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Concept Note: OPEN LEARNING IN POST SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

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Concept Note:

OPEN LEARNING IN POST SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1. Introduction

The Minister of Higher Education and Training, the Honourable Dr BE Nzimande, repeatedly affirmed that employment creation is essential for creating social stability in South Africa. People who do not have a reasonable hope of finding work – or creating their own sustainable livelihoods – have little to lose and have little stake in maintaining a stable society[1].

South Africa has a large youth population. According to Statistics South Africa is 51% of the South African population younger than 25 years old[2]. They furthermore reported that in 2011, out of a total of 10,1 million individuals in the 15 to 24 age cohort, 32,7% (3,3 million) youth were neither employed nor attending an educational institution. This situation points not only to a grave wastage of talent, but also to possible serious social disruption.

One of the obligations of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is to increase access to educational opportunities for young people that are not in employment or education and training (NEET) and those who experience barriers to learning. Such barriers would include geographical isolation, discrimination on the basis of race, gender, age, or physical disability, financial abilities, the inability to take time off work for a course, lack of 'appropriate' qualifications, and the use of pedagogical approaches that restrict accessibility to learning.

A possible strategy that can be used by the DHET to increase access to educational opportunities is the implementation of open learning in an organised, articulated, structured and systematic manner. It will include free access to education and training opportunities for all and in specific free access to learning support, assessment (on success rates) and development of workplace skills for those who are the poorest 60% of the population.

The 2010/11 – 2014/15 Strategic Plan of the DHET supports the development of open learning opportunities as part of the post-school system. There is an intention to connect education institutions and curricula to emerging networks and information resources, and to promote innovation and opportunities for lifelong learning.

This purpose of this document is to provide an outline of envisaged activities to be undertaken by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in order to support, coordinate and guide the development and provision of open learning in the post-schooling system. This is an attempt to provide a vision for the future delivery of open learning in the post-schooling system that are sustainable and meet the needs of a wide range of learners from the adult education and training

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[1] Keynote address by Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr BE Nzimande, at the annual convention of the South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 5 October 2012
[2] Statistics South Africa, Mid-Year Population estimates, 2011

sector, further education and training sector, university education sector and also youth who are not employed and not in education and training.

This document aims to:

- create a common understanding of open learning for the post-school education and training sector;
- serve as the basis and starting point for the development of an open learning policy for the post-school education and training sector;
- work towards the development and implementation of a model of open learning services and activities for post-school learners; and
- provide a starting point for cooperation and collaboration at all levels of government, non-governmental organisations, institutions and the private sector in providing coherent open learning opportunities in South Africa.

2. Terminology

Defining open learning

For the purpose of this concept document, open learning can be interpreted as an approach to education whose principles can continually inform all educational practices with the aim of improving them. It is therefore argued that the strength of the open learning lies in its capacity to lead to action focused on systematically opening learning. It is able to realise it because open learning brings together key educational principles, all of which focus in one form or another on opening learning.

In concurrence with the locally relevant definition of open learning taken from the Education White Paper (1995)[3], open learning is confirmed to be defined as follows:

> "Open learning is an approach which combines the principles of learner centredness, lifelong learning, flexibility of learning provision, the removal of barriers to access learning, the recognition for credit of prior learning experience, the provision of learner support, the construction of learning programmes in the expectation that learners can succeed, and the maintenance of rigorous quality assurance over the design of learning materials and support systems."

It enables as many people as possible to take advantage of affordable and meaningful educational opportunities throughout their lives through:

- Sharing expertise, knowledge, and resources;
- Reducing barriers and increasing access; and
- Acknowledging diversity of context.

(SAIDE, 2012[4])

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[3] Department of Education, 1995: White Paper on Education and Training. par. 25 (retrieve from: http://www.info.gov.za/whitepapers/1995/education1.htm)
[4] SAIDE, 2012: Presentation prepared for internal discussion of open learning.

This definition effectively helps to sort through differing international interpretations of the concept in moving towards a locally relevant understanding.

Differentiating open learning and other related terms

Internationally, there has been a growing tendency to conflate/equate open learning with distance education, online learning, flexible learning and many others.

We concur with the following position[5]:

1. Open learning has no conceptual value as a synonym for **distance education**. The term 'distance education' describes a collection of methods or a mode of delivery for the provision of structured learning (where the learner and educator are not at the time in the same place for learning to take place). It provides techniques of educational design and provision that – under certain circumstances – can bring better chances of educational success to vastly more people at greatly reduced costs.

2. The conceptual integration of open learning and distance education as '**Open and Distance Learning'** has created a real misperception that distance education is intrinsically 'open'. This is a challenge, not only because poor distance education practice can easily close off opportunities of actually learning, but equally because it contains an implicit assumption that only those educational strategies clustered under the banner of distance education have the potential to create openness in educational systems.

3. Open learning is also not synonymous with **online learning**. Online learning is (as distance education above) also only a collection of learning methods that are made available this time through the internet. Although it can potentially provide for different ways of learning and the construction of a potentially richer learning environment, caters for different learning styles, allows for greater diversification in learning, and/or greater access to learning, it does not equate to distance education or open learning. It can include one or more of the following aspects (that might be open), viz. online support for learning, communication, delivery of content, assessment, resources and/or interactive learning activities.

4. A misconception is that 'A sensible use of educational technology theories and technological devices can provide a truly open system'. Open learning does not necessarily means **technology enhanced learning/e-learning**, although access to and use of modern technology has open up learning in many ways.

5. Although **blended learning**, as defined as structured learning opportunities provided using a combination of contact, distance, and/or e-learning opportunities to suit different purposes, audiences, and contexts, is an integral feature of open learning, it is only a sub-set of open learning.

Critically, then, we have to take a position that open learning has no conceptual value as a synonym for either distance education, technology enhanced, e-learning, blended or online learning.

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[5] Department of Education /SAIDE, 2002: Reflections on Open Schooling and National Policy in South Africa: Background to the policy debate on open schooling in South Africa (Retrieve from: http://www.saide.org.za/Resources/SearchOurDatabase/SearchResults/tabid/1488/mctl/Details/id/37686/Default.aspx)

Principles of open learning

Based on the definition of open learning the following key principles of open learning are identified:

- learners are provided with opportunities and capacity for lifelong learning;
- learning processes centre on the learners and contexts of learning, build on their experience and encourage active engagement leading to independent and critical thinking;
- learning provision is flexible, allowing learners to increasingly determine where, when, what and how they learn, as well as the pace at which they will learn;
- learners have access to learning opportunities and unnecessary barriers to access have been removed. This include in specific:
  - providing free access to all to the learning materials;
  - providing paid for access to value added services, like learning support, tutoring and counselling (bursaries available to the poor); and
  - user charges for assessment of learners (with possible discounts for success, exemption from user charges or bursaries to the poor);
- prior learning and experience is recognised wherever possible;
- arrangements for credit transfer and articulation between qualifications facilitate further learning;
- providers create the conditions for a fair chance of learner success through learner support, contextually appropriate resources and sound pedagogical practices; and
- provision of open learning is working within legacy systems. This means that open learning will be embedded in, as well as enhance and expand the current education and training system, and not be an add-on to the current system.
(White Paper I, 1995; SAIDE, 2012)

3. Policy and legislative context

The following section provides a brief summary of some of the supportive legislation and policies. This is by no means an exhaustive list and will be elaborated upon as part of the implementation of this initiative. The following are noted:

1.   As early as 1994 the African National Congress's Policy Framework for Education and Training already directed education to a National Open Learning Agency (NOLA) that should 'conduct an analysis of the capacity of existing institutions which might form part of the national open learning system'[6].

2.   The notion of open learning was accentuated in the 1995 White Paper on Education and Training[7] where it defined open learning as an approach to learning that removes barriers to learning and encourages the development of an open learning approach, since it resonates with the values and principles of the national education and training policy and has applicability in virtually all learning contexts. The White Paper also directed the then

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[6] ANC Education Department, 1994, A Policy Framework for Education and Training, p. 74
[7] Department of Education, 1995: White Paper on Education and Training. par. 25 (retrieve from: http://www.info.gov.za/whitepapers/1995/education1.htm)

Ministry of Education to investigate the most useful structure and mission of a National Open Learning Agency (NOLA). This was envisaged as a small, flexible and responsive professional agency, with the mission of promoting the open learning principles wherever they can be most influential. NOLA was envisaged to undertake research and development on open learning, help build a network of public and private open learning institutions and practitioners, and facilitate their efforts to translate open learning principles into effective practice.

3.   The Department of Education's White Paper 3 (1997)[8] on Programmes for the Transformation of Higher Education stipulates that contact and distance education institutions are encouraged to provide effective and flexible learning environments on a continuum of educational provision ranging from fully contact-based to fully distance-based, in which educators would be able to select from an increasing range of educational methods and technologies that would be most appropriate to the context within which they operate.

4.   The DHET has, through its Strategic Plan for 2010/11 – 2014/15[9], reiterated its mandate - On the demand side to ensure that the skills needed to drive economic growth and social development are delivered at an increasing rate and on the supply side, to provide different entry points into and pathways through the learning system; and it must provide quality learning where ever learning takes place. It also affirmed that diversity in post-school options must be increased and be supported by an institutional base that is both diverse and differentiated. One of its strategic objectives is to support the development of open and distance e-learning opportunities as part of the post-school system[10].

5.   The DHET has committed itself to the establishment of a directorate for career guidance and open learning in the Branch: Planning and Monitoring Coordination via the new organisational design structure. The purpose of the directorate is to plan, manage and evaluate post-school career guidance services and to manage the implementation of open and distance learning policies and frameworks in the post-school sector; with particular aim of addressing the needs of the NEET youth in the country[11].

6.   The draft policy framework for the provision of distance education in South African Universities[12] has been released in May 2012 for comments. This document sees distance provisioning as an integral part of the post-school system in general, and more specifically in higher education. It addresses the barriers of cost of studies, access to learning opportunities and time constraints. It encourages the collaborative development of high

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[8] Department of Education, 1997: Education White Paper 3 - A Programme for Higher Education Transformation. (retrieve from: http://www.info.gov.za/view/DownloadFileAction?id=70435)
[9] Department of Higher Education and Training, 2012: Strategic Plan 2010-2015 Revised Version March 2012. (retrieve from http://www.dhet.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=k4aKtPbYHds%3D&tabid=36)
[10] Department of Higher Education and Training (2011) Revised Strategic Plan 2010/11 - 2014/15 and operational plans for the 2011/12 financial year
[11] Department of Higher Education and Training (2012) DRAFT Macro-organisation design: Job Purpose and Key Performance Areas/Functions. 17 January 2012
[12] Department of Higher Education and Training, 2012: Draft Policy Framework for the provision of Distance Education in South African Universities. May 2012
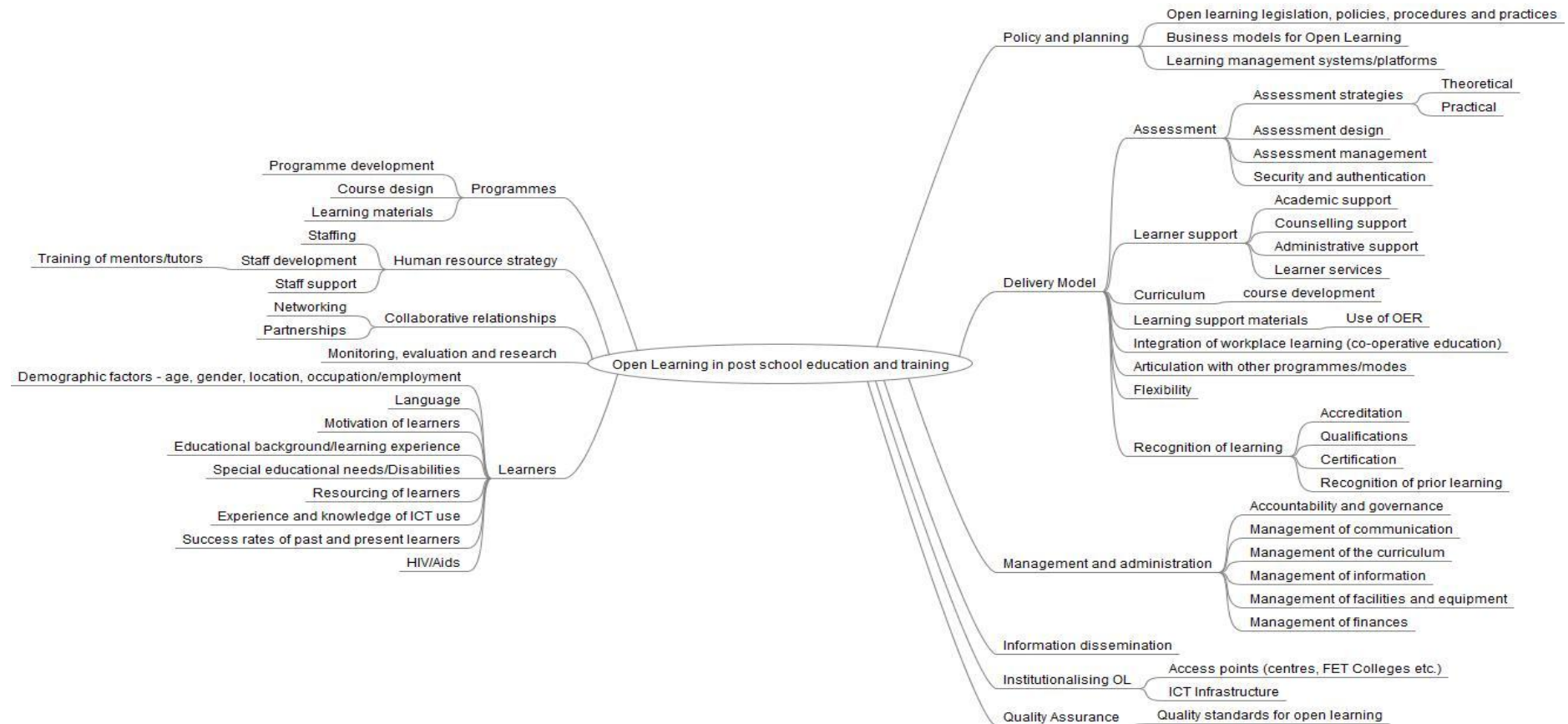
quality learning resources, improved access to and use of appropriate technologies, supporting a wider range of post schooling study options, technological infrastructure for post schooling, as well as shared learning and support centres. Although we concurred that distance education is not synonymous to open learning, the proposed enabling environment to be established, will definitely open up learning opportunities for post school education and training.

7. The Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training[13] noted the competing challenges to increase enrolment, throughput and curriculum relevance within a system and infrastructure that is already under strain. It also highlighted the need to cater for a very wide variety of potential student needs – including mature adult learners needing to learn and work at the same time, as well as younger people who may have dropped out of the schooling system due to financial, social, learning and other barriers to success. It directs towards access not only to a wide range of alternative kinds of programmes, but also to more flexible modes of delivery, which do not require them to attend classes very regularly, at fixed times and at central venues. Distance education, as a possible open learning method, offers the potential to address these competing needs and challenges. Distance education methods lay emphasis on well-designed learning materials, and possible achievement of economies of scale. The Green Paper emphasised the challenges of substantial up-front investment in curriculum design and materials development; access to these learning materials, structure and pacing, meaningful formative and summative assessment; accreditation; investment in decentralised student support and increasing use of educational technology.

8. In order to develop a fully-fledged open learning system, legislative and policy implications will be carefully considered including, but not limited to:
    a. Higher Education Act (Act No 101 of 1997) as amended;
    b. Skills Development Act (No 97 of 1998)) as amended;
    c. Further Education and Training Colleges Act (Act No 16 of 2006) as amended; The National Qualifications Framework Act, (Act No 67 of 2008), as amended; and
    d. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme Act, (Act No 56 of 1999) as amended.

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[13] Department of Higher Education and Training, 2012: Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training (Retrieve from:
http://www.che.ac.za/documents/d000236/DHET_green_paper_post_school_education_training.pdf

4. Concept of an open learning system for post school education and training

The following diagram summarised the various aspects of an open learning system. Each one of these aspects needs further clarification, deliberation and contextualisation[14].

Open Learning in post school education and training

- Policy and planning
  - Open learning legislation, policies, procedures and practices
  - Business models for Open Learning
  - Learning management systems/platforms
- Delivery Model
  - Assessment
    - Assessment strategies
      - Theoretical
      - Practical
    - Assessment design
    - Assessment management
    - Security and authentication
  - Learner support
    - Academic support
    - Counselling support
    - Administrative support
    - Learner services
  - Curriculum — course development
  - Learning support materials — Use of OER
  - Integration of workplace learning (co-operative education)
  - Articulation with other programmes/modes
  - Flexibility
  - Recognition of learning
    - Accreditation
    - Qualifications
    - Certification
    - Recognition of prior learning
- Management and administration
  - Accountability and governance
  - Management of communication
  - Management of the curriculum
  - Management of information
  - Management of facilities and equipment
  - Management of finances
- Information dissemination
- Institutionalising OL
  - Access points (centres, FET Colleges etc.)
  - ICT Infrastructure
- Quality Assurance — Quality standards for open learning
- Programmes
  - Programme development
  - Course design
  - Learning materials
- Human resource strategy
  - Staffing
  - Staff development — Training of mentors/tutors
  - Staff support
- Collaborative relationships
  - Networking
  - Partnerships
- Monitoring, evaluation and research
- Learners
  - Demographic factors - age, gender, location, occupation/employment
  - Language
  - Motivation of learners
  - Educational background/learning experience
  - Special educational needs/Disabilities
  - Resourcing of learners
  - Experience and knowledge of ICT use
  - Success rates of past and present learners
  - HIV/Aids

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[14] Framework for open learning in post-schooling in South Africa, 2013 (Retrieve from: http://olsystem.weebly.com)

5. Possible implementation programme areas of open learning in post school education and training

After extensive consultation within and outside the DHET, five programme areas were identified for possible first phase implementation of open learning (planning towards wide scale implementation). These are:

a. Skills programmes in the implementation of the National Infrastructure Plan;
b. The development of programmes for the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA);
c. FET College subjects that are not widely offered at FET Colleges, e.g. Physical Science;
d. University programmes to increase access to higher education; and
e. Career Development Practitioners' programmes for out-of-school youth to assist in Career Development Centres/walk-in centres/high schools.

The following paragraphs provide a short rationale for the selection.

Skills development and training

Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) are required to facilitate the delivery of industry sector-specific skill interventions that will help to achieve the goals of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III and address the New Growth Path and is related Skills Accord. In specific, it also needs to address inter alia the skills needs for the Strategic Infrastructure Projects (SIPs).

One of the strategic interventions relates to the implementation of open learning to address the skills needs identified in the SIPs. It is envisaged that skills programmes will be identified for the application of open learning approaches for inclusion in the specific skills plans.

This initiative is not only looking at the skills required to construct the infrastructure identified in the National Infrastructure Plan, but also the skills to maintain the infrastructure that will be built.

This programme area will require close collaboration and partnerships between the DHET, SETAs, the National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB), the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), other government departments, as well as public and private sector skills training providers. Specific attention has to be given to practical work and assessment through open learning and the integration of workplace learning (co-operative education)

Open Learning for adult education and training

In accordance with the Minister's delivery agreement, the expansion of the number of learners in Adult Education and Training programmes has to continue in order to achieve targets set. Specific focus is given to the implementation of the National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA), which has been approved by Umalusi Quality Council and supported by Higher Education South Africa (HESA) for purposes of articulation.

One of the priorities of the DHET is to develop the curriculum and textbooks and other teaching and learning material for the NASCA.

Open learning can provide opportunities for youth and adults who do not hold a National Senior Certificate that can enrol in the NASCA and further their studies.

University Sector

At the beginning of the 2013 academic year, the lack of spaces in universities for young grade twelve learners was once again highlighted. There is not only a need to expand the system to accommodate more students, but also to provide students from diverse backgrounds and circumstances enrolment into university programmes.

The intention here is not to develop an Open University (separate institution such as the UK Open University and the OU of Malaysia), but rather for existing universities to work collaboratively towards open learning programmes. International examples such as the African Virtual University (AVU) and the Open Educational Resource university (OERu) have shown that it is possible to not only significantly increase access to quality higher education and training, but also to provide a cost-effective alternative to traditional approaches, through the innovative use of open learning approaches.

Several South African universities such as University of Cape Town (UCT), UNISA and North West University (NWU) have already embarked on implementing some forms of open learning and Open Educational Resources (OER). Building on existing practice, experience and expertise is critical for the success of open learning in this sector.

Vocational and continuing education and training

The expansion and growth of the VCET sector remains a strategic priority of the DHET. In its strategic plan the DHET has, in order to ensure that FET Colleges continue to meet the demand, emphasised the participation in Report 191 programmes (N1 to N6) and the National Certificate (Vocational) (NCV) programmes. The same focused attention is been paid to the enrolment in Occupational qualifications and programmes that are accredited by the SETAs, professional bodies, as well as industry-certified qualifications.

In specific the expansion of the FET College sub-system through increasing the headcount, is a priority for the DHET. Open learning opportunities can enhance the efforts of the integrated turnaround strategy and provide not only increased access to FET College programmes not offered in all colleges, but also access to quality learning materials and bench-marked assessment. Examples such as the Namibia College for Open Learning (NAMCOL) in Namibia has demonstrated, that good open learning materials can also be beneficial to both students and lecturers in traditional education and training institutions.

Career Development Practitioners

Through the initiatives of the DHET to coordinate career development services in the country, the 'Framework for cooperation in the provision of career development (information, advice and

guidance) services in South Africa'[15] was published. The framework not only calls for national agreed classification/definition and standards for different levels of career development practitioners, but also for the development of training programmes where they do not exist.

In specific, the Minister of Higher Education and Training expressed the wish to retrain and place unemployed graduates in every secondary school to provide career guidance counselling as well as to advocate for education, training and skills development in the surrounding communities. Through a proposed project, and in collaboration with Department of Basic Education (DBE), the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), specific programmes will be developed to retrain the unemployed graduates. Due to the geographical spread of these people, open learning opportunities can provide cost-effective solutions to their training needs.

6. Proposed first phase of implementation

At this early stage of the conceptualisation/development of open learning in the DHET, a first phase of implementation is planned in order to initiate the development of an open learning system for post school education and training.

Objective

The objective of the first phase is to create and enabling environment for the implementation of open learning approaches and to identify workable models of open learning, especially for the area of adult and youth, and the development technical and vocational skills using open learning.

Outcomes

The outcomes of the first phase are:

1. Developing an open learning conceptual framework, user specifications of an open learning system and policy implications for government;
2. Developing and initialising the implementation of a policy framework for open learning in post school education and training;
3. Implementing pilots of an open learning system for post schooling;
4. Collecting case studies on the application of open learning in post schooling that can be shared amongst countries; and
5. Coordinating and researching the use of Open Education Resources (OER) in post school education and training.

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[15] Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), 2012: Framework for cooperation in the provision of career development (Information, Advice and Guidance) services in South Africa. Retrieved from: http://www.dhet.gov.za

High level activities

Outcome 1 - Developing an open learning conceptual framework, user specifications of an open learning system and policy implications for government

The following activities are associated with outcome 1:

- Identify the key characteristics of an open learning system;
- Develop a planning framework, including critical guiding questions for the introduction of programmes within an open learning system for post school education and training in South Africa;
- Identify key role-players in each of the 5 proposed programme areas and consult on the application and implementation of open learning; and
- Compile the conceptual framework, user specifications and policy implications for government, and specific for the DHET.

Outcome 2 - Developing and initialising the implementation of a policy framework for open learning in post school education and training

The following activities are associated with outcome 2:

- This concept document will be widely consulted with senior and broad management. It will serve as the basis to develop the next document – the draft policy framework for open learning in post school education and training.
- The DHET, through extensive collaboration by all branches, will develop a draft policy framework for open learning in post school education and training. This document will identify focus areas and develop a statement that describes the importance of the focus area and justifies why it should be included in the open learning system of the country, as well as formulate statements of recommendation that specifies the actions that need to be undertaken in order to ensure that the defined issue is adequately addressed. This process will include consultation with senior and broad management and the Reference Group.
- Key to the success of this document, is the establishment of a Reference Group, comprising of the following:
    - DHET Branches (VCET; University Education; Skills Development; and HRD, Planning and Monitoring Coordination)
    - The Department of Basic Education (DBE)
    - Department of Communication (DoC)
    - Department of Labour (DoL)
    - Department of Science and Technology (DST)
    - Higher Education South Africa (HESA)
    - Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)
    - National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB)
    - South African College Principals' Organisation (SACPO)
    - South African Graduate Development Association (SAGDA)
    - Quality Assurance Bodies (Council of Higher Education (CHE); UMALUSI and Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO))
    - Universities active in open learning and open educational resources (OER) (University of Cape Town; University of Pretoria, UNISA and North West University)

- - - South African Council for Higher Education (CHE)
    - South African Institute for Distance Learning (SAIDE)
    - Commonwealth of Learning (COL)
    - OER Africa

  The purpose of the Reference Group is to advise the DHET on possibilities and opportunities to expand the post school system through open learning and to contribute and shape the strategic direction of open learning in South Africa. This group will be instrumental in:

    - contextualising the concept of open learning and other related terms in the South African post schooling environment;
    - identifying possible opportunities that open learning can play within the expansion of post schooling in South Africa with specific focus on universities, FET colleges and skills development;
    - identifying drivers of open learning that will enable the implementation of open learning in post schooling in South Africa;
    - considering challenges of implementation in relation to an open learning system; and
    - advising on the content of the policy framework for open learning in post school education and training.
- Consultation will include presentation to and consultation with the Social and Economic Clusters.
- After consultation this document will be refined and the policy framework for open learning in post school education and training will be published.
- The policy framework will be submitted to Cabinet for noting.
- Following the directives emanating from the policy framework, relevant policy/policy directives will be developed.
- The final activity of this phase is that the Minister of Education publishes a policy directive on open learning for post school education and training in South Africa with a high level implementation plan to be implemented.

Outcome 3 - Implementing pilots of an open learning system for post schooling

Based on the outcomes of outcome 1, the DHET will pilot an open learning system in the programme areas identified through consultation.

This outcome sees the implementation of a robust, contextualised (both for infrastructure and human needs and challenges) learning management system and the development of institutional capacity to deliver courses in the proposed programme areas. Integral to this outcome is the development of high quality learning materials that will be published as Open Educational Resources (OER).

Outcome 4 - Collecting case studies on the application of open learning in post schooling that can be shared amongst countries

In the execution of the first three outcomes, case studies will be published in support of the implementation of open learning in post school education and training in South Africa. For the purpose of the outcome, research will also be commissioned.

Governments worldwide are progressively more requiring that educationally useful materials developed with public funds be made available under open licences. The following activities are associated with outcome 5:

- Identify a range of critical issues/areas in the DHET that can be addressed through OER;
- Develop and share models using OER in post school education and training;
- Develop and share different business models for the procurement/development of learning materials;
- Analyse the legislative and policy environment relating to OER;
- Develop an advocacy and communication plan to:
  - o Promote the use of OER in post school education and training;
  - o Clarify licence frameworks in post school education and training;
- Establish an OER Forum to promote the use of OER in post school education and training;
- Collaborate with other government departments on the use of OER; and
- Conduct an audit of publically funded materials in the Department of Higher Education and Training that can be made available as OER.

7. Support/Budget

All the activities will be coordinated through the Directorate: Career Development and Open Learning. The initial activities of outcomes 1, 2 and 5 have been budgeted through an operational allocation from the NSF (2012).

Further support was sought through the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). This entails:

- COL to identify an appropriately qualified resource person/service provider that could support the development of the concept framework, user specifications and policy implications for government on an open learning system (outcome 1);
- Once the concept framework is approved by the Minister, the DHET will convene a national task team to develop the Policy Framework for Open Learning in post school education and training, as well as a high level implementation plan. COL to support the task team with an international expert (outcome 2);
- COL to support DHET to review current Content and Learning Management System (C/LMS) platforms to identify the most robust that can accommodate the open learning system that is envisaged (outcome 3); and
- COL and DHET to collaborate on publishing open learning case studies (outcome 4).

Based on the conclusions of outcome 1 and 2, application to the NSF will be made to fund subsequent activities.

Contact Information

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Consultation on the Concept of Open Learning

The following people were consulted on the concept of open learning for post school education and training in South Africa:

Department of Higher Education and Training
- Mr Firoz Patel, Deputy Director-General: HRD Planning & Monitoring Co-ordination
- Ms Aruna Singh, Director: FET Curriculum Development & Support
- Mr Steve Mommen, Director: Public FET Colleges
- Dr Engela van Staden, Chief Director: University Academic Planning and Management Support
- Ms Melissa Erra, Director: SETA Support and Leadership
- Mr Hannes Hoon, Director: SETA Performance Management
- Ms Nadine Pote, Director: FET Examinations: NCV
- Ms Adrienne Bird; Deputy Director-General, Skills Development: New Projects
- Dr Paulus Buthelezi, Director: Private FET Colleges

Department of Basic Education
- Dr Jenny Joshua, Director: LTSM Policy, Development & Implementation
- Mr Haroon Mahomed, Director: Teacher Development
- Mr Phil Mnisi, Director: Curriculum Innovation

Department of Communications
- Dr Harold Wesso, Deputy Director-General: e-SKills Institute; Acting CEO: National Electronic Institute of South Africa (NEMISA)

Department of Correctional Services
- Ms. Phillips Xoliswa, Deputy Director: Curriculum Management
- Mr. Ngoloyi Leonard, Assistant Director: Curriculum Administration
- Ms Eullyne Rapeta, Assistant Director: Research & Development, Skills Development

South African Institute for Distance Education/OER Africa
- Ms Jenny Glennie, Executive Director
- Mr Tony Mays, Programme Specialist
- Ms Tessa Welch, Programme Specialist: Teacher Education

Commonwealth of Learning
- Mr Vis Naidoo, Vice-President
- Mr John Lesperance, Education Specialist: Virtual University of the Small States of the Commonwealth
- Ms Frances Ferreira, Education Specialist: Open Schooling
- Ms Alison Mead-Richardson, Education Specialist: Skills Development

UNESCO

- Mr Abel Caine, Programme Specialist; Communication and Information Sector (CI)

Other

- Mr Neil Butcher, OER and ICT in Education Strategist
- Ms Roelien Herholdt, Senior Research Manager: Assessment and Research, JET Education Services
- Dr Wayne Mackintosh, Director OER Foundation and Director, International Centre for Open Education, Otago Polytechnic, New Zealand
- Ms Beverley Wharton-Hood, Director: Strategic Development, Pearson
- Mr Kobus van Wyk, Head: e-Learning Initiatives, Mustek Ltd