies, bearing testament to the importance of learnerships as a gateway to employment, as well as work-based development and training opportunities for career growth.

"The PA for the human capital executive at Sanlam started as an unemployed person on a learnership and is now in a position of employment," he said.

In another case, Stroebel recalled the story of an unemployed disabled person who started a learnership with Sanlam through INSETA and is now completing her LLB studies at the University of Cape Town.



Qualitative evidence: Frederick Stroebel, Sanlam's Senior Manager for People Development, told INSETA's AGM of numerous successful case studies that bore testament to the importance of learnerships as a gateway to employment

"I can tell you about Odwa Gonya, who was an employed learner who completed an INSETA learnership. Odwa went on to head up learning and development in Sanlam Retail Mass, and he has done the global programme with INSETA," Stroebel added.

"Aphiwe, who started as an unemployed disabled person is now one of the top performers in our client care centre."

Stroebel was certain other companies in the sector had similar stories and brimmed with admiration as he shared his pride at his indus-



trial relations colleague being hired to lead a major industry body.

In September 2024, the Association for Savings and Investment South Africa appointed Kaizer Moyane – Sanlam's head of employee relations, transformation and compliance – as the organisation's new CEO.

"I speak about Khanyi Nzukuma, who was a trainer with me – a training adviser. He is now the CEO of Sanlam Glacier."

These stories of Sanlam employees, past and present, represented the qualitative evidence of the collaborative partnership between the company and INSETA that often got lost in the numbers, according to Stroebel, adding that in terms of quantitative measures, "Sanlam placed almost 600 managers and leaders through

development programmes partially funded by INSETA."

The development and learning opportunities offered by INSETA created a foundation and a springboard for future growth.

Stroebel pointed out that Sanlam now has the biggest financial services footprint outside of banking on the African continent.

"We are proud of that, and it is because we developed our own people. We also developed talent for the industry. These investments in our people have laid the foundation," he said.

Stroebel noted that the appointment of Gugu Mkhize as INSETA CEO "saw a more high-performance culture and a results-driven institution" and congratulated her "on the implementation of the transformative projects".



INSETA has solidified its role as a transformative force in South Africa's insurance sector by achieving remarkable milestones in skills development and has actively contributed to the government's objectives of improving access to Post-School Education and Training (PSET) opportunities, addressing unemployment, inequality, and poverty. These efforts include prioritising support for women, youth, and people with disabilities

Education News

DUT's School Engagement Project fosters a sense of community

ZWAKELE NGUBANE and BÉRÉNICE DE LA CROIX

The phrase "it takes a village to raise a child" originates from an African proverb and conveys the message that it takes many people to provide a safe, healthy environment for children, where children are given the security they need to develop and flourish, and to be able to realise their hopes and dreams.

A safe, healthy environment for children is needed even more when we live in a society with high divorce rates, teenage pregnancies, broken families, sharp inequality and child-headed households – a grim reality in South Africa for many young people.

Therefore, fostering and promoting a sense of community, compassion, and care is becoming more critical as we need to help each other fill the gaps. Indeed, many compassionate people amongst us step in to



Zwakele Ngubane is Director: Advancement at the Durban University of Technology

care for, protect, nurture, guide, support and mentor. Many initiatives demonstrate this "spirit" of what can best be described as ubuntu.

The Durban University of Technology School Engagement Project (DUT SEP) is one such initiative that attempts to make a difference. The



Reaching out: Learners strut their stuff in the DUT School Engagement Project 2024 Talent Show

project, launched in 2018, involves seven partner schools, approximately 30 DUT students, several staff members from various DUT departments, and external partners.

Young people are the future and need to know they are worth investing in. Through participating in holistic education opportunities, the gifts of our youth are unlocked for their benefit and the benefit of society. With increasing unemployment and joblessness, it is vital that our young people access and develop their confidence, vision and creativity. These life skills are invaluable in both formal employment and entrepreneurial endeavours.

Every society needs ethical leaders to function effectively. Currently, we have a deficit of ethical leaders in all sectors of society, in South Africa and globally; through values-based education interventions such as DUT's School Engagement Project, our young people are stepping forward as ethical, skilled, vi-

sionary leaders.

As one of its key strategic pillars, DUT embraces the tenet of being an engaged University. With this, comes a commitment to be socially responsible and responsive to local, regional and national needs. DUT SEP is an example of engagement in action and fully embodies this critical but often neglected responsibility. It enables DUT students and staff to be engaged in a worthwhile community initiative which enhances the education of both school learners and university students.

The project is informed by Otto Scharmer's Theory of Change, Theory U, in which he posits that conscious, values-based leadership can give rise to strategic social change. Using his experience working with some of the world's most successful leaders and innovators, Scharmer shows in Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges, how groups and organisations can develop op conscious leadership in order to

implement sustainable solutions to socio-economic challenges.

On this premise, the project seeks to impact young people multi-dimensionally through the seven project pillars: Tuition in Gateway subjects, Peace Clubs, Social Entrepreneurship Clubs, Talent Show, Sports Tournament, Career Guidance, and Super Chefs Competition. These project pillars are points of leverage that support one another to create inclusive and invigorated educational environments where skilled, ethical leaders can emerge. A project review is conducted every year, and project stakeholders have consistently indicated the significant contribution that the project is making to academic progress and the development of entrepreneurial and values-based leadership skills.

Zwakele Ngubane is Chair of the DUT School Engagement Project and Bérénice de La Croix is the Project Manager

Yes, there is gold at the end of the rainbow

SARANYA DEVAN

As a South African woman of Indian origin, now based in Cape Town, I have been questioning my identity as a Bharathanatyam dancer in the context of dance and 'Indian performing arts' in this country that I call home.

I have decided that my South Africanness supersedes my racial identity of being an Indian. Likewise, should Bharathanatyam be discarded because of its Indian heritage? Bharathanatyam is a dance form ... not a collective of people. Should it not be enjoyed by all the people of South Africa, the so-called Rainbow Nation that Archbishop Desmond Tutu spoke of?

Bharathanatyam does not enjoy endorsement by South Africa's official custodians of culture, namely, the national and provincial depart-



Saranya Devan

ments of arts and culture as well as education authorities. What can be done to ensure Bharathanatyam has

a rightful place on the multicultural agenda?

Under Apartheid, those who were not white were denied suitable public facilities to rehearse and perform; and funding for artistic and cultural pursuits was restricted especially at a time when the National Performing Arts Councils were only pouring funds into Western dance forms.

A few years ago, I conducted a study to test support for Indian Dance by non-Indian students. In light of a non-dictatorial-teaching approach, I found that so long as lessons are interesting, learners will be enthusiastic. Hence, I put into practice my cross-cultural teaching of Bharathanatyam at the University of Cape Town.

At the start of November, six of my students – all non-Indians – from the University of Cape Town's Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies, performed at the Diwali Festival

at the V&A Waterfront and displayed the true spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the Sanskrit phrase which means "The World Is One Family". The thunderous applause for the Kollatam and Bharathanatyam dance items made the sweat (lots of it) and toil all worthwhile.

The first piece celebrated unity in diversity and the second item fused fast and rhythmic beats, facial expressions and hastas (hand gestures) to reflect a state of bliss or Ananda.

It was a moment such as this that made me proud that there is a younger generation of non-Indian South Africans who are beginning to adopt a colour-blind approach to the arts and are so willingly crossing cultural barriers.

I reflect on the work of American-based Theatre scholar Richard Schechner who drew inspiration for some of his works from his travels

through India and his experiences with Indian performances. Schechner, commenting on his theory of Interculturalism said, "The more contact among people the better. The more we, and everyone else too, can perform our own and other peoples' cultures, the better."

While Bharathanatyam is viewed as being part of Indian culture, in South Africa the dance form can also be regarded as part of the wider South African contemporary dance culture which embraces, multiculturalism and comprises various cultures such as Indian, Zulu, Afrikaner and European culture, among others.

Saranya Devan – dancer, theatre maker and writer, holds a Master's in Dance from the University of Cape Town and a Master's in Bharathanatyam from the University of Madras. Email her at Saranya.devan29@gmail.com

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Education News



Unequal society: Dr Shevonne Henry says that South Africa as one of the most unequal societies in the world must deal holistically with the issue of school dropout

Social inclusion is crucial to meeting education targets

SHEVONNE HENRY

Dropout is a process by which youth become increasingly detached from society before they become detached from education. Andras Szabo, in his study of juvenile delinquency in Hungary in the 1960s, found that youth delinquency arose from a feeling of anomie. Anomie is the breakdown of interdependencies in society, which weakens the cohesive force of society and gives rise to individual cultures or sub-cultures.

Anomie is the product of a social system in which cohesion has weakened because of slackening in standards governing social behaviour. If the standards and values are deficient, a deep feeling of insecurity impacts the individual's capacity to respond appropriately to society. The feelings of anomie include:

- That the structures of power are indifferent to their needs and do not respond to them (disregard, lack of belonging);
- Little can be achieved in society (hopelessness, helplessness);
- Aims will not be realised (powerlessness);
- Life has little meaning (apathy);
- Life has nothing to offer (fatalism); and

- No one can be relied on or trusted (alienation, hyperindependence).

Anomie is an emotional disorder that affects the integration of the individual personality and gives rise to dysfunctional behaviours such as school dropout. Therefore, addressing the school dropout issue requires seeing it as part of a broader array of the social problems that the youth must encounter and overcome to finish their schooling.

In stable, integrated societies with even economic and social development, there is equitable access to the means (social interdependencies) and ends (social culture) to achieve individual success. However, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world, where the majority are marginalised and do not have access to the means or ends of the social integration that is required for success.

A society comprising strongly contrasting ways of life (high levels of inequality) tends to have higher dropout rates. Discrepancies in equality exacerbate tensions between social groups, erode social cohesion, and entrench marginalisation. What results is a behaviour that contradicts the socio-cultural norms of society and erases social standards.

Therefore, socially dysfunctional

behaviour like dropout is the product of social factors that govern the individual's level of social integration. The incidence of anomie increases when there aren't measures to counterbalance it. The relationship learners have with their society has a major impact on whether they stay in school or drop out. Therefore, the approach to addressing school dropout needs to be creating spaces for (re) socialisation.

The answer to addressing dropout is an ongoing process of identifying and filling both learning and social gaps to address these gaps and build a cohesive and resilient society. When youth are re-integrated into society, the support system (from that re-integration) mitigates the social challenges that would cause dropout.

Studies show that external social factors condition youth; therefore, the interdependencies between the individual and collective need to be analysed and understood to address dropout holistically. When the structures prevalent in society are defective, social interdependencies weaken and cause the breakdown of social culture.

The social fabric is damaged, social bonds are ruptured, and there is widespread disconnectedness, distrust in systems and processes, and destruction of support systems. The

marginalised feel a loss of control over their own lives, which causes feelings of insecurity and powerlessness.

To understand the root cause of youth dropout, Margins-Push Boundaries conducted surveys with 285 technical, vocational, education, and training (TVET) students aged between 15 and 35 at campuses in Roodepoort and Soweto.

The study found that students displayed symptoms of marginalisation as gauged from socio-economic indicators such as race (all survey respondents were black youth); socio-economic circumstances (72.5% of survey respondents came from single-parent, child-headed families, or homes where they were cared for by a legal guardian); 72.5% of those guardians only completed high school, and only 22% of the heads of household had a full-time job; 41% did not sleep in their own room, and 38.6% indicated that they did not get enough sleep; 35% had either a minor or severe illness; only 33% ate three meals a day; and 41.5% indicated that they were not eating enough.

Indicators of dysfunction at home were also prevalent, with 46.4% of respondents indicating that they did not feel safe at home; 29% stating that they had been abused, and 13.4% admitting to suicidal ideation.

Learners indicated that several difficulties were hindering the completion of their studies, such as learning difficulties (19.6%), lack of resources (27.5%), family problems (24.8%), bad living conditions (10%), transport problems (55.6%), insufficient food (14%), threat of unplanned events such as death, illness, or loss of income (35.3%).

A third of them indicated they did not have social support when encountering a problem, and 64.7% said they were uncomfortable discussing their problems with others. Almost half of them suggested that their needs for love and affection were not being met, and 23.4% said they did not feel like a respected or valued member of society.

Despite the strong indicators of social marginalisation, the youth did not attribute any of their challenges to society but shouldered the burden, demonstrating high levels of anomie. Youth normalised their circumstances, and 67.3% indicated that their daily mood was normal, evidencing low levels of self-awareness around their social exclusion.

Shevonne Henry (PhD) is chair of the Black Management Forum Policy and Research Committee, founder of Margins-Push Boundaries, and co-founder of Jozi Street

Education News

Given the right tools, South Africa's young people will make the country proud

EDWIN NAIDU

If there is one thing that Mimmy Gondwe, the Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, wants to be remembered for, it's tackling the youth unemployment crisis with gusto.

In October, the Deputy Minister hosted a Skills and Jobs Summit at the University of Johannesburg to find solutions to South Africa's youth unemployment crisis.

"This is a social and political time bomb," Gondwe told delegates [...] and we are here today to collectively find ways of defusing this ticking time bomb."

One of the ways of doing this was through education and skills development. A 2019 report by the National Skills Authority indicated that despite efforts to improve the impact of Sectoral Education Training Authorities (SETAs), there were still significant gaps in skills development, with many learners who had completed training programmes struggling to find employment.

She said youth unemployment currently stood at around 45%, meaning that nearly half of the country's young people could work and wanted to do so but could not find suitable work.

"This summit must answer the question of what are we going to do, as a collective, to ensure that we meet the priorities of the current seventh administration, which are to drive inclusive growth and job creation, to reduce poverty, tackle the high cost of living, and build a capable and ethical developmental state."

Hosted by UJ's Johannesburg Business School, Gondwe said the Summit was part of a vision to unite the higher education and business sectors to engage on the critical issues of youth unemployment and skills development.

"We are gathered here in the understanding that all of us, whether as business or members of the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) sector, have the common responsibility of being the villagers helping to raise the young of our village.

"Each of us comes to the table with different skill sets, resources and influence ... [and] what we bring to the table is worthy and necessary."

Gondwe challenged delegates to ensure that at the end of the summit, they pledged how each of



Committed: Mimmy Gondwe, the Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, says tackling youth unemployment in South Africa is an urgent necessity.

them, given their different areas of activity, would help provide opportunities for the skills needed and demanded by the economy.

One of the attendees, Jacques Basson, committed to working with the department to develop a call centre that could create 1,000 white-collar jobs within a year.

"Basson has further given us ideas on how the agricultural sector can help train young people in using biometric technology and how we can turn farm workers into farmers owning their farms.

"These are the kinds of pledges and commitments I am asking for

from the business community. It is no longer good enough for the PSET sector to measure itself by the number of enrolments or certificates, diplomas and degrees awarded. The business sector [must] measure itself on whether the young people who emerge from it are absorbed into the economy either as employees or entrepreneurs.

"We need both short-term and long-term interventions. We must identify what we can do today as we prepare for what can be done in the long term to ensure that the country's economy thrives and grows.

"We are here to invest in the fu-

ture of our youth, which is investing in the future of our country. We cannot do this without being fully intentional and deliberate."

In her role since the Government of National Unity (GNU) took office on 3 July, Gondwe, says she wants to be remembered as a leader who took active steps to address high unemployment among youth.

According to Statistics South Africa, the unemployment rate for young people aged 15-24 was 60.8% in the second quarter of 2024, while the rate for those aged 25-34 was 41.7%. This is higher than the national unemployment rate of 32.9%

in the first quarter of 2024. Gondwe has reached out to her counterparts at the Department of Employment and Labour to consider how to tackle the challenges, to ensure skills and opportunities for youth are unlocked in line with the GNU's priorities to drive inclusive growth and job creation, reduce poverty, and tackle the high cost of living as part of the national agenda.

The Deputy Minister firmly believes that given the right tools, South Africa's young people will make the country proud, citing the example of two Orbit TVET College students who won a top prize in artificial intelligence (AI) in Tanzania. Katlego Sebejane (22) and Kenoosi Rakhallane (21), both from Lethabile, in Brits, North West, achieved a remarkable milestone by winning the African Elevate Competition in Tanzania on October 17. Their prize was recognition of the app they designed, which translates sign language into text, bridging the gap between the deaf community and those unfamiliar with sign language.

The two students from Orbit are beneficiaries of the college's new facility, a groundbreaking R5-million Smart Skills Centre built by the Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority (CHIETA).

The centre opened in May to

bridge the digital skills divide and accelerate the development of basic digital skills for a future-fit workplace as part of the CHIETA strategy to innovate for impact in societies nationwide.

"This award is a testament to how AI, robotics, and coding skills are shaping the future. It's especially encouraging to see young women excelling in these fields. The two young ladies' accomplishments also highlight the growing importance of AI in addressing societal challenges. I have always believed that young people are innovative and have in them the solutions for many of the challenges our country faces. This app is one such example."

Gondwe said education is not an end, "but a means to an end. That end is to help the learner find a job or to be economically productive as an entrepreneur and an employer. That is why we must measure whether those who have been through our institutions of higher education do have jobs or are themselves employers of others."

Science & Technology

Innovative food project wins Samsung 2024 Solve for Tomorrow competition

EDWIN NAIDU

While its diverse electronic and smart appliance technology offerings are all the rage worldwide, the 2024 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow school competition celebrates a new winner in Mandisa Shiceka High School from Kagiso township in Krugersdorp, Gauteng.

Learners from Mandisa Shiceka High School took the top honours after beating nine fellow finalists in the latest edition of the competition with an innovation that produces food without soil, thus addressing the community's need for food security.

The Grade 10 learners of Mandisa developed an automated hydroponic structure to grow plants using a water-based nutrient solution rather than soil. They identified food security as the main challenge because their township, Kagiso, is predominantly a mining environment, which affects the quality of the soil, air, and water (resources necessary for growing healthy food). Their innovative system would grow food in greenhouses and use rainwater and

boreholes as the water source.

"We came into the competition with a strong belief that we would win because we believe in our idea as a great solution – that's the attitude the entire team carried until the end. We'd love to thank Samsung for the opportunity to improve our community and learn some valuable skills," said Makhosazana Mazibuko, team member and Grade 10 learner.

The team's educator, Nonki Motlogelwa, who helped guide them in their project, said expectations were high when learners submitted their entry. "Even though they started feeling the pressure as soon as the work began, they always had faith in themselves and that pushed them through. We are proud, especially because we won our first attempt. I am so excited for the learners; they have shown so much courage, creativity and teamwork that I am sure they are heading in the right direction. Overall, the experience was amazing and thought-provoking," she said.

Last year's winners, Mbilwi Secondary School from Venda in Limpopo, finished second, while Adam's College from Amanzimtoti in KwaZulu-Natal rounded off the top three. Mandisa



We are the champions: Mandisa Shiceka High School took the top honours at the 2024 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow competition for schools.

Shiceka won the R100,000 cash prize, Mbilwi Secondary received R50,000, and Adam's College received R30,000.

All the cash prizes will go towards purchasing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) equipment for each school, according to their unique needs. Samsung placed the cherry on top by rewarding each learner from the three winning teams with a new Samsung Galaxy device.

The Deputy Minister of Basic Education, Dr Makgabo Mhaule, who attended the prize-giving, praised Samsung for recognising a gap and walking the talk by working to fill it with this initiative, adding that their efforts and commitment to contributing towards educating the youth are highly commendable.

"It's easier to stand by and criticise, but with such a programme, Samsung shows that doing things will always be better than talking. Every learner and school participating in the Solve for Tomorrow competition is a winner simply for getting up and doing something to solve problems in their community, skill themselves and prepare for the future. This initiative is not just a competition; it is

a beacon of what social responsibility should be," Mhaule said.

Solve for Tomorrow is one of Samsung's corporate social investment initiatives. It is an ambitious effort to increase interest and proficiency in STEM and help the country contribute to the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Lenhle Khoza, Samsung's Manager for BBBEE & Transformation, highlighted the importance of corporates supporting the youth with platforms that could be a catalyst for their futures and the country's destiny.

Khoza added that since its launch in 2023, Solve for Tomorrow has grown into an annual creative thinking playground for underprivileged high school learners. "The youth is key to Africa's development potential, and it is our ambition as a business to spread the competition to more countries on the continent for transformative ways to solve societal issues through STEM initiatives like these. "Now more than ever, we need to guide young learners on the value of STEM skills to solve the greatest issues impacting our communities. Samsung is a firm believer in the power of education to drive positive change, and we remain committed to unlocking the potential of Africa's abundant resource, the youth," Khoza said.

The participating schools identify problems within their communities

and use STEM to solve them by conducting research and developing prototypes. Samsung further enabled the schools with resources and mentors to guide them through the process.

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and paste links, photos and more from one app to another.

Talk about computing in the palm of one's hand. If it does the same and more, will this reduce the reliance on a laptop?

The Galaxy Z Fold 6 takes stunning photos and videos. Although there are many phones on the market, only some, if any, offer the same

scope as this gadget.

A sticking point is the R45,000 price tag, which, subject to a R15,000 trade-in on an older device, can make it slightly more affordable.

The Samsung Galaxy Z Fold 6 owns the AI space, and with its education-enhancing benefits, the price for learning institutions, learners, and students could be considered reasonable.

Science & Technology

Address Africa's challenges through independent African science

EDWIN NAIDU

Dr Blade Nzimande, the Minister of Science, Technology, and Innovation, says Africa's ability to realise its full potential continues to be impeded by several historical and structural factors, particularly the persisting legacies of colonial underdevelopment.

Opening the 2024 Science Forum South Africa at the CSIR Convention Centre that took place between 3 and 6 December, the Minister said it was crucial to change how "we engage with the rest of the world as the African continent, not just in the area of science, but in all areas of human development".

Nzimande said that science policymakers on the continent could not allow Africa to be reduced to being a mere supplier of natural resources and skills to the other regions of the world.

"Therefore, one of the areas I believe we must give critical attention to is the funding of research in Africa and the development of a

sovereign African research agenda. We cannot have an African research agenda funded, in the main, by [outside] donors, regardless of their stated intentions," Nzimande said.

"We need to have research funding mechanisms designed and financed by Africans and that are totally committed to the African Union's Agenda 2063 and for our genuine friends to support such an effort," he added.

Nzimande said the issue of research funding is critical for strengthening Africa's scientific capacity and technological sovereignty to tackle the continent's disease burden by, among others, developing pandemic preparedness capacity, increasing access to education, water, and energy, and addressing new challenges such as climate change and digital inequality.

"It is therefore critical that the Science Forum South Africa expresses and mobilises greater support for implementing the African Union's Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy, which provides our continent with a useful framework for developing science, technology,

and innovation in Africa."

Since the dawn of democracy in South Africa, Nzimande said the country had made several commendable strides in its efforts to enhance the country's capabilities in science, technology, and innovation.

As a result of these investments, Nzimande said the country's share of global research output (0,98%) has increased and was making a difference in areas such as health innovation (HIV/Aids), developing rural livelihoods and international big science projects like the Square Kilometre Array in the Karoo – the world's largest radio telescope.

"However, this is far from our true potential," Nzimande added.

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, he said African scientists in South Africa first identified and sequenced the genome of a new and virulent SARS-CoV-2 variant, later named 501Y.V2.

"This pioneering work gave the global pandemic management community crucial time to implement measures to control its spread and develop new vaccines and therapies.



Minister of Science, Technology & Innovation, Dr Blade Nzimande, says research funding is critical for strengthening Africa's scientific capacity.

"This work was largely funded by

the Department of Science, Technology, and Innovation and based at public universities and Science Councils committed to 'open science' and 'science for public good'.

"As the Department of Science, Technology, and Innovation, all science, technology, and innovation interventions are aimed at supporting our country's apex development priorities, which the President articulated at the opening of Parliament in July this year.

These national priorities are:

- Inclusive growth and job creation;
- Reducing poverty and, tackling the high cost of living; and
- Build a capable, ethical, and developmental state."

In conclusion, Nzimande pledged to continue deepening strategic global partnerships focused on the African continent and the Global South, and guided by the country's international policy.

Celebrating 30 years of science

EDWIN NAIDU

In a world marked by rapid technological advancements, deepening inequalities, and complex global challenges, the role of international collaboration in scientific progress has never been more vital.

"One of the best decisions made by newly democratic South Africa in 1994 was to create a department dedicated to science, technology, arts, and culture. As this democracy matured, an even more insightful decision was adopted – a fully-fledged department of Science and Technology," said Dr Naledi Pandor at the launch of the SA Science Forum in Pretoria.

She said it was interesting to examine South Africa's beginnings as a democracy to understand its progress and failings.

Pandor noted that the development of science, technology, and innovation in South Africa has marked steady advances in palaeontology, astronomy, biotechnology, laser sci-

ence, and artificial intelligence.

"South Africa's science, technology, and innovation system has made commendable progress in the thirty years of democracy alongside immensely troubling and stubborn challenges."

At the 1995-96 date, she said the budget for the department was around 2,8 billion rands (approximately 800 million dollars). "The budget has more than doubled in the thirty years but has not reached nor exceeded the target of at least one per cent of GDP devoted to science and innovation."

Despite the inadequate funding, Pandor said South Africa has marked important areas of progress. "This is largely due to excellent research universities, science agencies, skilled scientists and a keen and bright youthful science population.

"Our challenges remain a worrying decline in resources and a growing wariness among young researchers about the viability of pursuing a full-time research career.

Sadly, the sector is also not immune to the impact of the current toxic geopolitical environment. South Africa's support for the struggle for sovereignty has resulted in some key research initiatives that rely on international funding, facing the threat of funds being withdrawn," she said.

"This is reportedly happening to universities that have decided not to pursue links with institutions in Israel that have links to the military actions in Palestine. The department needs to focus on the likely impact of such funds' withdrawal on institutions and researchers and support them in identifying alternative resources," Pandor added.

One of the most critical areas of success recently, Pandor said, was the work done by South African scientists in identifying a Covid-19 virus variant (Omicron), and thus alerting the globe early to this threat. "That discovery placed South African researchers and their collaborators at the apex of science excellence."



Science champion. Dr Naledi Pandor has held various high-level Cabinet positions in the South African government since the dawn of democracy

Galaxy Z Fold 6 puts learning in the palm of your hand

EDWIN NAIDU

The future of mobile phones is Artificial Intelligence (AI). Some new entry-level phones have AI features, but for the crème de la crème, look no further than the Samsung Galaxy Z Fold 6, which takes Galaxy AI to new frontiers.

If that sounds like something from Star Trek's television series under Captain James T Kirk, you're probably a tech dinosaur like me. The character, played by William Shatner, promised to boldly go where no one has before, and Samsung is certainly pushing the boundaries.

The Galaxy Z Fold 6 left me drooling. With its big screen, it is

almost a computer in the palm of one's hand. Performance and power are par for the course.

The phone has several features that may be beneficial for educational purposes, including:

- Note Assist feature which converts recorded files to text and generates summaries;
- Improved taskbar: Users can pin their favourite apps for quick access;
- Voice transcription: A feature in the recording app that may be useful for studying notes;
- AI-based writing: The phone can write emails using prompts for accuracy, style, and tone. It can also learn a user's writing style and improve itself over time.

Other features of the Galaxy Z Fold 6 include:

- Circle to Search: Users can circle an item on a menu and search results will appear.
 - Powerful gaming: The phone has a chipset that can transition from specs to a game on the unfolded screen.
- The Galaxy Z Fold 6 is made for multitasking, whether one is a teacher or a learner. The new taskbar has a layout like a PC, offering access to favourite and recent apps.
- This phone can take charge of one's life for good. Samsung's partnerships with Google and Microsoft take multitasking to the next level. Google apps, including Chrome and Gmail, now support drag-and-drop, allowing users to quickly copy

Teacher's corner

My favourite teacher made mathematics enjoyable

EDWIN NAIDU

Dr Rakeshnie Ramoutar-Prieschl, a former top achiever at Burnwood Secondary School in Clare Estate, Durban, is a Deputy Director General in the Department of Science and Innovation.

She attended Burnwood from 1990 to 1996, earning the Good Fellowship award in matric, and completed her formative years at Sydenham Primary.

Ramoutar-Prieschl is currently on secondment to the DSI from the University of Pretoria, where she is Head of Department: Research Capacity Development, responsible for the portfolio that includes: (i) grants management, (ii) early career training and mentorship, as well as driving (iii) strategic partnerships in support of staff doctoral candidates.

She is also a research associate in the Faculty of Humanities and holds several grants, including from the National Research Foundation, the Department of Higher Education and Training, and the US Embassy.

The mother of two has been the architect and driver of the University of Pretoria's annual Women in Science event, which celebrates the achievements and advancements made by women in the field. She has consistently championed opportunities, participated in dialogues about empowering women in science, and participated in countless webinars that have put South African and African sciences on the map.

Before joining the University, she led the Research Infrastructure portfolio for over 11 years at the National Research Foundation. During her tenure, Ramoutar-Prieschl advocated several policies, strategies and frameworks that have since provided the foundation for establishing, nurturing and sustaining various research platforms in the country.

Ramoutar-Prieschl also led Phase II of the Science Granting Council's Initiative, where she authored three manuals: (i) research and innovation excellence; (ii) research ethics; and (iii) digital grants management systems, which advocates for the safeguarding of intellectual property and know-how whilst complying with best practices in the said research areas.

Over the course of her career, Ramoutar-Prieschl has lectured, tutored, and mentored researchers and university staff at several African universities, spanning Botswana, Kenya, Ghana, and Malawi. She has also supported capacity develop-



Dr Rakeshnie Ramoutar-Prieschl was a top achiever at Burnwood Secondary School. She is pictured in Livingstone, Zambia, after a Science Granting Councils Initiative training workshop on ethics. Below, she receives an award from teacher Omar Essack. On the top right is Rakeshnie from Sydenham Primary School; below, she made it in a local newspaper.



ment needs at historically disadvantaged institutions in South Africa.

Ramoutar-Prieschl has also been part of the expert team identified by the African Academy of Sciences and the Association of Research Managers and Administration in the United Kingdom to lead Research & Innovation training in the International Research Management Development Programme across universities in Africa and the United Kingdom. In recognition of her work, she was awarded the 2022 SARIMA Excellence Award for making a distinguished contribution to the research management profession in Southern Africa.

Ramoutar-Prieschl has partic-

ipated in the United Nations Science Technology and Innovation forum on a subject that is very close to her heart: Building Structural Equity and Inclusion in Open Science Practices and is a strong advocate for the equitable, fair and inclusive access to information wherein she coined the concept: #UbuntuforOpenScience.

What was the name of your favourite teacher?

Mr Deena Pillay was my hero at Burnwood Secondary School, which I attended from 1990 to 1996.

How did Mr Pillay endear himself to you?

Certain individuals leave an indeli-



Rakeshnie Ramoutar, recipient of the Good Fellowship Award with her trophy.

situations, allowing us to see the subject's relevance and application beyond the classroom walls.

Has this influenced your choice of career?

Mr Pillay was more than just a teacher; he was a mentor who cared deeply for his students' growth. He took the time to understand our struggles and celebrated our achievements, big and small. His encouragement instilled confidence in us, nurturing a love for learning that extended far beyond mathematics. His belief in us motivated many to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Reflecting on my school years, I realise how fortunate I was to have Mr Pillay as a teacher. His influence shaped not only my understanding of mathematics but also my approach to challenges in life. He taught me that with dedication, hard work, and a little guidance, I could solve even the most complex problems.

In honouring Mr Pillay, I recognise the profound impact one teacher can have on countless lives. His legacy inspires me to strive for excellence, practice kindness, and, like him, to believe in the potential of others. Mr Pillay is more than just my favorite teacher; he is my hero, a beacon of inspiration, and a testament to the power of education.

Have you kept in touch with your favourite teacher?

I haven't had any contact with Mr Pillay since leaving school, but I once saw him at Sparkport Pharmacy in Overport. I did not recognise him at first, as he had shaved off his beard. However, when we talked, I told him I had finished studying for my master's and was in Cape Town at the time. He was so proud he hugged me. I never met him again, but I would love to find him and have a chat or coffee with him.

ble mark on the education journey, shaping our understanding and inspiring us to reach our potential. For me, that person was Mr Pillay. A man of remarkable dedication, he epitomised the perfect blend of strictness and kindness, transforming the landscape of mathematics for his students.

From the first day in his classroom, it was evident that Mr Pillay had high expectations. His rigorous approach demanded hard work and commitment but was never without purpose. He believed that every student had the potential to excel, urging us to push beyond our limits. His strictness was not a barrier; rather, it served as a pillar of support. With each challenge he presented, he taught us resilience and the value of perseverance.

What subjects did he teach you?

What truly set Mr Pillay apart was his passion for mathematics. He could uniquely break down complex concepts into manageable, engaging lessons. Through his innovative teaching methods, he made mathematics understandable and enjoyable. He would often relate mathematical concepts to real-life

Travel

Enjoy the spectacular glory of the Golden Gate National Park

SIMON NARE

The Creator must have been happy when he cast his eyes over the incredible beauty of the Golden Gate Highlands National Park in the eastern Free State. Geologists say the breathtaking landscape resulted from volcanic explosions millions of years ago. Still, I believe the Creator was in his element here.

The park's highlights and popular attractions include the vast, colourful sandstone formations that shine golden-yellow in the setting sun and give the park its name.

The first inhabitants of this area were the San. They lived in caves and under the many rock overhangs in the area, judging by the stone tools and rock paintings found at various places throughout the park. Farmers and trekkers arrived after the Basotho and European hunters arrived, and the San were forced out of the area.

The park boasts many animals but not the Big Five (lion, leopard, elephant, buffalo and rhino). "The Big Five prevent you from getting out of your car, which restricts your experience of being close to nature," says park manager Paddy Gordon. "We have many wild animals, but you can walk here because they are not dangerous. When you walk, you get absorbed into the Golden Gate experience."

The park is one of the last refuges of the rare Bearded Vulture and the rare Bald Ibis, which breed annually in Cathedral Cave. And there are ten antelope species – the Eland, Red Hartebeest, Black Wildebeest, Blesbok, Springbok, Mountain Reedbuck, Grey Rhebok, Grey Duiker, Steenbok and the threatened Oribi.

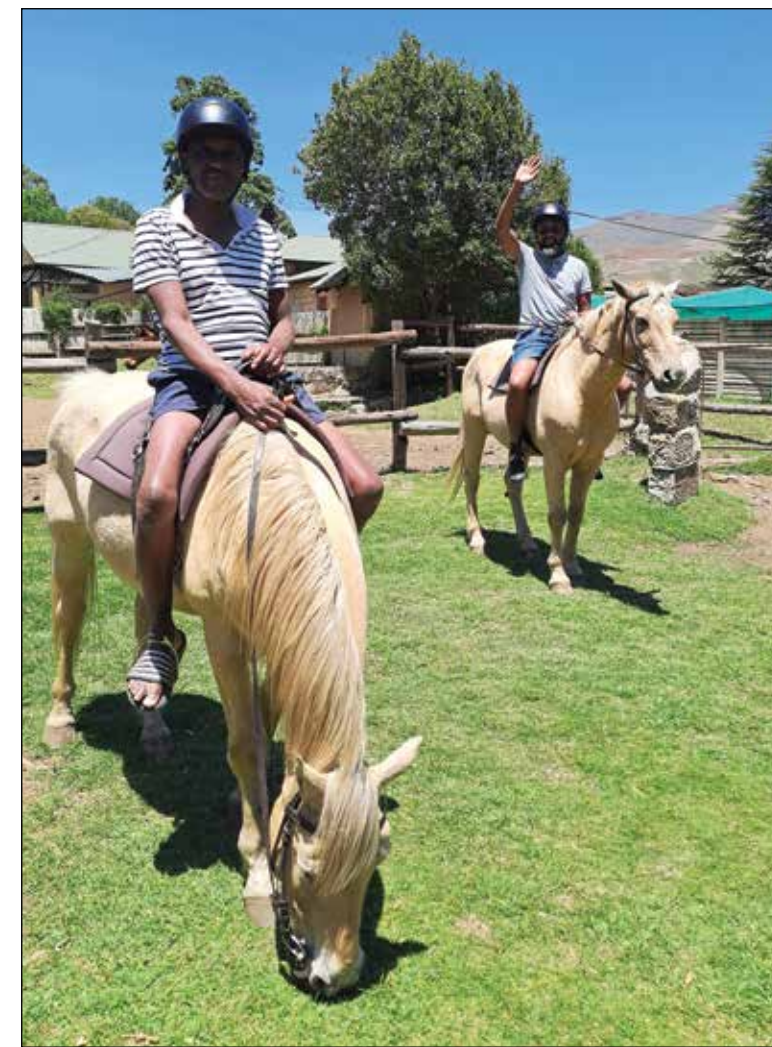
"Golden Gate has an amazing wellness feeling," says Gordon. "Many people drive through it to experience the beautiful environment, and the many visitors who walk in the park are surprised at how it boosts their wellness and leaves them feeling healed."

The tranquillity you feel and experience in the park, the trails, and the awe-inspiring beauty of the mountains and landscape draw you in. I have been here several times and discovered a new love for the place every time.

Gordon believes the history of dinosaurs in the area needs to be adequately told. The first ever fossilised Triassic dinosaur eggs were found in the park at Rooi Draai in 1973, and examples of fossilised dinosaur bones, roots, ferns, and



Spectacular views: The Golden Gate National Park gets its name from the sandstone formations that shine golden-yellow in the setting sun.



Lots to see and do: There are many fun activities in the park, from horseriding to zip lining, and learning about Basotho cultural traditions.

footprints can be found there. A museum is being built to tell and preserve the area's history and is expected to open in March 2025.

Visitors can also see some beautiful and rare indigenous flowers such as Watsonias, Fire Lilies and Red-Hot Pokers, and South Africa's national flower, the Protea. Among the many activities on offer at or near the park are archery,

fly fishing, golf, paintball, quad and motorbike trails, shooting, skiing, snowboarding, white water rafting and zip lining.

If you are looking for some cooling-off action after a long hike, take a dip in the Cathedral Cave pool, and to get there, you can go cowboy-style on horseback. It is an incredible experience that lets you get a fantastic view of the area from the

Highlands Mountain Retreat – a luxury camp home to eight log cabins – is the perfect getaway for visitors craving a secluded setting. The wooden cabins, tucked into the mountain-side, offer unbelievable vistas of the surrounding mountains.

The eastern Free State also boasts the Clarens Craft Beer Festival, a celebration of craft brewing with over 150 brands on offer, as well as live music and food. Tickets sell out quickly for this event, and pre-booking is essential.

Visiting the Basotho Cultural Village is a must when visiting the park. A tour takes you back to the 16th century and relates how the Basotho settled in the area and the neighbouring mountain kingdom of Lesotho.

If you're into nature and spirituality, there are the Sandstone Caves and Motouleng, also known as the Fertility Caves. Some people regard these as sacred sites, with traditional healers performing rituals there. They also provide an insight into the history of the Basotho people.

The Golden Gate Valley was one of the areas used as a route for the English and Boer armies during the Anglo-Boer War, and several historical sites in the park are linked to this period.

The caves and hollow kranzes of Gladstone and Vuurland, two old farms in the park, gave shelter to women and children who hid there for many weeks to escape the English concentration camps during the Anglo-Boer War.



Travel

A warm welcome to the varied pleasures of marvellous, magical Mauritius

EDWIN NAIDU

A working break is as good as a holiday, especially in paradise. However, enjoying oneself while on deadline with assignments can severely test one's multi-tasking skills.

The idyllic Indian Ocean island of Mauritius was my favourite stamping ground in 2015 when I undertook social media-related work with the agency dealing with the folk at the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority.

Nine years later, my travel fairy, Hermina Sennelo, got in touch to suggest that the island was calling out of the blue almost a decade later. My mantra is always to have my passport ready to travel when leave days are available.

And so it was cool to find myself back there recently, looking at value-for-money packages for South Africans. On a whistle-stop visit, I sampled three destinations, each with a different flavour and target market, but all offering something unique.

The Air Mauritius flight was a mere four hours, and I managed to write a column in that time, meaning there was one less task ahead. Customs was a breeze. The staff don't just portray a helpful image – they live it.

Service is one thing they do exceptionally well in Mauritius. Guest relations is an art. They welcome travellers with a smile, a drink and a refreshing, cold towel to spruce up after the flight. I have stayed in many places in South Africa, Africa and the world. They don't do welcomes as well as in Mauritius,

where they go the extra smile.

The four-star Ocean's Creek Hotel in northwest Mauritius, an hour-long drive from the airport, boasts spectacular views across welcoming sandy beaches and the famous Balaclava Bay. The enchanting Tombeau Bay and the impressive Pieter Both Mountain, the second highest in Mauritius, are nearby.

This 136-room hotel caters for families and conference delegates. In the spacious room overlooking the pool area, I found a notepad on the side table with the inscription: "You are exactly where you are meant to be." Wow! A buffet dinner with an array of meals made it a gastronomic welcome.

The all-inclusive hotel had a carnival atmosphere. A welcoming bar with a resident DJ was next to the inviting pool. Holidayers from India, South Africa and Europe, danced until 11pm nightly. The place was buzzing.

Ocean's Creek is co-owned by a Bollywood film star who once acted with the legendary Amitabh Bachchan. Unassuming and low-key, he likes to be treated like all guests whenever he visits.

The following day, we visited The Seven Coloured Earths, a geological formation and prominent tourist attraction in the Chamarel plain of the Rivière Noire District in southwestern Mauritius. The geopark focuses on connecting people with nature in an enjoyable, entertaining, and enlightening manner through geology, education and conservation.

Afterwards, we headed to Rhumerie de Chamarel to learn about the rum-making process, which our guide whizzed through faster



Twisting by the pool: Quirky C Mauritius offers a taste of difference



Travel fairy: Hermina Sennelo soaks up the sun in a catamaran



Cheers: Refreshing welcome drink at C Mauritius

than the Gautrain. On an empty stomach, one would have been tipsy. But there was a delicious lunch at Rhumerie de Chamarel, where I had tuna starter and fish as a main course. It left me wishing for a hammock.

We then headed back to Ocean Creek, where I tried Tiger Prawns, accompanied by crab soup, which reminded me of the taste of rus-som. This spicy tamarind-based soup is legendary among Indian families for relieving colds and flu.

The following day, we visited the Aapravasi Ghat ("The Immigration Depot"), a UNESCO World

Heritage Site in Port Louis. Mauritius was the first British colony to receive indentured or contracted labour from many countries. From 1849 to 1923, half a million Indian indentured labourers passed through the Aapravasi Ghat to be transported to plantations throughout the British Empire. The Immigration Depot is an important reference point in Mauritius's history and cultural identity.

Next, we strolled through the colourful Port-Louis Market and then headed to the Le Caudan Waterfront. That afternoon, we checked into the four-star LA Victoria, a

BeachComber hotel. We had a sumptuous room, views of the sea, and an Italian dinner next to the beach. The welcome was warm and welcoming as expected.


I ordered chicken and asked for it to be well done and spicy. Good food aside, the activities at LA Victoria include kayaking at Ile d'Ambres, followed by a splendid lunch at Le Château de Labourdonnais, and going on a catamaran the next day on the East Coast Croisieres Australes.

Up next was the quirky C Mauritius, our final destination. It has so much to write about, especially the vibrant host Catherine Barbe, who goes the extra mile to make guests' stays memorable: Sega dancing, kite-flying, and picnics on the beach are just some of the many highlights.

Air Mauritius operates flights to the island from Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town and travel agencies and the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority will have details of all-inclusive travel packages. <https://www.tourismauthority.mu>

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basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE

GRADE 12

MATHEMATICAL LITERACY P 1
FEBRUARY/MARCH 2018
MARKING GUIDELINES

MARKS: 150

SYMBOL	EXPLANATION
M	Method
MA	Method with accuracy
CA	Consistent accuracy
A	Accuracy
C	Conversion
S	Simplification
RT/RG	Reading from a table/graph/diagram
SF	Correct substitution in a formula
O	Opinion/Example/Definition/Explanation
R	Rounding off
NPR	No penalty rounding or omitting units
AO	Answer only, full marks

These marking guidelines consist of 12 pages.

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Ques	Solution	Explanation	Topic/L
1.1.1	$3\frac{1}{2}$ years ✓✓A OR Three and half a years ✓✓A OR 3,5 years ✓✓A	2A numerical period OR 2A period in words 3 years 6 months (only 1 mark)	M L1 (2)
1.1.2	Total Repayment Cost = R1 078,26 × 42 ✓M/A = 45 286,92 ✓CA	1MA multiply term by instalment 1CA Total cost From Q1.1.1.	F L1 (2)
1.1.3	Discount = R29 999,00 × 15% = R4 499,85 ✓A	1M calc. discount 1A saving	F L1 (2)
1.2.1	AD : CB = 10,9 : 9,45 ✓M = 218 : 189 ✓CA	1M ratio form 1CA simplified form Accept unit ratio (1: 0,87) OR (1,15 : 1)	MP L1 (2)
1.2.2	CD = 125,92m - (57,5 + 10,9 + 9,45) ✓M/A = 48,07m ✓CA	1M/A subtracting all lengths 1CA length	M L1 (2)
1.2.3	Radius = $\frac{4,73}{2}$ m ✓M = 2,365 m ✓A	1M dividing by 2 1A simplification NPR	M L1 (2)
1.2.4	Total Cost = R97,56/m × 57,5m ✓M/A = R5 609,70 ✓CA	1M/A multiply cost by correct distance 1CA simplification	F L1 (2)
1.3.1	C ✓✓A	2A city	D L1 (2)
1.3.2	Range = 8°C - (-7°C) ✓MA = 15°C ✓CA	1MA subtracting correct values 1CA temperature	D L1 (2)

Ques	Solution	Explanation	Topic/L
1.3.3 (a)	B ✓✓A	2A city	P L1 (2)
1.3.3 (b)	Likely OR less likely ✓✓A	2A correct words	P L1 (2)
1.4.1	Bar graph ✓✓A OR Single bar graph. ✓✓A OR Vertical bar graph ✓✓A OR Column graph ✓✓A	2A correct type	D L1 (2)
1.4.2	Three hundred and sixty one thousand nine hundred and forty eight. ✓✓A	2A number in words	M L1 (2)
1.4.3	Q5 ✓✓A	2A correct question	D L1 (2)
1.4.4	Average time per mark = $\frac{180}{150}$ min ✓MA = 1,2 min ✓CA Average time per mark = $\frac{OR}{150}$ ✓MA = 0,02 × 60 min = 1,2 min ✓CA OR 150 marks : 180 min ✓MA 1mark : 1,2 min ✓CA	1MA numerator and denominator 1CA simplification OR 1MA numerator and denominator 1CA simplification OR 1MA correct ratio 1CA simplification	D L1 (2)

Ques	Solution	Explanation	Topic/L
2.1.1	Stop order: an instruction to an employer or bank to pay / divert monthly or transfer regularly a certain amount to a person or an account. ✓✓ O OR Stop order: an instruction that an employee (individual) issue to the employer (bank) to make a series of future dated regular deductions ✓✓ O OR Stop order: Future dated regular monthly deductions ✓✓ O	2O explanation	F L1 (2)
2.1.2	Difference = R940 465,89 - R536 523,25 ✓M/A = R403 942,64 ✓C/A	1M/A subtraction of correct value 1CA simplification AO	F L1 (2)
2.1.3	Number of years (2017 - 2029) = 12 ✓M/A Number of months in 12 years = 12 × 12 = 144 ✓C Number of months from 10 May to 1 November = 6 ✓A Total number of contributions = 144 + 6 = 150 ✓CA	1M/A calculating years 1C converting years to months 1A additional months 1CA total number of months. AO	F L2 (4)
2.1.4	Total contribution value ✓M/A = (5 × 12) × R740,22 ✓RT = R44 413,20 ✓CA	1M/A multiplying (5 and 12) 1RT reading monthly contribution 1CA total contribution AO NPR	F L2 (3)
2.1.5	a greater / an increased/ a higher / more/ bigger/ larger/ inflated / better ✓✓A	2A correct missing words	F L1 (2)

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Ques	Solution	Explanation	Topic/L
2.1.6	$R740,22 + R740,22 \times 8,5\%$ $= R740,22 + R62,9187$ $= R803,14$ <p>OR</p> $R740,22 \times 108,5\%$ $= R803,14$ <p>OR</p> $740,22 \times 8,5\% = 62,9187$ $\therefore 803,14 - 62,9187 = 740,22$	IMA percentage IM adding two values OR IM multiplying IMA 108,5% OR IMA percentage IM subtracting values	F L1 (2)
2.2.1	$\text{Hourly overtime rate} = R17,76 \times \frac{1}{3}$ $= R23,68$	IMA hours ICA rate AO	F L1 (2)
2.2.2	$2017 \text{ Sunday wage rate} = 19,39 \times 150\%$ $= R29,09$ $\text{Total wage} = 3 \times 9 \times R29,09$ $= R785,43$ <p>OR</p> $2016 \text{ Sunday wage rate} = R17,90 \times 150\%$ $= R26,85$ $\text{Total wage} = 3 \times 9 \times R26,85$ $= R724,95$	IMA increasing by 150% IA Sunday hourly rate IA hours per day IM multiplying ICA wage OR IMA increasing by 150% IA Sunday hourly rate IA hours per day IM multiplying ICA wage NPR	F L2 (5)

Ques	Solution	Explanation	Topic/L
2.2.3 (a)	$\% \text{ increase} = \frac{17,76 - 16,40}{16,40} \times 100\%$ $= 8,29268\%$ $\approx 8,3\%$ <p>OR</p> $\% \text{ increase} = \frac{19,39 - 17,90}{17,90} \times 100\%$ $= 8,324\%$ $\approx 8,3\%$ <p>OR</p> $R16,40 \times 1,083 = R17,76$ <p>OR</p> $R17,90 \times 1,083 = R19,39$ <p>OR</p> $R17,76 \div 1,083 = R16,40$ <p>OR</p> $R19,39 \div 1,083 = R17,90$	IM percentage IA correct values used OR IM percentage IA correct values used OR IM percentage IA correct values used OR IM percentage IA correct values used OR IM percentage IA correct values used	F L1 (2)
2.2.3 (b)	$A \times 108,3\% = 21,93$ $A = \frac{21,93}{108,3\%}$ $= R20,25$ <p>OR</p> $A = \frac{21,93}{1,083}$ $= R20,25$	IRT reading values IM dividing by 108,3% ICA amount OR IRT reading values IM dividing by 108,3% ICA amount AO	F L2 (3)

Ques	Solution	Explanation	Topic/L
2.2.4	$\text{Total Weekly Wage} = (6 \times 9 \times R17,76) + (9 \times 150\% \times R17,76)$ $= R959,04 + R239,76$ $= R1 198,80$ <p>OR</p> $\text{Total weekly wage} = (6 \times 9 \times R16,40) + (9 \times 150\% \times R16,40)$ $= R1 107,00$	IRT reading value from the table IMA multiply with no. of days and hours ICA simplification OR IRT reading value from the table IMA multiply with no. of days and hours ICA simplification	F L2 (3)
2.3	$\text{Total Income for the day} = 7 \times R70 + 35 \times R50 + 4 \times R75$ $= R490 + R1 750 + R300$ $= R2 540$ <p>OR</p> $\text{Income from bakkies} = 7 \times R70 = R490$ $\text{Income from Cars} = 35 \times R50 = R1 750$ $\text{Income from minibus} = 4 \times R75 = R300$ $\text{Total Income} = R2 540$	2RT correct values IM multiply price by vehicle type ICA total income OR IA bakkies IA cars IA minibus ICA total income AO	F L1 (4)

Ques	Solution	Explanation	Topic/L
2.4.1	Employer provides people job/work for pay OR Employer is the company/individual who offers work opportunities for pay. OR Employer owner of the company	2O explanation	F L1 (2)
2.4.2	Get a few months reduced income after termination of work. OR To give employee a short-term financial relief should he/she become unemployed . OR Make provision for some income when a person becomes unemployed or retrenched or retired from work.	2O reason	F L1 (2)
2.4.3 (a)	$B = R6 272,16 - (R1 184,40 + R350,88)$ $= R4 736,88$ <p>OR</p> $B = 9 \times 6 \times 4 \times 21,93$ $= R4 736,88$	IRT amounts IM subtracting ICA value of B OR IRT amounts IM multiplying all values ICA value of B Accept B = (R5 131,62 If 26 days used)	F L1 (3)
2.4.3 (b)	$1\% \text{ of gross salary} = R6 272,16 - R6 209,44$ $= R62,72$ $\text{Total UIF amount} = 2 \times R62,72$ $= R125,44$ <p>OR</p> $\text{Total UIF amount} = 2 \times (1\% \text{ of } R6 272,16)$ $= 2 \times R62,7216$ $= R125,44$ <p>OR</p> $\text{Total UIF amount} = 2\% \text{ of } R6 272,16$ $= R125,44$	IMA subtracting correct values IA simplification ICA total amount payable OR IA calculating 1% IMA 2 contributions ICA amount OR 2MA Calculating 2% of salary ICA amount AO	F L2 (3)

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QUESTION 3 [25 MARKS]			
Ques	Solution	Explanation	Topic/L
3.1.1	$\sqrt{RT} \text{ 6 months to 2 years. OR } (\frac{1}{2} \text{ year to 2 years})$	2RT age Accept 23-24 months	M L1 (2)
3.1.2	8 kg	2RT mass/weight	M L1 (2)
3.1.3	12 months to 15 months	2RT (one age in this range)	M L1 (2)
3.1.4	February	2A correct month	M L1 (2)
3.1.5	$BMI = \frac{\text{weight (in kg)}}{(\text{height in m})^2}$ $19,5 \text{ kg/m}^2 = \frac{11,2}{(\text{height in m})^2}$ $\text{Height} = \sqrt{\frac{11,2}{19,5}}$ $= 0,758 \text{ m}$	1SF correct values IM new subject IM finding sq. root ICA simplification AO	M L2 (4)
3.2.1	$\text{Distance} = \frac{55 \text{ litre} \times 100 \text{ km}}{7,6 \text{ litre}}$ $= 723,68$ $\approx 724 \text{ km}$	IMA multiply by 100 IMA divide by 7,6 1R distance AO	M L2 (3)
3.2.2	$\text{Average speed} = \frac{189}{0,1845} = \frac{189}{1,75}$ $= 108 \text{ km/h}$	IC to hours 1SF correct values ICA Average speed AO	M L2 (3)
3.3.1	$\text{Volume} = 53,34 \text{ cm} \times 17,78 \text{ cm} \times 42,32 \text{ cm}$ $= 40 135,66 \text{ cm}^3$ $= \frac{40 135,66}{1000} \text{ litres}$ $= 40 \text{ litres}$	1SF correct substitution ICA volume IMA dividing by 1 000 1R volume in litres	M L3 (4)
3.3.2	$P(w) = \frac{3}{12} \text{ or } \frac{12}{48}$ $= 0,25$	1A numerator 1A denominator ICA decimal AO	P L2 (3)

QUESTION 4 [19 MARKS]			
Ques	Solution	Explanation	Topic/L
4.1.1	$N10 \text{ and } N2$	1A N10 1A N2	MP L1 (2)
4.1.2	Mountain Zebra N.P	2RT correct name	MP L1 (2)
4.1.3	Kirkwood	2A correct hometown	MP L2 (2)
4.1.4	$\text{Distance} = 25 \text{ km} + (207 \text{ km} - 22 \text{ km}) + 24 \text{ km}$ $= 234 \text{ km}$ <p>OR</p> $\text{Distance} = 24 \text{ km} + (380 \text{ km} - 195 \text{ km}) + 25 \text{ km}$ $= 234 \text{ km}$	IRT correct distances IM adding ICA difference OR IRT correct distances IM adding ICA difference AO	MP L2 (3)
4.2.1	3750 mm	2A distance	MP L1 (2)
4.2.2	$\text{Total exterior length of western wall} = 3 550 \text{ mm} + 3750 \text{ mm}$ $= 7 300 \text{ mm}$ $= 7,3 \text{ m}$ <p>OR</p> $\text{Total exterior length of western wall} = 3,55 \text{ m} + 1,7 \text{ m} + 2,05 \text{ m}$ $= 7,3 \text{ m}$	1A adding 3 correct distances 1C conversion to m OR 1A adding correct distances of Eastern wall (opp. Side //) 1C conversion to m AO	MP L1 (2)
4.2.3	Living room	2A (Passage and/or Kitchen maximum 1 mark)	MP L1 (2)
4.2.4	Bedroom 2	2A room	MP L1 (2)
4.2.5	Wash basin/sink/water basin OR Shower OR Cupboard	2A any item	MP L1 (2)

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QUESTION 5 [32 MARKS]			
Ques	Solution	Explanation	Topic/L
5.1.1	Numerical	2A answer	D L1 (2)
5.1.2	50%	2A answer	D L1 (2)
5.1.3	$\text{Range} = \text{Maximum} - \text{minimum}$ $34 = 90 - F$ $F = 90 - 34$ $= 56$	IM range concept (can be implied) IRT correct values ICA simplification AO	D L2 (3)
5.1.4	$\text{Median} \% = \frac{67 + 69}{2}$ $= 68$	IM concept of median IA median AO	D L2 (2)
5.1.5	$\text{Inter-quartile range} = Q_3 - Q_1$ $= 70 - 20$ $= 50$	IM IQR concept (implied) IRT correct values ICA simplification AO	D L2 (3)
5.1.6	66	2A mode	D L1 (2)
5.1.7	$\text{Mean} = \frac{\text{sum of the marks}}{\text{total number of learners}}$ $70 = \frac{1741 + H}{26}$ $1 820 = 1 741 + H$ $H = 79$	IMA mean concept (implied) IA adding values ICA value of H AO	D L3 (3)
5.1.8	$P_{(\text{equal marks})} = \frac{13}{26}$ $= \frac{1}{2}$	1A numerator 1A denominator ICA simplification AO	P L3 (3)

Ques	Solution	Explanation	Topic/L
5.2.1	$Q = 288 912 + 393 954 + 94 552 + 192 933 + 650 033 + 299 994 + 575 371 + 312 273 + 372 090$ $= 3 180 118$ <p>OR</p> $Q = 15 353 036 - 12 172 919 = 3 180 118$	IMA adding all Non-literate adults ICA Simplification OR IMA subtracting Literate from Total ICA simplification AO	D L1 (2)
5.2.2	$\% \text{ literate} = \frac{12 172 919}{15 353 036} \times 100$ $\approx 79,3$ <p>OR</p> $\% \text{ literate} = 100 - \left(\frac{3 180 118}{15 353 036} \times 100 \right)$ $\approx 100 - 20,71$ $\approx 79,3$	IRT numerator and denominator IM multiply by 100 ICA answer OR IRT numerator and denominator IM multiply by 100 ICA answer NPR	D L2 (3)
5.2.3	Non Literate: Literacy $= 650 033 : 1 956 497$ $= \frac{650 033}{650 033} : \frac{1 956 497}{650 033}$ $= 1 : 3,009842577$ $\approx 1 : 3 \text{ or } 1 : 3,01 \text{ or } 1 : 3,0099$	IRT both values IMA ratio in correct order CA unit ratio NPR	D L2 (3)
5.2.4	$244 282; 609 029; 760 029; 784 347; 922 171; 1 120 567; 1 762 494; 1 956 497; 4 013 463$	2MA arranging (Descending 1 Mark; Omitting 1 value 1 mark)	D L1 (2)
5.2.5	Northern Cape (NC)	2A correct province	D L1 (2)

TOTAL: 150

Sports

A phenomenal
year for SA
sports

SUMAYYA KHAN

Sport is a unifying force, transcending race, class, and nationality boundaries. Athletes' achievements on the global stage serve as a powerful reminder of our shared humanity. From the crowd's roar in a packed stadium to the collective pride felt when a national team and individual athletes triumph, sport uniquely brings people together.

It fosters a sense of belonging and community, promoting social cohesion in ways few other activities can. As we celebrate these moments of triumph, we also celebrate the power of sport to bridge divides and build a more inclusive society.

2024 has been a phenomenal year for SA sports, filled with remarkable achievements and memorable moments. Some of the highlights of the major codes of sport and Team South Africa's performance at the Olympic and Paralympic Games bear testimony that we are indeed a winning nation.

Olympics and Paralympics: SA won six medals at the Paris 2024 Olympics and six at the Paralympics, showcasing the talent and dedication of our athletes. Tatjana Smith, SA's most decorated swimmer, won gold in the 100-metre breaststroke and silver in the 200-metre breaststroke. Other outstanding performances came from athletes Akani Simbine and Bayanda Walaza, whose performance in the 4x100m relay earned the team a silver medal with a time of 37.57 seconds, setting a new African record.

Rugby: The Springboks won the Rugby Championship, while the women's team made their Olympic debut and won the Rugby Africa Women's Sevens title.

Football: Bafana Bafana came third at the Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) and won a bronze medal. Ronwen Williams was named Goalkeeper of the Tournament and earned recognition as one of the world's top goalkeepers.

Cricket: The men's and women's teams reached the finals of their respective ICC T20 World Cup matches. Kagiso Rabada became the fastest bowler to reach 300 Test wickets, achieving this milestone in just 11,817 balls.

Netball: The Spar Proteas re-



Sumayya Khan, former DDG of the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, says sport fosters a sense of belonging and community and promotes social cohesion.

cently faced off against the Malawi Queens in a thrilling netball series in Johannesburg. SA showcased their skill and teamwork with standout performances.

Athletics: Bayanda Walaza, 18, won a silver medal as part of SA's 4x100-metre relay team at the 2024 Paris Olympics. He also clinched gold in both the 100 metres and 200 metres at the 2024 World Athletics U20 Championships in Lima, Peru.

Swimming: Chad le Clos became the most decorated swimmer at the Swimming World Cup, capping off an iconic haul of one gold, two silver and one bronze.

These outstanding athletes started their journey at schools offering physical education and sports. Grassroots programmes and community sports initiatives are vital in identifying and nurturing talent from a young age, ensuring a steady pipeline of athletes who can compete at higher levels.

Mass participation and development in sports are crucial for fostering a healthy and active society. We can promote physical fitness, mental well-being, and social cohesion by encouraging people of all ages and backgrounds to engage in physical activities.

In September 2024, Sports Minister Gayton McKenzie and Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube signed a Memorandum of Understanding to formalise the relationship, identify the partners and stakeholders, and articulate the roles and responsibilities in providing access to sports programmes in schools nationwide.



Heroine: Tatjana Smith, who retired from competitive swimming this year, is a two-time Olympic champion and the most decorated South African Olympian



Investing in tomorrow's stars: Sports Minister Gayton Mackenzie and Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube

School sports is the bedrock of sports development in SA and the platform to transform it from a dominant minority representation to a majority inclusive reality. The Eminent Persons Group report highlights several critical issues and areas for improvement in our school sports system. According to the report, less than 10% of the country's 25,000 schools participate in sports, which is a significant concern.

The report emphasises the need for increased collaboration between the departments of sport and basic

education to address these challenges. The lack of resources and opportunities in underprivileged areas makes it difficult for young talent to be nurtured properly.

The report calls for a more inclusive and equitable approach to ensure all learners can participate and excel.

Physical education and sports must be offered in every school to ensure learners develop skills early. Sports federations must identify the talent, take custody of young athletes, and develop and prepare them for their

rightful places in the national, continental, and Olympic teams.

The commitment from Minister MacKenzie to provide sports equipment and attire worth R67 million, the adoption of regular participation guidelines to promote school sports leagues at a local level, and the hosting of school sports activities are positive steps. However, they must be supported by an enabling environment of provision of infrastructure, access to opportunity, and commitment from all role-players.

Minister Mackenzie has articulated his efforts to aggressively engage the private sector contribution to sports development and lobby for tax incentives for those contributing to sports.

In a speech at the National Sports Indaba in 2011, Gert Oosthuizen MP, then the Deputy Minister of Sport and Recreation, stated: "No country can expect to achieve and sustain success at an elite level without a strong participation base in the community, as that is the beginning for every champion."

• **Sports administrator Sumayya Khan is a former Deputy Director General in the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture.**