

National Education Collaboration Trust

Concerted action for national education reform



Image: Jet Education Services

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Ihron Rensburg, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg and member of the National Planning Commission

Enver Surty, Deputy Minister of Education

(See back cover for list of Council members)

The Education Collaboration Framework

A response to the NDP's call for co-operation across sectors to improve education outcomes

The National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) is envisaged in the Education Collaboration Framework (ECF), which was developed by a range of stakeholders in response to the National Development Plan (NDP) vision for South Africa's future.

Within this vision, the NDP takes forward Government's commitment to prioritising education.

The NDP recognises that our education system needs urgent action and identifies the following key areas for improvement: human capacity, school management, district support, infrastructure and results-oriented mutual accountability between schools and communities.

The NDP proposes the following focus areas over the next 18 years:

- Improving literacy, numeracy and mathematics and science outcomes.
- Increasing the number of learners eligible to study maths and science-based degrees at university.
- Improving performance in international comparative studies.
- Improving learner retention.

In order to contribute to meeting these challenges in basic education, the ECF defines themes for collaboration between Government and civil society. It also provides for the establishment of NECT which will drive resource mobilisation and programme design and implementation within this collaborative agenda.

Story behind the ECF

In December 2012, on the initiative of a group of concerned individuals involved in education, working with Minister Motshekga, a Leadership Dialogue on education was convened. Its purpose was to reflect on the state of education and consider how key stakeholders could work together to help government achieve national goals for education as outlined in the National Development Plan and the Education Sector Plan. The convening committee for the Dialogue and JET Education Services, as its secretariat, conducted additional interviews with stakeholders and academics to deepen understanding of what needed to be done jointly. These processes led to the formulation of the ECF, which proposed the creation of NECT and a National Education Council. The convening committee comprised Sizwe Nxasana, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Futhi Mtoba, Ihron Rensburg, Godwin Khosa, Thobile Ntola, Mugwena Maluleke and Basil Manuel.

Features of the National Education Collaboration Trust

NECT is a partnership initiative by civil society aimed at strengthening cooperation among stakeholders – business, labour and other civil society formations – in order to improve education outcomes.

NECT creates a coordinated interface with Government and strives both to influence and to support the agenda for reform in education. Its relationship with Government is based on mutual recognition of the distinct roles and responsibilities of the state and civil society.

The Trust is action-based and outcomes-oriented. It is guided by the ECF which sets out clear functional areas for intervention by civil society and indicates how priorities will be set.

NECT will galvanise numerous civil society and Government commitments that already exist. It will harness lessons from the past and seize current opportunities to improve educational outcomes. It values innovation, believing that methods that have fallen short in the past will not deliver change for the future.

The Trust will not replace current civil society and business projects aimed at improving education. It recognises the value of these and seeks instead to improve coordination among these projects, to ensure their integration with the national education reform agenda and increase their effectiveness and value.

NECT's objectives

- Improve the quality of schooling and systems for monitoring and supporting schools.
- Provide a governance platform for joint civil society, business, teacher associations and Government initiatives to improve education.
- Oversee implementation of national education collaboration programmes and ensure programmes are suited to their context.
- Improve coordination of private sector-funded school improvement activities and encourage alignment with the national school reform agenda.
- Undertake activities necessary to promote good returns on investment for private and public spending on education.
- Consolidate knowledge generated by private and public sector organisations about school improvement in order to benefit the national reform agenda.
- Set guiding principles for national programmes and local education projects.

Structures and themes of the ECF

In addition to creating NECT, the ECF provides for the creation of a National Education Council. This is a consultative forum of stakeholders that reviews NECT's progress and advises on changes to the programme of the Trust in the light of new developments. It also promotes continuous stakeholder dialogue in a structured and systematic way.



The ECF establishes clear roles for Government and civil society partnerships and sets out activities grouped into six major themes.

Focal themes of the ECF

Theme 1: Professionalisation of the teaching service

NECT will support Government to:

- Set up frameworks and materials required to implement the 2011 planning framework for teacher education and development.
- Train teachers and support them in their classrooms.
- Build management capacity at district and school level to support and monitor teachers.
- Improve the effectiveness of teachers and education officials.

Theme 2: A call for courageous leadership

NECT will explore with relevant structures the following actions:

- Promoting more active roles by civil society organisations to keep a check on actions that undermine schooling.
- Delivering training on good governance at school, district and provincial levels.
- Acting to empower managers to make decisions and be accountable for their decisions.
- Assisting leaders to set examples for officials and learners to follow.
- Reviewing the governance framework involving school principals, school management teams and school governing bodies.

Theme 3: Improving government capacity to deliver

NECT will support Government to:

- Develop a national framework and materials for implementation of the school management and district monitoring processes.
- Offer training and support programmes to assist schools and districts to implement monitoring and support systems.
- Investigate the current teacher provisioning model and develop and implement a more effective one.
- Provide mentors and coaches to strengthen school monitoring and support capacity, particularly in under-staffed districts.

Theme 4: Improving resourcing: teachers, books and infrastructure

NECT will encourage joint actions among stakeholders to:

- Improve maintenance, retrieval and utilisation of workbooks, textbooks and readers in schools.
- Develop a wide range of African language readers.
- Complement the provision of learning and teaching support materials, especially readers and maths and science kits.
- Develop and maintain an infrastructure demand and maintenance system that will inform investments by Government and its partners.
- Increase infrastructure and ICT resources, prioritising libraries and science laboratories.
- Increase the provision and utilisation of IT resources for teachers and learners.

Theme 5: Community and parent involvement

NECT will promote the following actions:

- Utilise talent beyond the public school system to support schooling, particularly literacy, maths and science education.
- Rebuild public accountability by equipping parents with checklists of what to expect from schools, teachers and learners and promoting advocacy to reinforce accountability.
- Integrate active citizenship and ethics in programmes for teachers, school managers and governing bodies.

Theme 6: Learner support and wellbeing

NECT will promote joint activities that:

- Increase provision of psychosocial services in schools.
- Complement nutrition in schools.
- Contribute to resourcing sports and cultural activities in schools.

Putting the ECF to work

NECT will focus on four functional areas as it seeks to implement the ECF:

- Guiding and overseeing inclusive participation by business and civil society in collaborative initiatives.
- Providing a co-financing modality for Government and private sector funders.
- Sustaining the education dialogue initiated in December 2012.
- Providing strategic project management, including programme development, initiation and monitoring and evaluation.

Guiding and overseeing collaboration

- NECT will develop and implement a multi-year programme of action within the Framework.
- This plan will make provision for nationally designed and managed projects as well as local projects.
- It will focus most of its attention on the neediest provinces which have a high proportion of poorly performing education districts.
- It will follow a district development model selecting districts that are performing poorly and yet have "absorptive capacity" – the leadership, human resources and other critical resources – to respond effectively to technical support and sustain positive changes.
- In terms of local projects, NECT will promote improved return on investment by developing a charter for local projects. This will seek to:

- Improve focus on common priorities within the national reform agenda.
- Minimise duplication and increase value for money.
- Improve sustainability and reduce maintenance costs to beneficiaries.

2013 is seen as an inception period for NECT-guided projects, with the first on-the-ground action unfolding in cohorts from 2014.

Districts in Cohort 1 2014 activation	Districts in Cohorts 2 and 3
Libode, Eastern Cape Mt Frere, Eastern Cape Uthungulu, KwaZulu-Natal Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal Vhembe 1, Limpopo Waterberg, Limpopo Bohlabela, Mpumalanga Bojanala, North West	Maluti, Eastern Cape Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Cofimvaba, Eastern Cape Graaf Reinet, Eastern Cape Uitenhage, Eastern Cape Vhembe 2, Limpopo Sekhukhune, Limpopo Mkgalakwena, Limpopo Mopani, Limpopo Gert Sibande, Mpumalanga Dr Ruth Mompati, North West John Toalo Gaetsewe, Northern Cape

Fund-raising and funding modality

One of the key responsibilities of NECT’s CEO will be to mobilise funding for the organisation’s programme of action. NECT envisages creating a co-financing modality for government and the private sector overseen by an accountable board of trustees. This modality will:

- Facilitate rapid approval and swift disbursement of funds.
- Offer donors an opportunity to earmark funds for particular projects.
- Provide donors with choices on how their funds should be used.
- Create conditions for coordination of funding.
- Link private funding to innovative, system-wide interventions that can make a real impact on the state of education.

NECT provides a unique opportunity for

- Government, labour, business and civil society to collaborate on a joint programme going beyond agreements in principle.
- Government, business and labour to co-fund a joint programme.
- Partners to work together to secure conditions for programme success which have already been spelt out for each theme. Specific targets will be agreed upon per theme to ensure that the collaboration stays focused on outcomes.
- The ECF seek to achieve sustainable improvement through carefully chosen change levers:
 - Using evidence to drive improvement
 - Building content knowledge and teaching skills
 - Improving accountability systems and practices
 - Increasing resources.

National Education Council

Joint Chairpersons

Ihron Rensburg, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg and member of the National Planning Commission

Enver Surty, Deputy Minister of Education

Academic

Eric Atmore (ECD specialist); Brian O'Connell (University of Western Cape); Brahm Fleisch (University of Witwatersrand); Servaas van der Berg (University of Stellenbosch)

Government and statutory bodies

Thabo Mabogoane (Department of Monitoring and Evaluation, Presidency); Nick Taylor (NEEDU); Gugu Ndebele, Mathanzima Mweli, Temba Kojana, Paddy Padayachee (all from Department of Basic Education); TBC (Department of Social Development); Khulekani Mathe (National Planning Commission); TBC (Department of Higher Education); Dr Thomas Auf der Heyde (Department of Science and Technology); Onnica Dederen (Limpopo Department of Education); Nombulelo Sesi Nxesi (EDTP SETA)

Labour

Chris Klopper (SAOU NATO); Hendry Hendricks (NAPTOSA); Mugwena Maluleke (SADTU); Ben Machipi (PEU)

Business and private sector schooling

Felicity Coughlan (Advitech); Jane Hofmeyr (Independent Schools Association of SA)

Civil society organisations

Godwin Khosa (JET Education Services); Phatekile Holomisa (House of Traditional Leaders); Masennya Dikotla (Molteno Language Institute); Donne Nicol (Shanduka); Graeme Bloch (Mapungubwe Institute); Matakanye Matakanye (National Association of School Governing Bodies); Paul Colditz (FEDSAS); TBC (TeachSA); Janet Love (Legal Resources Centre); Ann Bernstein (Centre for Development and Enterprise)

Youth organisations

Yershen Pillay (National Youth Development Agency); Collen Malatji (COSAS)

Trusts and foundations

Mpho Letlape (Sasol Inzalo Foundation); Gail Campbell (Zenex Foundation); Tracey Henry (Tshikululu Social Investments)

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