



basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

T H U T O



NEWSLETTER

The Embassy of the People's Republic of China donates smart boards and textbooks to ten schools in Tshwane



The partnership on Mandarin language teaching in South African pilot schools between the Republic of South Africa and the People's Republic of China has been maturing. Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, and the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to South Africa, Mr Tian Xuejun, officially handed over Mandarin language teaching equipment and textbooks to Willowridge High School, and nine other schools, in Pretoria on 06 March 2017.

South Africa and China signed several agreements on co-operation in different fields, including a Co-operation Agreement in the field of Basic Education, signed on 26 March 2013 during the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) Summit in South Africa. The partnership between the two parties forms part of a strategic programme signed during President Jacob Zuma's state visit to China on 04 December 2014.

Through the Co-operation Agreement between South Africa and China, both parties committed to forge close mutual technical collaboration, teacher training and expertise exchanges in the field of education, particularly in critical fields such as Mathematics, Science and Technology, as building blocks for the growth of knowledge economies in the respective countries. The Agreement also commits parties to work together in introducing Mandarin language teaching in South Africa. The Department has since introduced Mandarin as an elective foreign language in the South African school curriculum. Ambassador Tian Xuejun said that the implementation of Mandarin language teaching in South Africa will enable the partnership to grow even stronger.

In her address, Minister Motshekga thanked the People's Republic of China for their co-operation on educational issues: "Our bilateral relationship with China has grown into one of the most vibrant international partnerships supporting the South African basic education sector to date," remarked the Minister. Minister Motshekga further added that it is critical to break the language and cultural barriers that might hinder progress in building the economies of the two countries. "The potential for the global economic empowerment of our young South Africans is endless; offering Mandarin is a way of giving our learners an edge in the global economic playing field. China is fast becoming one of the South Africa's largest trading partners, and young people who are fluent in Mandarin would be able to have access to increased opportunities," concluded Minister Motshekga.

Creating a reading revolution whilst improving quality learning and teaching in schools



“Learners who adopt reading habits as part of their daily routine are likely to attain excellent academic results as they are being groomed to master content knowledge in subjects such as Mathematics and Physical Science,” said Minister Angie Motshekga, addressing the audience at the Observatory Junior School in Cape Town on 02 March 2017.

Minister Motshekga visited the school to create awareness in preparation for World Book Day on 23 April 2017. The promotion of reading in the Foundation Phase is a critical step in helping learners to perform optimally and for learners to become passionate about books while they are still young enough to enrich their vocabulary.

The Department of Basic Education is advocating several reading initiatives under the *Read to Lead Campaign* to drive a reading revolution in schools. “Learners in Grade R to 3 should proceed to other grades having mastered basic skills such as reading, writing and numeracy. Reading must be encouraged through parents’ involvement in the education of their children; parents need to read story books to their children on a daily basis. We should support learners to understand the importance of reading in their academic journey. Our learners need to be groomed to read with understanding in order to exit the schooling system with a quality pass,” Minister Motshekga reiterated.

The Observatory Junior School Principal, Ms Lynne O’ Ryan, agreed that: “Reading is essential because it broadens the imagination, experience and general knowledge of learners. Learners who read are good problem solvers and analytical and critical thinkers. It is therefore essential that we need to promote a reading culture in our schools”.

Education experts converge to share views on the progress on the South African schooling system



Minister Angie Motshekga believes that more education stakeholders need to collaborate with Government in improving quality learning and teaching in schools. Minister Motshekga therefore facilitated an all-inclusive stakeholder meeting in Pretoria on 03 March 2017, to consolidate Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) strategies aimed at mobilising members of society to pledge their support to education. In attendance was the KwaZulu-Natal MEC for Education, Mr Mthandeni Dlungwana and Limpopo MEC for Education, Mr Ishmael Kgetjepe. The Minister referred, in particular, to the need for social partners to collaborate with the Department and play their respective roles in supporting schools towards the attainment of quality passes in gateway subjects such as Accounting, Mathematics and Physical Science.

Minister Motshekga mentioned that it is important to ensure that the QLTC is strengthened at all hierarchal levels, especially at school and local level. The QLTC has been mandated to co-ordinate several community programmes to encourage South Africans to support schools in curbing the spread of social ills such as bullying, teenage pregnancy and alcohol and drug abuse. The *National Development Plan* (NDP) states the following on active community and parental participation in education: “*The performance of learners improves when parents are actively involved and take interest in their children’s education. All stakeholders in our society have a role to play in achieving good educational outcomes that are responsive to community needs and our economic development.*”

Minister Motshekga stated that, although the QLTC has done tremendous work in mobilising communities in the various provinces, more work still needs to be done to improve the level of literacy and numeracy in schools: “We should have a regular engagement with the communities to update them on the core issues of education requiring collaborative efforts of the sector as a whole. One other issue which should be given special attention is community protests and the vandalising of school property as they disrupt the schooling progress”.

The meeting therefore resolved that the QLTC should fast-track the development of a QLTC *Early Warning System* to pro-actively identify challenges at community level, and respond with targeted interventions before they escalate and negatively affect the delivery of quality education to avoid the reoccurrence of incidences such as the burning of schools in Vuwani in the Limpopo Province.

DBE hosts Nutrition Forum



The Department of Basic Education's (DBE's) National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) hosted the first Nutrition Forum under the theme: *"Enhancing Quality and Efficiency in the NSNP"* at the DBE from 01 to 02 March 2017. The aim of the Forum was to create a platform for key NSNP implementers at all levels (National, Provincial and District level) to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the Programme.

01 March 2017 also marked the *Africa Day of School Feeding* as adopted by the African Union, launched in Niger during 2016, to recognise school meals as the world's most widely-used safety net and the vital role it plays in education. The African Union (AU), in collaboration with the South African Government and the World Food Programme (WFP), joined the international community to celebrate the second *Africa Day of School Feeding* on the day.

Close to 170 participants from National, Provincial and District levels, as well as various stakeholders attended the Forum. Guest speakers from the Departments of Health (DoH); and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), the Dairy Standards of SA, the University of the Free State, the Tiger Brands Foundation, FUEL (Feed. Educate. Uplift. Love), a non-government organisation, and the DBE's Grant Management Directorate shared key information that has direct impact on NSNP implementation.

While the overarching goal of the NSNP is to enhance learning capacity and access to education through the provision of a nutritious meal to targeted learners on all school days, the Forum was intended to strengthen the NSNP value chain covering such topics as food safety; impact of nutrition on child development; Norms and Standards; and monitoring practices that enhance the programme. Special attention was given to the Education Districts as key participants and *"the engine of NSNP implementation"* with a view to strengthen planning, monitoring and evaluation of all activities. NSNP officials from fifty seven (57) Districts were actively engaged in breakaway sessions to address various topics and share practical experiences and best practices to address shortcomings in the Programme.

Dr Granville Whittle, Deputy Director-General for Social Mobilisation and Support Services, indicated that the NSNP Forum reinforces the Department's goal to provide support and to increase the capacity of Districts and Circuits towards educational outcomes. He officially announced the winners of the 2016/17 NSNP Best Schools Awards with Steenberg's Cove Primary in Western Cape, as the overall winner. The school will receive a kitchen to the value of R450,000 generously donated by the Tiger Brands Foundation (TBF). In addition, the school will also receive a variety of cooked breakfast meals prepared with high quality products from the TBF for a period of three years. The second place winner was Bophelong Special School in the North West Province, whilst Makeneng Primary School in the Free State Province finished in third position. The winning Best District was Butterworth in the Eastern Cape Province.

The DBE is proud to have hosted a successful Nutrition Forum attended by representatives from all nine provinces; it was lauded as an excellent opportunity to share best practices and lessons learnt to ensure a coherent, effective and system-wide NSNP implementation.

Announcement of the establishment of the UNESCO Chair at Tshwane University of Technology

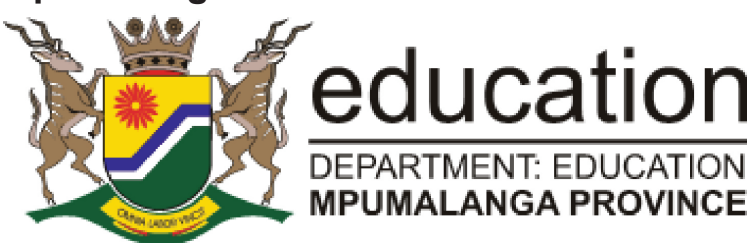
Director in the DG's Office, Dr Jenny Joshua, officially announced UNESCO's approval of the establishment of the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy and Sustainable Development at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), on behalf of the Director-General of the Department of Basic Education, Mr Mathanzima Mweli. The function was held on 03 March 2017, at the TUT.

The South African National Commission for UNESCO assisted TUT to apply for the Chair. The UNESCO Chairs Programme serves as a prime means of building the capacities of higher education and research institutions through the exchange of knowledge and sharing in a spirit of international solidarity. These institutions work in partnership with NGOs, foundations and public and private sector organisations; and play an important role in the field of higher education. The Programme opens avenues for higher education and research communities to join forces with UNESCO to contribute to the implementation of its programme and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It covers training, research and exchange of academics and offers a platform for information sharing in all fields within the competencies of UNESCO.

TUT's UNESCO Chair is intended to concentrate on Cultural Policy and Sustainable Development; and to contribute to cultural planning, creative industries and arts education. The Chair position will focus on fostering creativity and the diversity of cultural expressions; supporting inclusive social development; fostering intercultural dialogue for the understanding of cultures; and strengthening the contribution of culture to sustainable development, particularly in the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which is a part of UNESCO's global priorities in Africa.

Regional Round-up

Mpumalanga Province



Mpumalanga Education MEC, Ms Reginah Mhaule, said the Provincial Department of Education (PED) condemns service delivery protests that have hindered teaching and learning in the Bushbuckridge area. "We are deeply concerned that in the Bushbuckridge local municipality schooling was affected in Marite, Shatale, Lehukwe, Arthrseat and Dwarsloop in the Mashishing circuit since January. These protests continue in spite of the call to communities to not let service delivery protests affect teaching and learning. The Mpumalanga PED arranged for catch up lessons on the SABC radio stations Ligwalagwala FM and Ikwekwezi FM and also the 11 community radio stations in the province.

Upcoming Events

- 10 March 2017: Minister Motshekga to open School Infrastructure Projects at Mapaleni Primary School and Makhozana Manzini High School in Hazyview, Mpumalanga Province
- 13 March 2017: Director-General, Mr Mathanzima Mwel, to continue his Provincial Engagement Visits in Thohoyandou, Vhembe in the Limpopo Province
- 21 March 2017: Human Rights Day
- 25 March 2017: 17th Annual National Teaching Awards in Gauteng Province
- 30 March 2017: 17th Annual National Teaching Awards Broadcast on SABC 2 at 22:00
- 07 April 2017: Minister Angie Motshekga to host the 2nd National Education Excellence Awards at the Saint George Hotel and Conference Centre in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 07 April 2017: Closing date for the submission of the 2017 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secondary Schools Essay Competition entries to the Provincial Education Departments
- 11 April 2017: 17th Annual National Teaching Awards Repeat Broadcast on SABC 2 at 10:30
- 14 April 2017: Good Friday
- 17 April 2017: Family Day
- 27 April 2017: Freedom Day
- 29 July – 19 August 2017: National Schools Moot Court Competition essays are to be submitted to the University of Pretoria / www.schoolsmoot.co.za
- 19 August – 22 September 2017: The hosting of the provincial rounds of the National Schools Moot Court Competition
- 04 – 08 October 2017: The National Schools Moot Court Competition finals to be hosted at the University of Pretoria and the Constitutional Court in Johannesburg



OUR FUTURE - MAKE IT WORK

South Africa belongs to all its peoples. Now, in 2030, our story keeps growing as if spring is always with us.

Once, we uttered the dream of a rainbow.
Now we see it, living it. It does not curve over the sky.

It is refracted in each one of us at home, in the community,
in the city, and across the land, in an abundance of colour.

When we see it in the faces of our children, we know: there will
always be, for us, a worthy future.