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# South Africa

## Non-formal education

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# Non-formal education in South Africa

John Aitchison

## Introduction

This report draws upon existing documentation about non-formal education in South Africa, supplemented by recent information provide by local academics and educators. The information selected has been that relating (in some way) to provision that meets the needs of youth and adults for access to appropriate literacy, basic and continuing education and life-skills programmes (as per Education For All goals 3 and 4). The report attempts to document the availability of such programmes and the rates of participation in them and to make an assessment of their effectiveness and outcomes.

The investigation starts from a working definition of what non-formal education is and qualifies the focus of the investigation onto educational activities aimed at imparting adult literacy, basic education and equivalency schooling, life skills, non-formal vocational and work skills, income generation skills, rural development and general culture all – of which take place outside the formal education system.

The standard UNESCO definition of non-formal education (NFE) (UNESCO, 2000) is remarkably vague and apart from stating that it must be “organised and sustained educational activity” catering for people of all ages, it could cover virtually anything, though it gives as examples “education programmes to impart adult literacy, basic education for out-of-school children, life-skills, work-skills, and general culture.”

The brief for this study narrowed the focus by stressing on:

- Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE) programmes and structured learning activities targeting the least formally educated youth and adult populations
- NFE that can be easily compared across cases and countries.
- programmes whose participants are not counted as enrolled in the formal education system.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>This in itself is not always an easy to use criterion. A recent controversial decision by some provincial education departments was not to re-register 12<sup>th</sup> grade school failures who wished to return for another year but to enrol them as “private candidates” so that they no longer appeared in the schooling system grade 12 examination statistics and would effectively ‘disappear’ from the system., even though they would still be full-time school pupils.

This report has therefore concentrated on:

- **Literacy and numeracy programmes** (defined as being organised primarily to impart reading, writing and numeracy skills in a home language or the dominant language of the workplace (the latter also require conversational skills instruction), though they may include other learning areas such as health and income generation. Language courses will form a subsection of this category).
- **Equivalency, 'second chance' or alternative schooling** (distinguished from literacy and numeracy programmes in providing an equivalence of the general education provided for primary school children) and primarily organised for youth and adults who did not have access to or who withdrew from formal primary/basic education. In South Africa this includes formal adult basic education and training as well as so-called finishing schools at a secondary school level, both of which allow for continuing with formal education.
- **Life skills and community development** (including health (particularly HIV/AIDS prevention and care, family planning, environmental, community development, participation in government programmes and local government, citizenship, and other forms of education and training).
- **Income generation programmes, non-formal vocational training and rural and community development** (all related in livelihoods).
- **Continuing and professional development education and training** (usually related to work)
- **Early Childhood Education and care**
- **Religious and cultural education**

# Part A: Country level information on NFE

This part looks at the national conceptual, legal and governance frameworks for NFE as well how it is organized, financed, assessed, and evaluated at a country level.

## How NFE is conceptualised in South Africa

Studying non-formal education in South Africa is complicated by the term having fallen into disuse since the 1990s (though it is now enjoying a very minor renaissance), largely because of the overwhelming dominance of a discourse of standards and certification that has, quite literally, rendered formal most structured education and training provision.

At the start of the last decade of the apartheid era, the Human Sciences Research Council commission report of 1981, *The Provision of education in the RSA*, (the de Lange report), popularised the term non-formal education. This commission, wanting to modernise South African education, saw that the existing crisis-ridden system could not be expanded sufficiently fast to educate everybody well and saw non-formal education (particularly in the work place) as a flexible, quick, cost-effective way of doing so. That the corporate sector might be encouraged to pay for it made it even more attractive. It defined non-formal education as :

educational activities planned for adults that took place outside of the formal system of schools and tertiary education institutions and which did not lead to formal certification.

The De Lange report saw non-formal education as part of a continuum between **formal education** and **informal education** (the latter defined as learning that the individual gained from daily experience). NFE was seen as complementary to the formal system and there was even talk of a non-formal education **system** and, though by definition non-formal education did not have formal certification, some attention was given to non-formal qualifications enabling people to move across (back) into the formal system at the appropriate levels.

De Lange's NFE was totally without the critical and oppositional anti-apartheid stance of 'adult education' and critics complained about the report's technicism (in supposing that technical solutions should be found for the political and ethical problems of an apartheid society). The reform process that de Lange represented was soon aborted but a number of ideas on non-formal education remained important, namely:

- the need for non-formal education to complement and link up with the formal education system;
- the need for a system of educational equivalency (including perhaps certification) to allow people to move from formal to non-formal systems and vice versa;
- the need to address job related educational needs;
- the need to share educational costs with the corporate sector (and non-governmental or people's organisations).

The *Education Renewal Strategy (ERS): discussion document* (1991) used a similar definition of non-formal education, namely 'planned, structured education provided at or by any institution to obtain a qualification *other* than a degree, certificate or diploma instituted by or under any law for formal education'. Other passages in the ERS document identified non-formal education with vocational training.

The democratic movement's National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) report on *Adult*

*Education* rejected adopting the NFE terminology because of its technicist ‘modernising apartheid’ associations but did see an important place for NFE in education and training provision.

The post apartheid government elected in 2004 rapidly introduced a number of education and training policies and governance structures that introduced, inter alia:

- a national qualification framework and national standards for education and training with an implementing agency, the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) and various subsidiary quality assurance bodies.
- a competency-based/outcomes based education and training system
- the blurring the distinction between education and training
- recognition of prior learning (though often hard to implement in practice)
- portability of qualifications
- a commitment to lifelong learning (unfortunately largely rhetorical (see Aitchison, 2003)).

## Distinctive South African definitions

### Non-formal education

Since the effective demise of this as a working concept in South African policy discourse in the early 1990s its use in various contexts is largely a matter of clarification on whether the speaker or writer is denoting:

- any education carried on outside the formal school and higher education system, except vocational training
- any education that is not certificated
- education that is delivered in a non-formal or informal style (but which may be quite formal in the system or certification sense).

Until recently it was used as an expenditure category in financial statements of the national and provincial Departments of Education and referred to formal adult education, early childhood development (ECD) and some limited skills training.

### Adult basic education

The Department of Education’s national definition of ABET in its 1997 Adult Basic Education policy document states (1997: 8–9):

Adult basic education and training is the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts. ABET is flexible, developmental and targeted at the specific needs of particular audiences and, ideally, provides access to nationally recognized certificates.

Until recently, it appeared that the steady formalization of adult literacy and basic education was an irresistible process with complicated and heavily structured programmes and qualifications

that looked remarkably like, if not being identical to, those already entrenched in schooling. The ABET Act of 2000 stated:

adult basic education means all learning and training programmes for adults from level 1 to 4 where level 4 is equivalent to grade 9 in public schools or NQF level 1.

However in April 2005 the Minister of Education at a Roundtable on ABET declared that ABET needed to be more responsive and that it had become “utilitarian and narrow” and had “sought to make adults like children”. ABET would need to be re-conceptualised and revamped. Similar statements have been made at conference and official state education gatherings since then.

## Literacy

Literacy conceived of in functional or Freirian senses in the 1980s was totally overshadowed by the adult basic education and training (ABET) discourses of the 1990s. In late 1999 an attempt by the then Minister of Education to reinstate the idea of a mass literacy programme to reach those not being served by the increasingly formal ABET system (itself lacklustre) came to little because of funding and organisational problems. This initiative at least recognised that the very formal certificated ABET system was not substantially addressing the problem of illiteracy and a more campaign orientated literacy mobilisation was necessary.

In 2006 a Ministerial Committee of Literacy was set up to plan for a mass literacy campaign. Its report has a chapter on its view on literacy and defines it thus:

Though most definitions of literacy stress the ability to read and understand printed text and to communicate through writing, many recent definitions note that literacy is always relative to varying contexts and to skill and knowledge requirements.

Some academics now conceive of “literacy” rather as “literacies” which differ widely in their purpose, relationships to scripts and texts, and to institutional frameworks. Kell (2004, p. 28) argues, for example, that people are made literate not so much that they can deal with texts as that they can be enabled to take part in social practices within which specific texts are embedded. Literacy is therefore not even to be seen **in** a context – it **is** a context. However a criticism of the more extreme forms of this New Literacy Studies conception of literacies is that the term ‘literacy’ ceases to have much meaning as an ordinary word.

This is far from the more commonsense conception of **alphabetisation** which is about instruction in a fairly universal script-based technology that can be used for reading and writing in a huge variety of contexts (to which contexts it must bear some relation if it is to be meaningful).

The view of the Ministerial Committee on Literacy is that for practical purposes, this more **commonsense view of literacy** should be accepted with the obvious caveats that of course contextual relevance and meaningfulness is necessary and that any literacy that is **only** functional and meaningful within a schooling environment is inadequate. They also found the definition in the Global Campaign for Education’s *International benchmarks on adult literacy* (2005) helpful and comprehensive:

Literacy is about the acquisition and use of reading, writing and numeracy skills, and thereby the development of active citizenship, improved health and livelihoods, and gender equality. The goals of literacy programmes should reflect this understanding.

This definition combines both the simplicity of UNESCO’s 1958 definition:

A person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his or her everyday life.

with more recent ones, such as that of the World Declaration on Education for All of 1990 which see literacy as an essential learning tool to enable people to survive, participate and develop in the world.

## Lifelong learning

A detailed and critical account of the South African discourse on lifelong learning is found in Aitchison's 2004 article on *Lifelong learning in South Africa: dreams and delusions*. Aitchison quotes the official definitions but concludes that from the early 1990s the term 'lifelong learning' was largely used to broaden and place an emancipatory gloss on the 'competency' discourse that had been imported from the world of training into the discourse of the post-apartheid education system.

In a number of Education White Papers and policy documents produced during the 1990s the term 'lifelong education' appears several times (Department of Education, 1995;1996b;1997a, 1997b, 1998, 2001a, 2001b; Ministry of Education, 1997, 1998; Human Sciences Research Council, 1996). Though it is used in a number of the more inspirational passages which speak about learners and their right to lifelong education and training of good quality, an 'open learning' approach, redress for apartheid, responsible citizenship, and participation in the 'knowledge society' or the 'learning society', it is more frequently associated with the new National Qualifications Framework and the government's human resource development strategy. Generally the references to 'lifelong learning' in these White Papers suggest that, where it is not simply used to add a rhetorical flourish to the expressed desire for a better education system, it describes the competency or outcomes-based new National Qualifications Framework (NQF) that will serve the labour market. At worst the use of the language of lifelong learning becomes self-delusional, a pretending that a radical agenda is still being pursued when it is not. Lifelong learning, though present as a key founding concept in the White Papers on South Africa's new education system, lacks much prominence or substance.

Even when the passages on lifelong learning note that learning will no longer be the sole property of formal education but can take place anywhere, at any time and through any means, it has to meet nationally required standards (Department of Education, 1996b, p. 26).

The following lifelong learning definition appears in the September 1998 White Paper, No 4, *A Programme for the transformation of Further Education and Training. Preparing for the twenty-first century through education, training and work* (Department of Education, 1998, Glossary):

lifelong learning: ongoing learning through a continuously supportive process that stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire and apply the knowledge, values, skills and critical understanding required to confidently and creatively respond and rise to the challenges of a changing social, political and economic environment

This White paper also makes reference to the use of multiple sites of learning and the growth of 'virtual' institutions. Learning will take place in the workplace, at community facilities and in learners' private homes. Some learners will use the Internet and other technologies to access learning via a 'web' or network of providers who might be located very far apart and who need have no formal, centralized organization or structure. Open learning systems and an integrated approach to education and training will thus allow people to learn what they want, when they want and in the form they want, to satisfy their cultural, spiritual, career, personal development and other needs.

Another interesting tendency is for the term "lifelong learning" to be used as a synonym for adult education or even more narrowly as literacy and adult basic education. This trend is the result of taking what is the obvious base for a sustainable lifelong learning, namely literacy and numeracy, as being the whole.

## The legal foundations of NFE policies

The fundamental legal foundation for non-formal education is the new Constitution of South Africa which in clause 29 section 1(a) enshrines the right of all citizens to adult basic education and also to further education (which the latter, the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible).

Adult basic education [and training] refers to all forms of organised education and training that meet the basic learning needs of adults, including literacy and numeracy, as well as the general knowledge, skills and values and attitudes that they require to survive, develop their capacities, live and work in dignity, improve the quality of their lives, make informed decisions, and continue learning.

As a right, adult basic education is therefore not simply a tool for economic growth or for instrumentalist purposes, but rather a claim for dignity, self-respect, and cultural rights.

The National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) supports the protection of rights such as the right to basic education. The Act (Department of Education, 1996a) supports

the advancement and protection of the fundamental rights of every person and in particular the right (1) of every person to be protected against unfair discrimination within or by an education department or education institution on any ground whatsoever; (2) of every person to basic education and equal access to education institutions.

The South African Constitution provides that education up to the end of high school (Grade 12) is the responsibility of provincial governments, though central government retains the right to set “norms and standards” for all education. Financial allocations are made from central government to provinces on an equitable basis.

The new democratic government elected in 1994 through its new national Department of Education developed a *Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training* and a *National Multi-year implementation plan for Adult Education and Training: Provision and Accreditation* in 1997 as well as a series of more technical policy documents. The Department of Education also succeeded in placing draft legislation before parliament that resulted in the Adult Basic Education and Training Act of 2000 (Department of Education, 2000). The Act itself was largely devoted to the regulation of public adult learning centres (PALCs) in schools controlled by the nine provincial education departments. The memorandum accompanying the Act included the bizarre statement: “The best way to break the back of illiteracy amongst adults is to regulate it by legislation.” It included a most unfortunate clause 38 that, taken literally made providing any adult basic education in other than a state registered centre a criminal offence:

38. (1) Any person other than an organ of state, who without the authority of a public or private adult centre—
  - (a) offers or pretends to offer **any** adult basic education and training programme **or part thereof**;
  - (b) confers a qualification which purports to have been granted by a centre, or in collaboration with a centre; or
  - (c) purports to perform an act on behalf of a centre, is guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction to any sentence which may be imposed for fraud.
- (2) ...
- (3) Any person who establishes or maintains an unregistered private centre, is guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine or imprisonment not exceeding five years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

[However clause 43 states that clause 38 (3) does not apply to a person who was providing adult basic education and training programmes at an unregistered private centre immediately prior to the date of commencement of this Act (i.e. late 2000) who can continue to do so until a date set by the MEC and published in the Provincial *Gazette*.]

## How are NFE programmes governed and financed?

This is a difficult question to answer because of the falling into disuse of the term in policy and administrative discourse. However, the category, non-formal education, remained embedded as a budget category in national and provincial departments of education budgets and accounts, a hangover from the late 1970s and 1980s when non-formal education covered formal literacy, primary school equivalence, and high school equivalence classes run after hours in state schools, as well as some early childhood development centres (kindergartens) and finally a few genuinely non-formal classes in crafts and skills. This financial category came under criticism because government tended to claim that the full “non-formal education” budget was being spent on literacy and ABET when in fact usually less than half was, most going to high school equivalency classes for school pupils who had failed their grade 12 examinations. The actual financial outlay remains at less than one percent of the education budget, though the recent 2007/2008 budget included a large additional amount for ABET and literacy of over R800 million.

Apart from the Departments of Education, another major source of funding for NFE is the Department of Labour, which through its Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) which govern training in the main industrial and business sectors, uses a compulsory skills levy (equal to one percent of all salaries and wages paid), some of which is devoted to the training of unemployed people in various skills and ABET.

A vast range of formal education and training is now bureaucratically regulated by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which registers qualifications (which all have to be outcomes based) and standards (which form the building blocks of most qualifications), the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi), which controls certification of qualifications and the registration of providers of those qualifications; and the previously mentioned SETAs.

Some literacy provisions is still provided by NGOs financed by donor funding but there has been a drastic decline in this sector since the early 1990s and only a few NGOs remain in the field, financed mainly by contracts from the Departments of education or SETAs for providing formal certificated ABET.

The business sector also funds some ABET, mainly via outsourcing to commercial ABET providers and NGOs (of which providers there are currently 123 providers formally registered with the Umalusi).

## To what extent is NFE formally supported and managed?

The national body responsible for setting “norms and standards” for state run ABET and AFET is the national Department of Education which had a Directorate for Adult Education. The provincial departments have analogous directorates or sub-directorates. There have been various attempts to have a national board for adult education and the ABET Act of 2000 made provision for such but it has never been implemented.

There is very little evidence of much systematic national *monitoring* or *evaluation* mechanisms for NFBE. In the case of state run ABET, there have been the occasional evaluations of particular foreign donor funded projects and developments but they are not publicly accessible and there is scant evidence that such evaluations have ever been taken seriously. A couple of exceptions were a 1999 commissioned audit of Public Adult learning Centres (Human Sciences Research Council, 2000) and more recently tenders have been issued for similar audits in some provinces (e.g. KwaZulu-Natal).

Research studies by universities have depended on personal interest and the ability of researchers to generate their own funding. Generally speaking, the departments or centres for adult and continuing

education at universities or for non-formal university extension have all been seriously depleted since 1994. The only major ones left are the Centre for Adult Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, the ABET Institute of the University of South Africa (UNISA) and the Centre for Adult and Continuing Education at the University of the Western Cape. Three important examples of NFBE studies are those conducted by the Centre for Adult Education of the University of Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal), namely

Harley, A., Aitchison, J.J.W., Lyster, E. and Land, S. *et al.* 1996. *A survey of adult basic education in South Africa in the 90s*. Johannesburg: SACHED Books

Aitchison, J.J.W., Houghton, T. and Baatjes, I. *et al.* 2000. *University of Natal survey of adult basic education and training: South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Centre for Adult Education, University of Natal

Aitchison, J.J.W., Keyser, S., Land, S. and Lyster, E. *Linking literacy to development in South Africa. Key lessons from projects funded by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund 1998-2004*. Durban: Centre for Adult Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal

There are various policies and regulations about the qualifications required for adult educators at the formal state run Public Adult Learning Centres but these do not specifically demand training as an adult educator. The trainer of ABET educators is the ABET Institute at UNISA, which has trained over 80,000 people to certificate level. This whole qualification is registered with the South African Qualifications Authority.

## Part B. Information about major types of NFBE activities

### The types of NFE providers in South Africa

	Types of NFE Providers	Details
1	National government	The national government through the national Department of Education oversees norms and standards for ABET and adult secondary schooling equivalency programmes and the national South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) registers qualifications and promulgates standards. The Department of Labour is involved in various forms of skills training and other national departments are also involved in various forms of non-formal education (e.g. health, etc.) The Adult Education Directorate in the national Department of Education which is supposed to be a key player here is small and ineffective.
2	Provincial government	Provincial education departments deliver ABET in Public Adult Learning Centres but currently do little to assert the responsibility for curriculum, etc. They tend to slavishly follow national policy.
3	Local government	Currently has no educational powers though its Human Resource divisions may occasionally provide ABET to not only their own staff but to the public.
4	Co-operative	There are a variety of mainly agricultural cooperatives but educational services are not strong.
5	Public enterprise	Public enterprises in the areas of industry, agriculture or services are mainly already covered by national, provincial or local government. There are a number of utilities and previously nationalised industries (electricity, railways, telecommunications, etc.) that have been more committed than other government departments to ABET provision to their own staff.
6	Private enterprise	Private enterprise obviously does an enormous amount of training. ABET has been supported by industry (and in fact was the largest provider of ABET though with South Africa's high unemployment few illiterate or undereducated people are now being employed).

7	Educational/ training institutions	State schools (run by the provinces) allow their facilities to be used for public adult learning centres. A number of Further Education and Training Colleges (the old technical colleges) provide various forms of NFE including a growing number who offer ABET. public or private training institution, e.g. schools,
8	Professional association/ trade union	There is a significant amount of professional and trade union NFE. There are current moves to have qualifications in trade union education.
9	Religious bodies/ missions	Religious education is undertaken by a variety of religious organisations, many of who are major players in HIV/AIDS education and basic home care training. A number of faith based NGOs are involved in gender and social movement mobilisation.
10	International organisation/development agency	Many development and donor agencies have been active in South Africa though they tend to now work mainly through government and their support is declining in the post apartheid era. UNESCO has supported EFA work and there is a small ISCE project.
11	National branch of International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO)	INGOs are present in South Africa but not to the extent that they are in other developing countries. Notable examples here in relation to adult education are ActionAid and the South African REFLECT network. DVV also an interesting and committed resource that has particularly supported the building of associations and networks of adult educators.
12	National NGO	There are a large variety of national NGOs most of whom are engaged in varying forms of NFE. Project Literacy (ProLit) is the most significant ABET NGO that has survived the catastrophic demise of ABET NGOs in the 1990s as donor funding disappeared. It, however increasingly relies on government contracts which means it has less power to direct its services to the most disadvantaged groups.
13	Local branch of national NGO	The branch or area office administered by a national NGO office headquarters at sub-national level.
14	Local NGO	An NGO with only one office at sub-national level. Many of these but declining due to funding shortages.
15	Community based organization (CBO)	An organization or association formed at community level, i.e. within or between villages. Also many of these but often ephemeral because of funding lacks.
16	Private bodies/ individuals	Single individuals or groups of individuals undertaking NFE activities. Many, often as consultants or private providers.

## Types of provision

## Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)

### *Types of programmes*

#### **ABET in the fundamentals of literacy and numeracy**

These are literacy and numeracy programmes organised primarily to impart reading, writing and numeracy skills in a home language or the dominant language of the workplace (the latter is now predominantly English and these courses also require conversational skills instruction).

#### **ABET programmes linked to school equivalency**

These can be distinguished from literacy and numeracy programmes in providing an equivalence of the general education provided for primary school children and are primarily organised for youth and adults who did not have access to or who withdrew from formal primary/basic education.

In practice it is very difficult to distinguish between these two variants because of the formalisation of the ABET system in South Africa, but State Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) stress school equivalency whereas business provision tends to follow on ABET fundamentals with skills training

### **Main providers**

**Department of Education** (at Public Adult Learning Centres)

**Department of Labour** (through various programmes funded via SETAs via the skills levy with actual delivery outsourced to private providers and aimed at the unemployed and funded via the skills levy)

**Other government departments** (with provision sometimes outsourced to commercial or NGO providers)

**Business sector** (through various programmes funded via SETAs via the skills levy with actual delivery often outsourced to commercial or private providers)

**NGOs** (Project Literacy is the largest NGO provider (some of its programmes funded by Department of Education or Department of Labour contracts). Some NGOs run programmes donor funded or on government contracts and work is often linked to issues such as HIV/AIDS education, income generation or family literacy). South African REFLECT Network (SARN) runs a number of small but genuinely non-formal interventions.)

### **Main goals and objectives**

Most ABET programmes claim to mix rights objective (the constitutional right of all citizens to have a basic education) with a more life skills or income generation objectives. There is renewed national stress in all basic education on the necessity of the fundamental skills of reading, writing and numeracy (South Africa fares badly in international comparison tests) as against “skills” training – the argument being that in the modern world the “skills” of reading, writing and numeracy are central.

## Learners served (targeted vs reached)

Learners served by departments of education are often people who have had some schooling but dropped out early with few genuine absolute illiterates in classes. Majority of learners are women (about 7 to 3). According to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2000), in 1999 there were some 162,900 ABET learners in the Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) and this number may have grown to about 250,000 in 2005 (though these statistics are disputed). ABET students are mainly concentrated in the lower levels less than Grade 5). The number of PALCs may be in decline

Learners served by other government departments are usually poorly educated staff.

The Department of Labour trains about 140,000, mainly unemployed, learners every year in various skills but it is difficult to estimate what percentage of this provision is ABET or ABET related. Correctional Services run many ABET classes for certain categories of prisoners and a number of the prisons are registered as PALCs. This provision seems to be growing and possibly as many as 10,000 prisoners are in these classes. Other departments with significant numbers of learners are Water Affairs and Health. Other departments tend to have smaller numbers of learners in class though many potentially have large numbers of candidates for ABET. Local government also provides ABET, particularly in the Western and Northern Cape and Gauteng. It is estimated that this provision reaches as many as 25,000 learners.

The business sector is still the major provider of ABET and spends millions of rand each year on ABET. That the Independent Examinations Board registered over 1,100 business located examination centres in 1998 is an indication of this. A safe estimate is that as many as 125,000 learners are still served each year by business (including parastatals such as Eskom and Transnet). However, business (and even union) support for ABET has become significantly reduced over the last ten years and training more directly related to production and staff advancement is seen as more useful. It needs to be noted that business provision of ABET tends to concentrate on English literacy.

Learners served by NGOs went into an enormous decline from the 60,000 or so learners served in the early 1990s (as has the number of ABET NGOs). However, there may now be a modest regrowth in the number of learners served by a few NGOs such as Prolit that have survived in the hostile environment. A current estimate might be about 20,000 to 30,000.

## Types of teaching

Styles of teaching range from very formal and traditional in PALCs (where most teachers are still ordinary school teachers doing another shift) to more innovative business and NGO practice. The REFLECT network uses a modified Freirian approach.

## Outcomes

Outcome statistics are poor and often inaccurate (see Aitchison and Harley, 2006, for a savage analysis of dubious statistics recording ABET outcomes in South Africa). Statistics from Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi) certification results for ABET examinations and from the Independent Examinations Board show that the entire ABET system run in PALCs resulted in the very meagre output in the years 2001 to 2003 in the final (level 4) examinations: in 2001 some 18,438 candidates enrolled and by 2003 this had risen to 26,067. In 2001 a mere 78 qualified for a General Education and Training Certificate (GETC), in 2003 it had risen to 1,252 (Umalusi, 2004, p. 12). More broadly, Umalusi had by the end of 2003 only issued 440 ABET GETC certificates (it is unclear why the other successful candidates had not received theirs) and 19,028 learning area certificates (for individual learning area courses passed). It is clear that there is an enormous dropout rate of people registering for courses and examinations with only about 50% of enrollees actually writing examinations and a minuscule proportion passing them.

The Independent Examinations Board ABET examinations at various levels, generally used by industry and NGO providers, had for the period from 2004 to 2006 averaged about 28,000 a year. Given that it was estimated in 2001 that there are some 14.6 million adults (aged 15 and over) with less than Grade 9 level of education, this level of output is quite pathetic.

The National Skills Development Strategy set an impressive target for 904,993 workers to gain a National Qualifications Framework level 1 qualification (more or less at a Grade 9 level) by 2005. Almost magical growth was shown in the throughput: 5,079 (2001/2); 111,367 (2002/3); 316,991 (2003/4); 419,660 (2004/5) to a total of 899,686. However, this gain was less impressive than it seems as most of these qualifications were in things like factory safety and suchlike with no assurance that the people concerned had anything approaching functional literacy or the equivalent of a general education.

## *Types of programmes*

### **ABET linked to livelihood skills**

ABET that is linked to skills training (such as in the workplace) or livelihoods and entrepreneurial training (for unemployed people).

### **Main providers**

**Department of Education** (at Public Adult Learning Centres) have made some attempts at developing agricultural and entrepreneurial training courses. Small numbers are involved. The Department formed a partnership with the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) for the delivery of skill programmes in 60 Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) in agriculture, construction, electrical and hospitality skills and many learners have achieved an ABET qualification in one of these areas.

**Department of Labour** (through various programmes funded via SETAs via the skills levy with actual delivery outsourced to private providers and aimed at the unemployed and funded via the skills levy).

Business sector which obviously trains hundreds of thousands of people per annum and of which a portion are also engaged in some form of literacy or adult basic education instruction.

**NGOs** (Project Literacy is the largest NGO provider (some of its programmes funded by Department of Education or Department of Labour contracts). Some NGOs run programmes donor funded or on government contracts and work is often linked to income generation.

### **Main goals and objectives**

These programmes aim to provide effective livelihood training in some sort of package with ABET literacy, numeracy and general education. All these programmes take cognisance of the high unemployment levels in South Africa.

### **Learners served (targeted vs reached)**

There is little information on the enrolments, throughput and success of these programmes.

The Expanded Public Works Programme has some projects which link work to ABET but there is little documentation on this.

The business sector provides some training to its own workers but it is difficult to judge how many are involved in both ABET and skills training.

Some NGOs do link ABET to income generation training but the actual provision is probably small. (See the Aitchison et al report of 2006 on *Linking literacy to development in South Africa.*)

### **Types of teaching**

Tends to be old style didactic training model except in some business sector environments.

### **Outcomes**

Outcome statistics are poor to non-existent.

The National Skills Development Strategy set an impressive target for 904,993 workers to gain a National Qualifications Framework level 1 qualification (more or less at a Grade 9 level) by 2005. Almost magical growth was shown in the throughput: 5,079 (2001/2); 111,367 (2002/3); 316,991 (2003/4); 419,660 (2004/5) to a total of 899,686. It is likely that nearly all these qualifications were in some skill area but it is suspected that many were in non-income generating subjects such as factory safety.

## *Types of programmes*

### **ABET linked to public education**

This is adult basic education programmes that are linked to various forms of public education on health, community development, rural development, citizenship, etc.

### **Main providers**

Various government departments and institutes do sometimes link particular courses (e.g. on basic home care or AIDS awareness) to more formal ABET programmes or prepare general informational materials that can be used in such formal abet programmes in a form accessible to people with low levels of literacy. NGOs also produce such material (for example on AIDS education).

### **Main goals and objectives**

These programmes aim to provide effective information on a range of issues of importance to the public and which can be integrated or used in parallel to formal ABET programmes.

### **Learners served (targeted vs reached)**

There is little information on the enrolments, throughput and success of these programmes and materials.

### **Types of teaching**

Materials are usually well prepared and presented.

### **Outcomes**

Outcome statistics are poor to non existent (but see Aitchison et al, 2006 on some small scale successes and failures).

## High School Equivalency programmes

<i>Types of programmes</i>
<b>High School equivalency or 'second chance' schooling</b> This is formal so-called further education at Public Adult learning centres and private so-called finishing schools. at
<b>Main providers</b>
<p><b>Departments of Education</b> (at Public Adult Learning Centres) have neglected this field for some time because of their over concentration on the ABET system.</p> <p>Private for profit finishing school (which have to be registered with the Departments of Education) as well as a number of correspondence colleges serve this market.</p> <p><b>The Adult Secondary Education Curriculum for Adults (ASECA)</b> was an NGO developed high school equivalency programme specifically tailored for adult and out of school youth. It exams (administered by the Independent Examination Board) were officially recognised. The Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi) is interested in a major redevelopment of this programme.</p>
<b>Main goals and objectives</b>
These programmes aim to provide a second chance for students who failed their grade 12 examination (the so called matriculation or university entrance examination) or who were not able to attend high school.
<b>Learners served (targeted vs reached)</b>
<p>There is little information on the enrolments, throughput and success of these programmes.</p> <p>About 220,000 such learners are in PALCs.</p> <p>Drop out from both PALCs and correspondence colleges is very high.</p>
<b>Types of teaching</b>
<p>Tends to be old style didactic teacher tell instruction.</p> <p>Correspondence materials tends to be reasonable good.</p>
<b>Outcomes</b>
Outcome statistics not accessible.

## Life skills and community development

<i>Types of programmes</i>
<p><b>Life skills and community development</b>          These are the multitudinous programmes and materials that provide various forms of public education on health (particularly HIV/AIDS prevention and care), community development, rural development, citizenship,, family planning, environmental, community development, participation in government programmes and local government, citizenship, and other forms of education and training.</p>
<p><b>Main providers</b></p>
<p>Various government departments and institutes and NGOs prepare courses and general informational materials so that they are accessible to people with low levels of literacy or develop them for radio or television broadcast. Some NGOs and adult education centres at universities are active in this materials development work (for example see the newspaper supplement project, Learn with Echo, of the Centre for Adult Education of the University of KwaZulu-Natal).</p>
<p><b>Main goals and objectives</b></p>
<p>These programmes aim to provide effective information on a range of issues of importance to the public. Much general health and citizenship education is aimed at empowering participants to have more control over the health, livelihoods or access to (state) resources.</p>
<p><b>Learners served (targeted vs reached)</b></p>
<p>There is little information on the enrolments, throughput and success of these programmes and materials.</p>
<p><b>Types of teaching</b></p>
<p>Materials are usually well prepared and presented.</p>
<p><b>Outcomes</b></p>
<p>Outcome statistics are poor to non existent. There are some evaluations and readership surveys (e.g. of “Soul City” a television soap on mainly health issues) and a large number of research studies on various AIDS education interventions..</p>

## Work-related Skills Training

<i>Types of programmes</i>
<p><b>Work-related skills training</b>          These all vocationally related skills programmes run in the workplace or in training institutions serving the workplace as well as some <b>income-generation programmes, non-formal vocational training</b> and <b>rural and community development</b> (all related in livelihoods).</p>
<p><b>Main providers</b></p>
<p>Mainly the Department of Labour through the SETAs, some courses run at Further Education and Training Colleges and some NGOs</p>
<p><b>Main goals and objectives</b></p>
<p>Skills training for the workplace and to provide skills for employment or self-employment</p>

Learners served (targeted vs reached)
In house company training may reach as many as a million people a year, much of it more or less non-formal (though less so with the systematic formalisation of qualifications in the new education and training dispensation).
Types of teaching
Varied.
Outcomes
Very difficult to judge. South Africa is alleged to have severe skills shortages and productivity problems.

## Continuing and professional development education and training

<i>Types of programmes</i>
Continuing and professional development education and training
Main providers
In house company in the business sector, through the South African Management Development Institute (of the public service, through government departments, and through a multiplicity of commercial training organisations and professional bodies).
Main goals and objectives
Continuing education for increased productivity.
Learners served (targeted vs reached)
Mainly the higher levels of government and business sector employees.
Types of teaching
Varied. Often good and innovative.
Outcomes
Impossible to judge. No statistics.

## Early Childhood Education and Care

<i>Types of programmes</i>
<p><b>Early Childhood Education and Care (also known as Early Childhood Development (ECD))</b>          This includes various forms of childcare with associated education as well as the training of child care staff.</p>
<p><b>Main providers</b></p> <p>The Departments of Education, after a period when support for ECD diminished, are increasing support for ECD centres and for the training of practitioners.</p> <p>NGOs and CBOs run a number of ECD centres and networks.</p>
<p><b>Main goals and objectives</b></p> <p>Provide effective affordable childcare and early education (especially for children of working parents)</p>
<p><b>Learners served (targeted vs reached)</b></p> <p>Several hundred thousand children</p>
<p><b>Types of teaching</b></p> <p>Varies from the most innovative to poor.</p>
<p><b>Outcomes</b></p> <p>Hard to estimate but clearly positive.</p>

## Religious and Cultural Education

<i>Types of programmes</i>
<p><b>Religious and Cultural Education</b>          This includes various forms of religious education in its various forms.</p>
<p><b>Main providers</b></p> <p>Religious bodies and faith based NGOs and CBOs</p>
<p><b>Main goals and objectives</b></p> <p>Faith based objectives and general support for sound societal values and practices</p>
<p><b>Learners served (targeted vs reached)</b></p> <p>Whole population, everywhere, including the most disadvantaged</p>
<p><b>Types of teaching</b></p> <p>Varied</p>

Outcomes
Varied

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