



**FET COLLEGES: RESPONDING TO THE CRISIS OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT**



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**Access and Success** for vocational college students are essential to **employability** prospects for **youth**.

**Green Paper 2012 Policy Vision:**

- to create a policy framework that enables the DHET to shape its strategies and plans for the post-school system: HEIs, FET colleges, Adult Ed, Skills levy institutions
- a single, coherent, differentiated, articulated post-school E and T system

**The Size of the ACCESS Problem...**  
(Shaping the Future of SA's Youth, 2012: Perold, Cloete, Papier, Eds)

- 53.4% black 15-24yr olds unemployed by end 2009
- In 2010 3.2 million 18-25 yr olds NEET
- in 2011 of 496 090 students who wrote Gr 12 exam:
  - 173 117 passed without univ entrance
  - 147 973 failed the exam
  - 14 948 enrolled but did not write

= cumulative effect

**Policy intentions on Access:**

- expand access to E and T
- by 2030 a range of accessible alternatives for young people; diversified mix of programmes
- colleges intended to grow from present **400 000 to 1 mill by 2014 (300% in 2yrs)**
- attention to rural areas
- free post-school provision for poor



### Barriers to Access:

- ❑ stigma attached to vocational education – seen as 'academic dead end'
- ❑ lack of understanding of what FET colleges offer, ignorance of the programmes
- ❑ range of college courses might not suit aspirations
- ❑ students may need to attend college further afield – no subsidy for accommodation
- ❑ lack of maths/science background
- ❑ in spite of NSFAS, families may need young person to work and contribute to income



### The Success factor:

FET colleges are battling a low success rate: On average 20% of all students who enter ever qualify...

In some institutions the throughput rate is as low as 4%...



### Data on student success\*

2007-2009:

- rates of completion for N4-N6: 39%, 41% and 40%
- rates of completion for N1-N3: 36%, 27%, 41%
- NCV 2009 only 4% certification (those who completed 3 yrs)

\*(Perold,Cloete, Papier, 2012-Shaping the Future of SA's Youth)



### Some factors which hamper success\*:

- ❑ student expectations of college did not match reality
- ❑ many students had not chosen to go to college – referred by teachers & parents
- ❑ under-performing, problem students from schools
- ❑ college selection and recruitment processes

(from FETI study into low NCV success rates in Wcape, 2009)



### More barriers to success:

- ❑ NCV academic demands – students expected more practical
- ❑ problems with level of curriculum
- ❑ language issues
- ❑ diversity of students – eg age groups
- ❑ lecturer under-preparedness - assessment and cognitive challenges
- ❑ student facilities – recreation, campus comforts



### Current systems challenges:

- ❑ Lack of differentiation in provision
- ❑ Few 2<sup>nd</sup> chance education opportunities
- ❑ college sector small – in 2010 total headcount 326 970 (1/3 of university enrolment)
- ❑ resource inequalities
- ❑ variation in provincial contexts
- ❑ unrealistic expectations of colleges



- ❑ FET colleges currently only enrol 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of learners enrolled in higher education.
- ❑ private colleges struggle through lack of funding and unfriendly regulatory system
- ❑ expanding access also depends on improving throughputs
- ❑ increase capacity of FET colleges to also offer Level 5 HE programmes
- ❑ high failure rates, drop-out rates and low graduation rates need to be addressed in FET and HE



### Policy demands on College Sector:

- ❑ FET colleges must become institutions of choice – general voc as well as academic and theory
- ❑ must articulate with universities
- ❑ stronger ties with the workplace
- ❑ differentiate strong and weak institutions – autonomy and support
- ❑ central admissions tests
- ❑ management training



### Policy demands continued:

- ❑ Colleges should offer occupational, NCV, ABET and NSC for Adults, bridging, foundational, higher certificates to youth and adults
- ❑ lecturers need professional development, university training
- ❑ lecturers in touch with workplaces
- ❑ employment conditions of service need upgrading



### But strengthening Colleges entails:

- ❑ bridging and foundational support
- ❑ academic, social, guidance, placements
- ❑ financial support – NSFAS critical
- ❑ flexible delivery
- ❑ college partnerships with employers
- ❑ improved data collection and management – success rates, performance, progression – single information standard
- ❑ understanding of college infrastructure, staff, equipment
- ❑ massive expansion of lecturer development



### Other matters for FET colleges:

- ❑ improving quality assurance
- ❑ assessment systems
- ❑ RPL
- ❑ monitoring and evaluation
- ❑ clear/new nomenclature for public colleges
- ❑ coordination and collaboration
- ❑ university-college partnerships to support colleges eg. articulation and access
- ❑ national mechanism and data for skills planning essential