



**basic education**

Department:  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**THUTO**



## NEWSLETTER

# Roundtable Discussions on the SACMEQ IV and the Skills for a Changing World Reports prove fruitful



Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, hosted the Roundtable Discussions on the Release of the *Fourth Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ IV)* Study Report for Grade 6 Learners and the *Skills for a Changing World: National Perspectives and the Global Movement Report*.

The SACMEQ Project is a proudly African initiative which commenced in 1995, and was a response to the growing concerns among member states and other interest groups about the quality of basic education being offered to learners. The second study reports on the necessary “*Skills for a Changing World*”, conducted by the Brookings Institute. The Report provides several key findings for the sector to share an independent perspective and findings that will assist to deliver quality education at all levels of the system.

The roundtable was held on Friday, 18 August 2017, at the DBE Conference Centre in Pretoria. The theme of the Roundtable was: “*Strengthening Quality Education through credible Assessments and 21st Century Skills Development*”.

“Over the last few years, our education system has faced several low achievement hurdles, but we have remained steadfast in our mission of reaching targeted goals and overcoming obstacles in a bid to provide quality public schooling. Today, as critical stakeholders in the sector, we want to appreciate two research studies that can help us deliver on those high aspirations of improved quality education to all South African children,” Minister Motshekga said in her opening address.

Mr Hervé Lodovic De Lys, Country Representative for the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) South Africa, mentioned that, “children today face unique challenges with their norms and traditions being challenged. Both these reports have significant impact on children’s rights”. Mr Ludovic De Lys congratulated the DBE and South Africa for their continued participation in international and regional assessments.

Dr Esther Care and Dr Helyn Kim from the Brookings Institution made a presentation on the *Skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, saying that innovation in teaching approaches is necessary to equip global future learners with the necessary skills and personal attributes to succeed. The modern classroom should focus on active pedagogy with a focus on inclusivity, diversity and modelling.

Basic Education Director-General, Mr Mathanzima Mwel, highlighted the following skills necessary to effectively teach the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum: critical problem solving skills; communication and collaboration skills; digital literacy skills; innovation and creativity skills; and human rights and social justice skills. Mr Mwel also made reference to the Three Stream Model, which enables learners to follow different pathways such as the academic, the technical vocational and technical occupational streams, towards academic success.



Deputy Director-General for Curriculum Policy Support and Monitoring at the DBE, Dr Maboya, said that, although the improvement in reading, literacy and Mathematics is evident, quality remains a challenge: “These report results are a data-informed method of self-reflection which provides a rationale for policy review to strengthen implementation, measure the competitiveness of our education system and to benchmark ourselves against other countries”.

The observations in the Report affirm the on-going success of programmes such as the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI) Programme, essential learning materials through the supply of Workbooks, improved health care and support through the *National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)* and the *National School Deworming Programme*.

The Roundtable brought together policy planners and decision-makers and educational specialists from a variety of institutions within the sector to share innovative ideas on educational assessment and enhance the on-going dialogue on the role of assessment in improving quality education, as well as improving capacity in order to develop skills needed for the 21st century. The DBE is one of the participating countries in the SACMEQ study. The SACMEQ project enables participating countries to track changes and progress over time in order to make valid comparisons with similar education systems as well as report on progress made towards the attainment of *Education For All* (EFA) goals and the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs).

## Early Grade Reading Study findings to lay the foundations for improved Foundation Phase reading



One of the biggest developmental challenges facing South Africa is the high number of learners who do not learn to read for meaning in the early years of school. Reading is the foundational skill on which all others are built. Basic Education Deputy Minister, Mr Enver Surty, senior managers from the Department of Basic Education (DBE), partners and stakeholders signed a pledge of commitment towards the improvement of reading in South African schools during the release of the results of the Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS) on findings in the North West Province.

Deputy Minister Surty addressed the delegates on the importance of building an evidence-base for reading in South Africa. He made mention of the 55 million workbooks, which are distributed nationally to all public schools, as well as the DBE's commitment to the provision of libraries and e-libraries: “The resources are there; our learners must be able to read, and to read with understanding. We welcome improvements in interventions in moving away from mediocrity towards academic excellence.”

Dr Mamiki Maboya, Deputy Director-General for the Curriculum Policy, Support and Monitoring Branch, provided background to the EGRS, phase 1, which has been taking place in collaboration with the University of the Witwatersrand and the ZENEX Foundation: “The study is about the introduction of interventions in the Foundation Phase as we understand the importance of reading to access knowledge and the curriculum as the core business of the sector.” The study evaluates three interventions aimed at improving early grade reading, namely a structured learning programme and centralised training; a structured learning programme and specialist on-site coaching; and a package designed to improve parental involvement and monitoring for children learning to read. The three interventions were implemented in the Grade 1 class of 2015 and at Grade 2 level during 2016.

Chief Director for Strategic Planning, Research and Co-ordination, Ms Carol Nuga-Deliwe, said that it was crucial to use credible evidence in policy and planning to improve the impact of Home Language Literacy in African languages, and in rural areas in particular.

Dr Stephen Taylor, Director for Research, Co-ordination, Monitoring and Evaluation, presented the main research findings of the EGRS in the North West Province to a capitated audience. The study took place in a total of 230 schools in the Ngaka Modiri Molema and the Dr Kenneth Kaunda districts in North West Province in Quintile 1 to 3 schools, with Setswana as the Language of Learning and Teaching in the Foundation Phase.

Of the three interventions involving scripted lesson plans, reading materials and on-site coaching are showing the clearest evidence of a substantial positive impact after two years of intervention. The gains of the on-site coaching intervention are estimated at approximately a third of a year of learning ahead of the intervention group. The effective coaching intervention is helping to close the gender gap with boys catching up with girls who are substantially ahead of them in terms of Grade 2 literacy. The impact of the coaching intervention is largest for learners in the middle and upper part of the achievement distribution. For all three interventions, the observed impacts are



larger in urban township settings.

Some of the great success the project has managed to achieve include teachers modelling good literacy practices, learners interacting with texts individually; a focus on reading and writing extended texts; the use of books including textbooks, workbooks and readers; feedback to learners; and greater curriculum coverage. This study presents the most empirical evidence to date on the substantial effect of a structured pedagogical programme, when supported by high quality on-site coaching.

The project management team will be hosting a feedback session with all the participating school principals during September and October 2017. Phase 2 of the EGRS will be taking place in the Mpumalanga Province with the assistance of US Aid.

Click on the link to view additional information regarding the EGRS: <http://www.education.gov.za/Programmes/egrs.aspx>.



# DBE analyses subject content to promote social cohesion in the classroom



The evaluation of textbooks and Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) is vital to ensure that these materials are free from any form of discrimination. It is therefore critical that the DBE examines textbooks to promote equality and the appreciation of diversity to strengthen social cohesion in schools.

On 14 August 2017, the Ministerial Committee that was established by Basic Education Minister, Mrs Angie Motshekga, hosted its first session of consultations in the Western Cape Province. The morning session with key education stakeholders took place at the Cape Winelands Education District in Worcester, followed by an afternoon session at the Metro North Education District in Parow.

As part of its Terms of Reference, the Committee is currently in the process of conducting public consultations in provinces to discuss findings of the project and further discuss possible recommendations. During the evaluation processes, the committee targeted a sample of textbooks and LTSM being utilised in Grade 3, 6, 9 and 12 in order to identify various forms of discrimination including race, gender, disability, family status, religion, class and age. Subjects which formed part of the evaluation are English First Additional Language, Afrikaans First Additional Language, IsiZulu Home Language, Mathematics and Mathematics Literacy, Social Sciences and History, and Life skills and Life Orientation.

The key education stakeholders participating in these public consultations indicated that the Committee's outcomes will improve quality learning and teaching in schools. A Life Skills and Creative Art Subject Advisor from the Cape Winelands Education District, Ms Chantel Ross, said that, "this was a very helpful engagement since it allows all role players to gather under one roof to discuss the holistic process of textbook development. Through these findings, we hope that the manner in which the content is presented in the classroom setting will be improved for the better".

One of the publishers from Macmillan SA, Mr Sandile Khumalo, was of the view that, "this public consultation is a constructive way of finding solutions to various forms of discrimination and stereotyping that might be depicted in the textbooks. It is good that we were invited to attend this session because as publishers we play a crucial role in the development of such content".

Committee member, Professor Yusuf Sayed, stated that through the evaluation of the textbook content, Government will be able to give expression to the values enshrined within the *Constitution*: "We have to ensure that our education system is equitable, just, and fair. The main goal of the project is to promote inclusivity, social cohesion and diversity in schools. The participants made valuable inputs. It must be noted that we value the views of these stakeholders to achieve our objectives. Therefore, engaging them in this manner will actually assist us to compile a comprehensive report".

## Mobile learning expert panel on designing an effective Large-scale Mobile Learning Initiative





Local and international mobile education experts spent two days at the Protea Hotel Fire and Ice in Menlyn, Pretoria, from 07 to 08 August 2017 looking at possible options for designing an effective large-scale mobile learning (m-learning) initiative for public schools in South Africa.

This workshop was as a direct result of the Ukufunda Virtual School (UVS) initiative. The UVS was an m-learning service which was conceptualised in 2013 and launched during September 2014 by a partnership comprising of the DBE, UNICEF and the Reach Trust (formerly known as Mxit). The UVS was the DBE's first attempt in developing an m-learning portal which would be used to provide access to learning resources and content, counselling, safety services and other value added services and programmes. The UVS ran until December 2015.

During 2016, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) commissioned an independent implementation evaluation of the UVS on behalf of the DBE with the goal of distilling key lessons to be used to inform future implementation, scale-up and sustainability of an m-learning innovation. The evaluation highlighted key lessons and proposed recommendations; the report is available on the DBE website.

The workshop commenced with an opening speech from the Acting Deputy Director-General for the Teacher and Professional Development Branch, Dr Granville Whittle, who provided the background and purpose of the workshop. Dr Whittle mentioned that the workshop was intended to discuss the key lessons and recommendations of the UVS evaluation; discuss the key lessons and experiences from local and global m-learning initiatives, including other developing countries' contexts; and to share experiences of examples of good practices in m-learning from other sectors such as health services.

Basic Education Director-General, Mr Mathanzima Mweli, gave an opening address, highlighting that the importance of seamless information infrastructure is foregrounded in the South African Government's *National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030* as a critical enabler of education outcomes. The DG also mentioned that the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is premised on the *e-Education White Paper of 2004*; *DBE's Action Plan to 2019: Towards the realisation of schooling 2030*. He then touched briefly on Operation Phakisa, a Presidential initiative that developed implementation plans along five work streams including: Connectivity; Devices; Teacher Professional Development; Digital Content Development and Distribution; and e-Administration.

Mr Herve Ludovic De Lys, the Country Representative for UNICEF SA gave a message of support for m-learning. He thanked the DBE for the unceasing partnership which has resulted in various successes with a particular emphasis on the UVS initiative. He also thanked



all participants for their commitment in the m-learning field and willingness to share their expertise and experiences with South Africa, a fast developing country.

Apart from the preceding speeches which served at the first session aimed at setting the scene, there were seven other sessions which dealt with the content (m-learning) of the workshop. These sessions were chaired by various DBE and UNICEF colleagues. The presenters included the Departments of Health; Science and Technology through the CSIR; local and international renowned universities; Provincial Education Departments' (PED) and Kelello Consulting, the UVS independent evaluator.

Critical challenges that were tabled and dealt with included: Lack of access to affordable and reliable bandwidth; Language barriers; Lack of consistent buy-in from PEDs; Poor support and maintenance systems; Limited content that is contextually relevant; Low levels of uptake and usage; Little or no impact on learner performance; and Unsustainable m-learning interventions.

At the end of the two days, the DBE and UNICEF were in agreement that the workshop achieved the outcomes they had set out to achieve, and that these will guide the partnership on the next steps to be taken.



**QLTC structures to assume responsibility for improving the quality of education in South African communities**





On 11 August 2017, the DBE’s Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC) Directorate convened a consultative meeting with sister Departments and other important stakeholders in the education sector. In attendance were the Department of Health, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). The meeting was geared towards strengthening and to give meaning on the role that could be played by other entities on the implementation of the QLTC new road map and identify the roles and responsibilities they could play. This QLTC road map outlines the QLTC strategies and plans to be consolidated and realigned in order to improve quality learning and teaching in all public schools. Its primary objective is to find strategies and mechanisms to be put in place in mobilising stakeholders and members of the public to play substantive role towards the delivery of quality public education. As the final examinations are approaching, it is befitting for the QLTC strategies and plans to be consolidated and realigned in order to improve quality learning and teaching in all our public schools.

The QLTC was established during 2008 to make education a societal matter whilst promoting the effective implementation of various education programmes such as the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), the Learning and Teaching Support Material (Workbooks), the Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign and the Fundza Lushaka Bursary Programme. The QLTC is a social compact between education stakeholders and members of communities to promote accountability across the sector. The major thrust of the QLTC is to provide a platform for communities to actively and constructively become involved in the improvement of quality leaching and learning and protecting our schools.

QLTC Director, Mr Thula Nkomo, says that the Campaign plays a crucial role in ensuring that learners receive quality education and teachers deliver quality education; and that all education stakeholders including school communities, Districts, Provincial and National Departments work together to turn schools into a centre of excellence to achieve the objectives set out in the *Action Plan to 2019: Towards the realisation of Schooling 2030*.

“The QLTC calls on all individuals and organisations to assume responsibility for improving the quality of education. QLTC structures will be established at all levels of the education system to ensure that all role players adhere to the pledges they took to carry out their roles and responsibilities to the best of their ability. It is only when each role-player carries out their functions with dedication, motivation and commitment that we will be able to achieve excellence in education. It is crucial to mobilise and galvanise the entire nation to rally around the cause of the achievement of quality education for all. Thus the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign calls on all individuals and organisations to assume responsibility for improving the quality of education,” concluded Mr Nkomo.

Ministerial Services Chief of Staff, Mr Paul Sehlabelo, emphasised in his address that, “QLTC is the most relevant platform to give concrete expression to the mantra that education is a societal matter as it takes a village to raise a child. Working together, sharing ideas and best practice we can build a cohesive society if all government departments, social partners and religious leaders come together to contribute towards the improvement of quality, cohesion and nation building”.

## Regional Roundup



### Gauteng Province

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) is a leading example of a province that encourages girl learners to use education as a tool to protect and empower themselves, not only during Women’s Month, but throughout the year under the 2017 campaign theme: “Invest in a girl child and empower a young woman”. Scores of girl learners from schools in Soweto and surrounding areas were encouraged to reflect on their daily challenges and focus on finding lasting solutions during the recent launch of the 2017 Women’s Month at Aurora Girls High School in Soweto. At the event, girl learners had an opportunity to exchange ideas with Premier David Makhura on a variety of topics and challenges, which included teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, sexual abuse and homosexuality. Premier Mahura further emphasised the importance of education for both girl and boy learners to ensure that they are equipped with the necessary skills to become globally competitive and participate meaningfully to the economy. Educators were requested not to discriminate against learners from the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community, but to assist all learners on all levels to develop holistically.

## Upcoming Events

- 19 August 2017: The Second Chance Matric Support Programme North West Province Ministerial Roadshow will be taking place at the OR Tambo Hall, Ikageng in the North West Province
- 19 August – 22 September 2017: The hosting of the provincial rounds of the National Schools Moot Court Competition
- 21 August 2017: Ministerial Committee to host public consultations to evaluate Textbooks and Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) at Makhazeni Boarding School and the Enhlanzeni District Office in Machachodorp, Mpumalanga Province
- 21 August 2017: Basic Education Director-General, Mr Mathanzima Mveli, to attend a provincial engagement visit in the KwaZulu-Natal Province
- 24 August 2017: Ministerial Committee to host public consultations to evaluate Textbooks and Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) in the Limpopo Province
- 25 August 2017: DBE's Women's Day event to be hosted in Gauteng Province
- 28 August 2017: Ministerial Committee to host public consultations to evaluate Textbooks and Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) in the North West Province
- 28 August 2017: Basic Education Deputy Minister, Mr Enver Surty, to attend a business breakfast engagement session with Deloitte at the Southern Sun Hemingways Hotel in East London, Eastern Cape Province
- 31 August 2017: Ministerial Committee to host public consultations to evaluate Textbooks and Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) in Petrusburg and Bloemfontein in the Free State Province
- 04 September 2017: Ministerial Committee to host public consultations to evaluate Textbooks and Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) in the KwaZulu-Natal Province
- 23 September 2017: The 2017 National Spelling Bee Competition to be hosted at the University of South Africa (UNISA)
- 24 September 2017: Heritage Day
- 27 September 2017: World School Milk Day will be celebrated in the Western Cape Province
- 30 September – 02 October 2017: The inks Albert Luthuli Oral History Competition to take place in Pretoria, Gauteng Province
- 01 – 03 October 2017: The Transnet Rural and Farm Schools National Tournament to take place at the Germiston Stadium, Gauteng Province
- 02 – 07 October 2017: The Sanlam Kay Motsepe Schools Cup National Championships to take place in Johannesburg, Gauteng Province
- 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
- 05 October 2017: World Teachers' Day
- 09 – 15 October 2017: A National Nutrition Week Commemoration will be taking pace under the theme: *“Rethink your drink – Choose Water”* in the Gauteng and North West Provinces
- 09 - 22 October 2017: A National Nutrition Week *“So Chef”* workshop will be taking place in partnership with the French Embassy in four provinces (Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Western Cape) and in five cities (Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town)
- 23 October 2017: Start of the 2017 National Senior Certificate Examinations
- 28 November 2017: End of the 2017 National Senior Certificate Examinations
- 10 – 14 December 2017: The South African School Sport National Championships (Summer Games) to take place in Cape Town, Western Cape Province
- 04 January 2018: Ministerial Announcement of the 2017 National Senior Certificate Examination Results
- 17 January 2018: Start of the 2018 Academic School Year
- 01 – 31 March 2018: School Governing Body (SGB) Elections





# 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.