



# **Provincial Skills Indaba**

A provincial JIPSA Initiative

**26 and 27 February 2009**

East London, Regent Hotel

**Report and Summary of Results**



## **Background and Context – why a Provincial Skills Indaba?**

The Eastern Cape Provincial Growth and Development Plan (PGDP) initiated in 2004, identified human resource development as a core objective.

The PGDP identified five specific challenges within the HRD pillar:

- An extremely low skills base
- Under-investment in skills development
- Rising unemployment
- Poor alignment of training programmes with social and economic development strategies
- Mismatch between training outputs and skills requirements.

On 16 February 2006 the Eastern Cape Job Summit Agreement was signed by representatives of Provincial Government, Civil Society, Organised Labour, Organised Business, Organised Local Government and Higher Education. The vision of this initiative was to strive for a poverty free Eastern Cape where all people have equitable access to social services and fully benefit from the economy. To achieve this vision, the partners and signatories to the Agreement committed to the following objectives:

- Working together to build a robust social partnership in support of the 2014 targets of the Eastern Cape Provincial Growth and Development Plan
- Defending jobs and accelerating the pace at which new jobs are created in the Province
- Building an enduring partnership around a number of short, medium and long range outcomes that create jobs, promote growth and investment, based on the principle of people-centred development

In South Africa the importance of skills development is being prioritized anew through the ASGISA/JIPSA initiative (national and provincial). In order to strengthen occupational and vocational education and training, it is crucial that awareness is created among stakeholders of the role and importance of skills development.

The Provincial Skills Indaba also took the current economic crisis into consideration and discussed the role of skills development in an economic down-turn.

## **Theme of the Skills Indaba**

“Crafting a common approach for extensive skills development in the Eastern Cape – an answer to the current economic crisis?”



## Expected Outcomes of the Indaba

- Increased awareness amongst all stakeholders in education and training<sup>1</sup> of the possibilities and challenges arising from the current economic crisis and the role of skills development in the Eastern Cape Province.
- Plan of Action for strategic interventions.

## The Process followed at the Indaba

Unlike many conferences, where there is less deliberation amongst participants and more listening to the opinions of a few speakers, the Provincial Skills Indaba aimed at utilising the manifold expertise and experience of all participants. In order to provide the 150 experts within HR, training, academia from the public and the private sector, ECSECC called on six personalities to provide impulse statements and cover some of the most relevant and critical subjects before the participants took over the discussion and developed their results. These impulse statements took place on the first of the two day Indaba. The impulse statements were made by:

- Prof Saleem Badat – Rhodes University - spoke about skills and the narrow definition of skills and broaden the discourse
- Dr Miriam Altman – Human Sciences Research Council – linked education, training, economic growth and employment
- Prof James Woudhuysen – an international strategist and forecaster – took the current economic situation into consideration and asked – what role is there for skills development? – he gave us a (global) business perspective
- Mr Cedric Gina – NUMSA – looked at the challenge of the current job-shedding and the role of skills development
- Ms Nwabisa Vokwana – COEGA Human Capital Solutions – informed us about massifying skills development and presented the COEGA approach
- Dr Andre Kraak – formerly Human Sciences Research Council now Palama – talked about the relevance of sectoral skills development and the need for policy alignment

Three of the speakers were able to remain over the whole of the Indaba and provide a bird's eye view of the discussion when asked.

The deliberation between participants took place predominantly at table level. Each table accommodated 10 persons. At the commencement of each round, the tables chose their facilitators,

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<sup>1</sup> HE and FET Institutions, DOL, DOE, public and private sector, labour.



scribes and time-keepers, the aim being to ensure that all voices were heard, results recorded and that each table kept to the allotted time. In addition, some discussions were held in the plenary, in order to examine the overall results, deal with unclear or contentious issues or reflect on the process.

## **Important roles for skills development to play in the current economic crisis**

The initial discussion at table level was dedicated to reflecting on and debating the most important roles for skills development in the Eastern Cape. The backdrop to the discussion was the current worldwide economic crisis. The following results from the table discussions were summarised and grouped by the ECSECC editorial team:

### **Re- and up-skilling & retention**

- Multi-skilling
- Get funding to do re-skilling of retrenched & unemployed
- Prioritise skills areas & re-skill
- Skills retention
- Re-skill retrenched workers to feed other economic activities

### **Supporting R&D, innovation & diversification of provincial economy**

- Foster innovation
- Support R&D & diversification of industries
- Empower people to be innovative

Note: R&D should happen on various levels!

### **Needs identification and planning**

- Skills needs analysis - focus on identified provincial needs
- Do skills audit
- Provide relevant skills development
- Identify skills gap & establish appropriate training
- Research community needs
- Skills development plan for EC



### **Counter-crisis intervention**

- Link skills development to socio-economic growth clusters
- Keep people in training for social stability
- Use opportunity to train to be ready for up-turn
- Cushion impact of crisis

### **Interventions for specific occupations**

- Quality intervention programmes for specific occupations
- Establish co-ops with government support
- New venture creation
- Develop competitive edge & move from subsistence to commercial production (agriculture)

Note: Role needs to be a responsive one!

### **Facilitating employability**

- Continuous professional development
- Offer programmes responding to labour market
- Facilitating employability
- Bridging course(s) between school, FET and HE
- Occupational training on all educational levels
- Basic skills through ABET
- Improve recognition of FET qualifications

### **Knowledge production & dissemination**

- Produce & distribute knowledge
- Broaden horizons



## **Skills Development in the Eastern Cape 2020 – your realistic vision**

The start of the second day of the Skills Indaba was devoted to creating visions for Skills Development in the Eastern Cape in 2020. In order to avoid developing wish-lists, the participants were asked to focus on realistic visions. The visionary pictures were presented and formed the overall goals or “what for” of the road map to be developed. A summary of the various visionary ideas listed below can be read in the box following the list.

### Visionary Pictures:

- New opportunities and resources within the Eastern Cape Borders have been identified
- The Eastern Cape has a transformed and diversified provincial economy based on global competitive advantage of multi-skilled individuals supported by a modern infrastructure
- Through a multi-skilled and globally competitive workforce, the provincial economy has been diversified and made locally and regionally competitive through innovation and R&D
- Agriculture is the bread basket of SA & skills development has driven the transformation
- Eastern Cape educator training sector has become the centre of excellence to drive specific sub-sectors
- Focuses have been localised according to competitive and comparative advantage
- EC Province is recognised nationally as an emerging, sustainable, and competitive as a wealth creating Province. The core focus:
  - Primary Health Care
  - Education and Training
  - Universal access
  - Leaders in technology and automotive
  - Partnerships with private companies and business
  - Political stability and visionary leadership
  - English as primary academic language (this point was discussed contentiously: the participants agreed that whilst English is a crucial skill for matric level, the stress should refer to international language competence (i.e. Portugese, German, French))
- There is a structured realistic applicable skills development programme with the desired outcomes
  - supported by relevant stakeholders (government, private/business stakeholders, labour, DoL, communities, etc)
  - by means of vibrant advocacy campaigns (forums, reach out programmes, media, etc)
- There is a provincial skills development forum for sector initiatives namely:
  - Agriculture
  - Construction
  - Manufacturing
  - Tourism & services



This has been implemented and is functioning effectively. Eastern Cape Province has effective educational system from grass-root level.

- Change of mindset! There are contributing and independent citizens with relevant skills to participate in the economy
- Illiteracy levels have been eradicated
- Information sharing – there is a different take on intellectual property
- Bank services abound in rural areas (NPO's?)
- There is one access point for all government and municipality services – e-governance (a hub)
- There are skilled people in government who can provide improved services (e.g. roads, electricity)
- There is a better equipped infrastructure for institutions of learning
- An integrated database of skilled people provides more comprehensive placement
- The gap between academic and corporate has been bridged to achieve an alignment of programmes and a greater absorption of interns
- A competent, dedicated, skilled and transformed society speculates in a co-ordinated and integrated framework that commits to the economic growth and development of the EC Province
- Diversified auto-sector, agriculture, medical, clothing, textile and leather and engineering in the Province accommodates a wide range of skills
- There is an increase in the GDP contribution in the Province
- The schooling system produces students that are ready to be sorted into different sectors of the economy
- By 2020 the Eastern Cape Province has an education system that underpins/addresses the proliferation of skills that are critical and crucial for the development of industries both formal and informal

#### **Skills Development in the Eastern Cape 2020 – A Vision**

Economic prosperity and an increase in the GDP contribution in the transformed Province of the Eastern Cape are based on a diversified provincial economy utilising home-grown Eastern Cape resources and talents. The Province is recognised nationally as a politically stable, sustainable and wealth-creating player inspired by visionary leaders and offering a modern infrastructure for its citizens. State services are low on bureaucracy and high on reliability and e-government.

The Eastern Cape can boast a multi-skilled, dedicated and globally competitive workforce: contributing and independent citizens eager to participate in the economy and to share their knowledge to stimulate innovation. Whilst agriculture has transformed society, there is a strong R+D culture of innovation which draws expertise from the various centres of excellence in the Eastern Cape. Education and training are coordinated and localised according to competitive and comparative advantage so as to increase the efficiency of investments in skills development. In addition to expertise in agriculture, automotive, medical, clothing, engineering, construction, manufacturing, tourism/services and primary health care within the provincial skills development forum, leaders in technology and automotive profit from skills “made in the Eastern Cape”.



Whereas English is widely learnt to ensure access to higher education in particular, many learners profit from other international language skills, thus fostering better international business relations. Skills development enjoys a well-equipped infrastructure, universal access, vibrant advocacy campaigning and partnerships with the relevant government departments, private companies and business, labour and communities, which secures an alignment of programmes and a greater absorption of interns. This is also thanks to the effective educational system from grass-root level available in the Province which has effectively wiped out illiteracy and produces students ready to excel themselves in the development of industries both formal and informal within the different sectors of the economy.

## **Obstacles and Hurdles on the Way to the 2020 Vision**

After dwelling on the vision of effective and successful skills development in 2020, participants went on to discuss obstacles on the way to achieving that vision. They distinguished between short-term and longer term obstacles and hurdles. The editors have grouped the obstacles to provide further clarity.

### **Short-Term Obstacles**

#### **Coordination, Management and Alignment**

- Lack of coordination
- Lack of alignment of training intervention to an occupation/workplace
- Limited access to information
- Co-ordination (sectors and government)
- Communication (sectors and government)
- Lack of proper management of the distribution and utilisation of resources
- Lack of tools to measure productivity for future planning
- Lack of co-ordination

#### **Political Leadership and Competence**

- Political climate
- Ethical & visionary leadership
- Socio-political instability: lack of continuity in governance structures
- Leadership instability/uncertainty which impedes service delivery and leads to appointment of incompetent people
- Lack of political, social, economic and infrastructure accountability
- DoE-DoL conflict

#### **Bureaucracy and Corporate Governance**

- Bureaucratic red tape in accessing funding
- Bureaucracy in accreditation processes





### **Resources**

- Infrastructure
- Poor corporate governance (slow release of funds)
- Lack of funding
- Unemployment & poverty (natural resources)

### **Expertise and Brain Drain**

- Function/subject matter experts
- Migration of skilled personnel – need to do more in the economy to retain skilled personnel in the EC
- Lack of understanding of skills actually needed

### **Globalisation hits the Eastern Cape**

- Global financial crisis i.e. major industries are globally owned

### **Retrenchment**

- Retrenchment – potential solution: reskill/upskill using DoL funding

### **Cultural Change**

- Attitudes
- Lack of buy-in to need for organisational cultural change

In the discussion, additional comments were collected from the floor:

- Lack of partnerships between institutions of higher learning (public, private)
- Lack of buyers' loyalty towards SMMEs (instead of buying locally buy in China etc)
  - SMMEs can't cope with bad payment culture by government and lack of bank support
- Would-be farmers often lack real interest in setting up farms and are in it just for the government grants
- 80% of businesses are SMMEs – simple, non-bureaucratic, accessible government support is lacking
- Coordination is lacking:
  - Information
  - Legislation
- Skills development without a context (one size fits all) – there is no “talking to gaps”
- Lack of alignment between strategy and implementation in skills development
- Lack of experienced strategic thinkers (coaching: how?)
- Vicious cycle of joblessness, poverty, inadequate skills development, joblessness, poverty etc



## **Longer Term Obstacles**

### **Poor Learning Situation**

- Lack of career guidance when students go to tertiary institutions;
- Learnerships/learning progress and internships

### **Weakness of qualified, experienced workforce**

- Life expectancy in South Africa which is going to reduce experienced and qualified personnel that are needed by new entrants at the workplace;
- Language/Illiteracy
- HIV/AIDS and other communicated diseases

### **Lack of Strategic Planning, Leadership and Coordination**

- Lack of strategic planning and consistent implementation:
  - Electricity
  - Roads infrastructure
  - Agriculture
  - Education
- Lack of alignment and articulation between formal education and training sector and the diversifying economy
  - Short term orientation
- Lack of co-ordination
- Lack of leadership and management
- Lack of strategic leadership

### **Poor Communication**

- Lack of proper communication strategies
- Lack of documented evidence about success stories

### **“Change is Bad”: No Buy-In**

- Current attitudes of relevant stakeholders towards change
- Lack of consultation and belonging leads to lack of acceptance
- Attitudes of entitlement

### **Political Instability**

- Corporate governance
- Political instability
- Accountability



### **Other Obstacles**

- Lack of sector R&D
- Opportunities in a sector
- Infrastructure
- Brain – drain

### **Measures, Actions and Recommendations**

After identifying the obstacles, the participants were asked to discuss appropriate measures, actions and recommendations to reach the vision 2020 against the backdrop of the obstacles and difficulties. The measures, actions and recommendations were mapped onto the Road Map in accordance with their urgency.

The measures and actions voiced are:

#### **2009**

- Managers must exercise their role in ensuring implementation and monitoring of skills development
- Skills development agencies need to work together
- Companies must open more opportunities for graduate development
- Increase remuneration packages within the Eastern Cape to be competitive with other Provinces in order to retain expertise.

#### **2010**

- JIPSA to ensure regional implementation of sector targets within agreed timeframes
- A total collective commitment from students, government (education, labour etc), education (FETs), community, business and SETAs
- Attitudes
- Accountability
- Passion
- A standardised career mapping/guidance programme in all schools to be implemented at lower levels through to matric
  - In that when students leave school they have a clear direction with short and long term goals.
- Education and training and awareness
  - Stakeholders
  - Government
  - Education institutions (as from edu-carers, primary to tertiary)
  - Private and public sectors
  - Community
  - Every responsible parent
- NSA must play its role



- Minister of labour and minister of education must resolve their differences
- DOE must bring back N courses
- ASGISA – 2014 targets

## **2011**

- Education Department, ECSECC, OTP and Provincial Department of Labour must lead coordination
- HRDP to be developed and all levels of education and training should be included (ECD, GET, HET, HE and Provincial Skills Development Plan)
- Public entities, parastatals e.g. ESKOM, TELKOM etc, Government
- Disbursement of resources, specified targets, e.g Youth, Women, disabled (designated groups)
- Bursaries, scholarship, job creation, sustainability, infrastructure investment

## **2012**

- Business and industry to develop a strategy to retain, re-skill scarce and critical skills within various sectors.
- Job shadowing

## **2015**

- Department of Education and Department of Labour must align their strategies and agree on their roles and responsibilities
- Communicate effectively with other stakeholders and interested parties
- Career /vocational guidance must be strengthened: Department of Education
- Streamline/improve the process and procedures of the SETA functions
- Government to communicate clearly and timeously and honestly with commitment
- Screening and selection of potential interns must be done properly to improve success rate

Recommendations for Policy Makers were noted separately:

## **2009**

- Bring big business on board
- Strong co-ordinated communication strategy throughout

## **2010**

- Re-configuration of the SETAs & realignment of SETAs with National Development Strategy
- Need policy to inform FET/HE articulation
- Make training funds accessible



- Put in place a policy framework to support realisation of the milestones relating to the vision 2020
- More involvement from citizens in decision making
- All relevant national decision makers to engage in dialogue to review & ensure implementation of National Skills Strategy
- Reviewed National Skills Development to be cascaded & implemented effectively on provincial & district level
- Funds distribution improved
- Policy makers need to be realistic and understand what is happening on the ground
- Policies to be user-friendly and simplified
- There must be Provincial MECs for labour - especially in the Eastern Cape
- Provincial skills authority just like NSA should be established in the Eastern Cape
- National standardised policy across all provinces clearly understood by all stakeholders implemented

#### **2011**

- Policy makers: Consultative processes even during period call reviews
- Monitoring systems need to be strengthened
- Procurement process should be improved

#### **2012**

- Upliftment of education and communication in Rural Areas
- Access to information libraries, media, road-shows for citizens in rural areas
- NSDS should be sector specific (not one size fits all)
- Ensure that all legislative processes follow this route: Research, consultation, policy, implementation and M&E
- Changing the mindset to ensure successful implementation

#### **2015**

- Policy relating to skills development must be synchronised
- Implement policy and provide adequate funding
- Monitor and evaluate policy implementation



Some participants (two have added their names to their comment) also shared proposed actions with the group that they are personally planning to do to help reach the vision:

### **2009**

- MBA thesis on empowerment of woman in the construction industry
- Develop operational plan to assist the operationalisation of the above mentioned factors budget

### **2011**

Eric Strydom

- Personal training potential/opportunities in agricultural sector and if position apply for accreditation
- Have a closer look at the EPWP to play a bigger role in helping to achieve objectives

Nkosinathi Cway (VWSA technical learning academy)

- Open communication in the form of (Provincial TV/live programmes) which invite participation from the affected communities. This should encourage phone in and in-study participation. Feedback must be compulsory from task teams with deadlines.
- Eastern Cape must work even closer with local industry and business at early stages of any skills development initiatives. Skills development initiative for Eastern Cape Province must be as a result of industry and business strategic plans. (In other words skills development initiative must be based on industry/business strategic plans)
- Retention strategy in order to stop skilled labour, expertise immigrating to other countries or provinces.

### **2013**

- Advocating requirements of the province. Skills development/Human resource development plan to private sector.
- Assist with facilitation of mind set change/paradigm shifts/change management.

### **2015**

- Re-skilling workers skills audits: call sectors in liaison with relevant SETA's
- Training through approved providers (in time for upturn in the economy)
- Approach research and development office at Department of Agriculture as well as big business in agriculture.
- Share with colleagues in team building for strategic actions



## **2016**

- Breaking barriers on implementing Skills Development Act objectives
- Provincial economic planning structure as soon as possible

## **Reflection and Feedback on the Process**

At the close of the Skills Indaba, participants were invited to reflect on the road map and participatory process of the Skills Indaba. The following topics and statements were collected:

- For a follow-up event space should be created for other intellectuals:
  - E.g. creative thinkers, passionate – like VC of UKZN
- International perspective is important but we should not replicate – use what is usable and develop own approach
- Skills Development has to level playing field
- Introduction for topics: End results to be linked to JIPSA policy makers – not sure about implementation and review recommendation
- Great forum! Problem: Poor representation of private FET Institutions
- Further forums: more interdisciplinary representation
- How will deliberations be followed up on?
  - Recommendations will be presented to Provincial JIPSA Council (mid March)
  - Results will be presented to Provincial Cabinet

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Dear Participant, thanks again for your participation and contribution! Your commitment made the Provincial Skills Indaba a success! If you have any comments to make please do so to:

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