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**Memorandum from the Parliamentary Office**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1226**

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**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 13 OF 2018)**

**Mr A P van der Westhuizen (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education and Training:**

(1) What (a) are the reasons that certain trades with large employment numbers in the economy, such as joiners, plasterers and bricklayers, make relatively little use of the facilities of the Institute for the National Development of Learnerships, Employment Skills and Labour *Assessments* (Indlela) and (b) plans and targets have been developed to increase the numbers;

(2) how is her department assuring that consistent assessment standards are guaranteed when assessors are required to undertake as few as one or two assessments per annum;

(3) how are the full-time and part-time assessors used by Indlela sourced, remunerated and capacitated;

(4) has she found that the equipment used during the assessment of apprentices is of a comparable standard and age to that which is generally used by the various industrial sectors for which tests are conducted; if not, what steps are being taken to overcome the challenges;

(5) what amount has been raised by Indlela in accommodation fees for the (a) 2016-17 and (b) 2017-18 financial years?

**NW1324E**

**REPLY:**

1. (a) The main reason for the proportional lesser use of the INDLELA facility for the bricklayer, plasterer, joiner and others trades is attributed to a positive policy change which established a common trade test certificate in terms of section 26D of the Skills Development Act (SDA). The common trade test certificate is for all qualifying artisan candidates and is issued by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) since 2015.

The lesser use of INDLELA in 2004 can also be attributed to the amendment of the SDA to decentralise trade testing to Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) accredited trade test centres. Since then INDLELA largely tested candidates in terms of section 28 of the Manpower Training Act (MTA) before it was repealed.

The repeal of the MTA in 2015 brought about a single trade test certificate in terms of section 26D of the SDA. All accredited trade test centres, including INDLELA, are able to test all types of trades and candidates.

Until the 2014/15 financial year, INDLELA was the main national trade test centre. Section 28 candidates who made up the bulk of the numbers mentioned above were largely from the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Mpumalanga. The transition to a common trade test certificate dispensation and the implementation of section 11(5) of the Trade Test Regulations 2015, allows for all aspiring candidates all over the country to do a trade test at any accredited trade test centre in the country, not only at INDLELA.

(b) INDLELA has since shifted its priorities to focus on the trades in high demand. The Department is doing the following in order to increase participation:

(i) An integrated public awareness campaign focusing on the Decade of the Artisan and the World Skills South Africa competitions at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. The campaign aims to sensitise communities, learners and accredited training centres about the exciting careers in artisanship, including those with a declining uptake and the low cost of trade tests at INDLELA.

(ii) From year-to-year, the trade test fees structure at INDLELA is maintained as low as possible (between R250 and R400 depending on different trades) in order to encourage poor and low-income individuals to use INDLELA.

(iii) Since INDLELA uses only full-time permanently employed assessors, it depends on accredited training centres to send candidates to INDLELA for assessment in order to optimally use its assessors throughout the year. In spite of the inability of INDLELA to prescribe the numbers coming from these accredited training centres, it is projected that for the next five years (2018/19 to 2022/23) INDLELA’s trade test numbers on these trades will increase by approximately 10% per annum.

1. The National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB) ensures that each accredited Trade Test Centre (including INDLELA) maintains internal moderation. This is further quality assured through the external moderation done by NAMB itself. Because of a large number of accredited trade test centres (435 in the 2017/18 financial year), NAMB frequently conducts quality assurance at these trade test centres to ensure that set standards of trade testing are maintained.
2. INDLELA assessors are full-time employees of the Department of Higher Education and Training, and are recruited and remunerated in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994 (No. 103 of 1994) and the Department’s policy on recruitment. Newly appointed assessors are mentored and monitored by experienced assessors and moderators before conducting assessments individually to ensure that quality is maintained. Through the Performance Management and Development System, the Department provides assessors with an opportunity to develop a personal development plan, which is aimed at addressing the skills needed to improve individual and organisational performance.
3. All trade tests conducted at INDLELA and other accredited trade test centres are aligned to the existing training schedules and requirements. It is a standard requirement that all trade tests must be aligned with the training content and the necessary equipment of the respective trade. The current trade testing equipment at INDLELA is sufficient for testing historical/legacy trades but not for the testing of the newly listed trade occupations.

To address this challenge, INDLELA has developed a recapitalisation plan, which focuses on improving infrastructure, workshop machinery, equipment and information technology over a 4-year period from 2017/18 to 2020/21. The sources of funding for the plan are SETA donations, which to date have contributed R23 million.

1. In the 2016/17 financial year, an amount of R394 933.00 was raised in accommodation and meals, and R397 991.00 in the 2017/18 financial year.

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