

Progress Report - CET Task Team

Overview of progress

The task team (TT) has met four times since January 2016, and it has agreed on the vision for the sector as well as its purpose and scope. Some reflection has also taken place on international models of community education, as well as on the research work that has already been conducted in South Africa over several years. The TT discussed student demand for community education and training (CET), explored programmes that are available and can be tapped into by the public CET sector, and agreed on the broad programme areas of focus for CET. The TT has also developed a Workplan informed by the framework that was agreed as a guiding document for the development of the NP-PSET. The Workplan details work that needs to be done to inform the plan. During TT deliberations, the challenges impacting the development of the CET sector have been highlighted, in particular the need for targeted funding to support the proposed pilot community college projects, and ultimately a more sustained funding mechanism that will support the necessary growth of community education and training. Although institutional models have not yet been discussed, this is an area that needs considerable work, and will be enabled through the pilots. A particular concern is how it will be possible to build the kind of range of programmes with the necessary flexibility to adequately respond to community education and training needs across the country.

CET Vision

Opening up diverse learning opportunities for individuals and communities, to enhance their chances of success in finding work, starting and sustaining businesses, improving the quality of their lives through knowledge and personal development, and progressing into other post school institutions.

Purpose and Scope of CET

The primary purpose of CET is to offer a range of open access education and training opportunities to adults and youths who are not in education, training or employment, in a community context, including both formal and non-formal opportunities, to meet the learning aspirations of individuals and communities.

The CET sector will build on current interim community colleges and community learning centres (former PALCs), and other providers will include private providers, skills development institutes, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community based organisations (CBOs) non-profit organisations (NPOs), and religious organisations.

The key defining features for the sector are:

- Open access to accommodate the aspirations of those who cannot be accommodated by TVET and HE. Open access relates to physical, epistemological and financial accessibility.
- CET should be flexible as community needs and aspirations change. There should be organic development of the sector.
- Community colleges should be dynamic, attractive institutions. While there will be some similarities with aspects of other post-school institutions, the distinctive feature of community colleges is their community location and the need for community responsiveness.
- The diversity of communities will be evident in the diversity of programme offerings and types of institutions, which are likely to range from those with basic forms of infrastructure to high tech institutions.

- Developing CET institutions entails concurrently strengthening the existing provision of adult education and training, and imagining new forms of offering and institutions.
- Delivery modalities that are diverse and effective are needed to cater for different student needs and learning styles.
- Articulation pathways need to be mapped out so that lifelong learning opportunities are created for individuals who access CET institutions.
- Relationships between CET institutions and universities and TVET Colleges will be essential for the growth of the sector.
- There should be intentionality in the development of CET so that enough financial resources are deployed for adequate infrastructure, learning and teaching support materials, and a capable staff.
- Given the focus of CET on “community” it will be necessary to explain how community is defined in relation to the colleges – current thinking is that this will be municipal districts.
- It will be critical for a range of community interests to be represented in the governance of the colleges, taking into account that there is also a need for professional skills (finance, legal etc.).

Student Demand for CET

Using data from the Community Household Survey 2014, the Labour Force Survey Q3 2015, Census 2011 data, DBE National Senior Certificate reports, and DHET statistics, it was determined that the demand for CET potentially comprises several million people who have had limited education and training opportunities, cannot be absorbed into other post-school institutions, require new training opportunities, and those who drop out of basic schooling. The demand is potentially huge (several million) and is made up of the following sub-sets:

- People whose education levels ranged from no education to a matric without exemption;
- People who could have been eligible for TVET but have not been absorbed in that sector;
- Young people who drop out of their matric cohort annually, who drop out prior to matric and who fail matric;
- Those who have and will complete the Kha Ri Gude literacy programme;
- A large number of NEETs, some of who do not have education, and others with only primary education. This group is a sub-set of the 8.795 million youth and adults with no education and those with primary education only.

In short, CET should provide access for a significant range of individuals who are post-school, with wide variety of educational backgrounds.

While the Plan will need to be cautious about the numbers of potential students, given the likely capacity of the system in its early stages, it will be more useful to examine the numbers in relation to the specific needs of communities, and therefore it is proposed that some analysis of possible education and training needs at district level, will need to be conducted.

Programmes

Some analysis was conducted by the TT to determine programmes that already exist that are suitable for CET. Concrete examples of programmes were presented by the Catholic Institute of Education (CIE), which has 25 centres in seven provinces in the country, offering a range of skills

programmes, accredited by various SETAs. The CIE also has public PALCs offering the GETC. Data from a recent study on skills development providers, conducted on behalf of the DHET, has shown that there are 3 933 private and public skills development providers enrolling 473 413 learners taking programmes accredited by various SETAs in the fields of:

- Agriculture and Nature conservation
- Business, Commerce and Management Studies
- Communication Studies and Language
- Culture and Arts
- Education, Training and Development
- Health Sciences and Social Services
- Human and Social Studies
- Law, Military Science and Security
- Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology
- Physical Planning and Construction
- Physical, Mathematical, Computer and Life Sciences
- Services

Further analysis of these programmes and providers is necessary for the Task Team to be able to determine the programmes that might fall within the scope of Community colleges.

Further work on programmes will need to be done by the TT focusing in five major areas, on:

1. General Education and Training (GET): analysing the curriculum and its relevance for different needs, for example, is it suitable for those who just want language and numeracy skills to do other skills programmes? Should it be more flexible in subjects that students can take?
2. Skills – what does skills mean at CET level compared to TVET level? What qualifications will CET focus on?
3. Community and employer programmes: where a centre has to deliver programmes for communities and employers.
4. Post -secondary education programmes – what programmes can be offered to those who qualify for post-secondary education but cannot be absorbed into current institutions?
5. A range of programmes that could be termed “entrepreneurship” or relating to small-scale business development.

These are tentative categories and are under consideration.

Sector Challenges

The TT is aware of the challenges that face the sector, although this must not limit the opportunity to envision a CET sector for the future. However, these challenges have to be highlighted as risks in the development of the sector and mitigating strategies are needed for these:

- The intention is to build a new community college sector that includes but goes beyond the offering of mainly adult basic education programmes.
- The enormity of what is needed to transform the sector into a relevant and effective sector cannot be underestimated, as there is currently an annual budget of only R1.9 billion from the fiscus available to implement and develop the sector. The adult education budget has previously mostly gone towards personnel, leaving very little for LTSM. Funding is a constraint for both public and private providers.

- Current PALCs mostly do not have their own infrastructure, and innovative approaches to the use and sharing of government infrastructure will be necessary.
- The sector has largely utilised underqualified educators in the past as it has been difficult to retain qualified staff due to funding challenges. However, it will be necessary to clearly articulate in the plan what the staffing needs of the developing sector are, and how they can be recruited.
- Articulation has been poor with other sectors, and programmes will need to be designed with articulation possibilities to other post-school institutions, while also remaining responsive to community needs.
- The sector is ill prepared to deal with an influx of younger people who might have a host of social problems and weak educational preparedness.

Next Steps

The TT will now work towards commissioning research/analysis in the areas of work identified. The DHET is developing a concept document for pilots. The TT aims to support this development and to work closely with the CET branch, as well as the DG Task Team on Community Colleges, to put in place a strong vision for the sector, backed by a clear plan for growth and development over the period to 2030.