

Design Evaluation of Policy on Community Colleges

Draft Findings and Recommendations



higher education
& training
Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



THE PRESIDENCY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT: PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

DHET/DPME

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The Presentation

1. Purpose of the Evaluation

2. Background and Context

- Policy Context

3. Approach and Method

- Theory of change and Logframe
- Literature Review

4. Findings

5. Recommendations

The Purpose of the Evaluation

To assess the relevance and appropriateness of the Draft Policy on Community Colleges (PCC) in respect of:

- Fitness for purpose;
 - Internal and external coherence; and
 - Implementability
-
- It is understood that the findings of the evaluation will feed directly into the policy refinement process.

Background and Context

Current Policy Context

- The ***Further Education and Training Colleges Amendment Act, No. 1 of 2013***
- The ***White Paper for Post School Education and Training*** (DHET 2013)
- The 2011 ***Community Education and Training Centres Task Team Report*** The Report includes proposals for:
 - community learning centres: and
 - a new and differentiated college sector which includes the introduction of community colleges.
- The work of the ***National Planning Commission***

Approach

A Design Evaluation Approach **(Specified in the TOR)**

- Serves to pilot an approach to policy design
- Requires a Theory of Change (ToC) and Logframe is developed against which the evaluation is conducted (typically this step occurs before the policy/or programme is evaluated).
- Therefore done retrospectively (legislation already gazetted and function shift for PALCs planned for 1 April 2015)

ToC & Logframe Development Process

1. Developing a vision for the new Community Colleges
2. Conducting a stakeholder analysis
3. Conducting a problem analysis
4. Developing an objectives analysis and determining the key results areas and the change pathway
5. Developing the logframe matrix for the Policy on Community Colleges

A Vision for Community Colleges

Policy	Aligned with vision and goals for the country and developed with full stakeholder participation
Location	In an accessible location with a central site and satellite Community Learning Centres widely distributed
Beneficiaries	For adults and especially those not in employment, education or training (the NEETs)
Functioning	Fully functional with teachers teaching Interactive and responsive Linked to community and its challenges Well run, managed, governed Viable A sophisticated learning institution Community orientated

Vision (continued)

Provision	Easy access to meaningful, useful programmes and courses Variety of programmes offered to the local community A “One stop shop”
Programmes	School equivalency programmes Foundational programmes for university Facilities for Independent study Vocational skills Learners doing apprenticeships with SETAs People learning skills - such as plumbing, cooking, etc. Skills programmes Livelihoods related programmes
Materials	Good learning materials wherever possible
Articulation	Programmes articulate with further education and employment opportunities
Partnerships	Variety of partners sponsoring various projects including Learners doing apprenticeships with SETAs

Vision (continued)

Staff	Good, qualified, knowledgeable teachers teaching Qualified teachers Community members as teachers Motivated
Hours	Open week days and weekends from morning till night (10 pm)
Infrastructure and resources	Really well resourced with stress on access to modern state of the art information technology Good physical infrastructure including computers and ubiquitous free wi-fi Accessible, supportive, responsive spaces Lively noisy spaces Quite areas for independent study Many spaces for groupwork Good signage Outdoor lunch area
Quality	High standards

Vision (continued)

Diversity

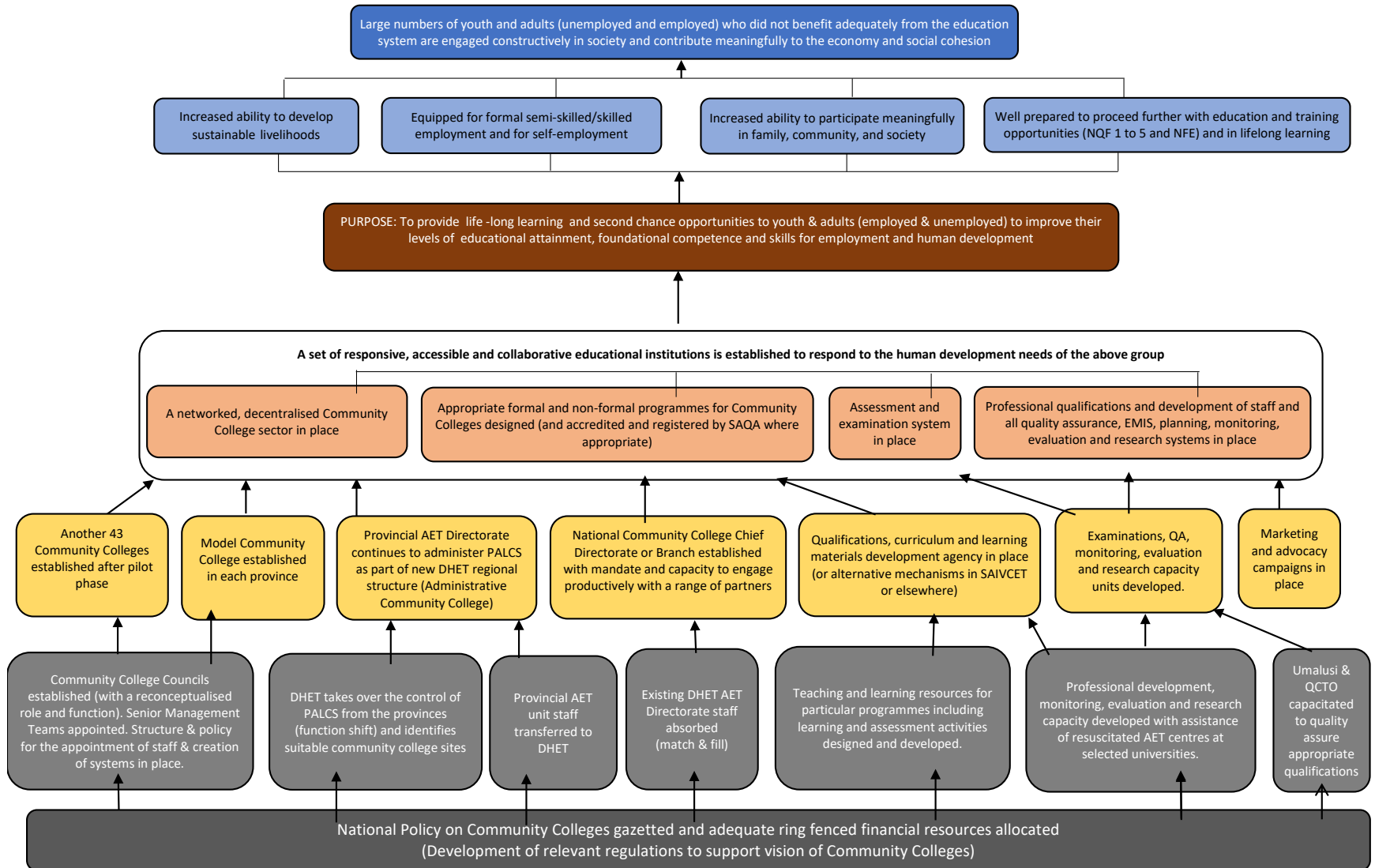
Of people ('races'), languages, ages and skills
Programmes and courses (formal and non-formal)

Atmosphere

Vibrant, engaging, learning, enabling, happy centre and spaces with many young people around

Objective Analysis

Appendix F: Objective Analysis



Five result areas identified as part of the objectives analysis
(Identifying the solutions and the pathway to the solutions)

PURPOSE: To provide life-long learning and second chance opportunities to youth and adults to improve their levels of educational attainment, foundational competences and skills for employment

1. A networked, decentralised community college sector is in place;
2. Appropriate formal and non-formal programmes for Community Colleges (CC) designed and accredited where appropriate;
3. Assessment and examination system in place
4. Professional qualifications and development of staff; all quality assurance, EMIS planning, monitoring, evaluation and research systems in place; and
5. A national Chief Directorate or branch and regional AET directorates established with mandate and capacity to engage productively with a range of partners.

Logframe matrix format

Description of the project's hierarchy of objectives

Targets and standards of performance

The means for monitoring progress

Conditions affecting the project not under your direct control

Logic of intervention	Objectively Verifiable Indicators	Sources of Verification	Assumptions
Overall objective (goal/aim)			
Purpose (specific objective(s))			
Results (outputs)			
Activities	Means	Costs	
			Preconditions

What conditions must be there for the project to start?

Literature Review

General contextual findings

- The NEETs
- Bad for the economy – R800 billion down
- From ABE to lifelong learning
- Rights are nice but comprehensive adult education policies and strategic plans better
- Little evidence of unique institutional forms – it is access and articulation that matter
- Successful delivery needs substantial governance and planning nodes at both national and state/regional level with autonomy from the schooling bureaucracy

General Contextual Findings (Continued)

- Insufficient trained practitioners with poor career prospects and poor conditions of service
- RPL is hard to implement
- Good monitoring, evaluation and research (all need good data flows)
- Preferential support for disadvantaged and poor regions
- No tuition fees

Community colleges specifically

(mainly USA evidence)

- No need to “reinvent the wheel”
- Positive impact of community colleges: cognitive and developmental and low cost
- Self governing though some state regulatory boards
- Go higher than NQF 4
- Good articulation and credit recognition
- Closeness to home is vital for access
- Problem of underprepared students
- Open access may worsen problem – failed high school students get in anyway

Community Colleges (Continued)

(USA focus)

- Non-formal courses are often the most dynamic
- Online courses - but not suitable for underprepared students
- Accountability and benchmarking compromised by data problems
- Funding mix
- Pressure to graduate more students
- Open access but with placement tests
- Adult Basic Education and Remedial (“developmental”) courses have not really worked. The idea that community colleges can easily “fix” under preparedness is false.
- Growing concern that the educational system teaches the same individuals multiple times for the same skills at taxpayers expense and that the schooling system should not be allowed to pass its ill-educated learners off to the next layer without accountability

Method

Method

- A qualitative methodology was used
- A literature review was undertaken
- A review of relevant policies was undertaken
- Individual and focus group interviews were conducted with:
 - The advisor to the Minister of Higher Education and Training
 - A representative from national Treasury
 - A representative from the Auditor General's Office
 - 15 Senior DHET officials including the DDG
 - 12 Provincial AET personnel from 7 provinces
- A qualitative analysis of the DHET Draft Policy on Community Colleges document was undertaken

Four key aspects frame the policy evaluation

1. Design of the policy (Internal and external coherence)
2. Relevance and appropriateness of the policy (appropriateness for and of purpose)
3. Measurability, evaluatability
4. Readiness for implementation

To what extent is the PCC ready to be implemented?

Sufficient evidence that the resources and capabilities required to implement the policy, are in place and are adequate to address the scale of the policy challenge? How can the PCC be improved?

Nine core questions used in respondent interviews

1. Purpose of the Community College Policy
2. Governance of Community Colleges
3. Programmes to be offered by Community Colleges
4. The target group for the Community Colleges
5. Modes of delivery of the Community Colleges
6. Staffing
7. Function shift
8. Collection and management of data for the Community College sub-sector
9. Resourcing of Community Colleges

Findings

Policy Purpose

Two purposes stated:

1. **Function Shift:** To effect the transfer of the current PALCs from provincial departments of education into the national control of the DHET and manage them so that they:
 - (a) continue to operate and
 - (b) (b) are over time transformed to a more effective means of operation where they are linked to district level community colleges.
 2. **To create an entirely new institutional form**, “the community college”, which is not a TVET college and which is more closely linked to local and interest communities, and to pilot some at a limited number of sites.
- No substantive explanation of **how** the policy will achieve these purposes
 - No information on how newly clumped together PALCS will be managed
 - The name *Community College* is itself misleading – these are clusters of PALCs and not a new institutional type
 - No explanation of **how** these two purpose will meet the actual educational needs of adults and youth
 - Such an interim “community colleges” would bear no resemblance to the community colleges envisaged in the ***White paper on post-school education and training*** – or the vision promoted in the ToC.

Purpose and nature of the new institutional form

The PCC is not aligned to other related policy and guiding documents and lacks coherence with its ostensible purposes

- The ***White Paper*** and the ***Task Team Report on Community Education and Training*** promote the idea of an institution that can offer a diverse range of possibilities to people for whom vocational and technical colleges and universities are not possible (real alternative)
 - *This principle is **not** evident in the specifics of the policy about creating community colleges. Rather its approach is a narrow and mechanical approach to provision*
 - *The setting up of some initial community colleges based on the TVET model, are problematic - the differing contexts, purposes , target groups etc. have not been interrogated. The TVET model is used as a default position without provision of sufficient detail.*
 - *There are **no real links** - only bureaucratic reference to related policies e.g.:*
 - ***Lifelong learning policies*** (as in the ***White Paper on Education and Training*** of 1995)
 - ***Draft Social Inclusion Framework (2014)***
 - ***Draft National Youth Policy 2014-2019***
 - Kha Ri Gude national literacy campaign (though mentioned in ***White Paper***)
 - ***Draft Policy on Qualifications in Higher Education for Adult Education and Training Educators and Community Education and Training College Lecturers (2014)***

Views on respondents on the issue of purpose

There is general consensus re need for Community Colleges (CCs), however on the issue of policy purpose

- National DHET Staff believe the PCC give effect to the vision of CCs in the White Paper on Post Schooling
- Provincial officials believe it is merely a political instrument to meet DHET performance targets
- A number of provincial officials reflected that the policy was merely facilitating another name change for AET Centres

Lack of alignment and consultation with other stakeholders

- Given the policy intent that community colleges, as quoted from the ***White paper*** “are expected to be sensitive to the needs of their communities” - little evidence in the policy of prior consultation with other stakeholders or of incentives to further consultation and collaboration.
- Lack of consultation was also raised by provincial AET officials.

Is the policy's ToC appropriate and robust enough to address the identified problems of youth & adults?

- A ToC process was undertaken (as part of this policy design evaluation during the later part of 2014) - only after legislation had been enacted and the policy document drafted.
- *There is a clear dissonance between the legislation and the draft policy and the principles espoused in the policy (Section 2.1) and in the retrospective ToC process.*
- *The PCC shows no or only weak links with the principles & overall objective, purpose and results or outputs of the retrospective ToC. Principles such as:*
 - Expansion of access to education and training to all youth and adults, especially those who have limited other opportunities for structured learning;
 - Provision of good quality formal and non-formal education and training programmes;
 - Provision of vocational training that prepares people for participation in both the formal and informal economy;
 - Close partnerships with local communities, including local government, civic organisations, employers' and workers' organisations and alignment of programmes with their needs;
 - Local community participation in governance; and
 - Collaboration and articulation with other sections of the post-school system.

Extent to which the PCC is measurable & therefore capable of being evaluated in the future?

- No specific target groups and their numbers are mentioned. Reference to:
 - *“Eligible youth and adults”*
 - Overall the policy speaks of expanding enrolments *“as these institutions are built”* from current approx. 265 000 to over 1 million in 15 years time (2030)
 - No mention is made of *data and data management systems* in measuring policy implementation achievements (Current PALC EMIS system is known to be particularly weak)
- The “merger” of the PALCs into *Community Colleges* will be done almost instantly through legislative “decree” with no quality or other indicators against which to measure the efficacy of the new institutional type
- The possibility of the nine “real” pilots has no timelines or scale criteria.
- **In summary**, the policy as currently constructed is not measurement or evaluation friendly.

To what extent is the policy ready to be implemented?

Is there sufficient evidence that the necessary resources and capabilities are in place and are adequate to address the scale of the policy challenge?

- ***In legal terms the limited policy is ready to be implemented.***
- ***However, there is no “framework to guide the management of the shifting of the AET function from the PEDs to the exclusive competence of the DHET.” (Section 4.1).***
- ***In effect this function shift suggests that the policy only envisages the PALCs operating as they always have and hence there is little evidence of them moving “into the emerging community education sector”.***
- ***The framework for “the establishment of Community Colleges, governance and management of these institutional types, employment of staff, the funding framework, programmes and qualification offerings, quality assurance, examinations and assessment, and monitoring and evaluation.” is presented in only the barest of detail***
- ***There is no mention in the draft policy of an implementation plan.***
- ***No policy on the programmes to be offered except in the most general of terms in Section 13.***
- ***No adequate conceptualisation or planning for the actual development of genuine pilot community colleges.***
- ***The policy states that “Details with regard to governance and management structures will be finalised after the conclusion of the pilot process.”***

Evaluation of implementability (Continued)

- ***There are no plans for curriculum or materials development; ICT development; and practitioner development;***
 - *National Treasury is opposed to the establishment of SAIVCET as this was not discussed with Treasury prior to legislation establishing the entity; and because Treasury believes that curriculum/ materials / professional development functions should be located within DHET.*
- ***There is no risk management plan.***
- ***Funding:*** *It is stated that the community colleges will be funded “in accordance with National Norms and Standards as provided for in terms of section 23 of the FETCA, 2006, as well as through other funding streams as identified in section 24 of the Act.”*
- *The funding norms for public Community Colleges will during the transitional period from PEDs be the funding convention as currently in operation in each Province”.*
- Experience from the merger of teacher training colleges into universities and the function shift of FET colleges to national is that the amounts of money realised from these transfers were inadequate; highly contested and still unresolved process.
- These funding norms were already totally inadequate for the existing PALCs and cannot possibly fund the erection of a new system of community colleges.
- **Given all the above, it can be argued that the policy is not ready to be implemented**

How can the policy be improved?

- **On the community college policy**

- A more substantive policy on Community Education and Training is required. A genuine, comprehensive policy on community education alongside the development of some pilots with varied structures and with detailed implementation plans should replace the current draft policy.
 - Funding provision and criteria established for success must be stipulated
 - A framework needs to be spelled out of what is to be done to build the capacity of the DHET to cope with this extremely complex undertaking
 - Professionally trained adult educators is a major and essential undertaking – university capacity to support this is needed
 - The funding formula must be developed also including support for education and training that does not necessarily lead to qualifications.
 - An M&E framework for the pilot implementation phase must be developed before implementation commences to ensure deliverables and timeframes are clear and that lessons can be extracted and documented to inform the full implementation of the new community college system.

How can the policy be improved? (Cont)

- **On the function shift of the PALCs**
 - Need for rapid development of a detailed implementation plan for the function shift of the PALCs from provincial education department to DHET administrative and directoral control should be undertaken.
 - Such a plan should incorporate the concept of regional Adult Education and Training offices that would continue to administer and support the existing PALCs.
 - Not just administrative support but support to improve teaching and learning and success in these centres.
 - Delay proclamation of certain the Further Education and Training Colleges Act, 2013 (Act No 1 of 2013) clauses (insofar as they refer to PALCs being mechanically being re-labelled as community colleges).
 - There should also be a policy defined for the pre- and re-skilling of educators serving in the PALCs.

Recommendations

Recommendations

Addressing the Policy Purpose

- High level recommendations - because of problematics in draft policy
- Assumption - the two purposes of the draft policy:
 - the “**function shift**” of PALCs from PEDs to the DHET
 - the initiation of a **new** institutional form of education and training provision, the **community college (and its associated community learning centres)**
- Finding: neither purpose adequately served by the draft policy

Function Shift Findings

- Nothing in draft policy of a detailed plan or process or funding to improve the acknowledged dysfunctionality of PALCs
- No risk analysis of nominal 'legal fiction' consolidation of all PALCs into nine "interim community colleges"
- Well functioning PALCs supported by district officials may well be disadvantaged
- Total lack of any budget estimates and likelihood that reallocation of past provincial budgets may be less in practice
- Little buy in from previous provincial directorate officials
- Potential disaster of the concept of a **new** institutional form of community colleges being seen by the public as simply the old dysfunctional PALC model renamed

Function Shift Recommendations

- A more substantive policy be developed that deals with the ongoing, even if only interim, existence and support of youth and adult learners at the old PALC sites and does not confuse it with the new institutional form
- The name “Interim community college” is inappropriate

[We see no reason why, in fact, policy is needed **merely** for the function shift of the PALCs to the DHET, the enabling legislation for this is in the FET Colleges Amendment Act of 2012. A set of guidelines could be developed]

New institutional form findings

- The notion of building a **new** institutional form is missing from the draft policy. Though some things are listed there is so little detail it is almost impossible to judge whether they truly do reflect what is a totally new institutional form for South African education.
- The proposals for the setup of the PALC conglomerate colleges and the pilot colleges slavishly follows the old TVET legislation and does not appear to meet the principles (set forth in section 2 of the Draft community college policy), nor reflect the vision in the White Paper and the Task Team report of a decentralised system close to learners.
- The Task Team report notion of a local networks of community learning centres supported by community college has been totally inverted to one of a centralised community college modelled on a TVET college which may have some satellite campuses.

New Institutional Form Findings (cont)

- The Draft policy gives no attention to the key concept of community learning centres and how they would be supported and networked, except to say that their heads must be appointed by the Minister (itself a proposal that seems highly over centralised and impossibly cumbersome and seems to bypass the Community College Councils as governing bodies
- .The Draft policy shows little evidence of broad consultation that was meant to follow on from and elaborate the White Paper proposals.
- The need for the DHET to establish a significant internal structure (such as a Branch) to handle the conceptualisation and building of this whole new sector is not dealt with.
- Total lack of attention to budgeting for the new system
- Given that new programme, curriculum and materials development will be crucial in improving provision the absence of any proposal on an appropriate mechanism for this is a significant absence in the Draft policy.

New institutional form recommendations

- A more substantive and imaginative policy be developed that deals with the creation and sustainable continuation of a new institutional form of distributed provision of adult and youth education in community learning centres supported by community colleges and with the requisite resources of programmes, curricula, materials and educators and trainers.
- This recommendation should in no way interfere with initiation of genuine pilots of community colleges.