

## Introduction

The Adult Learning Network acknowledges and supports the promulgation of aforementioned legislations as they are perceived to:

- Promote the long envisaged identity of the adult education sector, which over the years has been inundated by the “cut /copy & paste” approach from the mainstream which has proved to be a big disaster.
- Adult Education is the most disadvantaged sector in terms of funding , such that it is a shame that in 2012 , this sector has not finalised the institutionalisation of its operational systems like : Recruitment – Conditions of Service , infrastructure , relevant and responsive learner qualifications , not defined the relevant educator qualifications within the promulgated Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) and more and more institutions of higher learning have either scaled down on the provision of adult educator qualifications or totally shut them down.
- This is evident in the way the sector is so unstable in terms of educator attrition rates, low learner intake in basic levels, and generally low learner performance with high dropout rates. To date nationally the performance of sector continues to be under 40%.

## Background

The introduction of these pieces of legislation begins to resuscitate the long lost hope in the sector which has the potential for social change and stability. In a country that has the highest unemployment rate, adult education sector continues to provide a safe landing by becoming a catchment area for the out of school youth and unemployed adults.

It is not a debate that South Africans have lost their ground in the Micro economy sector. This sector has the potential to contribute to the reduction of high unemployment rate by the provision of skills in the micro economy. These sectors include: Hair Care , domestic workers , garden services , car guards, general building and maintenances , motor body repairs to name a few .

If the vision of skills development initially positioned adult education sector as the cornerstone for the acceleration of skilling the unemployed workforce, the situations would be much better. The reason for this statement is that, adult education was neglected in the institutional landscape. People suffered in local communities to have access to education and training as the favoured institutions were out of reach. Skills development continued to benefit mainly the private providers and became “milking cow” to benefit the few, whilst communities suffered lack of skills needed for employment and SMME development.

## Community Education and Training Concept

The ALN really applauds the dawning of the paradigm shift to Adult Education. The Bill repeals the concept of AET as encapsulated in AET Act: 52-2000 and replaces it with Community Education and Training.

The fact that we are moving to the concept Community College, has huge implications for:

1. **Right to Adult Basic Education** – the Constitution entrenches the right to adult basic education. The changes proposed by the FET Amendment Bill, 2012 means that the proposed institutions –CETCs- will be under an amended FET Colleges Act. What are the implications of the right to adult basic education in the amended legislation? Does it mean that the right to adult basic education is no longer legislated?
2. **Infrastructure** – Almost in all provinces many AET centres are still operating as night schools (having to wait for schools to be out before the facilities can be used for adult education and training). Despite that the demographic profile of the sector has evolved over the years (more younger learners who are available during the day), the night schooling system has continued. The proposal for Community Education and Training Centres to operate within the FET Colleges or accessing underutilised schools would continue to undermine the sector, if there are no mechanisms legislated to ensure that underutilised infrastructure is accessed by CETCs. Also there should be clear guidelines and prescriptions which defines the physical structure of a CETC so that we do not find ourselves in the same predicament, where citizens continue to shy away due to the infrastructure that undermines their human rights to dignity.
3. **Policy Shift** – Higher Education and Training policies are driven under the banner of andragogy. The currently prevailing instructional approach in this sector is that of mainstream education, which has totally suffocated the innovation and creativity in adult education. All post school institutions must be accredited to provide own qualifications, based on their own research and needs. The prevailing norm is currently disempowering as educators are relying on the “spoon feeding approach” . **The concept college implies that educators are the driving engines of curriculum design and subjects specialists in the related fields.** There is long walk in changing this mind set and mechanisms should be entrenched in the educator / lecture development approach, which should totally mirror that of the university standard. This means the instructional approach should be geared to acceleration of learning using various learning methodologies which are flexible to adult learning. If the aim is to build strong empowered communities, Policy shift should results to paradigm shift; hence educator qualifications should be taken to serious

considerations. This will have implications on the type of Conditions of Service envisaged by the sector.

4. **Governance and Management** – this area is currently the weakest link, but under the CETCs these areas will be strengthened and ensure that there is stability and promote the quality education and training. Communities will have stronger voices, and play important role in their own development.
5. **National Institute for HE** – this structure is a very important forum in that will provide professional guidance and research in the HET. There is a need for a seamless approach and operation especially in the area of NQF. It is still a challenge to have upward or sideward mobility in terms of learning credits accumulation. Many people are unemployable due to that they cannot be able to produce a national certificate from their loose qualifications. RPL is not yet working. This structure must really create an enabling environment for CETC to thrive and this is the sector which is in dire need of research.
6. **Implementation Plan**- The ALN would request the Portfolio Committee to call for a clear implementation plan from the DHET once the FET Colleges Amendment Bill, 2012 is promulgated by Parliament. This would afford the sector clear direction on the implementation of the proposed changes.
7. **Co-operative Governance** – The ALN would also proposed that co-operation be institutionalised with Adult Education and Training stakeholders. In both the FET and the AET acts, Boards were proposed as mechanisms for stakeholder participation and engagement with the Department. Such structures are no longer functioning or in existence. It is hoped the Ministry will provide clarity on this matter once the proposed White Paper is put out for public engagement.