

STUDENT FUNDING:

Manamela places troubled NSFAS under administration

Page 4



TEACHER'S CORNER:

Geraldine Fraser-Moloketi: 'How my favourite teacher awakened my social consciousness'

Page 13



HIGHER EDUCATION:

UNISA makes history as the first African university to own an airport

Page 18



INSIDE EDUCATION

Inspiring Minds



Scan to subscribe to our digital newsletter

APRIL 2026

www.insideeducation.co.za

QUARTERLY EDITION

Mother-tongue lessons a 'game changer' for SA schools

PAGES 2 & 3



Impressed: Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube says the programme has already been rolled out to 11,948 schools across the country. Photo: Eddie Mtsweni

Unlock your digital future with TelkomLearn!

Are you considering a career in the ICT sector or looking to upskill yourself?

The demand for digital skills is soaring, and TelkomLearn has got you covered with a wide range of free courses.



TelkomLEARN

Visit www.telkomlearn.co.za and start your journey today!

Telkom

Education News

Gwarube hails progress of Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education rollout despite challenges

SIMON NARE

Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube is impressed with the pace of the roll-out of the Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education programme since its implementation and believes the first nationally comparable assessment dataset for Grade 4 mathematics and natural sciences in November 2025 will provide credible impact evidence.

The minister said data analytics with provincial education departments will be used to reinforce the measurable impact of language on learner performance using actual system data, and that the assessment team will present analytics lessons learnt.

“The implementation has progressed well since the 2025 rollout,” Gwarube said. “The Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education (MTbBE) programme has shifted decisively from policy advocacy to measurable system execution.

“It achieved national-scale implementation at Grade 4 in 2025, with credible bilingual assessment evidence secured and language infrastructure established. There is also strengthened inter-branch governance and integration into provincial planning cycles for 2026.”

Gwarube said the programme has so far been rolled out to 11,948



On track: Basic Education Minister Siviwe Gwarube says “the MTbBE programme has shifted decisively from policy advocacy to measurable system execution”. Photo: Eddie Mtsweni

schools across the country, which wrote formal assessments for MTbBE in November 2025.

Focusing on language use, the programme is seen as a way to improve the pass rate and quality of education.

It is also viewed as a game changer that levels the playing field for African languages, as English and Afrikaans have historically had an advantage.

The programme uses a bilingual approach where learners use their home language for teaching, after research showed learners understand complex subjects better when taught in their mother tongue, especially in the early grades.

The department, however, says this should not be seen as a focus on one language but rather an intentional focus on using the language resources that children bring from home to school as a basis to learn while acquiring other languages.

When announcing the concept, the department said: “This is the distinct difference between mother tongue education and Mother Tongue-based Bilingual Education. The aim is bilingualism. Mother tongue education is not a silver bullet; it is not magic nor automatic. For MTbBE to succeed, it needs deliberate, conscious and consistent support. It is perceived as an effort to extend the use of African official languages as languages of teaching, learning and assessment beyond Grade 3.

The first roll-out was for Grade 4 in November 2025, and each year an additional grade will be added in primary school, targeting mathematics,

natural sciences and technology in the first phase.

Gwarube said some of the teething problems experienced during implementation included learning and teaching support materials constraints, especially affecting rural and no-connectivity schools. This was due to the electronic nature of most MTbBE materials, and the minister said this is a challenge that must be overcome, particularly in a constrained fiscal environment.

Other challenges include funding gaps for terminology development for Grade 5 to 7 expansion in 2026 and 2028, as well as unfunded PanSALB verification, which continues to pose difficulties.

The minister believes the programme will improve foundational learning outcomes, and while reports are not yet explicit, the attitude of teachers and learners towards the programme is promising.

The minister said a workshop on teacher training held in February, focusing on meaning-centred reading and morphological awareness, indicated strong teacher enthusiasm for the programme.

“The shift from phonics-only models to integrated literacy instruction, especially in rural areas, suggests growing acceptance among educators,” she said.

Gwarube believes the system is

here to stay and will transform the education system.

“The system is positioned for long-term sustainability and systemic reform spanning Early Childhood Development through to Grade 7, but this depends on key enablers such as dedicated fiscal resourcing, resolution of LTSM [Learning and Teaching Support Material] access constraints, and continued executive leadership to integrate efforts across branches.

“MTbBE has been implemented in 11,948 schools nationally at Grade 4 during 2025. Provincial alignment and school readiness engagements have ensured full provincial coverage, with differentiated operational plans and roadmaps for 2026 and beyond.”

Gwarube denied there was a 70% STEM target for 2026.

“However, given the establishment of terminology for mathematics, natural sciences and technology that is standardised and verified, as well as the first bilingual assessment dataset, progress toward STEM rollout is underway. This might be considered too ambitious, but supported by strong foundational infrastructure, we have reason to be ambitious,” she said.

The minister said as part of a broader strategic reorientation towards strengthening the foundations of learning, the ministry was confident that MTbBE will strengthen foundational learning and learner comprehension.

She said the bilingual assessment evidence, strengthened language infrastructure and data analytics will show the impact of language on learner performance support.

“The bilingual approach is framed as a systemic reform critical for equitable learning outcomes and long-term system transformation, implying it is necessary despite past challenges,” she said.

On whether the department has enough trained teachers to see the programme through, Gwarube said the report from the February facilitation does not explicitly state whether there are sufficient teachers nationwide.

“This is an HR/human capital matter and norms. At the provincial education department level there are vacancies for subject advisors specific to mathematics and natural sciences. The ongoing training efforts and institutionalisation processes suggest capacity is being built for MTbBE and MTbRL (literacy wing/foundation), but full equipping of all teachers remains an institutional priority and challenge,” she said.

CREDITS

Publisher:

- Matuma Letsoalo

Acting Editor-in-Chief:

- Charles Molele

Contributing Editor:

- Thebe Mabanga

News Editor:

- Desiree Erasmus

Marketing Manager:

- Dineo Bendile

Special Projects Manager:

- Faith Murumbi

Sales Executives:

- Mfiseni Khumalo
- Linda Mahlophe
- Minenhle Masondiya
- Thembisile Mlangeni

- Faith Sono
- Kyleen Ostrich
- Belle Petersen

Acting Sales Manager and Supplements Head:

- Lance Petersen

Contributors:

- Johnathan Paoli
- Simon Nare
- Thapelo Molefe
- Xolisa Phillip

Photographer:

- Eddie Mtsweni

Subeditor:

- Richard Gibbs

Layout:

- Mziwamangwani Ndabana

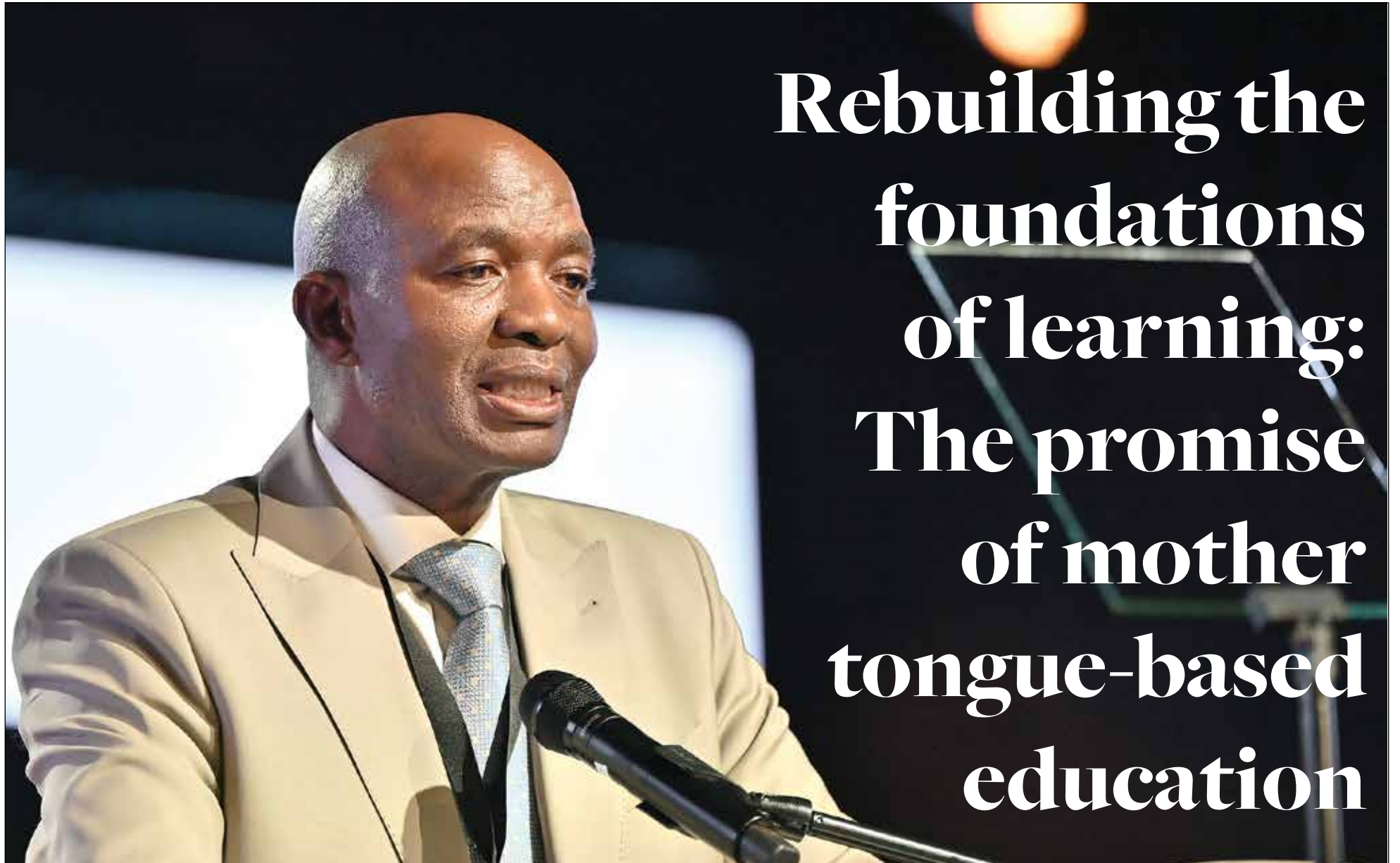
📧 @Inside_Edu

☎ +27 (011) 312 2206

📱 Inside Education

✉ info@insideeducation.co.za

DG's Corner



Rebuilding the foundations of learning: The promise of mother tongue-based education

Mathanzima Mveli, the Basic Education Director-General, says the introduction of Mother Tongue-based Bilingual Education "signals a move from compliance-driven learning to cognitively active engagement". Photo: Eddie Mtsweni

MATHANZIMA MWELI

The abrupt transition from mother tongue instruction in Grade 3 to English-dominant learning in Grade 4 has long been associated with declining literacy and numeracy outcomes in South Africa.

In 2025, the Department of Basic Education implemented Mother Tongue-based Bilingual Education (MTbBE) in 11,948 Quintile 1–3 schools across all nine provinces, introducing an 80% mother tongue and 20% English instructional model for Grade 4 mathematics and natural sciences.

This shift is not simply a technical adjustment in pedagogy; it is a direct intervention into one of the most enduring structural weaknesses in the South African education system. Early signals from classrooms suggest improved learner engagement, stronger conceptual understanding, and positive shifts in formative assessments, raising a more provocative question: has the system been solving the wrong problem all along?

Reversing the Grade 4 language shock: challenging a deeply entrenched assumption

For years, the narrative around South Africa's education crisis has been dominated by familiar explanations: teacher quality, infrastructure deficits, and curriculum coverage. While these factors matter, they have also served as convenient proxies, al-

lowing the system to avoid confronting a more uncomfortable truth: the way language is structured within schooling may itself be producing failure.

The Grade 4 transition is the clearest expression of this. At precisely the moment when learners are expected to engage with more abstract concepts, the system withdraws the very tool that made earlier learning possible — their primary language — and replaces it with one that many do not yet command. This is not a neutral shift. It is a cognitive rupture disguised as progression.

The illusion of early English advantage

The dominance of English as the preferred medium of instruction has long been justified by a powerful but poorly interrogated assumption: that earlier exposure leads to better outcomes. In policy discourse and public perception alike, English is treated as both a skill and a shortcut, a gateway to opportunity that must be accessed as early as possible. But what if this assumption is fundamentally flawed?

What if early immersion in a language learners do not yet understand does not accelerate learning but distorts it? What if it produces the illusion of participation — learners copying, repeating, and complying — without the substance of comprehension?

MTbBE disrupts this assumption. Maintaining 80% mother-tongue instruction and introducing English gradually suggests that the problem has never been insufficient English

exposure but rather premature linguistic substitution. In doing so, it challenges a deeply held belief: that access to English must come at the expense of understanding.

What the classroom is already telling us

The most compelling evidence for this shift is not theoretical; it is emerging from classrooms themselves.

Teachers are reporting something that standardised metrics often fail to capture: learners are more willing to speak, to question, and to attempt. Participation is no longer limited to a small group of linguistically confident learners; it is becoming more broadly distributed across the classroom.

In mathematics and natural sciences, this shift is particularly visible. Learners are not only arriving at answers; they are explaining them. They are engaging with concepts rather than memorising procedures. This distinction matters. It signals a move from compliance-driven learning to cognitively active engagement.

School-based assessments are beginning to reflect this change, with early indications of improved performance where the model is implemented effectively. While national results are still pending, the directional trend is difficult to ignore.

Language, power, and what counts as knowledge

At its core, the debate about mother tongue instruction is not only about pedagogy; it is about power.

English has long functioned as a gatekeeper in South African education, not simply as a language, but as a marker of legitimacy. To know in English is often to be recognised as knowing at all. This has created a hierarchy in which other languages are seen as transitional, informal, or insufficient for serious academic work.

MTbBE unsettles this hierarchy. By enabling learners to engage with mathematics and science in Sepedi, Sesotho, isiXhosa, isiZulu, and other official languages, it implicitly asserts that these languages are not merely vehicles of communication but vehicles of thought.

This position aligns with global advocacy led by UNESCO, which has consistently argued for the centrality of mother tongue instruction in equitable education systems. But in South Africa, the implications are sharper. To centre African languages in the classroom is to challenge historical patterns of exclusion that have shaped whose knowledge counts and whose does not.

The real risk: not change, but inertia

Critics of mother tongue-based education often raise concerns about long-term English proficiency and global competitiveness. These concerns cannot be dismissed, but they must be interrogated.

There is little evidence that the current model of early and abrupt transition to English has delivered either strong English proficiency or strong

academic outcomes at scale. If anything, it has produced generations of learners who struggle in both domains.

The greater risk, then, is not that MTbBE will fail but that the system will retreat from it too soon and that early gains will be dismissed as inconclusive. That ideological resistance will outweigh empirical evidence.

A system at a crossroads

What MTbBE has done, perhaps unintentionally, is expose a deeper question: is the South African education system willing to realign itself with how children actually learn, or will it continue to prioritise how it believes they should learn?

The early signs suggest that when learners are taught in a language they understand, they do better not marginally, but meaningfully. They engage more. They think more clearly. They participate more fully.

This should not be a controversial finding. And yet, in the context of South Africa's linguistic history, it is.

If MTbBE is sustained, it has the potential to do more than improve test scores. It could recalibrate the relationship between language, knowledge, and opportunity in the system. It could turn the Grade 4 transition from a point of collapse into a point of continuity.

The question is whether the system is prepared to follow the evidence even when it challenges long-standing assumptions.

Mathanzima Mveli is the Basic Education Director-General.

Education News



Restoring confidence: Higher Education and Training Minister Buti Manamela says the government is confident that the newly appointed administrator of NSFAS, Prof Hlengani Mathebula, will stabilise the troubled institution. Photo: Eddie Mtsweni

Manamela places troubled NSFAS under administration

JOHNATHAN PAOLI

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has been placed under administration following the resignation of two board members, including acting chairperson Mugwena Maluleke.

The student funding agency has been grappling with governance instability, audit failures and disruptions to funding processes affecting thousands of beneficiaries.

NSFAS has also operated without a permanent chief executive for more than 30 months, a vacuum widely cited as a key factor behind tensions between the board and the minister over the appointment of a permanent CEO.

Higher Education and Training Minister Buti Manamela announced the appointment of Professor Hlengani Mathebula as administrator, in a move he said was aimed at restoring stability at the embattled scheme.

“This decision was not taken lightly. It follows a long process of engagement, legal assessment, governance intervention and consideration of alternatives,” Manamela said.

“We took this step because the government cannot ignore potential legal irregularities in the constitution of a statutory body entrusted with billions of rand in public funds and the futures of millions of students.”

Manamela outlined a series of governance and operational failures that led to the intervention, including a disclaimer audit outcome for the 2024/25 financial year, material irregularities flagged by the Auditor-General, and persistent weaknesses in internal controls.

A March directive from the minister highlighted “serious data integrity concerns”, unresolved student appeals due to system deficiencies, delays in ICT modernisation, and student accommodation failures “affecting student dignity and safety”.

“The real question became this: was NSFAS, as an institution, functioning effectively, sustainably and credibly in the interests of students and the country?” he said.

He said in light of the increasing instability within the board, each remaining board member was written to individually and afforded an opportunity to give their take on the challenges of the institution, possible alternatives and whether intervention was necessary.

In addition, he said the department also considered possible alternatives to placing NSFAS under administration.

These included filling vacancies, appointing further interim leadership, continued directives, intensified departmental oversight and allowing more time for governance processes.

“Following the resignation of the In-

terim Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, the governance situation deteriorated further,” said Manamela.

“At that stage, I initiated a formal process in terms of section 17A of the NSFAS Act. Each remaining Board member was written to individually and afforded an opportunity to make representations regarding the governance position of the institution, possible alternatives, and whether intervention was necessary. Those representations were considered carefully.”

But, the minister said no satisfactory alternative to administration was found.

“Ultimately, however, I was not satisfied that the ordinary governance arrangements were capable of adequately stabilising the institution within the urgency and seriousness of the challenges confronting NSFAS,” he said.

“I was also not satisfied that continued Board-led governance, in the prevailing circumstances, would provide the level of assurance required to restore institutional stability, protect students and safeguard public resources,” he added.

Manamela said Mathebula brings more than three decades of experience across governance, finance and higher education leadership, positioning him to lead the turnaround.

“[The] government is therefore confident that Professor Mathebula pos-

sesses the experience, independence, leadership capacity and institutional understanding necessary to stabilise NSFAS during this period,” he said.

Mathebula currently serves as the Director of Tshwane University of Technology’s Business School and has held senior roles in institutions including the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) and the South African Revenue Service (SARS).

According to the minister, Mathebula’s mandate will centre on “stabilisation, accountability, operational continuity and institutional renewal”, including strengthening governance, addressing audit weaknesses, accelerating ICT reforms, and resolving student funding and accommodation challenges.

The administrator will also be empowered to appoint specialist expertise in areas such as audit remediation, ICT systems, governance, finance and legal services.

Manamela moved to reassure students and institutions that the intervention would not disrupt funding operations.

“Let me state this clearly: student funding will continue. Allowances will continue. Appeals processes will continue. Universities and TVET colleges will continue engaging NSFAS operationally,” he said.

He added that the administration was a temporary but necessary step to rebuild credibility.

“The purpose of the intervention is precisely to protect continuity and restore confidence. This intervention is not about personalities. It is not about factions. It is about protecting students, stabilising a critical public institution, restoring accountability, and ensuring that NSFAS performs its mandate effectively and lawfully,” he said.

He also pointed to ongoing challenges in student accommodation, noting that while many universities have taken over provision, private providers remain part of the system.

“So the reality is that for some of the challenges to be resolved, we have to design an ecosystem that responds, you know, to the prevailing material conditions in our institutions, and to make life easier for students,” he said.

Manamela acknowledged the role of former and remaining NSFAS board members, saying many had served “under challenging circumstances and engaged the process in good faith”.

He reaffirmed the government’s commitment to ensuring NSFAS fulfills its mandate to poor and working-class students.

“Government remains fully committed to ensuring that NSFAS succeeds in fulfilling its mandate to poor and working-class students. We will continue engaging institutions, students, Parliament, National Treasury, organised stakeholders and the public as this process unfolds,” he said.

Education News

National Education Summit Declarations - 20 April 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

We, the participants of the National Education Summit convened by the Inside Education Foundation on 20 April 2026, under the theme: "Fixing the Education and Skills Pipeline: From Early Childhood to Transformative Livelihoods," bring together stakeholders from government, industry, academia, and civil society to reflect on the state of South Africa's education and skills development system and to identify practical actions required to strengthen it.

The Summit recognises the significant progress made in expanding access to education, while acknowledging the urgent need to improve quality, relevance, and alignment with economic opportunities.

The discussions were structured around three key pillars:

1. *Early Childhood Development (ECD)*
2. *Entrepreneurship Education*
3. *Vocational and Technical Pathways*

These deliberations were underpinned by a shared commitment to strengthening the link between education, skills development, and sustainable livelihoods.

2. KEY THEMATIC DECLARATIONS

2.1 Early Childhood Development:

The Summit affirms that Early Childhood Development is foundational to lifelong learning and improved educational outcomes. The Summit calls for:

- The progressive expansion of access to quality ECD services, particularly in underserved communities
- Strengthened investment in the ECD workforce, infrastructure, and leadership development
- Enhanced focus on foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes- Greater parental and community involvement in early learning, supported through accessible resources and awareness initiatives
- Improved monitoring and support during the first 1,000 days of a child's development
- A review of funding models to include targeted support for quality improvement, mentorship, and practitioner development.

2.2 Entrepreneurship Education

The Summit recognises the importance of entrepreneurship education in developing the cognitive, practical, and innovative capabilities required for economic participation. The Summit calls for:- Integration of entrepreneurial competencies across all levels of education, beginning from early learning- A shift towards more practical and experiential approaches to entrepreneurship learning- Strengthened partnerships between education institutions, the private sector, and SMMEs to provide early exposure to

enterprise development- Expanded access to mentorship, financial literacy, and enterprise support programmes- Increased involvement of higher education institutions in developing entrepreneurial capabilities

2.3 Vocational and Technical Pathways

The Summit affirms the critical role of vocational and technical education in driving inclusive economic growth and addressing skills shortages.

The Summit calls for:

- Repositioning TVET colleges as institutions of choice, including curriculum reform, infrastructure development, and lecturer and leadership capacity building
- Strengthened partnerships between TVET colleges, industry, and SETAs to improve curriculum relevance and employability outcomes
- Expanded work-integrated learning opportunities to bridge the gap between education and the workplace- Improved articulation pathways between TVET colleges and universities
- A review of funding and governance models to enhance efficiency, responsiveness, and institutional performance.

3. CROSS-CUTTING RESOLUTIONS

The Summit emphasises the need for:

- Stronger alignment across the education and skills development pipeline, ensuring coherence from early learning through to employment and entrepreneurship
- A renewed focus on implementation and execution of existing policies and strategies, supported by measurable outcomes and monitoring mechanisms
- Shared accountability among government, the private sector, and civil society in delivering on education and skills development priorities
- Strengthened public-private partnerships to support innovation, resource mobilisation, and skills development initiatives
- Targeted interventions to improve youth employability, particularly for young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs)
- Integration of digital and technological competencies across all levels of education, including the effective use of digital tools for teaching and learning.

4. CONCLUSION

The Summit recognises that improvements in education and skills development must be complemented by broader economic growth and job creation to effectively address inequality, poverty, and unemployment. Participants commit to advancing the outcomes of this Summit through continued engagement, partnership, and the development of practical implementation mechanisms.

Adopted on 20 April 2026
National Education Summit

Powered by

Education News



Seriously concerned: Basic Education Portfolio Committee Chairperson Joy Maimela, seen here at a committee meeting with Minister Siviwe Gwarube, says inaccurate reporting on infrastructure conditions is undermining Parliament's ability to hold authorities accountable for improving learning environments. Photo: X

Parliament demands 'real answers' on infrastructure, overcrowding in schools

JOHNATHAN PAOLI

South Africa's schools are suffering from a chronic infrastructure crisis, and Parliament is demanding real answers.

Basic Education Portfolio Committee Chairperson Joy Maimela said she is "seriously concerned" about the growing gap between the state of school infrastructure reported by government departments and what committee members are witnessing on the ground during oversight visits.

In an interview with *Inside Education*, Maimela warned that inaccurate reporting on infrastructure conditions is undermining Parliament's ability to hold authorities accountable for improving learning environments.

"Our responsibility as Parliament is to ensure that no learner or educator is exposed to unsafe environments, and that preventive action replaces reactive responses. The committee's position is clear: learners and educators must never bear the cost of administrative inefficiencies or delays in infrastructure delivery," she said.

In terms of the South African Schools Act of 1996, the Basic Education Department is responsible for setting policy norms and standards, while provincial education departments are tasked with implementation and reporting on school infrastructure delivery.

Maimela said that this division of responsibilities often creates gaps in accountability.

"The concern about discrepancies between reports submitted to Parliament and the conditions we observe during oversight visits is a serious matter. The data that you submit as a department to the committee is difficult for us to accept as a true reflection, based on our own observations during oversight visits," she said.

According to the committee's recent briefings, South Africa's education system continues to face significant infrastructure backlogs.

Of the country's 22,789 public schools, about 13% are classified as being in poor or very poor condition.

The national system also requires an estimated 43,677 additional classrooms to address overcrowding, while 3,523 schools are still operating in inappropriate or unsuitable buildings.

Infrastructure deficits extend beyond classroom shortages. Only 32% of schools have laboratories, 57% have libraries, and 49% have computer centres. A further 9,248 schools lack sports facilities entirely.

Addressing the backlog will require an estimated R57 billion annually, yet only R49.9 billion is projected to be available through the Education Infrastructure Grant over the 2026/27 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework period, creating a substantial funding shortfall.

Maimela said that stronger verification systems are required to prevent departments from relying solely on administrative reporting.

Parliament must receive not only written reports but also independent verification through oversight visits and third-party audits of infrastructure projects, she said.

She added that provincial departments should implement digital infrastructure monitoring systems that allow real-time reporting to the national department and enable Parliament to track progress more accurately.

The committee is also pushing for provinces to submit quarterly compliance reports detailing which schools fail to meet the government's minimum infrastructure requirements under the Regulations Relating to Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for Public School Infrastructure.

"These reports must clearly identify schools that fall below required safety thresholds so that intervention can take place immediately," Maimela said.

Concerns about the accuracy of infrastructure reporting have been intensified by the recent closure of two schools in the Free State after labour inspectors declared them unsafe.

Classes at Matla Primary School in Bloemfontein were suspended after inspectors identified serious occupational health and safety violations.

According to reports, inspectors discovered exposed electrical wiring that had allegedly caused learners to be electrocuted, leaking water around electrical fixtures, and unhygienic sanitation facilities.

Inspectors also reportedly found insufficient toilets, extreme classroom temperatures exceeding 30 °C, and a lack of pest control services, all of which were deemed to pose a serious threat to the safety of learners and staff.

The closure followed contravention notices issued to the Free State Department of Education, which had been given several days to remedy the violations and present a compliance plan, but failed to do so.

A similar situation unfolded at St Benedict Primary School in Ladybrand, which was also shut down after infrastructure problems rendered the facility unsafe for continued use.

Maimela said such closures highlight systemic failures in identifying infrastructure risks early enough.

"When schools are closed after being declared unsafe, it often indicates that intervention occurred too late, which disrupts teaching and learning," she said.

From Parliament's perspective, she said provincial departments should implement proactive monitoring mechanisms to detect risks before

they escalate into crises.

She also emphasised the importance of stronger district-level monitoring.

"District offices must play a proactive role in reporting safety risks and escalating them to provincial authorities," she said.

Infrastructure challenges are not limited to the Free State.

In Gauteng, an oversight visit to Zonkhisizwe Secondary School in Vosloorus revealed extensive overcrowding and deteriorating facilities.

The school has a capacity for about 1,200 learners but currently accommodates 1,403, creating severe pressure on existing infrastructure.

It faces a shortage of around 600 desks and 600 chairs, while a lack of classrooms has forced the school to rely heavily on prefabricated structures.

These prefabricated classrooms were designed for temporary use of around five years, but have reportedly been in operation for approximately 15 years.

In addition to overcrowding, the school has experienced repeated security breaches.

Its generator and security cameras were stolen, and infrastructure such as palisade fencing, toilets and furniture have been damaged through vandalism.

The poor condition of facilities has coincided with academic challenges at the school, which recorded a matric pass rate of 77.7%.

Infrastructure problems have also been linked to concerns about the management of education budgets.

During a recent briefing to the committee, it was found that the department had spent about 80% of its adjusted budget by the end of the third quarter of the 2025/26 financial year, yet performance targets in several areas had not been achieved.

Members raised concerns about a R262 million variance between projected and actual expenditure, with particular concern centred on the slow spending of infrastructure funding.

By the third quarter, only 40.9% of the School Infrastructure Backlog Grant had been spent, despite persistent overcrowding and maintenance problems in schools.

Maimela said stronger accountability mechanisms were needed to ensure infrastructure funds translate into tangible improvements in school facilities.

"Funds such as the School Infrastructure Backlog Grant must be tracked to ensure they are spent on priority infrastructure needs," she said.

She added that provincial departments should be required to account not only for how much money they spend but also for whether projects are delivered on time and to the required standard.

Maimela said that district education offices themselves require adequate infrastructure and resources in order to monitor schools effectively.

Where provincial departments repeatedly fail to address infrastructure backlogs despite receiving funding, Parliament is considering stronger consequences.

Maimela said oversight committees could summon accounting officers and provincial MECs to account, escalate cases of suspected financial mismanagement to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, or recommend national government intervention under Section 100 of the Constitution.

For Maimela, the issue goes beyond administrative compliance and strikes at the heart of constitutional rights. She said that the committee is determined not to let infrastructure reform become "just talk".



Advertorial — Skilling Mzansi

CATHSSETA drives employability through industry partnerships and practical skills development

THAPELO MOLEFE

As South Africa continues to confront high youth unemployment and widening inequality, the need to link training directly to jobs has become urgent. Across sectors, the emphasis is shifting from qualifications that do not translate into work towards programmes that deliver employment, entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihoods.

Within the creative and service economy, the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) has made employability central to its strategy. The authority is strengthening partnerships with employers, colleges and training providers to ensure that learning leads to real opportunities for young people entering the labour market.

CATHSSETA's Chief Executive Officer, Marks Thibela said the organisation is gradually moving away from training for the purpose of achieving the performance targets set in the annual performance plans to partnering with stakeholders who are keen to create sustainable employment for the youth. "Our biggest priority is employability," he said. "Programmes must lead to sustainable jobs or significantly improve a learner's chances of finding work."

CATHSSETA oversees skills development across six subsectors, namely: (1) Arts, Culture and Heritage; (2) Conservation; (3) Gaming and Lotteries; (4) Hospitality; (5) Sport, Recreation and Fitness; and (6) Tourism and Travel Services. Together, these subsectors form a significant part of South Africa's cultural and service economy and offer a wide range of career paths.

"Our responsibility is to ensure that training is aligned to industry needs," Thibela said. "From performing arts to tourism and hospitality, programmes must prepare learners for real roles in the workplace."

Funded through the National Skills Development Levy, CATHSSETA supports a range of learning pathways, including learnerships, internships, bursaries, work-integrated learning, artisan and recognition of prior learning. The latter allows individuals with extensive practical experience to gain formal qualifications.

"We partner with employers who provide workplace exposure and training providers who deliver the theory," Thibela said. "CATHSSETA funds and coordinates the process so learners gain both."

A cornerstone of this approach is collaboration with industry, particularly employers willing to create path-



Industry aligned: CATHSSETA Chief Executive Officer Marks Thibela says the SETA's "biggest priority is employability". Photo: Supplied

ways into employment. One of the most prominent examples is the partnership that CATHSSETA established with McDonald's South Africa. It was launched in August 2024 by the then Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training and current Minister, Buti Manamela, at the McDonald's headquarters in Sandton.

The initiative combines classroom learning with workplace training in various McDonald's operations. Crucially, it was designed with clear employment outcomes from the outset. The beauty about this programme was that the employer has a footprint in all the non-provincial provinces and able to place learners at the outlets that are nearer to their place of stay.

"We asked what the return would be for investing in the programme at time of considering the partnership proposal from McDonald's" Thibela said. "They pledged to employ at least 80% of learners who complete the learnership programme. It should be noted that the learners were trained at McDonald's training academy called Hamburger University that is stationed at the Sandton headquarters. The training programme is accredited by CATHSSETA including the issuing of certificates.

At the end of the programme, about 467 out of 700 young people secured permanent employment. CATHSSETA invested over R40 million in the programme to pay for learner stipends during training.

"This shows what is possible when expectations are clear in any partnership between the private and public," Thibela said. Based on the successes of phase one of the programme, phase two shall now take effect with about 2300 learners participating in the learnership programme.

Apart from these corporate partnerships that have been established, CATHSSETA is partnering with various Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Continuing Education and Training (CET) colleges to improve their physical infrastructure,



Chef Malebo Mohlatlego Meela, the emerging culinary star at the Young Chef Olympiad 2026 in India. Photo: Supplied

systems and curriculum development in preparation to offer Occupationally directed qualifications that fall within its jurisdiction. This is in line with outcome five of the National Skills Development Plan, 2030, which advocates for providing support to the public college system so that it could offer high-quality training. Through the CATHSSETA funding, a number of industrial kitchens are either being constructed or renovation in various TVET colleges, whereas some equipment is being procured or refurbished. Through collaborations with TVET colleges and universities of technology, the authority funds work-integrated learning so students can complete the practical components of their qualifications.

"In hospitality and tourism, TVET learners typically require 18 months of theory and another 18 months of workplace experience, hence, the SETA provides funding for the Work Integrated Learning component to ensure that the learners successfully graduate from the courses that they studied," Thibela said."

Moreover, such notable TVET and CET infrastructure projects that the SETA funded in the past years, include: the construction of industrial kitchens at the Mapunzi Campus of the King Sabatha Dalindyebo TVET College, as well as the Centane Campus of the King Hintsa TVET College in the Eastern Cape Province. In Limpopo, we supported the construction of a state of the art industrial kitchen at Lephalale TVET College, refurbished the kitchen equipment and facility to enhance hospitality training at the Capricorn TVET College, and the acquisition of a tourism and hospitality centre at the Letaba TVET College in Tzaneen. Other projects have been funded in the provinces of North West to construct a multi-purpose sport facility for the CET college. In Free State, the construction of the multi-purpose sport facility, while in Mpumalanga it is the construction of a tourism facility. In KwaZulu-Na-

tal, we supported the procurement of equipment to assist the learners to be equipped with the Galileo training; and in the Western Cape, we also supported with the refurbishment of existing industrial kitchens. The list does not end here because there are new colleges that have been added and have to be funded in this current financial year.

These investments were deliberately made to ensure that the development of skills that respond to the needs of the industry is realised, especially in this era when the occupationally directed qualifications are being developed and partially rolled out, in collaboration with the industry.

CATHSSETA has also partnered with South African National Parks to support skills development in conservation and tourism. Programmes include training for field rangers, tour guides and related professions within the national parks system.

"Some learners will work in the parks, while others may become entrepreneurs in tourism," Thibela said.

These initiatives contribute both to conservation and to employment creation in a key economic sector.

Artisan development is another priority, particularly in the culinary field. Through chef qualification programmes, learners undergo a rigorous three-year process combining theory and practical training in professional kitchens.

"We have some learners being absorbed into employment even before they complete the whole programme and sit for trade test," Thibela said. "Some secure international opportunities during their training."

One recent success is South African culinary student Malebo Meela, supported through CATHSSETA-funded programmes and is a student at Limpopo Chefs Academy. Meela represented South Africa at the 2026 Young Chef Olympiad in India, finishing among the top 10 competitors from 50 countries and receiving the Ambassador's Award for professionalism.

The competition, held across cities including Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kolkata, required participants to complete demanding culinary challenges. In one round, competitors had two and a half hours to prepare a vegetable and fillet a whole fish.

Meela presented a chocolate fondant with coconut, mango and orange gel, alongside a fish roulade with sweet potato rösti, saffron and lime sauce, and a fennel and grape salad. For the cultural segment, he prepared amadumbe pudding, introducing judges to a traditional South African dish.

"These competitions expose our

learners to international standards," Thibela said. "They return with new skills and confidence."

“

When a young person moves from training into employment or starts a business and becomes self-sufficient, that is when skills development makes a real difference.

”

While employment remains central, CATHSSETA is also promoting entrepreneurship. Many talented individuals, Thibela noted, struggle to turn their skills into viable businesses due to gaps in knowledge around compliance, registration and financial management.

"In many communities, people have extraordinary talent but lack the tools to build a business," he said.

Through targeted programmes and partnerships with other government agencies, CATHSSETA equips aspiring entrepreneurs with essential business skills, while other institutions provide funding and enterprise support.

"Our role is to develop the skills needed to run a business but not funding any operations as that falls outside of legal mandate," Thibela said.

Digital transformation is another key focus. The authority is modernising its systems to enable employers, training providers and learners to access services online rather than through manual processes. "We want people to interact with us electronically, wherever they are," Thibela said.

The move is expected to reduce administrative delays and improve access, particularly in rural areas.

Looking ahead, CATHSSETA is working closely with industry to ensure that occupational qualifications reflect evolving labour market demands.

"We want employers to tell us what skills they need so that the relevant qualifications can be made available," Thibela said. "If industry helps shape qualifications, training provided will lead to the production of the right skills.

Ultimately, he said, success is measured by outcomes.

"When a young person moves from training into employment or starts a business and becomes self-sufficient, that is when skills development makes a real difference."

Minister's Corner

Paris, policy and the promise of a skills revolution

What a week in France revealed about where South Africa stands — and where it must go

BUTI MANAMELA

There is something clarifying about sitting in a UNESCO conference room in Paris and listening to ministers from India, Uruguay, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) debate the same questions we argue about in Cape Town budget hearings: how do you protect education spending when fiscal space is shrinking? How do you turn investment in skills into measurable economic returns? How do you build accountability into a system that is, by its very nature, long-term in its payoffs?

I was in Paris from 13 to 15 March as part of a G7-linked high-level engagement on sustainable education financing, convened by UNESCO and the Global Partnership for Education under France's G7 Presidency. South Africa was the only sub-Saharan African country represented at the ministerial level.

That fact is not incidental — it reflects a deliberate choice to ensure that the African voice, and specifically the voice of a country in the middle of a serious skills transformation, was part of a conversation that will shape global education financing frameworks for the decade ahead.

My contribution on the panel centred on something that is not always easy to explain to international audiences: that the challenge in

South Africa is not a lack of political will or even a lack of resources. It is the architecture of how resources are deployed.

We spend approximately 6.5 percent of GDP on education — above the international benchmark. And yet the outcomes remain deeply unequal. The conclusion I drew for my fellow panellists is one I have been making at home: volume without accountability is not a financing model. It is a subsidy system with aspirations.

What South Africa has been building — through NSFAS, through the Skills Development Levy mandatory grant reforms we secured in this year's budget, through the repositioning of our SETAs — is a financing architecture that links investment to outcomes.

That argument landed. It is one thing for it to be made in a parliamentary committee. It is another for it to be made on a panel with the World Bank, the OECD, and ministers from three continents.

The bilateral with the OECD was, for me, one of the most substantive conversations of the visit. Andreas Schleicher's directorate is where the serious global benchmarking work happens — the kind of evidence base that South Africa has not always been able to access on its own terms.

What we agreed to explore is a partnership that would do three things: help us benchmark our TVET colleges against international

standards in a way that is honest about where we are and specific about where we need to go; develop a skills strategy diagnostic that is grounded in our actual labour market; and open the door to co-publication of policy research that places South Africa's Skills Revolution in a global comparative context.

We also had a rich exchange on work-integrated learning and the dual education system. Countries like Germany and Switzerland have had dual systems for generations — employer-based training running parallel to classroom instruction.

But the more instructive cases for us right now are newer adopters. Norway, Denmark, and Vietnam have all moved to introduce dual system elements in recent years, in very different economic contexts.

Vietnam's experience in particular — a developing economy embedding workplace learning into a rapidly expanding TVET sector — offers lessons that are directly applicable to what we are trying to build through SAIVCET and the National Vocational Excellence Compact. These are not aspirational comparisons. They are benchmarks we can actually use.

One of the most meaningful moments of the week had nothing to do with conference rooms.

On the margins of the visit, I met with six South African students studying in France through various scholarship programmes.

They are at institutions including Sciences Po, Université Paris Saclay, Sorbonne Université, and Université Bourgogne Franche-Comté. Their fields range from nuclear engineering to development economics, from ecology to classical literature. Young South Africans, scattered across France, are doing serious work at serious institutions.

What struck me in the conversation was not their accomplishments — though those are real — but their hunger to come home and contribute. Every one of them had a version of the same question: what does it look like to return, and will there be a place for what I am learning? That question is an indictment of the gap we have not yet closed between how we invest in students and how we invest in the systems that would absorb them on their return. It is also a mandate.

The Skills Revolution is not only a domestic project. It is a diaspora project. It is a repatriation of capability project. These students are part of the answer — if we build the structures to receive them.

Before leaving Paris, I had the opportunity to pay tribute to Professor Stefania Giannini, who is stepping down as UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education at the end of March after a remarkable tenure. It would be an understatement to call her role significant.

During some of the most turbulent years in UNESCO's recent history — financial uncertainty, geo-

political pressure, shifting donor priorities — she held the line on Africa's place in the global education agenda. She did not allow the continent to become an afterthought in conversations about the SDG 4 framework. South Africa's seat at the table — including our new position on the SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee — owes something to the environment she helped create.

To Stefania: Africa thanks you. We will carry the work forward.

I return from Paris with three things: a clearer sense of where South Africa's education financing story stands in global terms (better than we sometimes give ourselves credit for, more fragile than we can afford to be complacent about), a set of concrete partnership commitments with the OECD that will be operationalised in the months ahead, and a renewed sense of urgency about the G7 Leaders' Summit later this year, at which education and skills will again be on the agenda.

South Africa will not be a spectator at that table either.

The Skills Revolution is not a domestic project that occasionally looks outward. It is a global positioning project that happens to start at home. Paris reminded me of that. The students I met in France reminded me of why it matters.

Buti Manamela is Minister of Higher Education and Training.



Inspired: Minister of Higher Education and Training Buti Manamela spent a week in Paris and returned to South Africa with a clearer sense of where the country's education financing story stands in global terms — "better than we sometimes give ourselves credit for, more fragile than we can afford to be complacent about." Photo: Eddie Mtsweni



STEP **BOLDLY** INTO YOUR FUTURE

YOUR SUCCESS STARTS HERE, AVBOB STEP 12 FOR THE MATRIC CLASS OF 2026

The **AVBOB** STEP 12 programme provides Examination Preparation Guides for Grade 12 language subjects for both Home Language and First Additional Language in all 11 official written languages. There is a guide for each language paper – Language in Context, Literature and Creative Writing.

The **AVBOB** STEP 12 Examination Preparation Guides are always up to date, CAPS-aligned, and approved by the Department of Basic Education.

Scan the QR code or visit the website to download
your **FREE** guides from any device



AVBOB Mutual Society is invested in the future of basic education in South Africa.

STEP 12

www.AVBOBSTEP12.co.za

FSP 20656.



Skilling Mzansi — Advertorial

TETA expands its job creation programme

SETAs must collaborate more deeply on supplying the skills SA needs

THEBE MABANGA & CHARMARINE NDLELA

The Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA) has called for better collaboration between Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) to improve their impact in supplying the skills the South African economy needs.

The transport sector is a key driver of South Africa's economy, contributing between 8% and 9% to gross domestic product and supporting over 1.4 million jobs.

TETA CEO Maphefo Anno-Frempong described skills as “the heartbeat of industry” and said the authority aims to play a central role in supplying the transport and logistics sector with the skills it needs to thrive. She argued that SETAs cannot afford “to work in silos” and need to collaborate out of necessity, as they already do on some projects, but that more and deeper collaboration is required.

In late 2024, for example, TETA, the Chemical Industry Sector Education and Training Authority (CHI-

ETA) and the Mining Qualification Authority (MQA) launched the Green Hydrogen Centre for Excellence at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Pretoria to explore this important new growth area.

TETA used a recent stakeholder engagement breakfast with the South African National Editors Forum (SANEF) to announce a proposed two-year journalism training programme that Anno-Frempong said would allow mostly unemployed journalism graduates to spend a year in the classroom and another year in newsrooms across the country to gain practical experience.

Reggy Moalusi, executive director of SANEF, said that as the organisation marks its 30th anniversary, it is intensely focused on training journalists. He noted that journalists from established traditional media houses to new outlets in digital and social media were all “grappling with change” and how to collect and disseminate accurate news in a manner that is cost- and time-effective.

Anno-Frempong told the gathering that TETA is also expanding its job creation efforts through internation-



Commitment: TETA CEO Maphefo Anno-Frempong says the authority aims to play a central role in supplying the transport and logistics sector with the skills it needs to thrive. Photo: Eddie Mtsweni

al partnerships and revealed that it is working with a Switzerland-based shipping company that has secured up to 5,000 job opportunities annually for South Africans on global cruise ships and shipping lines.

TETA is also involved in the Nyanza Light Metals titanium dioxide pigment manufacturing plant to be located in a Special Economic Zone near Richards Bay in KwaZulu-Natal that is expected to create up to 10,000 jobs.

In the 2023/24 financial year, TETA generated approximately R1 billion in revenue, which has been directed towards bursaries, skills development programmes and workplace-based learning opportunities.

To further strengthen post-school education, TETA has funded a fourth industrial revolution centre at the South West Gauteng TVET College and continues to expand partnerships with several TVET institutions. Anno-Frempong says that TETA has adopted over 60 schools to support in various ways since 2012.

Dr Felling Yende, CEO of the Fibre, Processing and Manufacturing Sector Training Authority and Chairperson of the SETA CEO Forum, also emphasised the need for collaboration at the stakeholders' engagement breakfast.

“We need to come together, collaborate and strategically identify the country's needs — only then can we invest in programmes that will make a meaningful difference,” she said.

Yende characterised SETAs as being in a unique and strategic position to shape South Africa's skills landscape through their access to labour market intelligence and the National Skills Plan, as well as research from both industry and academia to determine the country's skills profile and needs across various sectors.

Yende said that for SETAs to make a sustained, positive contribution, “meaningful employer participation” was needed. She pointed out that 80% of what SETAs collect as levy income goes back to the employer as mandatory and discretionary grants. Ten

percent of what SETAs collect goes to administration costs, while 10% goes to discretionary grants and other skills development programmes, possibly including international partnerships.

Yende emphasised the significant social investment undertaken by SETAs. Between 2019 and 2024, SETAs invested R5 billion in TVET colleges for curriculum modernisation and lecturer development, among other key activities. In that period, SETAs also invested R6 billion in the country's public universities to help fund “missing middle” students.

SETAs have spent R300 million on Community Education and Training Colleges, even as that sector is not yet fully developed to the desired level and standards. This investment benefited 1.2 million learners.

Yende also highlighted emerging sectors such as renewable energy and green hydrogen as critical to future job creation. “We are investing in sectors that will define the future of work and create sustainable opportunities for young people,” she said.

TETA offers ‘eye-opening’ opportunities to aspiring executives

The Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA) offers opportunities that broaden horizons and help managers prepare for senior leadership and executive roles in the transport and logistics sectors through leadership and executive development programmes offered by South Africa's leading business schools.

A panel discussion at the recent TETA/South African National Editors Forum revealed how beneficiaries were enriched by these TETA-sponsored master's-level programmes that include sending students to various

countries in Africa and other parts of the world to study first-hand how companies handle various challenges.

Tshisi Tshiongo, an International Executive Development Programme for Women beneficiary at the Gordon Institute of Business Science and a logistics executive at DP World, described the programme as “eye-opening” as part of it involved her travelling to different parts of the continent to observe some of the key ports that play a vital role in the global logistics value chain.

Rirhandzu Mashava, who completed the International Executive Development

Programme at Wits Business School, says the biggest benefit she derived from the programme was being allocated a coach, which was critical for her development as an executive.

Wisdom Ndashe, who is completing the International Leadership Development Programme at the University of Cape Town and works at the Air Traffic and Navigation Services, said the programme had shown him that South Africa has the best practices on the continent in air traffic navigation.

Loyiso Jiya, a recipient of an industry award from TETA last year, works

as a communication executive at the Gibela Rail Transport Consortium and said that, partly through support from institutions like TETA, they have been able to train and employ 19,000 people.

Jiya noted that training programmes funded by TETA have helped him and his colleagues from different backgrounds and diverse industries to come together and shape a new culture in the company that is a little over a decade old. Funding from TETA continues to play a crucial role in Gibela's operations and growth.

Jaco Opperman, principal of the TETA-adopted Katlehong Technical High School, said it benefits immensely from the authority's funding and design of its programmes. Opperman is proud of how he and his leadership team have made the school highly sought after by parents who want their children to follow a technical career. He says of the 1,600 learners enrolled at his school, about 60% are girls, a statistic which mirrors a global trend of women outnumbering men in high school completion and tertiary enrolment rates. — THEBE MABANGA

Skilling Mzansi — Advertorial

Building futures through skills: TETA's investment in the next generation

THAPELO MOLEFE

The Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA) is not just funding education — it is actively shaping the future of South Africa's transport sector by investing in people, skills, and innovation.

At the heart of this vision is a powerful partnership with South West Gauteng TVET College. This collaboration began in 2019 with a shared goal to deliver education that is practical, relevant, and transformative.

The partnership has grown steadily over the years, evolving from a funding relationship into a strategic alliance focused on long-term impact in the skills development space.

Speaking at the launch of new cutting-edge training facilities, TETA CEO Maphefo Anno-Frempong reflected on the importance of investing in human potential.

"The greatest investment we can make is not in infrastructure alone, but in the human potential that brings that infrastructure to life," she said.

Her remarks captured the essence of TETA's approach, which places people at the centre of development while ensuring that infrastructure investments translate into meaningful opportunities for students and industry alike.

Since the partnership began, TETA has made significant investments to strengthen the college's entire skills development ecosystem. These investments have been carefully structured to ensure that every part of the training value chain is supported, from teaching and learning to leadership and institutional capacity.

More than 200 lecturers have been supported through Workplace Integrated Learning programmes, ensuring that students are taught skills aligned with real-world industry demands.

This exposure allows lecturers to bring current industry practices into the classroom, making learning more

relevant and practical for students. In addition, over 50 managers have been trained in curriculum management, equipping them to lead with confidence, improve programme delivery, and ensure that courses remain responsive to industry needs.

These interventions are backed by substantial funding, including over R7 million dedicated to lecturer development alone. This investment reflects TETA's recognition that quality education depends not only on infrastructure but also on the people who deliver it.

Beyond training, TETA has invested heavily in infrastructure that directly supports hands-on learning, with three specialised facilities now standing as symbols of this commitment.

These include a Welder Workshop designed to produce highly skilled artisans, a Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) Centre focused on advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and automation, as well as a Driving Simulator Centre aimed at improving driver training and road safety.

Each of these facilities represents a significant financial commitment, with investments exceeding R12 million per centre. The Driving Simulator Centre alone accounts for more than R12.6 million, highlighting the scale of resources being directed towards improving training quality and safety outcomes.

Together, these facilities are transforming the learning environment at the college, giving students access to modern equipment and technologies that mirror what they will encounter in the workplace. This ensures that graduates are not only qualified on paper but also capable of performing effectively in real-world settings from the outset of their careers.

These centres are more than just buildings. They are designed to close the gap between theory and practice, ensuring that students graduate with skills that are immediately applicable in the workplace.



Brave new world: A student at the South West Gauteng TVET College tries out a virtual reality headset. Photos: TETA



Door to knowledge: The entrance to the TETA-sponsored IT Practical Centre at the South West Gauteng TVET College



Hi-tech: The college has been fitted with state-of-the-art equipment

"The Driving Simulator Centre is not just about learning to drive. It is about saving lives, promoting safety, and ensuring that our young people enter the transport sector with confidence and competence," said Anno-Frempong.

Developed in partnership with the Road Traffic Management Corporation, the simulator provides a safe, controlled environment where students can gain essential driving experience without risk. It also supports broader national efforts to improve road safety by producing better-prepared drivers who understand the responsibilities that come with being on the road.

At the same time, the 4IR Centre prepares students for the future of work, equipping them with digital and technological skills that are increasingly in demand across industries. From AI to automation, the centre introduces students to the tools and systems shaping the global economy.

"We are not preparing students for the world as it was — we are preparing them for the world as it is and as it will be," said Anno-Frempong.

This forward-looking approach ensures that graduates are not left behind as industries evolve but are instead positioned to take advantage of emerging opportunities in a rapidly changing labour market.

TETA's approach goes beyond training. It focuses on creating a clear pathway from education to employment, recognising that skills development must ultimately lead to economic participation.

"Skills without opportunity can become frustration, but skills with opportunity become transformation," Anno-Frempong emphasised.

Through partnerships with industry and ongoing investment in workplace opportunities, TETA is working to ensure that graduates do not just leave with qualifications but with real prospects for employment and entrepreneurship. This includes strengthening relationships with employers, expanding workplace-based learning opportunities, and aligning training programmes with actual labour market demands.

The organisation also recognises the importance of continuous collaboration between education providers and industry stakeholders. By maintaining strong partnerships, TETA is able to adapt its programmes in response to changing industry needs, ensuring that training remains relevant and effective.

The success of the partnership with South West Gauteng TVET College is already being seen as a benchmark for what is possible when institutions collaborate with purpose. It demonstrates how coordinated efforts between public entities, training institutions, and indus-

try partners can produce tangible results.

By aligning its initiatives with Quality Council for Trades and Occupations standards, TETA is helping to produce graduates who can compete both nationally and globally. This alignment ensures that qualifications are credible, recognised, and responsive to the needs of employers.

More importantly, this model demonstrates how strategic investment in education and infrastructure can drive economic growth and social development. By equipping young people with practical skills, TETA is contributing to job creation, productivity, and the overall competitiveness of the economy.

For students, the impact of these investments is both immediate and long-term. Access to modern facilities, experienced lecturers, and industry-aligned programmes provides a strong foundation for success while also instilling confidence and ambition.

"These centres say to every young person here today, 'You belong in the future,'" said Anno-Frempong.

With world-class facilities, industry-aligned training, and strong institutional support, TETA is not only equipping students with skills but is also empowering them to shape South Africa's future.

Students are encouraged to take full advantage of these opportunities, to engage actively in their learning, and to develop the resilience and creativity needed to succeed in a competitive environment.

As the partnership continues to grow, there is a clear focus on sustainability and expansion. TETA says it aims to replicate this model across other institutions, extending its impact and ensuring that more students across the country benefit from similar initiatives.

As Anno-Frempong concluded, "We are not just building centres. We are building futures."

Higher Education

Restore the intellectual purpose of postgraduate education

Professor Jansen warns that universities risk a narrow production system driven by outputs and subsidies

BHEKISISA MNCUBE

South African universities must restore the intellectual purpose of postgraduate education, defend the academy's openness, and strengthen the quality of supervision if they are to remain credible sites of knowledge production.

This was the central message delivered by Jonathan Jansen, Distinguished Professor of Education at Stellenbosch University, in his keynote address at the opening of the third Enabling Quality Postgraduate Education (EQPE) colloquium, held in Gauteng in March. The event formed part of an ongoing effort to interrogate the direction of postgraduate education and reassert the intellectual mission of universities amid growing institutional and societal pressures.

The two-day colloquium brought together academics, supervisors and higher education specialists to reflect on strengthening postgraduate training and building more robust research cultures across South Africa.

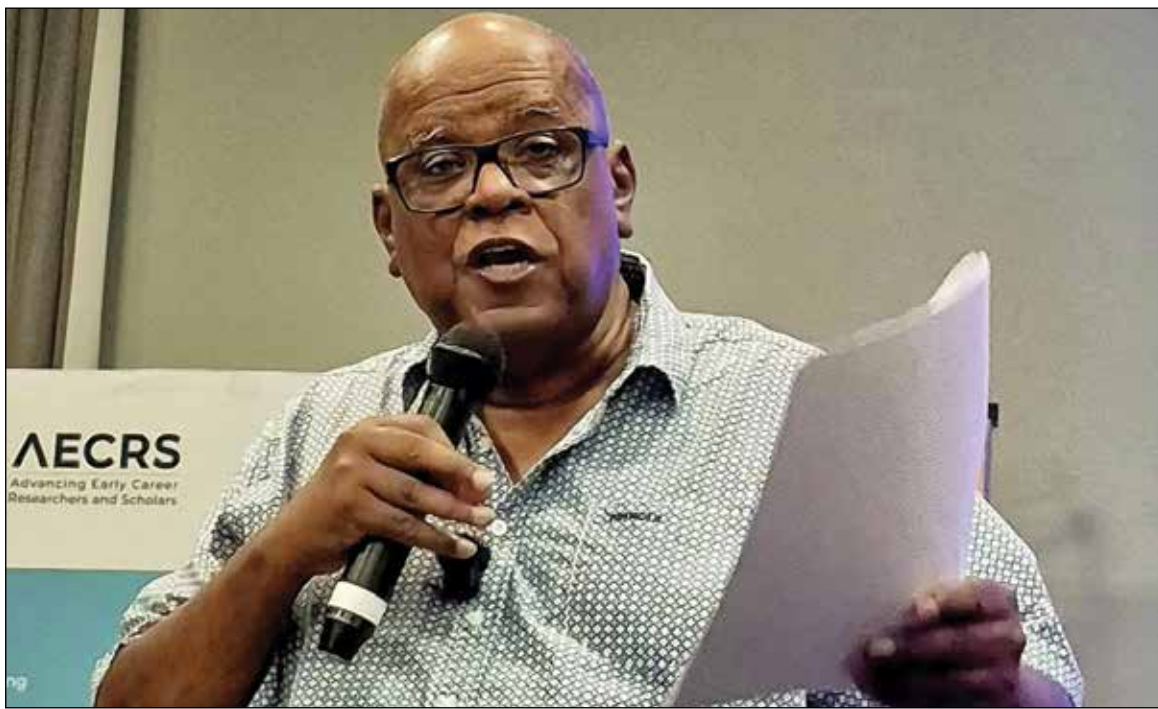
Under the theme "Enhancing the Knowledge Project", the 2026 gathering marked the final instalment in a three-part EQPE series led by Sioux McKenna of Rhodes University, with funding from the Department of Higher Education and Training.

The initiative is implemented in partnership with the Community of Practice for Postgraduate Education and Scholarship, led by Stephanie Burton of the University of Pretoria, and included representatives from Universities South Africa, the Council on Higher Education and the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation.

Xenophobia has no place in the academy

Jansen opened with a stark warning about xenophobic rhetoric within higher education. "I never thought the day would come when I would see my government issuing blatantly xenophobic statements about foreign nationals who teach and do research on our campuses," he said.

He argued that such rhetoric threatens the intellectual life of universities,



Intellectual mission: Professor Jonathan Jansen says "postgraduate education should cultivate curiosity, courage and the joy of inquiry". Photo: Supplied

which depends on the free movement of ideas and scholars. Knowledge production, he emphasised, is inherently global and collaborative. "None of us has developed knowledge in isolation from people in other countries," he said, stressing that the vitality of South African universities depends on openness to intellectual exchange.

Reclaiming the intellectual purpose

Jansen challenged what he described as "easy answers" within academia. "We tend to say postgraduate education prepares leaders for professions, meets demand for high-level skills and inducts students into research methods," he said. "But the deeper intellectual purposes are seldom discussed."

Jansen warned that universities risk reducing postgraduate education to a narrow production system driven by outputs and subsidies. With real-term public funding declining, departments are under pressure to increase master's and doctoral outputs simply to sustain themselves.

"At its worst, postgraduate education becomes a numbers game," he said. "You produce graduates not for intellectual development, but for financial survival." This, he argued, distorts academic priorities and undermines the purpose of the university.

When quantity undermines quality

"At its worst," Jansen said, "the process has been corrupted in a relentless quest to maximise income and research outputs." He used the term to describe the erosion of intellectual and ethical standards rather than legal wrongdoing.

He pointed to practices that undermine scholarly integrity. Among these is the issue of authorship. "Do not claim authorship on your students'

work," he said. "You are paid to supervise. It is the student's work."

He also criticised "salami slicing," where a single research project is divided into multiple publications to inflate output. "That is not scholarship," he said. "That is gaming the system."

Jansen further condemned the use of predatory journals, warning that they damage the credibility of academic work. Public universities, he argued, have a duty to maintain rigorous standards. "We are funded by taxpayers," he said. "We must be accountable for the integrity of what we publish."

Central to his critique was a rethinking of supervision. He rejected the idea that supervision is merely a technical process of guiding students through research design and completion. "The purpose of postgraduate education is to cultivate the intellectual mind," he said. "It should produce people who can think deeply within and beyond their field."

The ideal supervisory model

Jansen described the ideal supervisor as someone who models curiosity, humility and rigour. "The more we know, the more we realise how little we know," he said, highlighting humility as a defining scholarly quality. At the same time, he encouraged supervisors to foster independence. "The moment a student surpasses the supervisor is the moment every professor should celebrate."

He was critical of the traditional single-supervisor model, arguing that no individual can provide the full range of knowledge required for postgraduate education. This model, he said, often leads to intellectual isolation and limited development.

In response, Jansen advocated for cohort-based approaches that bring students together in intellectual communities. "These models create shared spaces for debate and learning," he said. Through

seminars, collaboration and exposure to multiple scholars, students develop broader and more critical perspectives.

He linked this to the need for interdisciplinary thinking. Using the Covid-19 pandemic as an example, he argued that narrow disciplinary approaches can produce flawed policy responses. "You cannot address social crises using only biomedical expertise," he said. "The problems of the world do not arrive packaged as disciplines."

He criticised the exclusion of social scientists from decision-making during the pandemic, noting that policies often failed to account for lived realities. "When you ignore social conditions, your policies will fail," he said.

For Jansen, postgraduate education must produce scholars capable of working across disciplines. "We need people who can speak with equal confidence about statistical validity and qualitative credibility," he said.

Best practice v institutional realities These themes resonated in the discussion that followed, where delegates raised concerns about ethics and institutional pressures.

Sandile Khamanga of Rhodes University emphasised fairness in co-authorship. "Ethical collaboration between supervisors and students is critical," he said.

Sharol Mkhomazi of Tshwane University of Technology highlighted institutional requirements for postgraduate students to publish before graduating. While intended to boost research output, such expectations can place pressure on students and risk encouraging questionable practices.

Jansen responded that responsibility lies with institutions. "Universities must regulate their own systems," he said. He called on university leadership to play a stronger role in monitoring publication standards and preventing unethical practices.

Developing future supervisors

The issue of supervisory capacity also emerged as a concern. Mandisa Cakwe of the Department of Higher Education and Training raised questions about the competence of academics supervising postgraduate students.

Jansen pointed to initiatives such as the Future Professors Programme, which supports early-career academics, but cautioned that national programmes alone are insufficient. He urged universities to take responsibility for developing supervisory capacity through structured training and mentoring.

Artificial intelligence

The impact of artificial intelligence also featured in the discussion. Lesetja Legoabe of North-West University asked how AI might reshape postgraduate training.

Jansen described AI as "a blessing in disguise", arguing that it exposes weaknesses in traditional assessment. "If you ask low-level questions, artificial intelligence will answer them easily," he said. "The problem is not the technology, but how we design teaching."

He suggested that AI offers an opportunity to rethink assessment in ways that prioritise critical thinking and originality. "When you introduce context and nuance, it cannot simply replace human thinking," he said.

Rather than resisting change, universities should adapt by designing curricula that require deeper intellectual engagement.

Restoring the intellectual imagination

Jansen concluded by returning to a unifying idea: the need to restore the intellectual imagination of the university.

"Postgraduate education should cultivate curiosity, courage and the joy of inquiry," he said. Without these qualities, universities risk producing graduates who are technically competent but intellectually limited.

For Jansen, the renewal of postgraduate education is not simply a technical challenge but a moral and intellectual one. It requires institutions to confront difficult questions about their priorities and practices.

"When we lose sight of the intellectual purpose of postgraduate education," he said, "we lose sight of what a university is for."

The EQPE colloquium underscored the urgency of these questions. As South Africa seeks to strengthen its research capacity and knowledge economy, the quality, integrity and purpose of postgraduate education remain central.

Bhekisisa Mncube is a contract writer for Universities South Africa.

Teacher's Corner

Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi: 'How my favourite teacher awakened my social consciousness'

SIMON NARE

Former cabinet minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi may have come from a politically active family, but she credits Livingstone High School in Claremont, Cape Town, for cultivating and shaping her political career.

Fraser-Moleketi joined the exiled anti-apartheid movement in the Frontline States in 1980 and returned to South Africa during the negotiations to end apartheid in July 1990.

She was Minister of Welfare and Population Development from July 1996 to June 1999 and Minister of Public Service and Administration from June 1999 to September 2008. She represented the African National Congress in the National Assembly from 1994 to 2008 and is a former deputy chairperson of the South African Communist Party.

Fraser-Moleketi told *Inside Education* that it was in the classrooms of her former school where teachers did not merely deliver a syllabus but ignited a social consciousness that prepared learners for a future “we couldn't yet see”.

The outgoing chancellor of Nelson Mandela University spoke fondly about the school — which fell under the then Department of Coloured Affairs — and how it instilled in its learners the ability to look beyond race.

This, she said, was at the height of oppression under the apartheid regime, which had divided South African society along racial lines, where coloured people were ranked above black people but below Indian people.

“Livingstone High School enabled us, to a large extent, to become critical thinkers. We were not simply prepared to look at school narrowly from an academic perspective ... at a time when the education system was strictly classified according to racial divisions,” she said.

“What made it unique was that the teaching body at that school was very deliberate in shaping young minds in such a way that we saw beyond

race and the narrow curriculum of the time, which tried to place South African children into racial hierarchies,” Fraser-Moleketi said.

“You know, the whole notion that African children, according to apartheid ideologues, were destined to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. Coloured children were supposed to be one level up, Indian children another level up. We strongly rejected the label of ‘coloured’. We saw ourselves broadly as black and believed we had to view the world more expansively.”

She said this was what made the school special and led many learners to view the term “coloured” as derogatory. There were various societies in the school, such as the debating society and the history society, which explored alternative histories of the country beyond the prescribed syllabus and exposed learners to material that could have been banned by the regime.

Fraser-Moleketi was a member of the debating society and among its foremost debaters.

“That shows the impact of the school on my personal development, and of course, this was reinforced by my home environment,” she said.

Academically, Fraser-Moleketi rated herself as average, but outside the classroom, she was one of the school's leading debaters and an athlete specialising in long-distance running and cross-country.

One debate that stands out, she said, was on the topic “Is marriage absolute?”, which she argued in favour of and won.

“I won that debate — ironically because I debated in favour of it. Do I believe it today? Absolutely not!” she said.

Fraser-Moleketi said what truly inspired her in high school was the awakening of her and her fellow pupils' social consciousness — including the understanding that learners should enjoy their school experience and the subjects they study.

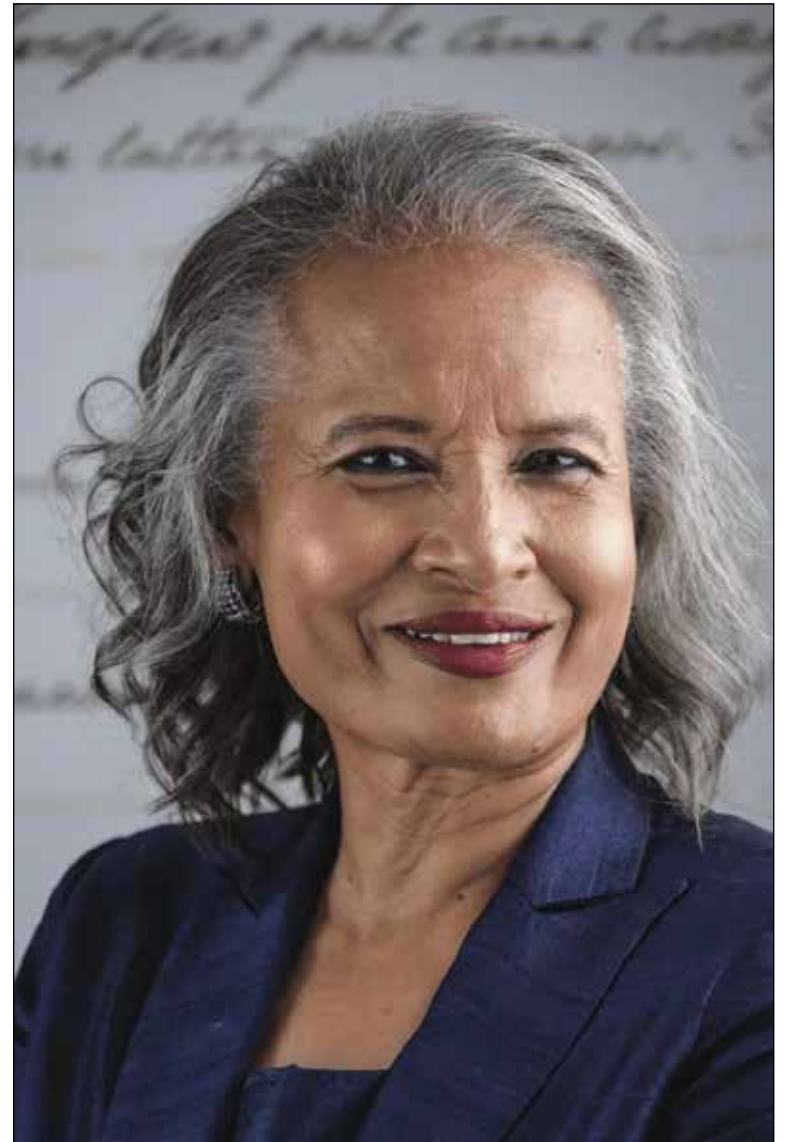
She said the challenge with the present education system is no longer access but structural issues.

“We face severe infrastructure deficits, resource misallocation, and a critical need for continuous educator development. We have the democratic framework; now we must ensure that every classroom has the resources, and every teacher has ongoing training.

“Having said that, I must acknowledge the younger teachers who are coming through, who are excellent in their subject areas and passionate about their work with learners.

“I want to say this carefully: there is passion among educators for their students and the subjects they teach. There are many examples of this. I am the outgoing chancellor of Nelson Mandela University, and we have a very strong education faculty. I believe part of that strength lies in its approach to education and the humanities and the underlying philosophy that informs it,” she said.

Fraser-Moleketi spoke fondly about her favourite German teacher, Faiza Bardien, who taught her the mechanics of the language, awakened her social consciousness, and introduced her to German lit-



Liberating: Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi says her favourite teacher taught her that “knowledge is a tool for the oppressed to understand and change their circumstances”. Photo: X

erature — particularly the works of socialist scholars and poets such as Bertolt Brecht.

“Rather than treating poetry merely as an emotional outlet, she showed us how Brecht used it as a platform for social ideas and to expose injustice. It was through her class that we were taught to be critical thinkers,” she said.

“Looking back at my time at Livingstone High, we were subjected to a system actively designed to limit our potential and enforce inequality.

Yet, within those walls, there was a fierce culture of intellectual resistance. The challenges were immense, but the commitment of our educators and our community to academic excellence and social justice was unbreakable.”

In March 2016, Fraser-Moleketi was named as New African Woman of the Year, an award sponsored by the African Development Bank. She was awarded honorary doctorates by Nelson Mandela University in 2017 and North-West University in 2021.

My Favourite Teacher Q&A with Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi

What is the name of your favourite teacher?

Faiza Bardien

What were your favourite subjects at school?

History, English literature, and German. “These weren't just subjects to pass; they became the lenses through which I began to understand the world.”

How did your favourite teacher endear herself to you?

There is a specific reference from Ms Bardien that has always stayed with me: she frequently drew on Brecht's *In Praise of Learning*.

What did you most like about your favourite teacher?

She didn't just teach us the mechanics of a foreign language; she used it to awaken our social consciousness.

Did this influence the choice of your career?

I would say it certainly played a pivotal

role by giving me the analytical tools I needed. However, shaping my path was a collective effort.

What was the one phrase from the teacher that inspired you?

The core message — that knowledge is a tool for the oppressed to understand and change their circumstances — was incredibly inspiring. It taught us that education is an active, necessary force for taking charge of the future.

Why are teachers so important to society?

The classroom teacher creates the environment for learning, generates and transmits inspiration, establishes the focus and content of study, and demonstrates that the learner is valued.

What advice do you have for learners today?

Enjoy your school days and your life at school. Do not see it merely as a duty but as a profound opportunity

to broaden your horizons through the subjects you study.

While at school, did you imagine ending up where you are today, and why is it important to believe in one's dream?

Did I imagine ending up where I am today? Not at all. But that is exactly why believing in a dream is vital. A dream isn't a rigid map of the future; it is the internal engine that keeps you moving. You build your capacity, your critical thinking, and your values so that when history calls, you are prepared to step into roles you could not have predicted as a student.

Lastly, any advice for teachers?

My advice to educators today is to embrace lifelong learning. The world is evolving at a staggering pace. If a teacher's knowledge stagnates, they cannot help their students interpret a complex, modern world. You cannot guide the next generation using an outdated map.

Skilling Mzansi — Advertorial



Rebuilding trust and delivering skills: LGSETA's path to stability and impact

THAPELO MOLEFE

The Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) is undergoing a critical phase of renewal, with a strong focus on restoring governance, strengthening accountability, and ensuring that skills development for municipalities continues without disruption.

Appointed in August 2025, Administrator Zukile Christopher Mvalo has assumed full executive responsibility for stabilising the organisation, marking a shift from oversight to direct accountability. Mvalo was appointed by the Minister of Higher Education and Training Buti Manamela, following consultation with the National Skills Authority, in terms of Section 15(1) of the Skills Development Act.

His appointment followed serious governance failures at LGSETA, including procurement irregularities, board instability, and lapses in oversight, which threatened the SETA's ability to deliver on its mandate.

His mandate is clear: restore integrity, enforce consequence management, and ensure that learners and workers are not prejudiced by institutional weaknesses.

Reflecting on his appointment, Mvalo said his previous role within the system provides a critical advantage in addressing current challenges.

"My appointment as administrator represents a paradigm shift from oversight to direct executive accountability. What distinguishes this role is the ability to implement corrective actions immediately, enforce consequence management, and stabilise governance structures," he said.

He added that his institutional knowledge allows for "faster diagno-

sis and more targeted intervention" in resolving systemic issues.

This shift has enabled the organisation to move decisively, with a strong emphasis on compliance, governance reform, and rebuilding institutional credibility.

A key focus of the administration has been implementing the findings of a National Treasury forensic investigation into governance failures at LGSETA.

"A key priority of my administration was to implement the outcomes of the National Treasury-commissioned forensic investigation report," Mvalo said.

The investigation highlighted serious lapses, including the irregular appointment of a chief executive officer and the unlawful dissolution of the audit and risk committee. In response, disciplinary processes were initiated and recommendations made for criminal proceedings.

"In accordance with section 86(2) of the PFMA, it was recommended that criminal proceedings be instituted against the chairperson and board members," he said.

A criminal case has since been opened and referred to law enforcement authorities, signalling a firm stance on accountability and consequence management.

Beyond governance, LGSETA has had to address complex financial challenges, including the aftermath of a cyberattack that compromised financial data.

"In light of the protracted engagements and the absence of a mutually agreed resolution, I resolved to close the matter and accept the findings as issued by the Auditor-General of South Africa," Mvalo said.

"This decision was taken in the interests of institutional stability and

governance certainty."

The organisation is now focused on rebuilding its financial systems, strengthening internal controls, and ensuring full compliance with audit requirements. The re-establishment of a functional audit and risk committee has been central to this effort, providing the oversight needed to prevent future irregularities.

“
Ultimately, tough decisions require balancing firmness with fairness. —
Zukile Mvalo

Despite internal challenges, LGSETA has maintained its core mandate of supporting skills development within the local government sector.

"LGSETA's 2025/26 municipal support portfolio reflects a substantial pipeline of skills development support directed at local government institutions across the country," Mvalo said.

The current portfolio includes more than 800 municipal-linked projects across 132 municipalities, representing over 15,000 planned learner opportunities and an investment exceeding R500 million.

"The portfolio is not confined to classroom training. It is oriented toward practical municipal capability in priority areas such as infrastructure, water and sanitation, finance, revenue management, governance, and technical trades," he added.

These programmes are designed to address real capacity gaps within

municipalities, ensuring that skills development translates into improved service delivery on the ground.

In addition to direct training programmes, LGSETA is leveraging partnerships to drive innovation and reform within the sector.

Strategic initiatives include municipal support programmes, youth employment pathways, and specialised training in areas such as infrastructure development and digital skills. These efforts are aimed at strengthening local government capacity while creating opportunities for unemployed youth and graduates.

By working with key stakeholders, LGSETA is positioning itself as a catalyst for change within the broader skills development ecosystem.

Operational stability has remained a key priority throughout the administration. Decisions such as the extension of the organisation's office lease have been taken to ensure continuity while longer-term solutions are finalised.

"The current lease extension is intended to safeguard operational continuity and service delivery while enabling proper handover of the premises," Mvalo said.

He noted that the decision was supported by internal legal advice, with an external legal opinion also commissioned to ensure full compliance.

At the same time, internal organisational processes are being reviewed to improve efficiency and address stakeholder concerns. Engagements with organised labour and other stakeholders are ongoing, ensuring that reforms are implemented transparently and inclusively.

LGSETA's stabilisation is guided by a comprehensive workplan covering governance, financial management, service delivery, stakeholder engagement, and

organisational development.

Looking ahead, Mvalo confirmed that the organisation is working toward exiting administration with stable leadership structures in place.

"The plan is to have both the chief executive officer and the board by the end of July 2026," he said.

This transition is expected to mark the completion of the administration phase and the beginning of a new chapter for the organisation.

Mvalo's leadership approach is firmly grounded in legal compliance, evidence-based decision-making, and accountability.

"Compliance with the legal and regulatory framework is non-negotiable, as it provides the foundation for legitimacy and accountability," he said.

He emphasised that all decisions are carefully considered and documented to ensure transparency and withstand scrutiny.

"Ultimately, tough decisions require balancing firmness with fairness," he said.

This approach has been critical in navigating the complex challenges facing LGSETA while maintaining focus on long-term sustainability.

For Mvalo, the ultimate goal extends beyond stabilisation to building a sustainable and credible institution.

"My aspiration is for LGSETA to become an employer of choice, both internally and externally," he said.

He added that success will be measured by the organisation's ability to deliver on its mandate with integrity and consistency.

"Ultimately, I would measure success by whether the LGSETA is positioned for sustainability, supported by strengthened systems, disciplined processes, and a culture of accountability," Mvalo said.



Taking charge: Administrator Zukile Christopher Mvalo has assumed full executive responsibility for stabilising the LGSETA. Photo: Eddie Mtsweni

Skilling Mzansi — Advertorial



Important workers: Local government needs skilled people in a variety of different roles, from firefighters to town planners, office clerks to water technologists, and nurses to electrical engineers. Photos: Vecteezy.com

Education News

Teacher shortages and weak foundations blamed for maths decline in SA schools

CHARMAINE NDLELA

South Africa is experiencing a steady decline in the number of learners choosing pure mathematics, raising concerns among education experts and policymakers about the country's future skills pipeline.

According to a report by the Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2009 was the first year in which South Africa had more learners doing pure mathematics, with 51.1%, than maths lit, with 48.9%. Since then, the number of learners taking pure mathematics has been declining in the education sector.

Mmusi Maimane MP, leader of Build One South Africa, says the problem begins long before learners reach high school.

Speaking to *Inside Education*, Maimane said weak foundations in primary education are a major reason many learners struggle with mathematics later in their schooling.

"The first problem you've got to confront is that at primary school, many young people cannot read for meaning by the age of 10," he said.

"And if a learner cannot read for meaning, it becomes extremely difficult for them to understand mathematics because mathematics requires comprehension and problem-solving."

Maimane also highlighted the lack of strong mathematics teaching at an early stage.

"Your primary school teachers are often not there to give the basic concepts. Once a child is not prepared for mathematics at primary school, they struggle when they get to high school," he said.

He added that South Africa must strengthen its pipeline of mathematics teachers if the country wants to reverse the trend.

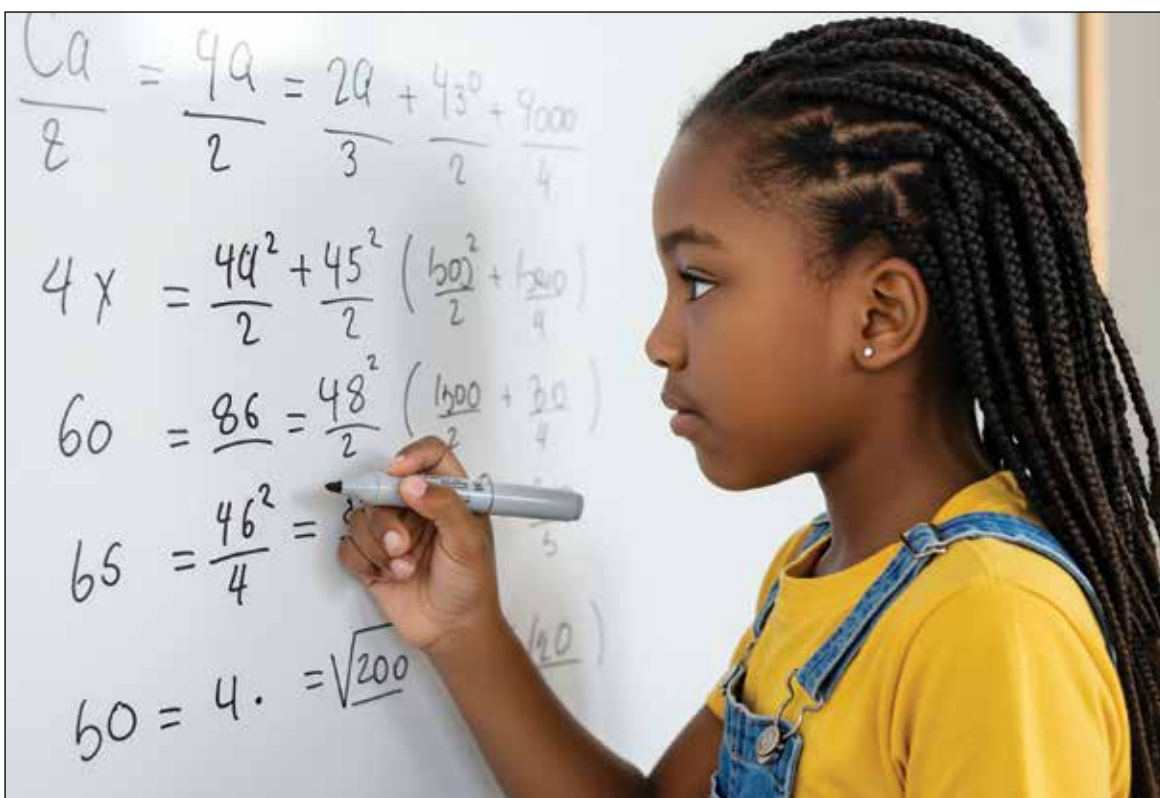
"If you are a maths teacher, you are highly skilled, and you can work in many other industries. Many teachers leave for the private sector because they can earn more money there," he said.

"That means schools, especially those in rural areas or townships, are left without qualified teachers."

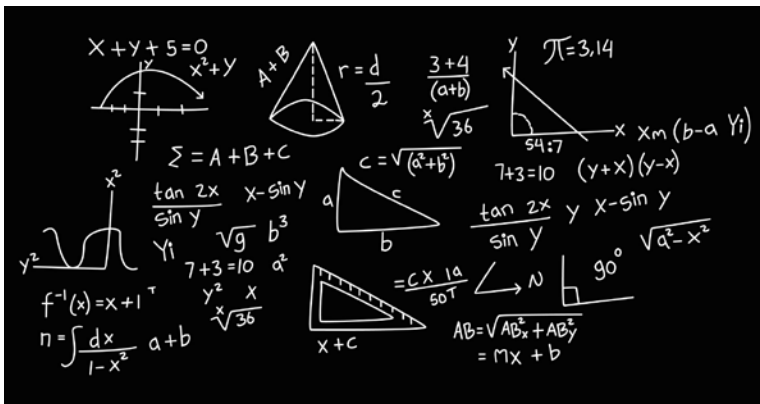
Maimane said the government needs to introduce stronger incentives to attract and retain mathematics teachers.

"Incentives must be put on the table. We need to reward mathematics and science teachers better and make the profession attractive again," he said.

He also stressed the importance of investing in the next generation of teachers. "When we see learners who are excelling in maths and science in Grade 11 or Grade 12, we should already be supporting them with bursa-



Mastering maths: Mmusi Maimane says "fixing the foundation phase is critical if we want more learners to succeed in mathematics." Photo: Vecteezy.com



ries and encouraging them to become teachers," he said.

"If we don't grow that pipeline of teachers, the shortage will continue."

Maimane warned that the consequences of declining mathematics participation could affect the country's economic growth.

"If South Africa does not have the skills in mathematics and science, companies that want to invest in technology, engineering or artificial intelligence will simply move to other countries," he said.

"Young people then become unemployed because they do not have the skills needed in the modern economy."

He also emphasised that parents must play a stronger role in supporting education.

"The success of education is not only determined in the classroom. Parents must be involved in their children's education," he said.

"When parents are engaged with schools, learners are more likely to stay motivated and perform better."

According to the DBE, the number of matric learners taking mathematics has dropped significantly from 46% in 2011 to 34% in 2023. In 2024, the number of learners registered for mathematics dropped to 255,762, which is more than 12,000 fewer learners compared to the previous year.

The department says the decline is influenced by several factors, including limited resources, teacher shortages and low learner enrolment in mathematics streams.

A parliamentary reply also revealed that 464 public schools across South Africa do not offer pure mathematics.

KwaZulu-Natal has the highest number, with 135 schools not offering mathematics, followed by the Eastern Cape with 84, Limpopo with 78, and the Western Cape with 61.

Experts warn that if the number of learners studying mathematics continues to decline, South Africa could face serious economic consequences.

in Grade 10, hopes to pursue a career in information technology.

"He wants to do IT after matric, so mathematics is very important for him. But right now they are being taught by a teacher who normally teaches a different subject," she said.

"We are hoping the learners will still manage to pass, but it is worrying." Another parent, Matseke Kekana, believes many learners struggle because they lack strong foundations in mathematics from earlier grades.

"Most learners do not have the basics of mathematics," she said.

"They already have gaps from previous grades, so when they reach high school, it becomes very difficult for them to continue with pure mathematics."

Some parents say learners often switch to mathematical literacy because they fear failing mathematics.

Bulelwa Metuse shared that learners sometimes need additional support outside the classroom.

"Get your child some help, extra lessons, YouTube and lots of practice at home," she said.

Some learners say their subject choices were influenced by peer pressure and perceptions about the difficulty of mathematics.

Samkelo Zikode said choosing mathematical literacy in Grade 10 had long-term consequences for his studies. "My biggest academic mistake was choosing mathematical literacy in Grade 10," he said.

"That decision still affects me today because I lost many bursary opportunities." Grade 12 learner Endinawo Mbolompo from Lindelani Secondary School in the Eastern Cape said she chose pure mathematics because of her dream career.

"I want to be a doctor," she said. "I like maths because I understand it. Many of my classmates did not choose it because they found it difficult."

The DBE says it is implementing several initiatives to address the decline in mathematics participation, including strengthening early learning programmes, improving teacher training and expanding support through the Mathematics, Science and Technology Conditional Grant.

However, experts say reversing the trend will require sustained investment in teachers, resources and foundational learning.

As Maimane puts it: "Mathematics is a progressive subject. If a learner misses the basics, they struggle later. That is why fixing the foundation phase is critical if we want more learners to succeed in mathematics."

Academic expert Mamokgethi Phakeng argues that many learners develop weak numeracy skills early on, making it harder to grasp more advanced concepts later. Juan Botha, an academic expert at the University of the Free State who promotes student mental health and wellbeing, said the stigma around mathematics contributes to fewer learners choosing the subject.

"Mathematics requires more time and critical thinking, but it is doable if it is taught properly," he said.

Botha added that learners need teachers who can explain concepts and problem-solving processes rather than simply teaching methods to memorise.

Parents in some communities say the shortage of mathematics teachers has been a long-standing challenge.

Speaking to *Inside Education*, Vuyokazi Dasi, a parent from Whittlesea in the Eastern Cape, said the problem at her child's school, Sovuka Sikhanyane Secondary School, has persisted for years.

"The problem with a maths teacher at the school has been ongoing since 2006 when I was doing matric," she said.

"Since then, there has never been a permanent maths teacher. Sometimes volunteers come and go, but it is not stable."

She said parents were once asked to contribute money to pay a temporary mathematics teacher.

"The school collected money from parents to pay a maths teacher, but eventually the teacher left, and no one replaced them," she said.

Dasi said her son, who is currently

Education News

Mother tongue education will boost literacy in South Africa

LEBONE RODAH MOSIMA

South Africa's literacy crisis cannot be addressed through textbooks alone and requires greater access to enjoyable stories in children's home languages.

This is according to Nal'ibali executive director Lorato Trok, who said the organisation works with children up to the age of 12 to build a culture of reading while reinforcing the value of their languages and identity.

"We are a reading for enjoyment campaign, focusing on stories and making resources available that bring joy to children," Trok said.

Nal'ibali provides story resources in homes, Early Childhood Development centres, and to children outside of preschools, while also running family literacy programmes to reach children outside organised education.

"We visit homes and speak with parents about the importance of stories for children, emphasising home languages — so our resources mostly focus on home languages," Trok said.

She said that children are not being taught in their familiar languages, referencing the reading panel report that found one in three Grade 3 learners cannot read for meaning.

"The solution is mother-tongue-based education, and we don't need to look far to see that it works," she said.

Children taught in their native languages tend to outperform their peers, who are expected to learn in unfamiliar languages, but most South African learners lack the opportunity to be taught in their home languages in schools.

"We can produce all the English books in the world, but it won't improve our country or the results we see every day — it's a dead end," she said.

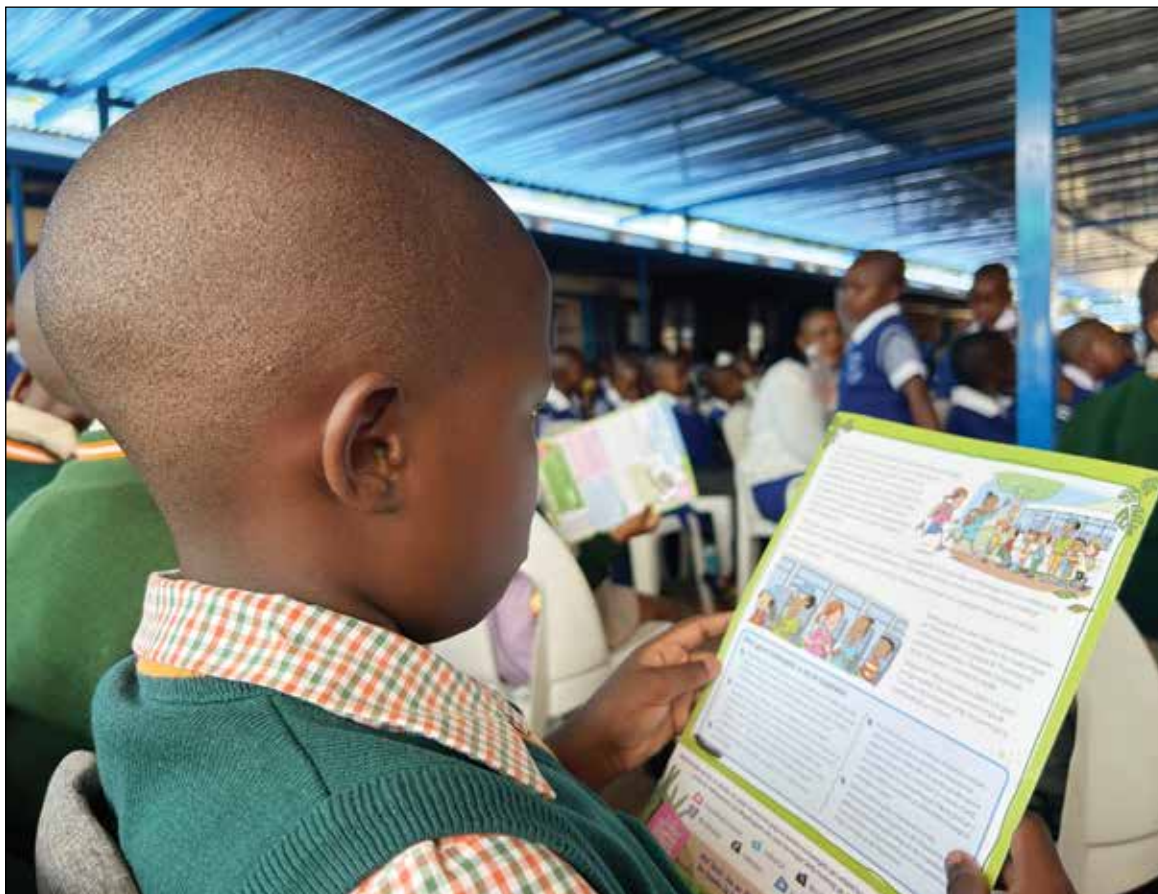
Trok added that mother tongue learning enables self-expression in conversation. Nal'ibali provides stories in various languages, aiming to instil pride in these languages by involving parents from different communities in the education system.

She said that literacy is more than just reading and writing; it's a lifelong skill, and oral literacy should not be overlooked because it plays a crucial role in language development.

Trok highlighted the importance of children owning books early on, saying they are vital to a child's learning and contribution to society.

But she also cautioned against viewing literacy solely through a "Western, book-centred lens".

Many South African households — particularly those led by grandparents who have never been in a classroom — have long used oral storytelling as



Mind expanding: Youngsters enjoy storybooks at a reading session provided by Nal'ibali, an NPO that runs over 1,200 community reading clubs nationwide and distributes books to encourage community reading. Photo: Nal'ibali

a powerful form of literacy, she said.

"We have oral stories and oral literature — it's not just a book; it all starts with orality". Nal'ibali supports storytelling through broadcasts on SABC radio stations in 13 languages, including Khoisan languages, as well as through reading clubs and mobile "hanging classroom libraries" placed in schools and homes without formal libraries. These mobile libraries are free, providing children with accessible reading materials.

"It's very hard for a parent when children are hungry, and you have to choose between bread and a book. A book [then] seems useless — you want to feed your children," Trok said.

She said that South Africa's poor reading outcomes are closely linked to language policies.

"Since we advocate for reading for fun, which is part of our curriculum, play is essential. We play because stories are words that help in reading textbooks and prescribed books and writing essays," she said.

"Fun words, enjoyable stories, and learning in home languages — research confirms that mastering your home language makes it easier to learn a second or third language."

Trok expressed concern that the lack of relevant reading materials remains a major barrier, especially in rural and under-resourced communities, where many schools lack libraries or only possess outdated donated books that do not reflect children's lives.

Nal'ibali attempts to bridge this gap by running over 1,200 community

reading clubs nationwide and distributing books to encourage community reading. However, funding remains the organisation's greatest challenge.

The organisation does not receive direct government funding. Instead, it relies on private donors like the DG Murray Trust, which founded and continues to support the programme, while partnering with the Department of Basic Education to access public schools.

"We need funds for translating, editing, supporting authors, and printing, especially for initiatives like World Read Aloud Day, which started in sign language and was translated into other languages, plus braille," she said.

"Mass production of resources across the country is always funding-dependent." Similarly, culturally relevant content and illustrations are crucial. Trok said that many imported children's books, especially from the US and UK, depict scenes unfamiliar to South African children, such as snowy Christmas landscapes.

"Christmas at home is hot and summery in December. So, it's

Smart move: Nal'ibali executive director Lorato Trok applauded the government's efforts to introduce mother tongue-based bilingual education. Photo: Nal'ibali

dominated by textbooks, with storybooks — key to reading enjoyment — being neglected.

She applauded the government's efforts to introduce mother tongue-based bilingual education and called for more original storybooks in native languages, with less translation.

"Education is everyone's business," Trok said. "African languages are good for the economy. We need to overhaul the system to respect and resource African languages. That's how we become a winning nation."

Children's books are "a huge business", according to Andrea Pappenheimer, the former senior vice-president and associate publisher of the children's division at HarperCollins Publishers.

Pappenheimer said publishers faced stiff competition not only from rival companies but also from television, video games and smartphones competing for children's attention.

She believes reading habits need to be nurtured first at home.

"It's got to be a combination of being exposed at home to books and parents who encourage you, who have the resources and who have to buy a book or go to a library — reading is the most important skill that a child can acquire."

"Whenever I see a child with a book, I always ask, 'How do you like the book? What else are you reading?' Because reading is so important," she added.



Higher Education



Sky's the limit: UNISA's airport facility is expected to support specialised programmes in aeronautical engineering, drone technology, advanced digital systems and space science. Photo: Vecteezy.com

UNISA makes history as the first African university to own an airport

CHARMAINE NDLELA

The University of South Africa (UNISA) has made history by becoming the first university on the African continent to own an airport, marking a bold shift towards practical, skills-based education.

The 20-hectare facility will serve as a training and research hub for aviation, drone technology and advanced digital systems — giving students hands-on experience in industries shaping the future of Africa's economy.

Vice-Chancellor Puleng LenkaBula confirmed the milestone during a recent media briefing, describing the acquisition as a strategic investment in innovation and real-world learning.

"This 20-hectare airport will give our students a unique opportunity to apply their studies in practice and gain skills that are in high demand in the aviation and engineering industries," she said.

LenkaBula added that the facility would act as a "launchpad for future innovators", enabling UNISA to expand beyond its traditional distance-learning model into more practical, technical training.

Beyond aviation, UNISA is strengthening its continental research footprint through strategic partnerships across Africa. A recent high-level visit to Namibia culminated in the signing of an agreement with the University of Namibia, advancing the Africa Millimetre Telescope project.

In February, LenkaBula, accompanied by senior management, academics, astrophysics student researchers and professional staff, met with University of Namibia vice-chancellor Kenneth Matengu to affirm a joint commitment to African-led research infrastructure, postgraduate development and long-term scientific collaboration.

"The Africa Millimetre Telescope is not simply a scientific instrument; it



UNISA Vice-Chancellor Puleng LenkaBula describes the airport facility to be built at the university as a "launchpad for future innovators", enabling it to expand beyond its traditional distance-learning model into more practical, technical training. Photo: UNISA

is an expression of Africa's intellectual ambition," LenkaBula said. "Through this partnership, we are strengthening African-led research infrastructure and ensuring that our continent contributes meaningfully to global knowledge production.

"We are investing not only in a telescope but also in people, postgraduate development and sustainable scientific ecosystems that will serve Africa for generations," she said. Further clarity on the airport acquisition was provided by Professor BB Senokoane, executive director of institutional advancement and university spokesperson.

Senokoane said the acquisition forms part of UNISA's broader strategic programme to activate one of its 10 catalytic niche areas — aviation and aeronautical studies.

"The initiative involves introducing formal academic programmes in aviation and aeronautical sciences. To ensure students receive world-class, practice-based training, UNISA is

also securing relevant facilities where practical learning, skills development and research can take place," he said.

He added that the airport will serve as a critical platform for practical training for students enrolled in these programmes. Senokoane said the university is finalising all modalities, requirements and business processes linked to the acquisition.

"Once these processes are completed, UNISA will publicly communicate full details relating to the facility, its academic integration and its long-term value to the higher education and skills ecosystem," he said.

The airport strengthens UNISA's catalytic niche area in aviation and aeronautical studies and positions the institution at the forefront of research, skills development and technological advancement on the continent.

The facility is expected to support specialised programmes in aeronau-

tical engineering, drone technology, advanced digital systems and space science.

"This facility will open opportunities for our students, our academics and society at large to advance skills in aviation and related fields. This is history in the making," LenkaBula said.

The announcement comes as UNISA reflects on five years of resilience and growth amid a complex global and national environment.

"Over the past five years, our institution has demonstrated resilience and strength, navigating a complex global, national and sectoral environment with focus and determination," LenkaBula said.

The university has recorded improvements in global rankings, including the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings and the Academic Ranking of World Universities.

Locally, UNISA ranks among the top 10 institutions for research output, with growth in digitalisation,

biotechnology, renewable energy and the social sciences.

The institution continues to play a key role in developing high-level skills for South Africa and the continent. UNISA produces more than 50,000 graduates a year, including over 500 doctoral and more than 900 master's graduates.

Founded in 1873, UNISA is one of the largest universities in the world, serving more than 400,000 students globally. It is widely recognised as a pioneer in open and distance e-learning.

"We are a university of firsts," LenkaBula said, highlighting its long-standing role in expanding access to higher education across South Africa, the continent and beyond.

The airport acquisition, alongside expanding continental partnerships, further cements this reputation — positioning UNISA as a leader in both practical training and cutting-edge research.

The airport is expected to be officially launched between April and May 2026, with specialised programmes in aviation and drone technology set to roll out alongside the facility.

Beyond training, the airport is also expected to serve as a regional hub for collaboration with other African nations seeking to modernise their aviation sectors.

At the same time, initiatives such as the Africa Millimetre Telescope project signal UNISA's growing role in shaping Africa's scientific future.

UNISA has reiterated its commitment to expanding access to high-quality, future-oriented education while driving innovation that contributes to national development and global knowledge production.

As Africa's aviation and scientific sectors evolve, UNISA's latest move underscores a forward-looking approach — equipping students with the skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing, technology-driven world.

Advertorial — Skilling Mzansi



MQA marks 30 years with focus on jobs, technology and energy transition

THAPELO MOLEFE

The Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA) has used its 30th anniversary to highlight a central question facing South Africa's mining sector: how to turn skills development into real jobs in an industry undergoing rapid technological and structural change.

Speaking to *Inside Education* on the sidelines of the WorldSkills South Africa conference at the Durban International Convention Centre, MQA CEO Dr Thabo Mashongoane said artisan training and internships remain the strongest pathways into employment.

"I would say both programmes in the form of artisanship have delivered the strongest kind of employment opportunities," Mashongoane said, pointing to trades such as electricians, boilermakers and welders.

"The sector needed more of the skilled labour force on the basis that the sector is now advanced in terms of technology and movement from the old system of manual labour."

He said this shift has resulted in more workers being absorbed into skilled roles.

"That's a big jump in terms of a lot of young people as well as the current workforce being absorbed as artisans," he said.

Mashongoane added that internship programmes linked to bursary funding have also shown strong employment outcomes.

"After we have funded the bursary beneficiaries from universities as engineers or geologists, we then provide an opportunity for them to become interns, and most of them then get absorbed after the internship," he said.

"So, because of the need in the mining space, they needed highly qualified people. That is why you saw a big jump in terms of those programmes in terms of absorption."

The anniversary, marked at Gallagher Estate, reflects three decades of the MQA's role in coordinating skills development in the mining and minerals sector since 1995.

Between the 2003/04 and 2024/25 financial years, the authority supported more than 458,000 beneficiaries and delivered close to one million skills programme opportunities. Over the same period, nearly R12 billion in discretionary grants was allocated.

Mashongoane said this highlights the role of SETAs in expanding access to post-school education and training.

"You need a dedicated body to coordinate skills development, and SETAs have accumulated a body of knowledge that is invaluable," he said.

"SETAs fund a significant proportion of students in the post-school



Rapid evolution: MQA CEO Dr Thabo Mashongoane says the mining sector is evolving rapidly due to the adoption of advanced technologies across different subsectors. Photo: Eddie Mtsweni

system, contributing to broader access to education and training."

Mashongoane said the mining sector is evolving rapidly due to the adoption of advanced technologies across different subsectors.

"What is clear is we see data analytics coming up because we need more information in terms of the operations of the mines," he said.

"So whatever is going to be extracted, the volumes, the speed at which it is going to be extracted, you need more information. So data analytics plays a key critical role."

He said automation is also becoming central to mining operations, particularly in improving safety.

"We want to promote remote operations. While people have not gone totally underground, you can stand still and send machinery," he said.

"So automation then becomes key, especially to reach those very dangerous, faraway underground areas."

Mashongoane emphasised that safety and health remain central, with new technologies supporting monitoring and risk detection.

"Safety remains the bedrock of the mining space. We are now becoming more conscious of the health factors and how people are going to be affected," he said.

"It does incorporate data analytics in relation to the detection of hazardous areas and healthy environments."

He added that environmental considerations are also shaping skills demand.

"We are not just going to be operating a mine and leave the environment the way it is. There are now rules and regulations," he said.

"So you see, we need additional skills and capabilities that were not a priority previously. They are now a priority because of the new policies and new way of doing business in the mines."

The MQA is also aligning its programmes with South Africa's Just Energy Transition, particularly as coal regions face restructuring. Mashongoane said reskilling programmes are being rolled out to support unemployed artisans.

"We have started programmes where we find unemployed artisans, then we upskill and reskill them," he said.

"In KwaZulu-Natal, there has been a programme that catered for more than 100 learners in terms of reskilling on solar technology." He said similar initiatives are underway in Gauteng and the Northern Cape.

"We are also in the Gauteng region, working on a similar project. In the Northern Cape region, we have also rolled out the 4IR-related technologies to some of the learners," he said.

Mashongoane added that universities and TVET colleges are beginning to embed emerging technologies di-

rectly into their teaching, ensuring students gain exposure to skills now in high demand in the mining and energy sectors.

"In universities, it is already subsumed within their curriculum development processes as either electives or additional components of what the students must then know," he said.

He highlighted partnerships with institutions, including the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and the Central University of Technology (CUT), to deliver hands-on experience in areas such as green hydrogen, solar technology, and other renewable energy solutions.

Mashongoane said the registration of learners for green hydrogen economy projects is scheduled to begin around April or May this year.

"We are going to roll out, together with CUT and UJ, programmes to register learners on green hydrogen economy-related projects around April or May," he said.

He also mentioned collaboration with the CSIR to support simulation-based and virtual reality platforms, giving students practical exposure before entering the workplace.

"There are several interventions that we are beginning to adopt and roll out, including simulation rooms and virtual reality platforms where students get used to the technologies they will encounter in industry," he said.

Mashongoane said South Africa's post-school education system is under increasing pressure due to growing matriculant numbers and limited capacity at universities and TVET colleges.

"One option is online learning because if institutions are full, they cannot take more than what they are built for," he said.

He suggested optimising existing facilities through a "platooning" system, where teaching schedules are staggered, and additional staff are employed to allow more students to use the same infrastructure.

"Many TVET colleges end their sessions at one, two, or three o'clock in the afternoon, and then the buildings sit empty," he said.

"Why don't you employ additional staff and run classes from four o'clock up until eight or nine every day, so the buildings are in use, and you can take another block of students? This way, you make optimal use of existing facilities and reduce the number of learners who cannot get access because institutions are full."

Mashongoane said simulation-based facilities could also help when workplace placements are limited, allowing learners to gain practical skills safely and effectively.

"If learners are not going to find a workplace, they can go to a simulation set-up. It gives a person a sense of what happens in the mining space," he said.

"It is like driver's lessons. You are put into a simulation room, you are trained, and then you gain confidence before going into the real world."

Mashongoane said deeper collaboration across the sector is essential to improve outcomes.

"There will not be any progress until there is a common understanding of what the needs are," he said.

He said platforms such as the WorldSkills South Africa conference are important in building alignment between government, industry and training institutions.

"We need to go in the direction where employers feel that they are involved and have a say, even in co-designing the curricula," he said.

"If you do research, do not just come back with results. Involve them so that by the end, they say they have been part of it."

As the MQA enters its fourth decade, Mashongoane said the focus will be on strengthening partnerships and ensuring the sector is equipped with the skills required for a changing economy.

"With the industry remaining a key contributor to the economy, we must ensure that the skills base is ready," he said.

National Education Summit



Energised: Delegates wait for a panel discussion to take place at the National Education Summit. Photo: Eddie Mtsweni

Fixing the pipeline: the focus turns to implementation

THEBE MABANGA

The Inside Education Foundation hosted the National Education Summit on the 20th of April in Johannesburg, under the theme “Fixing the Education Pipeline: from Early Childhood to Transformative Livelihoods”.

The summit explored this theme under three pillars: Early Childhood Development, Entrepreneurship Education and Vocational Skills as Pathways to Employment.

The summit made bold declarations on each of these, but also emphasised the need for implementation.

Matuma Letsoalo, chairman of the Inside Education Foundation, said: “The response and outcomes of the summit energise us. It shows that this country has many stakeholders who care deeply about the education system and the people it serves. If we can put similar energy into implementation, a lot of challenges faced by the education sector can be overcome.”

On ECD, the summit resolved on the need for a commitment to universal access to quality ECD. The summit agreed that ECD does not need to be made compulsory by law at this stage, as this will require additional resources and enforcement.

The gathering was told that parents need to be encouraged to enrol children at the appropriate age and be taught about the benefits of ECD while access is improved through the building of more facilities.

The declarations also called for parents to be taught the importance of the first 1,000 days of a child’s life and their role in their development.

The event also called for a tweak in the funding model to include investment in the improvement of quality beyond payment for practitioner training and infrastructure.



Charting the future of education: Learners, teachers and a wide variety of education stakeholders attended the summit. Photos: Eddie Mtsweni

“There needs to be investment in the ECD workforce and infrastructure and to capacitate principals through leadership training,” said Dr Monica Tash, CEO of Cotlands.

On entrepreneurship education, delegates called for the integration of entrepreneurship across the curriculum and to place learners in different career paths for university entry.

They also called for a redesign of the curriculum to include an introduction to basic entrepreneurship in education and to make it more practical than theoretical.

The summit also called for strengthening partnerships with the private sector and SMMEs.

Delegates said there needs to be a system-wide approach for repositioning TVET. This must include reviewing the positions of principals and creating a central platform for all TVET colleges while retaining their autonomy and drive for efficiency.

This repositioning must include funding review, articulation of movement from TVET to university, improving partnerships between TVET and corporates and marketing it better to the public.

Higher Education and Training Minister Buti Manamela highlighted the plight of the 3,4 million young South Africans who are not in education, employment or training.

Manamela urged delegates to come up with solutions that benefit this group and set them on the path to employment.

DELEGATES’ DECISIVE DECLARATIONS

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

- **Commitment to universal access to quality ECD:** ECD does not need to be made compulsory by law at this stage. But parents need to be encouraged to enrol children at the appropriate age and be taught about the benefits of ECD while access is improved through building more ECDs.
- **Invest more in parents:** To enable them to complement ECD work at home including through technology and digital platforms. Bearing in mind the digital divide, in some areas, resources such as hard books and stationery can be used.
- **Strengthening literacy and numeracy outcomes:** Including through partnerships and resource sharing between better-resourced ECDs and those which may be from deprived areas.
- **Make the first 1000 days more formally monitored and documented:** Teach parents about the benefits of the crucial period of development and document development milestones and indicators.
- **Tweaking of the funding model:** In addition to per-child-per-day spending, practitioner training and infrastructure spending, there needs to be spending on the improvement of quality or “mentorship and support” spending.
- **There needs to be investment in the ECD workforce and infrastructure:** Capacitate principals through leadership training.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

- Integration of entrepreneurship across the curriculum and training children in different career paths for university entry.
- Redesign curriculum from introduction to basic entrepreneurship in education at various levels, and make it more practical and theoretical.
- Strengthening partnerships with the private sector and SMMEs and giving access to markets and opportunities as early as Grade 10.
- Build a stakeholder partnership for professionals to become entrepreneurs.
- Provide mentorship and raise awareness of training and mentorship opportunities.
- Post-school education must include entrepreneurship education, and universities must get involved in training entrepreneurs and offer financial literacy training.

VOCATIONAL PATHWAYS

- There needs to be a system-wide approach for repositioning TVET. This must include reviewing the positions of principals and creating a central platform for all TVET colleges while retaining their autonomy and drive for efficiency.
- This repositioning must include funding review, articulation of movement from TVET to university, improve partnership between TVET and corporates and market it better to the public
- Expand work-integrated learning opportunities.

IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

- * Focus on execution of existing policies.
- * Measurable outcomes and monitoring mechanisms.
- * Shared accountability across stakeholders.
- * Youth Employability
- * Targeted interventions for NEET youth.
- * Expansion of skills programmes linked to economic sectors.

National Education Summit

‘Access alone is not enough — we must focus on quality, relevance and outcomes’

THAPELO MOLEFE

The National Education Summit 2026 convened government, education leaders, business and civil society to confront persistent challenges in South Africa’s education

system and propose practical solutions to improve learner outcomes and skills development.

Hosted by the Inside Education Foundation, the summit focused on weaknesses across the pipeline — from early childhood development to post-school training — aiming

to better align learning with the demands of a rapidly evolving, digital economy.

Key concerns included weak literacy and numeracy foundations, high dropout rates, and a mismatch between education outputs and labour market needs. Delegates also

explored expanding vocational and technical pathways and strengthening entrepreneurship as alternatives to traditional academic routes.

Inside Education Foundation chairperson Matuma Letsoalo said the summit comes at a critical time and urged a shift beyond access.

“Access alone is not enough. We must focus on quality, relevance and outcomes,” he said.

Letsoalo emphasised the need for stronger collaboration to drive meaningful reform and better prepare young people for further education, employment and entrepreneurship.



Addressing the issues: Delegates at the National Education Summit discussed a wide range of challenges with energised enthusiasm. Inside Education Foundation chairman Matuma Letsoalo (pictured top left with Minister Buti Manamela) told the gathering that if they brought the same energy to implementation “a lot of the challenges facing the education sector can be overcome”.
Photos: Eddie Mtsweni

VHEMBE TVET COLLEGE RENEWABLE ENERGY CENTRE

Proudly sponsored by
EWSETA and the Chinese Culture
and International Education
Exchange Centre



POWERING SOUTH AFRICA'S FUTURE: FROM SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TO ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

South Africa's Just Energy Transition requires more than infrastructure. It requires the right skills—delivered at scale, aligned to industry, and focused on real opportunity.



EWSETA IN ACTION

As the sector skills authority for the energy and water sectors, EWSETA:

- ✓ Anticipates skills needs
- ✓ Drives demand-led skills development
- ✓ Invests in modern skills infrastructure
- ✓ Creates pathways to employment and entrepreneurship

We are shifting the focus from outputs to outcomes that change lives.

BUILDING FUTURE-FIT SKILLS SYSTEMS

Our flagship initiative at **Vhembe TVET College** in partnership with the **Chinese Culture and International Education Exchange Centre** delivers:

- ✓ Hands-on training in solar, wind and battery technologies
- ✓ International exposure to global best practice
- ✓ Strengthened TVET capacity
- ✓ Real pathways to jobs, enterprise and innovation

A full value chain approach that creates lasting impact.

EXPANDING PATHWAYS, CREATING OPPORTUNITY

EWSETA is enabling young South Africans to:

- ✓ Gain in-demand technical skills.
- ✓ Enter the growing renewable energy sector
- ✓ Build sustainable livelihoods and businesses

From training to participation—that's the shift that matters.

YOUR FUTURE IN ENERGY *Starts Here*

- ✓ Build a career in a future-focused industry
- ✓ Start your own business in renewable energy
- ✓ Play a role in solving South Africa's energy challenges

From training to employment — the full value chain starts here. And you can be part of it.

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS. STRONGER IMPACT.



Through strategic partnerships with government, industry, education institutions and international collaborators, EWSETA is building a responsive, scalable skills system that supports inclusive growth, community development and a just energy future for all South Africans.

“ Success is no longer defined by the number of learners trained, but by the number of lives changed and opportunities created. ”

“ The Just Energy Transition is not only about decarbonisation—it is about inclusion. ”

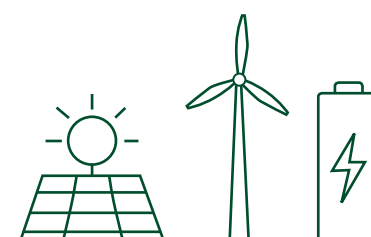
THE SHIFT THAT MATTERS

South Africa's energy transition presents both a challenge and an opportunity. The outcome will depend on the extent to which we are able to build a skills system that enables meaningful participation.

This is the shift that matters.

Through **EWSETA's** mandate, partnerships and targeted initiatives, we are driving this shift—from training for its own sake to enabling real economic participation.

And this is how a more inclusive, future-fit South Africa is being built.



EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES IN
THE ENERGY AND WATER SECTOR
Visit: www.ewseta.org.za



Follow EWSETA on LinkedIn for updates, opportunities and sector insights.

Governance

College of Cape Town gets new lease on life

Administrator and team will review all aspects of the college's operations

THEBE MABANGA

Dr Robert Nkuna, who has been appointed administrator of the College of Cape Town for a period not exceeding two years, sees his role as more than just stabilising governance at the institution or taking action against individuals who are found to have engaged in corruption.

Nkuna takes a broad, holistic view and brings his academic and bureaucratic rigour to the role. He and his team intend to use this opportunity to review all aspects of the college operations, including infrastructure, content, and the overall positioning of the college, as well as its oversight. "I would like the work that we do here to become a blueprint of how to guide an institution under administration," says Nkuna.

Nkuna says South Africa has to interrogate why so many public service institutions suffer governance failures when there are rules to govern all aspects of operation. "The public service is a highly regulated space. There are rules for appointment, promotion and discipline. The question now is whether governance lapses occur because people are not aware of the rules or because they know them but choose to ignore them." He leans towards the latter explanation.

Nkuna notes that overregulation "leaves no room for creativity" and yet "it has not fully solved the question of ethics", which is why there is widespread collapse in governance in the civil service, from municipalities to the matters raised in the Zondo commission on state capture and the Madlanga commission on criminal interference in the police and the justice system.

Nkuna says the country needs to reposition Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges as "vibrant centres of enterprise"

that young people want to attend in order to gain practical skills that lead to employment, rather than a place they go to when they have been rejected by universities. His first challenge is to help stabilise the college.

The College of Cape Town was established in 2002 by merging a number of colleges around the metro. It now has 10,000 students across eight campuses — in the central business district, Gardens, Athlone, Pinelands, Thornton, Wynberg, Gugulethu, and a teacher training college in Crawford.

Nkuna notes that there are disparities in infrastructure between historically deprived areas such as Gugulethu and Athlone compared to the college's other campuses. He would like to see these campuses upgraded as part of a broader overhaul for TVET colleges, including those in rural areas.

Nkuna also intends to use his background as a former director-general in the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies' Technology Innovation Agency to introduce digital programmes at TVET colleges and have the College of Cape Town included as part of the pilot programme.

The process that led to Nkuna being appointed as an administrator started in October 2025, following a parliamentary hearing at which, according to Higher Education and Training Minister Buti Manamela, the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education heard disturbing evidence of governance breakdown at the college.

Manamela then established a Stabilisation and Governance Support Team (SGST), led by Advocate Buti Skhosana SC, assisted by Professor Busani Ngcaweni and Joyce Nkopane, with a mandate to "investigate allegations of maladministration, mediate conflicts, and recommend measures to restore governance".

The SGST conducted its legwork



New broom: Minister of Higher Education and Training Buti Manamela says Dr Robert Nkuna (above), administrator of the College of Cape Town, brings strategic management, governance expertise and institutional integrity to a role that demands all three. Photo: Eddie Mtsweni

over October and November last year and reported in February. Manamela shared the report immediately with the College of Cape Town council, which has since been dissolved, and the parliamentary portfolio committee.

"The report's findings were sobering," Manamela said on its release. "It documented a collapse of governance oversight structures, irregular appointments and nepotism." Nkuna has since confirmed many of the findings.

For example, Manamela points to the council's decision to extend a security contract after a court had already declared it invalid as a sign of procurement irregularities. "The report confirmed that teaching and learning were being compromised and that students and staff were living in a climate of fear," Nkuna says.

The college principal and CEO, Dr Mhangarai Muswaba, was dismissed in February following an independent disciplinary process.

The SGST's primary recommendation was that Manamela dissolve the council and appoint an administrator in terms of section 46(4) of the Continuing Education and Training Act.

Manamela describes Nkuna's mandate as administrator as "comprehensive", starting by assuming all responsibilities of the college council, which is now deemed to have resigned.

"His priorities will be to stabilise operations immediately, commission a forensic audit, implement consequence management, rebuild governance structures, and ensure that students can continue their studies without disruption," said Manamela.

Nkuna says his establishment of a new council will include strengthening oversight to prevent the recurrence of a collapse in governance.

Nkuna points out that for trans-

gressions and malfeasance to thrive, there needs to be co-operation between people in the council as well as across various layers of management.

Nkuna says irregular appointments and procurement practices are at the heart of problems at the institution. Part of his brief is to review appointments and have these reversed or corrected.

Once he has overseen the appointment of council, he will help appoint five vice-principals in areas such as finance, human resources, IT and facilities management.

On procurement, Nkuna notes that "emergency procurement is the most abused practice in the public service" and that managers create "emergencies" to bypass procurement.

Manamela notes that "administration is not an end in itself. Its purpose is to protect and redirect public funds to the people they are meant to serve: workers, learners, young people seeking opportunity".

Nkuna feels the two years he has been given are enough, as if an administrator stays too long, "he can be sucked into power structures and become part of the problem".

He notes, however, that power blocks do not disappear with the departure of key individuals; they merely reorganise.

In the month since he joined the college, Nkuna has met all the key stakeholders, including all eight campus managers; the Students Representatives Council; and labour, represented by four unions — the National Professional Teachers Organisation of South Africa, the South African Democratic Teachers Union, the Public Service Association and the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union.

Nkuna has established terms of

engagement with students about the issues they can engage in and on what terms. These include the quality of facilities, course content and materials, and accommodation.

Nkuna says he has unanimous support from all four unions to implement the findings of the stabilising team, but he says the test for unions is not to back out when implementation adversely affects their members.

When announcing Nkuna's appointment, Manamela said he brings strategic management, governance expertise and institutional integrity to a role that demands all three.

Nkuna was, until last September, the director-general of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation. Before that, he was director-general of Communications and Digital Technologies and also served as a councillor at the communications regulator ICASA.

Over the course of his career, Nkuna has held several senior advisory roles, including serving as a ministerial adviser in the departments of Communications, Transport, and Energy. He holds a master's and a doctoral degree from the University of the Witwatersrand. His PhD is in Interdisciplinary Digital Economy Studies, focusing on research on the governance of the key network industries — electricity, telecommunications and transport.

Nkuna is also Professor of Practice at North-West University and serves as a Senior Fellow at the National School of Government.

He is the author of the book *Infrastructure and Regulation for Economic Development*, published by Palgrave Macmillan. He was focused on promoting the book when he received the call to take up the administrator role.

Education News

Gauteng subsidy 'realignment' leaves hundreds of schools scrambling to plug funding gap

THAPELO MOLEFE

More than 400 fee-paying public schools in Gauteng are scrambling to revise budgets, freeze staff posts and consider higher fees after a provincial funding "realignment" sharply reduced the per-learner subsidy many of them rely on.

School governing bodies say the change, which affects Quintile 5 schools, has left them with significant financial shortfalls after budgets for the 2026 school year had already been finalised and fees communicated to parents.

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has rejected claims that it slashed funding by 64%, insisting the move is an interim "realignment" to national funding norms introduced to stabilise the provincial education budget.

The department has also pushed back strongly against the criticism surrounding the move, describing the backlash as politically driven and based on misinformation.

But school finance experts warn that the practical effect is a sudden loss of hundreds of thousands of rand for many schools, forcing difficult decisions that could affect staffing, maintenance and fee structures.

Willem Kitshoff, chief executive of education technology company d6 Group, said the scale and timing of the change had created what he describes as a financial shock across the affected schools.

"For a school of about 1,200 learners, the loss is roughly R600,000 a year," Kitshoff told *Inside Education*.

"That is not a rounding error. It is a significant gap in a budget that had already been set."

Quintile 5 schools are classified as the least poor public schools and are allowed to charge fees. In Gauteng, however, they historically received a higher subsidy than the national minimum, placing Quintile 4 and Quintile 5 schools on similar funding levels.

Under the revised allocation, the subsidy for many Quintile 5 schools drops to the national minimum adequacy rate of about R315 per learner, down from previous allocations that were often more than double that amount.

Kitshoff said the impact is particularly severe because schools say they only received their allocation certificates after the statutory 30 September deadline by which governing bodies must finalise school budgets and fees for the following year.

"Schools completed their budget meetings, set fees and communicated those to parents before they knew this



Squeezed: Quintile 5 schools like Parktown High School for Girls in Johannesburg are under enormous pressure to manage an unexpected financial crisis as a result of the provincial funding "realignment". Photo: Parktown High School for Girls



Financial shock: Willem Kitshoff, chief executive of education technology company d6 Group, said, "the word 'realignment' suggests an orderly transition. What schools experienced was a cliff edge." Photo: Courtesy of Willem Kitshoff

change was coming," he said. "The word 'realignment' suggests an orderly transition. What schools experienced was a cliff edge."

The disruption has forced some governing bodies to reopen financial planning processes months after they were supposed to be concluded.

Data from school management systems used across thousands of schools indicates that many affected schools are urgently revising projections and reconsidering spending.

"The most immediate responses are fee increases, cutting SGB-funded posts, or deferring maintenance," Kitshoff said. "In reality, most schools will have to use a combination of all three."

Positions funded by school governing bodies, often referred to as SGB posts, include additional teachers, learning support staff and administrative personnel who supplement government-appointed staff.

Because these posts are funded directly from school budgets, they are among the first areas schools review when revenue falls.

"We are already seeing schools freeze posts or begin restructuring scenarios," Kitshoff said. "Those positions are critical to the functioning of many schools, but they are also the only part of the staffing structure that schools can adjust quickly."

The funding shift is also raising concerns for parents who have already committed to 2026 school fees.

Many Quintile 5 schools serve lower-middle-income families rather than wealthy communities, meaning fee increases may not be easily absorbed.

"The assumption that fee-paying schools are wealthy is incorrect," Kitshoff said. "Many parents are already stretching to pay fees because they want a better environment for their children."

He warned that higher fees could trigger a cycle of growing arrears and declining enrolment if families cannot keep up with payments.

"When schools raise fees to close a funding gap, some parents default. When defaults rise, the financial gap widens again," he said. "Breaking that cycle becomes extremely difficult."

The Gauteng Department of Education has defended the funding shift, saying it was necessary to manage se-

vere budget pressures facing the provincial education system.

In a statement, the department insisted that the move does not constitute a funding cut but rather a correction of historical funding patterns where some Quintile 5 schools in Gauteng received higher subsidies than the national adequacy levels.

"The process does not constitute a budget cut but rather a realignment to nationally prescribed adequacy rates, particularly correcting the historical funding of certain Quintile 5 fee-paying schools," the department said.

The department added that schools were formally notified through indicative budget allocation certificates issued in September 2025 and said the process was communicated in advance.

It said the realignment is a temporary stabilisation measure implemented after the province faced a R444 million shortfall in the current financial year and a projected R160 million gap over the medium-term expenditure framework period.

The department also insisted that key commitments, such as classroom teaching posts and learning and teaching support material payments, remain protected.

Former Education MEC Matome Chiloane said claims of a 64% reduction were "false, misleading and reckless", adding that they represented a deliberate distortion of information already placed in the public domain.

Chiloane also accused the Democratic Alliance (DA) of manufacturing outrage over the issue for political gain.

"The sudden outrage being man-

ufactured by the DA is disingenuous and politically opportunistic," he said.

"It is dishonest to accuse provinces of cutting school funding while remaining silent about the national budget cuts imposed by the National Treasury."

Chiloane added that provinces cannot be blamed for implementing funding norms determined at the national level and called on critics to direct their concerns to the Department of Basic Education, which sets the national funding framework.

"If there is a petition to be delivered, it should be delivered to the Department of Basic Education, which is responsible for national funding norms and allocations, and which the DA itself leads," he said.

"Provinces cannot be scapegoated for implementing national policy under constrained budgets that we do not control."

But critics argue the issue is not only the level of funding but also how the change was implemented.

Kitshoff said the lack of advance notice and transitional support has placed governing bodies under enormous pressure to manage an unexpected financial crisis.

"The governance burden on principals and SGB treasurers right now is immense," he said. "They are trying to manage a major budget shift in real time."

In the longer term, analysts warn that sustained funding pressure could gradually erode the quality gap that attracts parents to fee-paying public schools in the first place.

If schools lose additional staff, defer infrastructure maintenance or struggle to maintain programmes, enrolment could decline, and their financial models could become unsustainable.

"The risk is systemic deterioration," Kitshoff said. "These schools serve a critical middle band of families in South Africa's public education system."

He warned that if quality declines significantly, more families who can afford it may move their children to private schools.

"When the middle class leaves the public system, it weakens the entire system," he said.

For now, governing bodies across Gauteng are trying to stabilise their finances while waiting for clarity from the department on whether the revised funding level will remain in place beyond the current financial cycle.

Schools say that without clear long-term guidance, they face months of difficult decisions about fees, staffing and services while trying to keep classrooms functioning normally.

MESSAGE

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dr. Felleng Yende

At FP&M SETA, we remain committed to building a skills-driven economy that is inclusive, competitive, and responsive to industry needs. Through strategic partnerships, demand-led training, and targeted investment in people, we continue to enable job creation, transformation, and sustainable livelihoods across our sectors. Our work is fundamentally about people equipping South Africans with the skills required to participate meaningfully in the economy today and into the future.

About FP&M SETA (Summary)

The Fibre Processing and Manufacturing (FP&M) Sector Education and Training Authority was established on 1 April 2011 by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, following a government decision to cluster related industries and strengthen value-chain linkages.

FP&M SETA serves 13 interrelated sub-sectors, which together play a critical role in South Africa's industrial and manufacturing economy. These sectors transform natural and manufactured inputs into every day and industrial products that support households, infrastructure, healthcare, automotive, construction and global value chains.

Dr. Felleng Yende



THE 13 SUB-SECTORS INCLUDE: Clothing, Footwear, Forestry, Furniture, General Goods, Leather, Packaging, Printing, Print Media, Publishing, Pulp and Paper, Textiles, Wood Products

Although regulated individually, these sub-sectors are deeply interconnected and collectively contribute to employment, exports, innovation, and economic growth.

OUR MANDATE

FP&M SETA exists to:

- Drive skills development aligned to sector and industry demand
- Support job creation, employability, and entrepreneurship
- Promote transformation, inclusion, and access, including support for rural communities and persons with disabilities
- Strengthen partnerships between industry, training institutions, and government

VISION

To be an innovative skills development partner supporting high-quality learning and development interventions towards global competitiveness, an inclusive economy and decent work.

MISSION

To evolve as an agile and ethical institution that facilitates an efficient and effective skills development process, contributing to sector competitiveness, transformation and economic growth.

Scan for WhatsApp



Scan for Website



SCAN THE QR CODE

For more information on FP&M SETA programmes, funded projects and opportunities, visit our website:
www.fpmseta.org.za

CONNECT WITH US

Follow FP&M SETA on social media for updates, opportunities and impact stories:
X (Twitter): @FPMseta | Facebook: FP&M SETA | LinkedIn: FP&M SETA | Instagram: fpmseta

Higher Education

Stranded and forgotten

Students battle fallout from deregistration of Damelin College, City Varsity, Lyceum Colleges and ICESA

LEVY MASITENG

For thousands of students across South Africa, the promise of a brighter future through higher education has become an anxiety-ridden ordeal. Learners who paid substantial fees and invested years of study at private institutions such as Damelin College, City Varsity, ICESA City Campus and Lyceum College now find themselves in academic and financial limbo following the decision by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to deregister these colleges.

What has unfolded is more than an administrative intervention. For many families, it is a crisis marked by uncertainty, financial strain and fading trust in the private higher education sector. Complaints about delayed refunds, inconsistent communication and unresolved academic records have deepened frustration, leaving students unsure whether their qualifications, credits or money will ever be recovered.

Many say they feel abandoned. “I already paid registration fees, and now I don’t know what will happen,” said Rethabile Kgadi, who had planned to begin her studies at Damelin this year. Speaking to *Inside Education*, she said the lack of clarity has forced her to reconsider her plans.

“It seems like this year I will be having a gap year because I don’t have any more money to pay for other institutions. I haven’t had any communication or feedback regarding the refund process, and I am not hopeful because the communication is not consistent,” she said.

Her experience reflects a broader pattern. Across social media platforms, students and parents have shared accounts of confusion, unanswered queries and financial distress. Many describe a system that has failed to respond at a moment when clarity is most needed.

Parents have also voiced their concerns. Hayley Strydom described the emotional and financial toll on her family, while others, such as Pfumi Donny, said they have been trying to secure refunds for years with limited success. Beatrix Bodenstien recounted how, despite completing all application steps, an institution failed to process her daughter’s enrolment properly and then stopped responding altogether.

These accounts point to a deeper issue: a breakdown in accountability and communication between institutions and the students they serve.

The current crisis is the culmination of long-standing regulatory and governance failures. The affected colleges have faced repeated scrutiny over non-compliance with the Higher Education Act and the Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions.

Late in 2025, Higher Education and Training Minister Buti Manamela issued a Notice of Intent to cancel the registration of Damelin (Pty) Ltd, City Varsity (Pty) Ltd and ICESA City Campus (Pty) Ltd. The department cited persistent failures to meet statutory obligations, including the submission of complete annual reports for 2024 despite multiple extensions.

Institutions were also unable to provide proof of financial and operational sustainability. Required documentation — such as audited financial statements, tax compliance certificates and evidence of financial guarantees — was either incomplete or not submitted. In addition, City Varsity and ICESA City Campus had already ceased operations, meaning they were no longer providing higher education as required by law.

The notice was formally gazetted in January 2026, initiating the legal process to cancel registrations outright.

The DHET has maintained that its actions are necessary to protect students and uphold the integrity of the



Bitter blow: The deregistration of Damelin and other colleges has left students in limbo. Photo: Internet

higher education system. It has also reassured students that qualifications obtained while institutions were legally registered remain valid.

Manamela has urged prospective students not to pay fees until the situation is resolved and has emphasised that non-compliant institutions cannot be allowed to operate at the expense of students’ futures. The department has further committed to supporting affected learners through a “teach-out” process, enabling enrolled students to complete their studies under approved arrangements.

Yet for many students and families, these assurances have done little to ease immediate concerns.

“We are seriously struggling with Damelin,” said Strydom. “Our child left after deregistration in March 2024, and we are still being harassed to pay fees for the whole year.”

Others report similar experiences. Some students say they have received only partial refunds after years of follow-up, while others claim they have received no response at all. In some cases, students allege they are still waiting for results or certification years after completing their courses.

These experiences have intensified scrutiny of the private education sector, particularly around financial practices and student protections.

The colleges involved are part of the Educor group, which has faced mounting criticism in recent years over governance and financial management. Problems began surfacing as early as 2021, when staff and students reported unpaid salaries, delayed academic results and administrative failures.

By 2023, the situation had deteriorated significantly. Reports described a “Black Christmas” for staff, with lecturers allegedly going unpaid over the holiday period. The South

African Federation of Trade Unions warned that delayed payments, unresolved grievances and contract terminations painted a bleak picture of institutions in distress.

An investigation by the Department of Employment and Labour found that some employees had not received salaries or severance packages following campus closures. In one instance, Damelin was instructed to pay outstanding wages and severance amounting to R179,155, yet only a fraction of employees received payment.

Lecturer Irshaad Gangat-Duvange said many staff members were left struggling financially. “We keep asking about outstanding payments, but there is no response,” he said, adding that affected employees had approached the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration for assistance.

The current developments echo a similar crisis in 2024. In March of that year, then Minister Blade Nzimande cancelled the registrations of four Educor colleges, affecting around 13,000 students across 10 campuses. Although the institutions were provisionally reinstated in August 2024 and fully reinstated in March 2025, compliance issues persisted.

By late 2024, Damelin had cancelled year-end examinations and advised students to transfer to other institutions, often without clear guidance on whether their credits would be recognised. The latest deregistration process, initiated in December 2025, suggests that underlying problems were never fully resolved.

According to DHET spokesperson Veli Mbele, institutions are required to assist students with transfers and provide refunds where applicable. However, the gap between policy and practice remains stark.

For students, the consequences are immediate and tangible. Many face the prospect of repeating coursework, losing credits or incurring additional costs to continue their studies elsewhere. The financial burden can be significant, particularly for families who have already paid tens of thousands of rand in tuition fees.

Second-year student Itumeleng Sethosa described feeling trapped. “I wanted to transfer, but I had already spent the money, and I couldn’t bring myself to just let it all go,” he said.

While some students have successfully transferred credits, many others report difficulties in securing placements or recognition of prior learning. The process can take months or even years, further delaying academic progress and entry into the workforce.

As the legal process unfolds, uncertainty continues to define the experience of those affected. The DHET’s teach-out plans and regulatory interventions may eventually provide a pathway forward, but for now, students remain in limbo.

For Kgadi and thousands like her, the situation has already altered the course of their lives. The prospect of an involuntary gap year, financial loss and disrupted ambitions underscores the human cost of regulatory failure and institutional collapse.

At its core, the crisis raises urgent questions about oversight, accountability and the protection of students in South Africa’s private higher education sector. While the state has acted to enforce compliance, the fallout reveals gaps in enforcement, communication and student safeguards.

The central question now is whether promises of support, refunds and academic continuity will materialise — or whether students will ultimately be left to bear the cost of a system that failed to protect them.

Science & Technology

R100m Wits hydrogen project targets green skills

JOHNATHAN PAOLI

Wits University, Air Liquide South Africa and the Localisation Support Fund have launched a R100 million hydrogen pilot project designed to train a new generation of engineers and support the growth of the country's green hydrogen industry.

The modular hydrogen pilot plant is based on Wits' West Campus in Johannesburg.

Designed as a "living laboratory", the facility will support applied research, hands-on teaching and industry testing of hydrogen technologies, positioning students and researchers at the centre of South Africa's transition to cleaner energy systems.

The project was officially launched during a sod-turning ceremony in February, attended by senior government leaders, including Deputy President Paul Mashatile, Electricity and Energy Minister Kgosientsho Ramokgopa and Higher Education and Training Minister Buti Manamela.

During his address at the launch, Manamela said hydrogen development was central to South Africa's long-term economic and energy strategy. The sector could unlock new industrial opportunities while supporting decarbonisation, he said.

"Hydrogen is not just an alternative energy source. It represents energy security. It represents industrial diversification and export potential, but also meaningful decarbonisation," he said.

He said that the success of the hydrogen economy would depend not only on policy ambition but also on building the skills and technical capacity required to support it.

The facility is scheduled to become operational by 2028. It forms part of Air Liquide's broader multi-year investment programme aimed at supporting decarbonisation in South Africa.

At the heart of the Wits-SAHLI facility will be a 110-kilowatt electrolyser capable of converting water and renewable electricity into low-carbon hydrogen.

The system will produce about 2.2 kilograms of hydrogen per hour and will be able to store up to 200 kilograms on site.

Stored hydrogen can be converted back into electricity, delivering up to 200 kilowatts of clean power during peak operation.

The modular design allows com-



First steps: Ministers and executives at the sod-turning ceremony to mark the launch of the hydrogen pilot project at Wits University. Photo: Air Liquide



All systems go: Air Liquide SA CEO Nkululeko Magadla, Electricity and Energy Minister Kgosientsho Ramokgopa, Wits Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Zebulon Vilakazi and LSF CEO Irshaad Kathrada hold up the signed MoU. Photo: Air Liquide

ponents to be developed, tested and refined within a controlled environment while still operating as a real production system.

Professor Rodney Genga, who leads the Wits-SAHLI design team, said the facility would transform how engineering and science students are trained.

"This is not a laboratory experiment. It is a working plant on a university campus. Our students will learn in a real operating environment. They will see how hydrogen is produced, stored and used at scale. That kind of exposure builds confidence and skills that South Africa urgently needs," he said.

The plant will also support research across multiple disciplines, including engineering, energy storage, clean transport and industrial hydrogen applications.

Wits Vice-Chancellor and Principal Professor Zebulon Vilakazi said the initiative reinforced the university's commitment to developing knowledge and talent capable of building industries in the future.

"We are proud to be at the forefront

of driving innovation that addresses the critical challenges of our time. Wits-SAHLI aligns perfectly with our mission to advance the frontiers of knowledge, produce world-class research and nurture talent that will build new industries and lead in the global green economy," Vilakazi said.

The project will enable postgraduate students and researchers to test hydrogen technologies under real-world operating conditions, bridging the gap between academic theory and industrial practice.

Industry partners will also be able to test hydrogen applications on campus, allowing companies to explore the technology without the significant capital costs normally associated with building hydrogen production facilities. Mashatile described the facility as a technological milestone and a strategic economic intervention.

"This moment marks not only the beginning of a groundbreaking project but also the start of a shared national endeavour to build a new industrial capability that drives in-

novation, creates quality jobs and contributes to a just, inclusive and sustainable economy," he said.

South Africa's hydrogen ambitions date back to 2007, when the then-cabinet approved the Hydrogen South Africa Research, Development and Innovation Strategy, implemented by the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation.

The strategy sought to leverage the country's large reserves of platinum group metals, which are critical components in fuel cell technologies used in hydrogen production and energy systems.

Mashatile said the new plant builds on this foundation, complementing the country's three Hydrogen South Africa Centres of Competence that focus on catalysis, hydrogen production, storage, distribution and systems integration.

He also acknowledged the role of Electricity and Energy Minister Kgosientsho Ramokgopa in strengthening policy certainty and advancing renewable energy integration, key elements needed to support hydrogen development.

Executives involved in the project emphasised that the partnership combines global hydrogen expertise with local research capacity.

Nicolas Poirot, CEO of Air Liquide for Africa, the Middle East and India, said the company's investment aimed to transfer knowledge while strengthening South Africa's role in the global energy transition.

"We are excited to be investing in this project, which is truly part of a knowledge transfer approach. By bringing Air Liquide's 60 years of global hydrogen expertise to Wits-SAHLI, we are providing South Africa with the technical expertise needed to lead the continent's energy transition," Poirot said.

Air Liquide South Africa head Nkululeko Magadla said the initiative also forms part of the company's commitments following its 2021 acquisition of Sasol's air separation units.

"Our goal is to ensure that as the hydrogen economy grows, South Africa is equipped with a homegrown workforce and a competitive network of local suppliers," Magadla said.

The Localisation Support Fund, established in 2021 to strengthen domestic manufacturing capabilities, views the project as a foundation for building a competitive hydrogen supply chain.

Irshaad Kathrada, CEO of the LSF, said localisation would be critical to ensuring the economic benefits of the energy transition are widely shared.

"Wits-SAHLI is a model public-private partnership that will build a competitive local supply chain for the low-carbon hydrogen sector from the ground up. By focusing on empowering South African companies, we are ensuring that the benefits of the energy transition are shared broadly, fostering inclusive growth and industrial capacity," Kathrada said.

The launch of the hydrogen pilot plant comes at a time when South Africa is grappling with long-term industrial decline.

Manufacturing's contribution to the country's GDP has fallen from more than 22% in the early 1990s to around 12-13% today. Employment in the sector has also dropped significantly, declining from over two million jobs in 2008 to roughly 1.6 million.

The government hopes that emerging industries such as green hydrogen can help reverse this trend by creating new manufacturing value chains.

Higher Education

Student well-being comes from care, but is caring enough? Academics reflect on three stumbling blocks

MARTINA VAN HEERDEN
and SHARITA BHARUTHRAM

Students' well-being in higher education has been a growing concern globally since the coronavirus pandemic, which disrupted learning and lives generally.

Well-being has been described as “the combination of feeling good and functioning well; experiencing positive emotions such as happiness and contentment as well as the development of one’s potential, having some control over one’s life, having a sense of purpose, and experiencing positive relationships”.

Well-being is important for student engagement, achievement and belonging, which all make for a more positive learning and teaching experience.

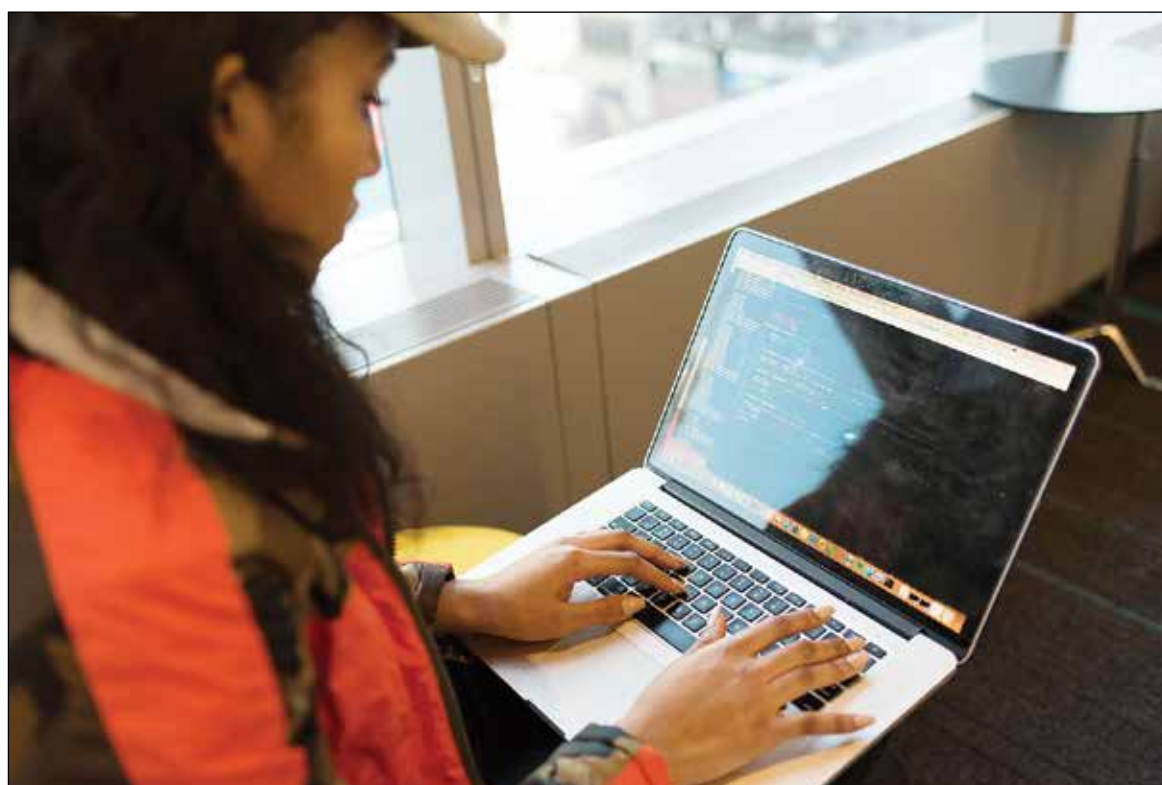
We teach in an academic literacy module at a historically disadvantaged university in South Africa. Since the pandemic, we’ve continued to see that students’ well-being is often neglected, especially by students themselves. This neglect could potentially lead to a lack of motivation, a lack of interest and burnout.

In South Africa, first-year students’ well-being is often precariously placed, as they have to navigate socio-economic and familial stresses while adjusting to the demands of higher education. One of the many hurdles that students face is due to the “digital divide”, and it includes having to learn how to use unfamiliar technological resources. There are high dropout rates for first-year students.

That’s despite the efforts of universities to support them.

As academic literacy practitioners, we aim to help students to understand what’s required of them academically. In the last five years, since the pandemic, we’ve revised our module to foster a more caring, responsive and engaging environment. The idea is to smooth the way into university studies and to enhance student well-being.

We recently published a paper on what we’ve learnt so far. Our main finding is that creating a “care-full” environment for learning is not as simple as it sounds. Care has to be offered at various levels — and also received. Universities, lecturers and



Challenges: The authors write that “one of the many hurdles that students face is due to the ‘digital divide’, and it includes having to learn how to use unfamiliar technological resources. Photo: Courtesy of #WOCinTech/#WOCinTech Chat.

students still need to overcome some barriers to receiving care.

Getting to know students

Our academic literacy module is offered to first-year undergraduate students and runs for both semesters, with a different group of students each semester. In line with the university’s mandate, the module is concerned with student flourishing and success.

During the pandemic (2021-2022), we became aware of our students being in emotional distress, and so, to focus more deliberately on student well-being, we adopted a more “care-full” approach to learning and teaching.

We embedded “care” into our module by considering how we might equip students better to deal with the demands of higher education. We listened to our students’ experiences and needs and made the necessary adjustments to provide a more supportive, holistic, care-full classroom. This continued in our post-pandemic classroom.

The changes included adding assignment-specific guides, more resources, more focused discussions on time management and organisation, regular reminders of due dates, and links to work apps.

We also had regular conversations with the students as our way of getting to know them and finding out how they were coping. We wanted them to know that we were there to care for them, not just to impart knowledge.

But we came to realise that by 2023, students were still struggling with the same issues as before, despite the changes we had made. This became clear from student questionnaires, end-of-semester feedback forms, and the informal conversations we had with them.

An analysis of our data showed that certain challenges acted as impediments to care and negatively affected students’ well-being. The three main impediments were:

- Resources
- Time management
- Anxiety.

In other words, these problems prevented students from “receiving” and benefiting from the care we offered.

Resources

Resources present a dual impediment to students’ well-being. Firstly, students might not have access to resources like laptops and a stable internet connection. Secondly, they might not know how to use the available resources efficiently.

For example, many of our students indicated that they struggled to find lecture content or to submit assignments on the university’s Learning Management System.

This was even though we had made “how-to” guides for students showing step-by-step instructions and the university scheduled workshops on how to navigate it. Resources became another hurdle instead of helping as intended.

Organisation and time management skills

Many students struggle with meeting deadlines and balancing their social and university lives. During the pandemic, the online environment provided little structure to their days, so some of them struggled with managing their workload. This continued when classes were back on campus. It is not a problem that is unique to South Africa, but time management is important for well-being (and thus student success).

Feelings of inadequacy and anxiety

The last impediment we identified related to feelings of inadequacy and anxiety. These feelings may be a result of struggles with resources and

time management skills, but they might also be related to students’ own perceived competence in their studies. Anxiety has become a challenge for many students in university, not just in South Africa, but globally. These feelings may stop students from reaching out for help.

Getting past the impediments

We’ve realised these challenges act as impediments to care. That is, despite the efforts educators may put into creating a “care-full” environment, certain challenges can hamper their effectiveness. In our context, we weren’t able to make all our students feel cared for. This realisation could negatively affect the well-being of students and educators alike. Academics are at risk of burn-out, too.

We still think academics have to be “care-full” with students, but they can’t do it alone, and their care has to be reciprocated if it’s to result in academic success and well-being. Care requires input from both the educators (the carers) and the cared-for (the students). When it works both ways, a “care-full” approach might improve students’ well-being.

Both parties need to take responsibility. Students must be willing to receive care by taking care (that is, asking for advice, accepting the advice and resources that have been made available, and doing what they can).

We understand that they might feel uncomfortable or anxious; we are not blaming them. Educators must take care in interactions with students, in pedagogical choices, and in content.

University structures and processes are also involved in care. And the issue extends beyond the confines of the university into the national health, welfare and safety landscape. Care requires buy-in from all parties. Otherwise, there may be limits to how care is received.

Martina van Heerden (PhD) is a senior lecturer at the University of the Western Cape.

Sharita Bharuthram is an Associate Professor in the English for Educational Development Programme at the University of the Western Cape

• Article reproduced courtesy of *The Conversation*

Technology



Finding the balance: Tal Slemrod writes that “slowing down how students are using AI in the classroom does not mean rejecting it altogether. Photo: Vecteezy.com

More and more teachers and students are using AI – even though it might do more harm than good

TAL SLEMRD

Primary and secondary school (K-12) teachers and students across the US are increasingly using AI in and out of classrooms, whether it is teachers turning to AI to refine lesson plans or students asking AI to help them research a particular topic. (In the US, the primary and secondary schooling system is referred to as K-12).

An estimated 85% of K-12 public school teachers recently reported that they used AI during the 2024-2025 school year — often for curriculum and content development.

In 2023, 13% of teens said they used ChatGPT to complete their schoolwork, while 26% of them said in 2025 that they were using ChatGPT for this purpose.

Similarly, 86% of K-12 students shared in 2025 that they have used AI in general. An estimated 50% of students reported that they use it for schoolwork, such as learning more about topics outside of what was taught in class, tutoring on specific subjects, receiving help with a homework assignment or asking for college advice.

However, policies and training have not kept pace with how frequently teachers and students are using AI.

Only 35% of school district leaders reported in 2025 that they provided students with any AI training, according to the global policy think tank RAND Corporation. Additionally, 45% of principals reported school or district policies or guidance on the use of AI in schools, according to these findings.

One great link every day or two

Another challenge is that students are also using AI for potentially dangerous uses. There are recent examples of students who self-harmed or died by suicide after they used AI for mental health support. A 2025 study found that when a chatbot responded to 60 simulated scenarios that posed mental health questions, the chatbots sometimes made harmful proposals — such as cutting off all human contact for a month or dropping out of school.

So, is it safe for young students to use AI? Does using AI provide better learning outcomes for students when compared to traditional instruction? Does AI help teachers reduce their workload?

The answers to these questions are complicated. It is not yet clear how AI influences learning in primary and secondary school settings or when and how it is best for teachers and students to use AI.

Some clear pros

As an associate professor of inclusive teacher education, I’m trying to answer some of these big questions about AI and K-12 education.

Some university centres that I’ve worked with, such as the Center for Innovation, Design, and Digital Learning at the University of Kansas, are researching how AI can be used to support students with learning disabilities.

In 2025, 57% of special education teachers said they use AI to help develop individualised plans, often called an individualised education programme, for their students with learning disabilities.

I believe there is no doubt that AI can, in some ways, reduce barriers and support students with disabilities. In my own research, for exam-



Focus needed: Policies and training have not kept pace with how frequently teachers and students are using AI in the US. Photo: Vecteezy.com

ple, my co-authors and I show that AI can help students learn by adapting assignments to meet their personal learning needs and pace. It can also help teachers reduce their time spent grading or editing assignments.

There remain concerns over student privacy and whether AI systems will reinforce bias, but special education teachers are testing the benefits of generative AI.

The missing evidence

Among the broader available research and evidence on AI and K-12 education, some studies from 2019 through 2022 show that AI might help students learn and stay motivated by providing a personalised learning experience. However, the evidence appears less promising when considering how students learn after they use AI and then stop using it.

For example, Guilherme Lichand, an economics scholar at the Stanford Accelerator for Learning, found in 2026 that when students use AI and then are told they can no longer use it for their studies, students actually perform worse than those who never

used AI. This shows that additional research on how AI influences students’ long-term learning and development is necessary.

The Brookings Institution also recently warned in a 2026 AI and K-12 education report that the risks of using generative AI in education overshadow its benefits. These risks include weakened relationships between students and teachers, as well as students’ safety.

A 2025 report by the nonprofit Center for Democracy and Technology also shows that an average of 71% of K-12 teachers reported that when students use AI to complete their schoolwork, it is hard for the teachers to understand whether the student’s work is their own.

Similarly, almost two-thirds of parents of K-12 students said in 2025 that AI is weakening important academic skills that their child needs to learn, such as writing, reading comprehension and critical thinking.

Lessons from the past

AI is being introduced to K-12 classrooms faster than evidence and understanding can support. But

schools have rushed to incorporate educational technologies into their classrooms before.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, schools needed to quickly equip teachers and students with online platforms for remote learning.

But the rush also challenged educators to learn how to effectively teach and provide individual support for each student — and to ensure that all students, including students with disabilities, could participate in remote learning.

Similarly, not long ago, some educators thought that social media and smartphones would bring the next frontier in education, with the idea that these technologies could increase student engagement. Yet we now know the dangers that both social media and smartphones pose for children.

Slowing down how students are using AI in the classroom does not mean rejecting it altogether. I think it means being responsible — especially when there is a good chance children’s academic skills, behaviours, or emotions are at risk.

New evidence on AI and education is coming from scholars like my colleagues and me. There is little doubt that AI and future technologies are game changers in society and education.

I think it is also critical that we slow down and follow the evidence that is available. Speed is a choice, and education deserves intention.

Tal Slemrod is Associate Professor of Special Education at California State University, Chico

• Article reproduced courtesy of *The Conversation*

Higher Education

A bachelor's pass on its own does not open doors to university

MATEBOHO GREEN

It is a perennial challenge, yet it manifested in unprecedented ways in January, as parents turned to Universities South Africa (USAf) for assistance as they lamented their children's rejection from higher education institutions despite having achieved several distinctions.

However, USAf has no magic wand to wave. As the representative association of public universities, the organisation identifies systemic challenges and engages policymakers and other stakeholders to find appropriate solutions.

That is why in October last year, USAf convened a half-day dialogue to explore this issue. The aim was to foster public understanding ahead of the 2026 academic year and to identify potential solutions, even if these might take years to materialise.

Under the theme "Rethinking Post School Education and Training for Youth Employment in South Africa", the event addressed the twin challenges of limited university places and the risk of long term unemployment among unskilled youth in a modern economy.

From this platform, USAf also sought to explore alternatives beyond public universities, that is, diverse learning pathways that could alleviate pressure on higher education while equipping young people with marketable skills.

Martin Gustafsson, adviser to the Department of Basic Education and Professor of Economics at Stellenbosch University, presented on "School Completion Advancing More Rapidly than University Growth: Implications for Youth and National Development".

Setting the stage for four other distinguished experts invited to participate on the panel with him, Gustafsson examined long term trends in school completion, university access, and the interplay between educational progress and labour market outcomes.

Mathematics is the decisive factor in university entry

Gustafsson explained that, although he had long believed the bachelor's pass to be the key determinant of university entry, he was confronted with a rude awakening: "Mathematics is the real threshold [as it] is required, at specific mark levels, for two thirds of first year university programmes. Requirements range from 40% to 60%, often in combination with physical science."

With basic schooling not producing enough learners with these



mathematics marks, it was inevitable that so many learners with a bachelor's pass would be denied entry to most university programmes and offered more explanations for this conundrum.

School success and the post-school bottleneck

Gustafsson showed that the number of learners qualifying for bachelor's or diploma-level studies had grown significantly over the past three decades — from 337,000 in 1994 to 526,000 in 2024.

However, university admissions had not kept pace. Only about 213,000 students had entered university as first-time undergraduates in 2023. "We have tripled the number of learners who qualify for bachelor-level studies over the past three decades," he said, "but the number of spaces available at universities has not kept up with that growth."

Gustafsson said that in recent years, about 40% of qualifying school leavers get into university compared to 64% in 2010 — another pointer that universities' absorption capacity has not increased at the same rate as the number of school leavers who qualify.

Quality matters

Gustafsson said that although SA's "participation in schooling is extremely high by global standards ... the challenge is repetition. About 30% of Grade 10 learners are repeaters."

He also mentioned that although SA's National Development Plan acknowledges schooling quality as a problem, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study data show some improvement. "In 2003, South Africa was below the curve. In 2023, we were on the curve. Our quality is still not high, but it is no longer exceptionally low."

However, considering schools' performance in mathematics, Gustafsson concluded that increasing bachelor-level passes is not enough.



Maths is essential: Professor Martin Gustafsson (pictured left) says schools are not producing enough learners with good mathematics marks, so it is inevitable that even with a bachelor's pass, they would be denied entry to most university programmes. Photo: Vecteezy.com

Towards viable solutions

"If we want to expand universities, to give more young people opportunities and to grow the economy, we must consider quality," he said. "We have a skills-constrained economy. Both the public and private sectors struggle to find people."

Gustafsson mentioned that in the current scenario, it is easier for universities to expand in humanities than in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

At this juncture, Stephanie Allais, Professor of Education at the Centre for Researching Education and Labour in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, disagreed with his view that expanding enrolments in the humanities would be easier than for STEM programmes.

She wrote on the Zoom Chat platform: "We have expanded universities much faster than we have expanded university funding," she argued. "We are placing an enormous burden on lecturers — the same logic applies as what you used in relation to maths teachers. And it's not true that you can teach social sciences and humanities in huge numbers — the 'skills crisis' that you refer to relates largely to students' ability to read and write complex prose. Teaching writing and reading well at the university level needs a low number of students per lecturer."

Gustafsson acknowledged that ex-

panding universities come with funding pressures. "Spending per university student has risen substantially, especially after Fees Must Fall, largely due to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). This is good for students, but it has limited the number of students that can be funded."

Maths literacy or pure maths?

While schools increasingly favour mathematical literacy over pure mathematics simply to boost their pass rates, the professor offered a different perspective. "Too many learners take pure mathematics without being prepared. Almost half do not attain the minimum 30% pass. Should they be in the pure maths class? Gauteng reduced participation and pushed up the number of learners, achieving 60%"

Gustafsson added that the government's Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) aims to increase the number of learners achieving 60% or more in mathematics by 2029. "The emphasis on mathematics is correct," he remarked, "but what seems missing is an evidence-based strategy for achieving this. We need clearer signals to learners about subject choice and the evolving meaning of a bachelor-level matric."

Growth versus funding pressures

Amid all the pressure to balance participation with quality and

affordability, Gustafsson noted that university enrolment is expected to grow by only 9% by 2029 — notwithstanding the higher population growth — while TVET enrolments are projected to more than double over the same period.

"Balancing post-school enrolments and per-student costs is not receiving enough attention," he warned. "This applies to both TVET colleges and universities. There has not been enough analysis on unit costs and how these might be reduced."

It is worth asking whether NSFAS can be redesigned to lower per-student costs. Reducing these costs is often viewed negatively, but doing so could allow more young people to access the system."

Gustafsson concluded by calling for stronger alignment across the education system. While the emphasis on school success and the subject mix is correct, he said greater attention must be given to how these achievements connect to post-school and labour-market outcomes.

He added that learners and parents need clearer information about subject choices and what a bachelor-level matric means in practice. "We must send clearer signals to youth around subject selection and the evolving meaning of a bachelor-level matric."

Mateboho Green is Manager of Corporate Communications at USAf

Travel



Quiet prestige: Marakele National Park is not a place you simply visit, but one you slowly absorb. The park is home to the Big Five and also offers cycling trips for adventurous tourists and visitors. Photos: Simon Nare

Marakele: Where the Waterberg whispers and time slows

SIMON NARE

The Waterberg mountain range beckons the moment you leave Thabazimbi in Limpopo, its rugged silhouette rising gently as the road winds toward Marakele National Park, tucked quietly into the foothills.

By the time you reach the main gate, a striking stillness settles over you, the kind of tranquillity that doesn't announce itself but simply arrives.

Beyond the faint hum of passing vehicles and the distant chatter of staff, the park breathes in softer tones: beautiful birdsong woven through thick, dense bushveld that often conspires against easy animal sightings.

This season, blessed with generous rains, has painted the landscape in lush, vivid greens. Yet beneath this abundance lies a quiet tension.

Inside Education has learnt that consultations with scientists are underway to determine whether selective clearing along tourist routes could improve visibility without disturbing the delicate balance of the ecosystem.

Marakele, home to the Big Five, carries quiet prestige. It boasts the country's second-largest population of endangered black and white rhinos after the iconic Kruger National Park. And yet, here, an animal can graze mere metres from the road and remain unseen, veiled by the generous bush.

Still, it is the calm that lingers. We arrive on a late Sunday afternoon, the air cooled by a day of stubborn rain — a welcome reprieve in a region known for its punishing heat. Some senior staff members joke that we have brought the rain with us from Gauteng, a gift they gladly accept.

For a park that draws international visitors, many in search of the elusive rhino, the absence of a restaurant or convenience shop feels like an omission. Management, however, insists this will soon change, with plans for an aggressive marketing push to elevate Marakele into becoming a premier destination.

Sipho Zulu, head of tourism at the park, acknowledges the gaps.

Early Monday morning, we set out on a game drive, the anticipation almost tangible. At the top of my list is the rhino — a creature I have only

seen once before, more than two decades ago. But Marakele reveals itself on its own terms. We manage just two of the Big Five: a lone elephant and a small herd of buffalo, half-hidden behind stubborn foliage.

Giraffes move with quiet grace in the distance, while impalas — often nicknamed “McDonald’s” for their place on the predators’ menu — dot the landscape. Then, as if to remind us who is in charge, the rain returns, cutting our three-hour journey short after barely an hour.

But the bush holds more than wildlife. Tucked deep within it lies an unexpected love story — one that lingers long after the game drive ends.

Jan Jacobus Coetzee, a white police officer transferred to Lephalale after refusing to enforce apartheid policies in Cape Town, found love with a Batswana woman, Reginah Motloung. They married, built a family, and in death, remained side by side — buried together in a small cemetery deep in the bush, now named in his honour.

Their story, quiet and resolute, stands as a reminder of both the brutality of the past and the quiet defi-

ance of love.

Game drives here stretch up to three hours, but even without the full Big Five, the landscape — especially along the mountain ridges — is breathtaking. Yet, for a park spanning 67,000 hectares, only 52 kilometres of tourist roads exist, a limitation Zulu admits is significant. Plans are underway to expand this, guided strictly by scientific data to protect the park's sensitive soil.

“Every development must be informed by real data,” Zulu explains. “Our soil is very sensitive. We are identifying how our roads should look.”

Beyond game drives, Marakele offers guided cycling along a demanding 12km gravel route — not for the faint-hearted — and hiking trails that invite visitors to walk slowly, to listen, and to reconnect.

Accommodation, though limited, carries its own charm. Tlopi Tented Camp sits perched along the banks of the Apiesrivier Poort Dam, its safari-style tents offering quiet luxury — private verandas, braai stands, and front-row views of animals drawn to the water. Occasionally, even elephants wander too close; one, we are told, left behind a broken toilet seat as

evidence of its mischief.

Then there is Bontle Camp — a place that lives up to its name, meaning “beauty”. With its blend of campsites and family units, it offers something more intimate, more grounded. Ostriches roam nearby, and though the area is fenced from predators like lions, leopards remain a quiet, unpredictable presence.

Plans include more wilderness accommodation for those seeking solitude, as well as additional facilities — including a swimming pool — to ease the summer heat.


Park manager Koketso Kotsoe says Marakele currently welcomes between 19,000 and 20,000 visitors a year, with ambitions to grow that number to 24,000.

But numbers feel secondary here. Because long after the roads end and the rain lifts, what lingers is something softer — the hush of the mountains, the rhythm of the bush, and the quiet sense that Marakele is not a place you simply visit, but one you slowly absorb.

• *Simon Nare was hosted by SAN-Parks*

PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY:





basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**NSC 2019
MEO 2019
SC CANDIDATES**

GRADE 12

**ACCOUNTING
NOVEMBER 2020**

MARKS: 300
TIME: 3 hours

This question paper consists of 20 pages and a 15-page answer book.

Copyright reserved Please turn over

INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

Read the following instructions carefully and follow them precisely.

1. Answer ALL the questions.
2. A special ANSWER BOOK is provided in which to answer ALL the questions.
3. Show ALL workings to achieve part-marks.
4. You may use a non-programmable calculator.
5. You may use a dark pencil or blue/black ink to answer the questions.
6. Where applicable, show ALL calculations to ONE decimal point.
7. Write neatly and legibly.
8. Use the information in the table below as a guide when answering the question paper. Try NOT to deviate from it.

QUESTION 1: 45 marks; 25 minutes	
Topic:	This question integrates:
Manufacturing	Managerial accounting Concepts and Production Cost Statement Break-even analysis and interpretation Managing resources Internal control

QUESTION 2: 45 marks; 30 minutes	
Topic:	This question integrates:
VAT and Reconciliations	Financial accounting VAT calculations Bank reconciliations, Age analysis Managing resources Internal control processes

QUESTION 3: 40 marks; 25 minutes	
Topic:	This question integrates:
Inventory Valuation	Managing resources Weighted average method and FIFO method Internal controls

QUESTION 4: 65 marks; 40 minutes	
Topic:	This question integrates:
Fixed Assets and Financial Statements	Financial accounting Concepts and Balance Sheet with notes Managing resources Fixed asset management

QUESTION 5: 70 marks; 40 minutes	
Topic:	This question integrates:
Cash Flow Statement and Interpretation	Financial accounting Concepts, cash flow calculations Interpretation of financial information

QUESTION 6: 35 marks; 20 minutes	
Topic:	This question integrates:
Budgeting	Managerial accounting Cash Budget: analyse and interpret Managing resources Internal control

QUESTION 1: MANUFACTURING (45 marks; 25 minutes)

- 1.1 Choose an example in COLUMN B that matches the cost category in COLUMN A. Write only the letter (A–E) next to the question numbers (1.1.1 to 1.1.5) in the ANSWER BOOK.

COLUMN A	COLUMN B
1.1.1 Selling and distribution	A raw material issued for production
1.1.2 Direct labour	B bad debts
1.1.3 Administration	C depreciation on factory machinery
1.1.4 Factory overhead cost	D production wages
1.1.5 Direct material	E bank charges

(5 x 1) (5)

1.2 BERGVIEW MANUFACTURERS

This information relates to the financial year ended 29 February 2020. The business manufactures buckets.

REQUIRED:

Prepare the following on 29 February 2020:

- 1.2.1 Factory Overhead Cost Note (16)
- 1.2.2 Production Cost Statement (10)

INFORMATION:**A. Stock balances**

	29 February 2020	28 February 2019
	R	R
Work-in-progress	?	130 000
Finished goods	140 000	155 500
Indirect material	14 300	12 400

B. Amounts extracted from the records on 29 February 2020

	R
Salary: factory foreman	150 000
Depreciation on factory equipment	145 000
Direct material cost	2 200 000
Direct labour cost	1 209 300
Indirect material purchased	33 100
Insurance	60 000
Water and electricity	115 000
Rent expense	113 000
Sales	6 500 000
Cost of sales (mark-up on cost: 60%)	?

- Insurance is shared by the factory, administration and the selling department in the ratio 3 : 2 : 1.
- Water and electricity for February 2020 is still outstanding, R12 000. The factory uses 80% of the water and electricity.
- Rent expense is distributed according to floor space used. The factory occupies 7 200 m² of the total floor space of 9 000 m².

1.3 EASY FOODS

Easy Foods manufactures snack bars. The financial year ends on 31 December.

REQUIRED:

- 1.3.1 Explain why the change in units produced affected the fixed costs per unit. (2)
- 1.3.2 Give TWO possible reasons for the increase in direct material cost per unit. (4)
- 1.3.3 Explain why the business should not be satisfied with the level of production and the break-even point. Compare and quote figures for both years. (6)
- 1.3.4 The owner, Mike, wants to reduce the weight of the snack bars from 80 grams to 75 grams while keeping the selling price at R12,50 each. Explain ONE reason against this option. (2)

INFORMATION:

PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



QUESTION 2: VAT AND RECONCILIATIONS

(45 marks; 30 minutes)

2.1 VAT

The following relates to Lunga Stores for the VAT period ended 30 April 2020. VAT at 15% applies to all goods.

REQUIRED:

Calculate the VAT amounts denoted by (i) to (iii) on the table. Indicate the effect of EACH answer on the amount payable to SARS. Refer to the example. (8)

INFORMATION:

- A. Amount owed to SARS on 1 April 2020, R5 500
- B. Amounts from April 2020 Journals:

DETAILS	EXCLUDING VAT	INCLUDING VAT	VAT AMOUNT	EFFECT
Total sales	R544 500	R626 175	R81 675	Increase
Purchases of stock	174 900	201 135	(i)	?
Drawings of stock	32 000		(ii)	?
Bad debts		7 015	(iii)	?

2.2 BANK RECONCILIATION AND INTERNAL CONTROL

The information relates to Plaston Traders for April 2020.

REQUIRED:

- 2.2.1 Show the entries that must be recorded in the Cash Journals. (10)
- 2.2.2 Calculate the Bank Account balance on 30 April 2020. (4)
- 2.2.3 Prepare the Bank Reconciliation Statement on 30 April 2020. (9)
- 2.2.4 As internal auditor you are not happy with the control of cash in this business. (6)
 - Explain TWO problems to confirm your suspicion. Quote figures.
 - Give advice on how EACH problem can be avoided in future.

INFORMATION:

A. Information from the Bank Reconciliation Statement on 31 March 2020:

Unfavourable balance as per Bank Statement	R19 500
Outstanding deposit	50 400
Outstanding cheques:	
Cheque 615 (dated 30 October 2020)	15 750
Cheque 960 (dated 20 March 2020)	11 850
Cheque 965 (dated 30 May 2020)	6 750
Unfavourable balance as per Bank Account in the Ledger	3 450

- The deposit of R50 400 appeared on the Bank Statement on 14 April 2020.
- Cheque 960, issued in March 2020, was reflected on the Bank Statement for April 2020 as R14 550. The Bank Statement is correct.

B. Provisional totals in the Cash Journals on 30 April 2020 before receiving the April Bank Statement:

- Cash Receipts Journal, R65 570
- Cash Payments Journal, R64 790

C. Information on the April 2020 Bank Statement which did not appear in the April 2020 Cash Journals:

DATE	DETAILS	DEBIT	CREDIT
11	ZL Nkosi (EFT by tenant)		R31 350
25	Debit order (Quick Insurance)	R9 750	
25	Unpaid cheque (P Grobler)	3 375	
28	Interest		150
29	Service fees	600	
30	Service fees	600	

NOTE: The bank duplicated the service fees in error. They will correct this error next month.

D. Deposit entries in the April 2020 Cash Receipts Journal that do not agree with the April 2020 Bank Statement:

- R27 750 on 24 April 2020
- R44 000 on 26 April 2020. The Bank Statement reflected this as R33 500. An investigation revealed that the cash slips added up to R44 000, but only R33 500 was deposited. The shortfall cannot be traced and must be written off.

E. Entries in the April 2020 Cash Payments Journal, not in the April 2020 Bank Statement:

DOCUMENTS	DATE	DETAILS	BANK
Cheque 980	29	PNA Suppliers	R8 600
EFT: P Sithole	30	Drawings	R7 300

F. Bank Statement balance on 30 April 2020: ...?

2.3 DEBTORS' AGE ANALYSIS

The information relates to Tonga Hardware.

REQUIRED:

- 2.3.1 Explain how the Debtors' Age Analysis will assist the business in managing debtors more effectively. (2)
- 2.3.2 Explain TWO separate problems highlighted by the age analysis. Provide evidence for EACH. (4)
- 2.3.3 State TWO strategies that Tonga Hardware can use to ensure that only reliable applicants are granted credit. (2)

INFORMATION:

A. Debtors are granted 30 days to settle their accounts.

B. Debtors' age analysis on 29 February 2020:

DEBTORS	CREDIT LIMIT	AMOUNT OWING	CURRENT AMOUNT	30 DAYS	60 DAYS	90 DAYS
N Nene	9 000	7 500	3 150	4 350		
P Palm	5 250	6 300	5 700	600		
D Duma	10 500	2 175	750			1 425
S Swart	19 500	18 750	1 500	4 500	6 750	6 000
	44 250	34 725	11 100	9 450	6 750	7 425

45

QUESTION 3: INVENTORY VALUATION

(40 marks; 25 minutes)

- 3.1 Complete the sentences by filling in the correct stock valuation method. Write only the answer next to the question numbers (3.1.1 to 3.1.3) in the ANSWER BOOK.
 - 3.1.1 The ... method assumes that stock is sold in order of date purchased. (3)
 - 3.1.2 The ... method divides the total cost of goods available for sale by the number of units. (3 x 1)
 - 3.1.3 The ... method is used for very expensive, individually recognisable items. (3)

3.2 JJ FASHION HOUSE

JJ Fashion House uses the periodic stock system. Janine Naidoo owns the business.

REQUIRED:

Refer to Information A: Jeans

- 3.2.1 Calculate the following on 29 February 2020:
 - Value of the closing stock using the weighted-average method (6)
 - Gross profit (4)
- 3.2.2 Calculate how long (in days) it will take to sell the closing stock of the jeans. (4)
- 3.2.3 Janine is considering a change in the method of valuing stock.
 - Calculate the value of closing stock using the FIFO method. (7)
 - State ONE advantage of using the FIFO method. (2)

Refer to Information B: Jackets

- 3.2.4 The owner is concerned about the theft.
 - Calculate the number of jackets stolen. (4)
 - Give TWO solutions to solve the problem. (4)
- 3.2.5 The internal auditor is concerned about the stock levels and the selling price of jackets.
 - Explain reasons for his concern, with figures, and give different advice in EACH case. (6)

INFORMATION:

A. Jeans:

	UNITS	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
Opening stock (1 March 2019)	240		R124 500
Purchases	3 150		R1 813 000
May 2019	1 300	R560	R728 000
October 2019	1 450	R580	R841 000
January 2020	400	R610	R244 000
Subtotal	3 390		R1 937 500
Returns from January purchases	130	R610	R79 300
Sales	2 880	R960	R2 764 800
Closing stock (29 February 2020)	380	?	?

PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY:

**B. Jackets:**

	2020 (UNITS)	2019
Opening stock	1 760	
Purchases (less returns)	6 500	
Units available for sale	8 260	
Closing stock	2 980	
Units sold	5 020	
Weighted-average cost per unit	R700	R630
Selling price per unit	R1 450	R1 070
Stock-holding period	216 days	103 days
Mark-up % achieved	107%	70%

40

QUESTION 4: FIXED ASSETS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
 (65 marks; 40 minutes)
AVENGERS LTD

The information relates to the financial year ended 31 March 2020.

REQUIRED:

- 4.1 Refer to Information B.
Calculate the missing amounts denoted by (i) to (iv). (16)
- 4.2 Prepare the following notes to the Balance Sheet on 31 March 2020:
 • Ordinary share capital (7)
 • Retained income (8)
- 4.3 Complete the Balance Sheet (Statement of Financial Position) on 31 March 2020. Show workings. (34)

INFORMATION:**A. Amounts extracted from the books on 31 March:**

BALANCE SHEET ACCOUNTS	2020 R	2019 R
Ordinary share capital	?	4 800 000
Retained income	?	1 181 250
Mortgage loan: Grandeur Bank	2 508 000	3 150 000
Fixed assets at carrying value	11 458 500	
Trading stock (balancing figure)	?	
Net trade debtors	881 000	
Bank (favourable)	454 000	
Creditors' control	1 318 000	
SARS: Income tax (provisional)	972 000	
Income received in advance	32 000	
Shareholders for dividends	889 200	752 000
Nominal accounts (pre-adjustment amounts)		
Commission income	29 920	
Rent expense	364 000	
Directors' fees	2 275 000	

B. Incomplete Fixed Asset Note:

	LAND AND BUILDINGS	VEHICLES	EQUIPMENT
Carrying value (1 April 2019)		631 000	
Cost	(i)	1 281 000	
Accumulated depreciation		(650 000)	(200 000)
Movements			
Additions		625 000	
Disposals	(850 000)	0	(iii)
Depreciation		(ii)	(42 450)
Carrying value (31 March 2020)			
Cost	9 650 000		
Accumulated depreciation			(iv)

Land and buildings:

- A building, on a separate property, was sold at cost.

Vehicles:

- A new vehicle was bought on 1 January 2020.
- Vehicles are depreciated at 20% p.a. on cost.

Equipment:

- Old equipment, cost R21 000, was sold on 30 September 2019. The accumulated depreciation was R15 000 on 1 April 2019.
- Equipment is depreciated at 15% p.a. on the diminishing-balance method.

C. Share capital:

DATE	INFORMATION
1 April 2019	800 000 ordinary shares in issue
31 May 2019	400 000 ordinary shares issued
1 October 2019	60 000 ordinary shares repurchased <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average share price, R7,00 Repurchase price per share, R10,80

D. Dividends:

- An interim dividend of 124 cents was paid on 30 September 2019.
- Final dividends were declared, R889 200.

E. Mortgage loan: Grandeur Bank

- Fixed monthly repayments (including interest) have been made and correctly recorded.
- Interest of R258 000 has not been recorded by the business yet.
- The capital repayment will remain the same over the next financial year.

F. The decrease in the provision for bad debts, R2 500, was not recorded.

G. Commission income for March 2020, R41 900, was still outstanding.

H. The company has three directors who earn the same monthly directors' fee. One director has not received his directors' fee for March 2020 yet.

I. Rent for April 2020 has been paid. The rent was increased by 25% on 1 January 2020.

J. Net profit after tax and income tax:

- The correct net profit after tax **after all adjustments** is R2 534 400.
- Income tax is calculated at 28% of the net profit.

65

QUESTION 5: CASH FLOW STATEMENT AND INTERPRETATION
 (70 marks; 40 minutes)

- 5.1 Choose the correct word(s) from those given in brackets. Write only the word(s) next to the question numbers (5.1.1 to 5.1.4) in the ANSWER BOOK.
- 5.1.1 The (internal/external) auditor is appointed by shareholders to express an unbiased opinion of the financial statements of a company.
- 5.1.2 (Directors/Shareholders) are responsible for the management and running of the business.
- 5.1.3 The (Income Statement/Balance Sheet) shows the financial position of the business in terms of its assets, equity and liabilities.
- 5.1.4 The (Income Statement/Cash Flow Statement) is a financial statement that shows the sources of a company's funds and how they were used. (4 x 1) (4)

5.2 BOMBAY LTD

The information relates to Bombay Ltd for the financial year ended 29 February 2020.

REQUIRED:

- 5.2.1 Fill in the missing amounts on the Cash Flow Statement provided. Show workings. Indicate outflows in brackets. (22)
- 5.2.2 Calculate the following financial indicators on 29 February 2020:
 • % operating profit on sales (3)
 • Acid-test ratio (5)
NOTE: The current ratio is 1,6 : 1. (5)
 • Net asset value (NAV) per share (5)

INFORMATION:**A. Extract from the Income Statement (Statement of Comprehensive Income) on 29 February 2020:**

Sales	R4 824 000
Gross profit	1 608 000
Depreciation	312 600
Operating profit	1 122 500
Net profit before tax	984 000
Net profit after tax	688 800

B. Extract from the Balance Sheet (Statement of Financial Position) on 29 February:

	2020 (R)	2019 (R)
Fixed assets (carrying value)	4 830 000	3 760 100
Current assets	?	962 000
Current liabilities	774 000	712 800
Trading stock	619 000	538 000
Bank	0	56 400
Petty cash	2 500	0
Ordinary share capital	5 880 000	5 360 000
Retained income	542 800	236 000
Loan: Kan Bank	950 000	1 300 000
SARS: Income tax	26 400 (Cr)	11 600 (Dr)
Shareholders for dividends	165 000	126 000
Bank overdraft	28 800	0

C. Share capital and dividends:

- The authorised share capital comprises 1 500 000 shares.
- On 1 March 2019, 60% of the authorised shares were in issue.
- On 30 June 2019, 200 000 additional shares were issued for R1 240 000.
- On 29 February 2020, 120 000 shares were repurchased at R96 000 above the average share price.
- Total dividends paid and declared in the 2020 tax year were R286 000.

D. Fixed assets:

- Additions to buildings were completed during November 2018.
- Old equipment was sold at carrying value, R34 500.

PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



5.3 TWO COMPANIES: LULU LTD AND COCO LTD

Noah Lott won R5,6 m in the national lottery five years ago and then decided to invest R2,8 m in each of the two companies below, as follows:

Lulu Ltd	400 000 shares at R7,00 each = R2,8 m
Coco Ltd	100 000 shares at R28,00 each = R2,8 m

He wants your opinion on these companies.

NOTE: When answering the questions below, compare the information given and quote the relevant financial indicators of both companies (percentages, ratios and/or amounts).

INFORMATION:

	LULU LTD		COCO LTD	
	2020	2019	2020	2019
Total number of shares	1 100 000 shares		700 000 shares	
Shares originally bought by Noah	400 000 shares		100 000 shares	
Noah's % shareholding	36%		14%	
Current market value per share	R9,50		R18,80	
Ordinary share capital	R9 900 000		R11 900 000	
Retained income	R1 890 000		R600 000	
Long-term loan	R9 432 000		R2 500 000	
Current ratio	1,7 : 1	1,6 : 1	4,2 : 1	4,8 : 1
Acid-test ratio	0,9 : 1	0,8 : 1	3,6 : 1	3,5 : 1
% operating profit on sales	16%	16%	14%	18%
Debt-equity ratio	0,8 : 1		0,2 : 1	
Net asset value per share	R10,72		R17,86	
Earnings per share (EPS)	273 cents	233 cents	171 cents	266 cents
Dividends per share (DPS)	110 cents		200 cents	
% return on equity	25%	14%	9%	15%
% return on capital employed	20%	12%	10%	14%
Interest rate on loans	13%	13%	13%	13%
Interest rate on fixed deposits	6%	6%	6%	6%

REQUIRED:

- 5.3.1 Explain which company has the better liquidity. Quote TWO financial indicators to support your opinion. (4)
- 5.3.2 Comment on the earnings per share and the % return on equity of Lulu Ltd. Give TWO reasons why the shareholders will be satisfied with these indicators. (5)
- 5.3.3 Comment on the market value of the shares in Coco Ltd. Explain TWO points. (4)
- 5.3.4 Compare the dividend payout rates of both companies and explain why the directors of EACH company decided on these payout rates. (4)
- 5.3.5 Noah says that the dividend of 110 cents per share he earned from Lulu Ltd is better than the dividend of 200 cents per share from Coco Ltd. Give ONE point to prove that he is incorrect. (4)
- 5.3.6 Comment on the risk and gearing of EACH company. Quote TWO financial indicators. (6)
- 5.3.7 Noah wants to buy shares in Lulu Ltd on the JSE at current market value to become the majority shareholder and CEO. Calculate how much Noah will have to pay for the shares that he needs. (4)

70

QUESTION 6: BUDGETING (35 marks; 20 minutes)

- 6.1 Indicate whether the following statements are TRUE or FALSE. Write only 'true' or 'false' next to the question numbers (6.1.1 to 6.1.3) in the ANSWER BOOK.
 - 6.1.1 Bad debts is an example of a payment in a Cash Budget. (3)
 - 6.1.2 A Projected Income Statement estimates the expected profit or loss for a specified period. (3)
 - 6.1.3 A decrease in a fixed deposit will be shown as a receipt in the Cash Budget. (3 x 1) (3)

6.2 KURUMAN (PTY) LTD

John Peters is the majority shareholder and CEO. You are provided with information for the period ending 31 July 2020. There are five other shareholders.

Refer to Information A.

- 6.2.1
 - Calculate the missing amounts indicated by (i) and (ii) in the Debtors' Collection Schedule. (4)
 - Calculate the percentage discount allowed to debtors who settle in the month of the sales transactions. (5)
- 6.2.2 Calculate the following budgeted amounts:
 - Total sales for July 2020 (3)
 - Payment to creditors during June 2020 (4)
 - Additional loan to be acquired on 1 June 2020 (4)
- 6.2.3 The directors did not adhere to the Cash Budget during May 2020.
 - Identify TWO overpayments in May 2020. Provide figures. (3)
 - Give a valid reason for EACH overpayment identified, to support their decisions. (6)

Refer to Information E.

- 6.2.4 Why are the auditors concerned that the agreement with Tradecor is unethical or possibly a crime? Explain THREE points. (6)

INFORMATION:

A. Sales and debtors' collection:

- Estimates of total sales for 2020:

April	R150 000
May	R165 000
June	?

- 25% of all sales are on credit. The rest is for cash.
- Debtors are expected to settle as follows:
 - 60% within the same month of sale, subject to a cash discount allowed.
 - 38% in the month following the month of sale.
 - 2% of debts are written off in the second month following the month of sale.
- Partially completed Debtors' Collection Schedule:

	CREDIT SALES	MAY	JUNE	JULY
May	R41 250	R23 760	(i)	
June	(ii)		R25 056	R16 530
July	R48 000			R27 648
				R44 178

B. Purchases of merchandise and payments to creditors:

- The business uses a fixed-stock base with stock sold being replaced monthly.
- The business uses a mark-up of 50% on cost.
- 20% of all merchandise is purchased for cash.
- Creditors are paid in full in the month following the month of purchase.

C. Loan and interest:

The loan from Bokke Bank will be increased on 1 June 2020. Interest at 20% p.a. is not capitalised and is payable at the end of each month.

D. Extract from the Cash Budget for the three months ending 31 July 2020:

	MAY		JUNE	JULY
	Budgeted R	Actual R	Budgeted R	Budgeted R
RECEIPTS				
Cash sales	123 750	142 400	130 500	144 000
Collection from debtors	38 010	26 000		44 178
Loan			?	
Sale of property	0	320 000		
Sale of old vehicle	40 000	95 000		
PAYMENTS				
Cash purchase of stock	22 000	18 000	23 200	?
Payment to creditors	80 000	80 000	?	?
Salaries	28 000	28 000	28 000	42 000
Advertising	5 600	8 400	5 600	5 600
Staff training			30 000	
Interest on loan	6 000	6 000	7 500	7 500
Vehicle maintenance	12 200	36 350	5 800	5 800
Purchase of vehicle	235 000	235 000	-	-
Rent expense	0	0	0	0
Security personnel	8 000	6 500	8 000	8 000

E. Agreement with Tradecor:

The CEO, John Peters, decided to sell one of the company's properties at book value. This property was originally bought for R320 000 in 1980. According to the sale agreement, the purchaser, Tradecor, would rent the property back to Kuruman (Pty) Ltd for R26 000 per month with effect from 1 June 2020.


The auditors of Kuruman (Pty) Ltd discovered that the sole owner of Tradecor is John Peters's wife. They regard this agreement as unethical and possibly a crime.

35

TOTAL: 300

PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY:





basic education
Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SENIOR CERTIFICATE/SENIOR SERTIFIKAAT
NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE/
NASIONALE SENIOR SERTIFIKAAT

GRADE/GRAAD 12

MATHEMATICAL LITERACY P1/
WISKUNDIGE GELETTERDHEID V1
NOVEMBER 2020
MARKING GUIDELINES/NASIENRIGLYNE

MARKS/PUNTE: 150

Symbol/Kode	Explanation/Verduideliking
M	Method/Metode
MA	Method with accuracy/Metode met akkuratheid
CA	Consistent accuracy/Volgehoue akkuratheid
A	Accuracy/Akkuratheid
C	Conversion/Herleiding
S	Simplification/Vereenvoudiging
RT	Reading from a table/graph/document/diagram/Lees vanaf tabel/grafiek/dokument/diagram
SF	Correct substitution in a formula/Korrekte vervanging in 'n formule
O	Opinion/Explanation/Opinie/Verduideliking
P	Penalty, e.g. for no units, incorrect rounding off, etc./Penalisasie, bv. vir geen eenhede, verkeerde afronding, ens.
R	Rounding off/Afronding
NPR	No penalty for rounding/Geen penalisasie vir afronding nie
AO	Answer only/Slegs antwoord
MCA	Method with consistent accuracy/Metode met volgehoue akkuratheid
RCA	Rounding consistent with accuracy/Afronding met volgehoue akkuratheid

This marking guideline consists of 17 pages.
Hierdie nasienriglyne bestaan uit 17 bladsy's.

Copyright reserved/Kopiereg voorbehou Please turn over/Blaai om asseblief

Q/V	Solution/Oplissing	Explanation/Verduideliking	T&L
1.1.5	Increased delivery fee/Verhoogde afleweringkoste = $R10 \times 1,0632$ ✓MA = R10,632 Increase in delivery fee/Verhooging in afleweringkoste = $R10,63 - R10,00$ = R0,63 ✓A	1MA calculating percentage 1A simplification	(2)
1.2.1	2008 ✓✓RT	2RT reading correct year	D L1 (2)
1.2.2	Difference/Verskil = $R11,04 - R4,31$ = R6,73 ✓CA	1MA subtracting correct values 1RT correct values 1CA simplification	F L1 (3)
1.2.3	✓MA $5,56 : 12,48$ ✓RT $1 : 2,24$ OR/OF $0,45 : 1$ ✓CA	1MA concept of ratio in correct order 1RT correct values 1CA simplification	F L1 (3)
1.2.4	Total/Totaal = $13,45 \times R4,00$ ✓MA = R53,80 ✓CA OR/OF R : € 4 : 1 ✓MA 53,80 : 13,45 Total cost = R53,80 ✓CA	1MA multiplying correct values 1CA simplification	F L1 (2)
1.2.5	2007 ✓✓RT	2RT reading correct year	D L1 (2)

Q/V	Solution/Oplissing	Explanation/Verduideliking	T&L
1.3.1	✓A ✓A Strip Map (Chart)/Strookkaart ✓✓A	2A strip map (chart)	MP L1 (2)
1.3.2	Distance in metre/Afstand in meter = $779 \times 1\,000$ ✓MA = 779 000 ✓A	1MA multiplying by 1 000 1A simplifying NPU	M L1 (2)
1.3.3 (a)	✓A ✓A Ladismith AND/EN Calitzdorp	1A correct town 1A correct town	MP L1 (2)
1.3.3 (b)	The distance from Riversdale to Oudtshoorn/ Afstand vanaf Riversdal na Oudtshoorn = $82 \text{ km} + 45 \text{ km} + 53 \text{ km}$ ✓MA = 180 km ✓CA	1MA adding correct values 1CA simplification	MP L1 (2)
			[30]

NOTE:

- If a candidate answers a question TWICE, only mark the FIRST attempt.
- If a candidate has crossed out (cancelled) an attempt to a question and NOT redone the solution, mark the crossed out (cancelled) version.
- Consistent accuracy (CA) applies in ALL aspects of the marking guidelines; however it stops at the second calculation error.
- CA marks only apply if at least 1 correct value is used.
- If the candidate presents any extra solution when reading from a graph, table, layout plan and map, then penalise for every extra item presented.

LET WEL:

- As 'n kandidaat 'n vraag TWEE KEER beantwoord, sien slegs die EERSTE poging na.
- As 'n kandidaat 'n antwoord van 'n vraag doodtrek (kanselleer) en nie oordoen nie, sien die doodgetrekte (gekanselleerde) poging na.
- Volgehoue akkuratheid (CA) word in ALLE aspekte van die nasienriglyne toegepas, dit hou op by die tweede berekeningsfout.
- CA geld alleenlik wanneer ten minste 1 korrekte waarde gebruik is.
- Wanneer 'n kandidaat aflesings vanaf 'n grafiek, tabel, uitlegplan en kaart geneem en ekstra antwoorde gee, penaliseer vir elke ekstra item.

QUESTION/VRAAG 1 [30 MARKS/PUNTE] ANSWER ONLY FULL MARKS			
Q/V	Solution/Oplissing	Explanation/Verduideliking	T&L
1.1.1	Vertical bar graph/Vertikale staafgrafiek. Bar/Balk/Staaf, Column graph/Kolomgrafiek ✓✓A	2A bar graph	D L1 (2)
1.1.2	✓MA $A = R110 + R11$ = R121 ✓CA	1MA adding correct values 1CA Simplification	F L1 (2)
1.1.3	✓MA $B = R141 - R126$ = R15 ✓CA	1MA subtracting correct values 1CA simplification	F L1 (2)
1.1.4	Difference/Verskil $R126 - R110$ ✓MA = R16 ✓A	1MA subtract lowest from highest 1A simplification	F L1 (2)
1.1.5	Increased Delivery fee/Verhoogde afleweringfooit = $R10,00 \times 6,32\%$ ✓MA = R0,632 = R0,63 ✓A OR/OF $= R10,00 \times \frac{6,32}{100}$ ✓M = R0,632 = R0,63 ✓A OR/OF	1MA calculating percentage 1A simplification OR/OF	F L1

PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



Q/V	Solution/Oplissing	Explanation/Verduideliking	T&L
M L2	Area/Oppervlakte $(50\text{cm} \times 50\text{cm}) + (120\text{cm} \times 50\text{cm})$ $2\,500\text{ cm}^2 + 6\,000\text{ cm}^2$ Total Area/Totale Oppervlakte $(10 \times 2\,500\text{ cm}^2) + (2 \times 6\,000\text{ cm}^2)$ $25\,000\text{ cm}^2 + 12\,000\text{ cm}^2$ $37\,000\text{ cm}^2$ OR/OF 8 square sides/ <i>vierkantige sye</i> $\times (50 \times 50)$ $= 20\,000\text{ cm}^2$ 2 rectangular sides/ <i>reghoekige sye</i> $\times (120 \times 50)$ $= 12\,000\text{ cm}^2$ 2 square sides / <i>vierkantige sye</i> $\times (50 \times 50)$ $= 5\,000\text{ cm}^2$ Total area to be painted/ <i>Totale area wat geverf moet word:</i> $= 20\,000\text{ cm}^2 + 12\,000\text{ cm}^2 + 5\,000\text{ cm}^2$ $= 37\,000\text{ cm}^2$ OR/OF Total perimeter/ <i>Totale Omtrek</i> $= (50+50+50+50+50+50+50+50+120+50+50+120)\text{ cm}$ $= 740\text{ cm}$ Total area to be painted/ <i>Totale area wat geverf moet word:</i> $= 740\text{ cm} \times 50\text{ cm}$ $= 37\,000\text{ cm}^2$	1A area 1A area 1M multiplying correct values 1M adding the two areas 1CA simplification OR/OF 1A simplification 1A simplification 1A simplification 1M adding all values 1MA finding total area OR/OF 1A all correct values 1M adding correct values 1A simplification 1MA multiplying correct values 1A simplification	(5)

Q/V	Solution/Oplissing	Explanation/Verduideliking	T&L
	$8\text{ m}^2 : 1\text{ l}$ $80\,000\text{ cm}^2 : x$ Amount of paint for 1 coat/ <i>aantal verf vir 1 deklaag</i> $x = \frac{1000 \times 37000}{80000}$ $= 462,5\text{ ml}$ Amount of paint for 2 coats/ <i>aantal verf vir twee deklae</i> $= 462,5\text{ ml} \times 2$ $= 925\text{ ml}$ OR/OF Total area to be painted/ <i>Totale area wat geverf moet word</i> $= 37\,000 \div 10\,000$ $= 3,7\text{ m}^2 \times 2$ $= 7,4\text{ m}^2$ Spread rate/ <i>sprydingskoers</i> in ml/ l $1\,000 \div 8$ $= 125\text{ ml/ l}$ Amount of paint/ <i>aantal verf</i> $125 \times 7,4$ $= 925\text{ ml}$	1C conversion 1M dividing by 80 000 1M area of 2 coats 1CA simplification OR/OF 1C conversion 1M area of 2 coats 1M dividing by 8 1CA simplification	(4)
3.1.6	$\text{Height/Hoogte} = \frac{\text{Volume}}{\pi \times (\text{radius})^2}$ $= \frac{1\,000\text{ cm}^3}{3,142 \times (6,5\text{ cm})^2}$ $= 7,53298\dots\text{ cm}$	1C conversion from litres to cm^3 1SF substitution of radius 1CA simplification NPR	M L2 (3)
3.2.1	a) W or White/ <i>Wit</i> b) SB or Synthetic Brown leather/ <i>Sintetiese bruin leer</i>	2RT correct code 2RT correct code	P L1 (4)

Q/V	Solution/Oplissing	Explanation/Verduideliking	T&L
3.1.5	$37\,000\text{ cm}^2 \div 10\,000 = 3,7\text{ m}^2$ Total area to be painted/ <i>Totale area wat geverf moet word</i> $= 3,7\text{ m}^2 \times 2$ $= 7,4\text{ m}^2$ Spread rate/ <i>sprydingskoers</i> $\frac{7,4\text{ m}^2}{8\text{ m}^2} \times 1\,000$ $= 925\text{ millilitres/milliliter}$ OR/OF Spread rate/ <i>sprydingskoers</i> $= 8 \times 10\,000\text{ cm}^2/\text{l}$ $= 80\,000\text{ cm}^2/\text{l}$ Amount of paint / <i>aantal verf</i> in l $= \frac{37\,000}{80\,000}$ $= 0,4625$ Amount of paint for 1 coat / <i>aantal verf vir 1 deklaag</i> in ml $= 0,4625 \times 1\,000$ $= 462,5$ Amount of paint for 2 coats/ <i>aantal verf vir twee deklae</i> $= 462,5\text{ ml} \times 2$ $= 925\text{ ml}$ OR/OF Total area to be painted/ <i>Totale area wat geverf moet word:</i> $= 37\,000\text{ cm}^2 \div (100)^2 = 3,7\text{ m}^2$ Amount of paint for 1 coat/ <i>aantal ver vir 1 deklaag</i> in l $= \frac{3,7}{8} \times 1$ $= 0,4625\text{ l}$ Total amount of paint/ <i>Totale aantal verfl</i> $= 0,4625 \times 1000 \times 2$ $= 925\text{ ml}$	CA Question 3.1.4 1C converting from cm^2 to m^2 1M area for 2 coats 1M divide by spread rate 1CA answer in millilitres OR/OF 1M multiplying by 8 1M dividing by 80 000 1C converting 1CA simplification OR/OF 1C conversion 1M dividing by 8 1M area of 2 coats 1CA simplification	M L2 (5)

Q/V	Solution/Oplissing	Explanation/Verduideliking	T&L
3.2.2	$P(\text{not selecting red material}) = \frac{6}{9}$ $= \frac{2}{3}$ OR/OF $P(\text{not selecting red material}) = 1 - \frac{3}{9}$ $= \frac{6}{9}$ $= \frac{2}{3}$	1A numerator 1A denominator 1CA simplification	P L2 (3)
3.3.1	$1\text{ inch} = 153,6 \div 60$ $= 2,56\text{ cm}$ OR/OF Alternative solution method: inch : cm 60 : 153,6 1 : 2,56 1 inch = 2,56 cm	1M dividing by 60 1A simplification	M L1 (2)
3.3.2	$\text{Perimeter/Omtrek} = 2 \times (5\text{ m} + 153,6\text{ cm})$ $= 2 \times (500\text{ cm} + 153,6\text{ cm})$ $= 1\,307,2\text{ cm}$ OR/OF $\text{Perimeter/Omtrek} = 5\text{ m} + 5\text{ m} + 153,6\text{ cm} + 153,6\text{ cm}$ $= (500 + 500 + 153,6 + 153,6)\text{ cm}$ $= 1\,307,2\text{ cm}$	1RT correct value – 153,6 cm 1C converting from 5 m to cm 1CA simplification OR/OF 1RT correct value – 153,6 cm 1C converting from 5 m to cm 1CA simplification	M L2 (3)
			[31]

PROUDLY BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



QUESTION/VRAAG 4 [17 MARKS/PUNTE]			
Q/V	Solution/Oplissing	Explanation/Verduideliking	T&L
4.1.1	R46 ✓✓A	2A name of route (2)	MP L1
4.1.2	Number scale OR Numeric scale OR Ratio scale Nommerskaal OF verhoudingskaal OF Getalskaal OF Numeriese OF Getalle Skaal OF Syferskaal ✓✓A	2A identifying the scale (2)	MP L1
4.1.3	South West OR SW OR West of South West OR WSW Suidwes OF SW OF Wes van Suidwes OF WSW ✓✓A	2A general direction (2)	MP L1
4.1.4	A = 210 km – (62 km + 13 km + 82 km) ✓MA A = 53 km ✓CA	1MA subtracting correct values 1CA simplification (2)	MP L1
4.1.5	Ladismith ✓✓A	2A correct town (2)	MP L2
4.2.1	Total length /Totale lengte = 20 cm + 229 cm + 20 cm + 20 cm + 229 cm + 20 cm = 538 cm ✓CA OR/OF Total length /Totale lengte = 2(20 cm + 229 cm + 20 cm) = 2 × 269 cm = 538 cm ✓CA OR/OF Total length /Totale lengte = (20 cm × 4) + (229 cm × 2) = 80 cm + 458 cm = 538 cm ✓CA	1MA correct values (4×20) 1MA adding values (2×229) 1CA simplification OR/OF 1MA correct values (4×20) 1MA adding values (2×229) 1CA simplification OR / OF 1MA correct values (4×20) 1MA adding values (2×229) 1CA simplification (3)	MP L2

Q/V	Solution/Oplissing	Explanation/Verduideliking	T&L
4.2.2	D + 86 + 80 + 86 + D = 260 ✓MA 2D + 252 = 260 ✓M 2D = 260 – 252 2D = 8 D = 8 ÷ 2 ✓M = 4 cm ✓CA OR/OF Length excluding D = (86 cm × 2) + (20 cm × 4) = 172 cm + 80 cm = 252 cm ✓MA 2D = 260 cm – 252 cm D = 8 cm ✓M = 8 cm ÷ 2 = 4 cm ✓CA	1MA adding all values 1M subtracting from 260 1M dividing by 2 1CA simplification OR/OF 1MA calculating 252 1M subtracting from 260 1M dividing by 2 1CA simplification (4)	MP L3
[17]			

QUESTION/VRAAG 5 [30 MARKS/PUNTE]			
Q/V	Solution/Oplissing	Explanation/Verduideliking	T&L
5.1.1	TGA – team/span ✓✓RT	2RT correct tea (2)	D L1
5.1.2	Range/Omvang = 9,625 – 9,100 ✓RT = 0,525 ✓CA	1RT reading correct values 1CA concept of range (2)	D L1
5.1.3	Mean/Gemiddeld ✓RT = $\frac{9,100+9,250+9,300+8,650+9,100+9,050+8,750+9,050+8,300+9,200}{10}$ ✓M = 8,975 ✓CA	1RT correct values 1M concept of mean 1CA simplification NPR (3)	D L2
5.1.4	A = 36,425 – (9,300 + 9,100 + 9,225) ✓M = 8,800 ✓A	1RT correct values 1M adding and subtracting 1A simplification (3)	D L1
5.1.5	36,425 ✓✓A	2A correct mode (2)	D L1

5.1.6	✓A $\frac{3}{5} \times 100\%$ = 60% ✓CA	1A numerator 1A denominator 1CA percentage NPR (3)	P L2
5.1.7	Quartile / Kwartiel 2 ✓RT = $\frac{9,375 + 9,400}{2}$ ✓M = 9,3875 ✓A	1RT arranging or correct values 1M dividing by 2 1A simplification NPR (3)	D L2

Q/V	Solution/Oplissing	Explanation/Verduideliking	T&L
5.2.1	Fifty two million nine hundred and eighty two thousand. ✓✓A Twee en vyftig miljoen negehonderd twee en tagtig duisend.	2A amount in words (2)	D L1
5.2.2	Increase in population/Toename in bevolking(2015-2016) ✓RT ✓M 56 020 718 – 54 901 943 = 1 118 775 ≈ 1 120 000 ✓R	1RT correct values 1M subtracting 1R correct rounding (3)	D L1
5.2.3	Annual population growth/Jaarlakse bevolkingstoename(2015) = $\frac{54\,901\,943 - 53\,947\,998}{53\,947\,998} \times 100\%$ ✓SF = 1,768% ≈ 1,8% ✓CA	1SF substituting 54 901 943 1SF substituting 53 947 998 1CA simplification NPR (3)	D L2

Q/V	Solution/Oplissing	Explanation/Verduideliking	T&L
5.2.4	<p style="text-align: center;">Estimated total population and annual growth from 2013-2017</p> <p>IA – correctly plotted number of people 1CA – drawing of graph 1A – correctly plotted population growth 1CA – drawing of graph (4)</p>		D L2
TOTAL/TOTAAL: 150			

Sport



New league set to transform school golf

JOHNATHAN PAOLI

South African school golf is entering an exciting new phase with the launch of the Junior Invitational League (JIL), a high-performance junior competition designed to identify, challenge, and prepare the country's most promising young golfers for elite amateur and international competition.

Developed through a partnership between SA Kids Golf and the Ill-ovo-based Elite Sporting and Cultural Academy (ESCA), the league represents a major investment in junior golf development, aiming to create a competitive environment that mirrors the expectations and structures found at top amateur and collegiate golf programmes around the world.

The new league will bring together 24 invited junior golfers aged between 14 and 18, who will compete across a season of at least 10 elite-level tournaments hosted primarily in Gauteng.

ESCA Vice-Principal Isa Mohamed praised the league for offering many of the selected players their first sustained exposure to high-performance tournament golf designed to replicate international standards.

"This is where standards rise," he said. "This is where performance matters. And this is where the next generation of South African junior golf talent begins to take shape."

"The goal is simple: to provide talented young golfers with the kind of competitive environment required to prepare them for the next level of the sport."

Unlike traditional junior tournaments that operate as stand-alone events, the JIL will function as a season-long competition, with players accumulating points on an Order of Merit table based on their performances throughout the year.

Every tournament will contribute to the standings, ensuring that consistent performance is rewarded over the course of the season.

At the end of the campaign, the top performers will earn recognition and potential international opportunities.

Among the league's most attractive incentives is qualification for one of the world's leading junior tournaments.

The top two players on the final Order of Merit will earn automatic qualification to the Dubai Junior Desert Classic, widely regarded as one of the premier junior golf championships on the global calendar.

The opportunity to compete internationally is expected to provide significant motivation for young golfers striving to elevate their game.

While golf is traditionally an individual sport, the JIL introduces an innovative team-based component inspired by the collegiate golf system used at many universities.

The 24 invited players will be divided into six teams of four golfers, creating a competitive structure that emphasises teamwork, accountability, and shared success.

At each event, the best three scores from each team will count toward the team total. Points will then be awarded based on overall performance, with standings tracked across the season.

At the conclusion of the campaign, the team with the highest cumulative points will be crowned League Team Champions.

The format is designed to expose junior golfers to the kind of team dynamics they are likely to encounter if they pursue scholarships or play in international collegiate programmes.

The league has been built around five core principles aimed at raising the standard of junior golf in South Africa.

First, the league aims to create a genuine elite competitive environment, with all tournaments being

played under the official Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews (R&A) Rules of Golf and contested from championship tees, ensuring that players face conditions similar to those encountered at elite amateur events.

Second, advancement within the league will be strictly merit-based, with the Order of Merit determining recognition, opportunities, and qualification for international events.

Third, the league is structured to prepare young golfers for collegiate golf systems, introducing them to the pace, professionalism, and expectations required at the next level of competition.

Fourth, organisers have placed a strong emphasis on character development, with values such as integrity, discipline, humility, and accountability considered as essential elements of the programme.

Finally, the league seeks to foster a true high-performance



Impressive composure: Yieke Ajulu finished third in the championship. Photo: Supplied

culture, where talented players compete regularly against peers of similar ability, pushing one another to improve.

"Together, these pillars aim to develop not only stronger golfers but also well-rounded young athletes prepared for the demands of high-level sport," Mohamed said.

Beyond competition, the league has also been designed to provide greater exposure for emerging golfers.

The season will feature official media days, player profiling, statistical performance tracking, and sponsor integration, helping players build a competitive profile that can assist with college recruitment and international opportunities.

This visibility aligns closely with ESCA's broader mission of helping student athletes access opportunities beyond school sport, particularly through pathways into higher education and international competition.

The launch of the league has also attracted support from organisations committed to strengthening the junior golf ecosystem.

Among them is EXA Global, ESCA's international athlete placement and development division.

The organisation will serve as an official sponsor of the league, helping connect promising golfers with educational and sporting opportunities abroad.

Another key partner is One Golf Melrose Arch, a premium golf retail

Rising star: Mowana Chokwe finished second in the Central Gauteng Golf Union/ESCA Junior Championships, held on 22 February 2026 at the Wanderers Golf Club. Photo: Supplied

and fitting destination known for its focus on innovation and equipment performance.

Mohamed said the partnerships are expected to enhance the league's ability to create a professional environment where young golfers can develop both technically and competitively.

Qualification for the inaugural league began earlier this year at the Central Gauteng Golf Union/ESCA Junior Championships, held on 22 February 2026 at the Wanderers Golf Club.

The tournament, played on the 6,150-metre championship layout, provided an early glimpse of the talent likely to feature in the league.

Fifteen-year-old Muhammad Caje delivered one of the standout performances of the event, firing a superb two-under-par 69 to claim victory in the A Division.

Close behind him was Mowana Chokwe, who finished second with a one-under-par 70.

Rounding out the podium and displaying impressive composure was Yieke Ajulu, who carded an even-par 71 to finish third.

With only two strokes separating the top three players, the championship highlighted the strength of emerging junior talent in the region.

Organisers believe the launch of the league represents more than simply another competition on the junior calendar but the beginning of a stronger development pathway for young golfers seeking to compete at the highest levels of the sport.

By combining elite competition, international exposure, and structured development opportunities, the league aims to bridge the gap between junior potential and sustained high-performance success.