

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3248.**

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**3248. . Dr S S Thembekwayo (EFF) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:  
to ask the Minister of Basic Education:**

How does the National Framework on Rural Education guarantee sustainable living in rural communities and curb migration into cities in search for quality education for the children?

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#### **Response**

The Rural Education Framework aims to:

- Improve access to, and the quality of education in rural schools.
- Address the isolation, disconnectedness, as well as the lack of development often associated with rural communities and schools.
- Provide a basis for the development of context-specific, relevant and sustainable strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning in rural schools

The Framework moves from the premise that there is no single definition of “rurality”; and therefore, the strategies to address the challenges facing rural education, need to be sensitive and relevant to the different contexts. In South Africa, rural refers to -

- Areas that consist of the tribal lands controlled by traditional leaders;
- Settings that are sparsely populated and where agriculture is the major means of economic activity;
- Areas of dense settlement created by colonial and apartheid-driven land settlements; and
- Mining areas in rural contexts, where mining is no longer active.’

With such an all-encompassing definition, the Framework provides a guide for to provinces, districts and schools in their design of programmes and projects aimed at improving the quality of education and livelihoods. This is in line with the NDP’s call for an inclusive rural economy which requires multi-sectoral cooperation and collaboration among key stakeholders.

The Framework recognises the centrality of teachers in any attempt to improve the quality of education, especially in rural areas. One of the challenges that the Framework seeks to address, is the difficulty of attracting quality teachers to rural schools. It recommends the establishment of Edu-Villages, which will serve as hubs for teacher development, but also provide much-needed accommodation for teachers in rural schools. These villages will also have infrastructure required for modern day living, so that teachers do not have to go to town to access such services (IT facilities, Early Childhood facilities, etc.)

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The Framework also recommends broader community mobilisation and participation in educational affairs. Such participation should extend to parents playing a role in supporting schools in areas, such as the teaching of Arts and Culture, Sports and Reading and Numeracy. The bringing in of communities into schools for the teaching of these subject areas, will bring to bear the relevance of what is delivered in rural schools, as these will draw on indigenous knowledge systems, and heighten awareness of the rich cultural resources that are available in rural communities for the benefit of children and education. This will also highlight the possibilities that exist in rural areas to contribute meaningfully to the rural economy, particularly the potential benefits and marketability of skills related to the Arts, Culture and Sports.

Agriculture is a cornerstone of rural economy. While it contributes 4% to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), its contribution to the South African economic wellbeing, should not be discounted simply because of the sector's percentile contribution to the GDP. Agriculture has both backward and forward linkages to the entire economy, including in the sectors of manufacturing, beverages and food.

The Framework recommends expanding the provision of Agricultural education across the system as a way of developing the love for, and developing the skills amongst learners in this area. Such skills will be beneficial not only to rural economies, but also the national economy. Agricultural skills are not only limited to farming. Agricultural Technology, for example, opens the way for the development of goods that are required for beyond Agriculture. Learners, who study Agriculture Technology, can provide goods and services that are required for everyday living, and can become entrepreneurs in their own right.

Furthermore, the Framework recommends the development of education initiatives that target young people, such as their use as Education Assistants in schools. This will assist, not only in employment creation, but also ensuring that learners in rural schools are supported, and enjoy the quality of education offered in rural schools