

WORKER EDUCATION TECHNICAL TASK TEAM CLOSEOUT REPORT



1. Background

The Worker Education Technical Task Team (WETTT) was established by the Human Resource Development Council to develop an implementation plan addressing specific bottlenecks in the skills development pipeline in the area of Worker Education at the beginning of 2012. The first few meetings of the task team indicated the diversity in the approach to worker education. There was no common understanding of worker education amongst the representative of labour, business, education and communities. In order to formulate a common approach to the task ahead of defining worker education and reaching a common vision, the task team went through several processes of brain storming. Finally to assist with the development of a framework the Worker Education Technical Task Team, in November 2012, through the HRDC:

- Commissioned research looking at the state of Worker Education (what programmes were being run and what issues were hampering the system)
- Commissioned desktop research to look at International Worker Education Systems

The Researchers were then asked to make Recommendations as to a way forward for improving Worker Education in South Africa.

The first draft of the Research Report was submitted to the Task Team in April 2013. Further revisions and input were made by the Task Team in May and June 2013 until the final Research Report was submitted on 28 June 2013. Finally, through a series of meetings and in response to the final Research Report submitted to the Task Team in June 2013, the Task Team compiled its own insights and recommendations on the way forward.

This report aims to chronicle the journey of the Worker Education Task Team and capture its recommendations.

2. Terms of Reference

The Worker Education Task Team established by the Human Resources Development Council was asked to:

Propose systemic changes to promote the **“provision of an integrated, accredited and non-accredited costed National Worker Education and Training System and Implementation Plan”** (HRDC Secretariat, Final Terms of Reference for Worker Education and Training Technical Task Team) *“allowing the progression in human resource and skills development and vocational education and training in equipping recipients/citizens with the requisite skills to overcome ... poverty, ..inequalities and unemployment”* (ibid.)

The Task Team's interpretation of their terms of reference (ibid.) further defined Worker Education and Training to include:

- training that improves someone's ability to do their job (current and future)
- training to help people make a contribution (economically and socially) to their communities
- processes and policies that support demand-led (bottom-up) education and training
- promotion of life-long learning as a process of becoming responsive to an ever changing work world – allowing the individual to remain productive throughout
- the incentives which encourage the (public and private) provision of training for workers on a continuous basis

3. Problem Statement

The terms of reference (ibid.) keenly singles out that South Africa has not been able to establish a culture of demand-led integrated education provision and that this together with a lack of career pathing and other practices supporting personal progression within the workplace has left the country bereft of systemic skills development for workers, and without clear champions of such an initiative going forward.

Fundamentally, **“there is no clear collective vision on an integrated, accredited and non-accredited worker education and training framework in South Africa.** As a result no national coordinated and integrated Policy and Legislative Framework is available to guide and support the implementation of worker education and training”.

4. Key Findings

The key research findings around Worker Education in South Africa are:

Worker Empowerment

Worker education for the purposes of creating better life for workers (as a group) takes many forms of informal and formal; structured and unstructured; accredited and non-accredited – and is offered mainly by trade unions, labour service providers

Worker Education Technical Task Team Summary Report (2014)

and worker education institutions, but also is incorporated into programmes offered by various Higher Education Institutes

The researchers concluded that more work needed to be done to create a qualifications framework organising and categorising the existing worker education initiatives from the various players / providers

The opportunities, approach and implementation of Recognition for Prior Learning (RPL) were poorly understood and hence not advocated adequately to promote access to further education/employment and recognition of exiting skills

Vocational Training

Although many of the vocational training initiatives happening in the workplace or preparing people for the workplace have happened under the oversight of the SETAs – system inefficiencies resulted in companies participating in fewer training programmes

There are opportunities to promoting higher worker-initiated training

Also marginalised groups such as contract, temporary or casual workers normally did not benefit from training initiatives

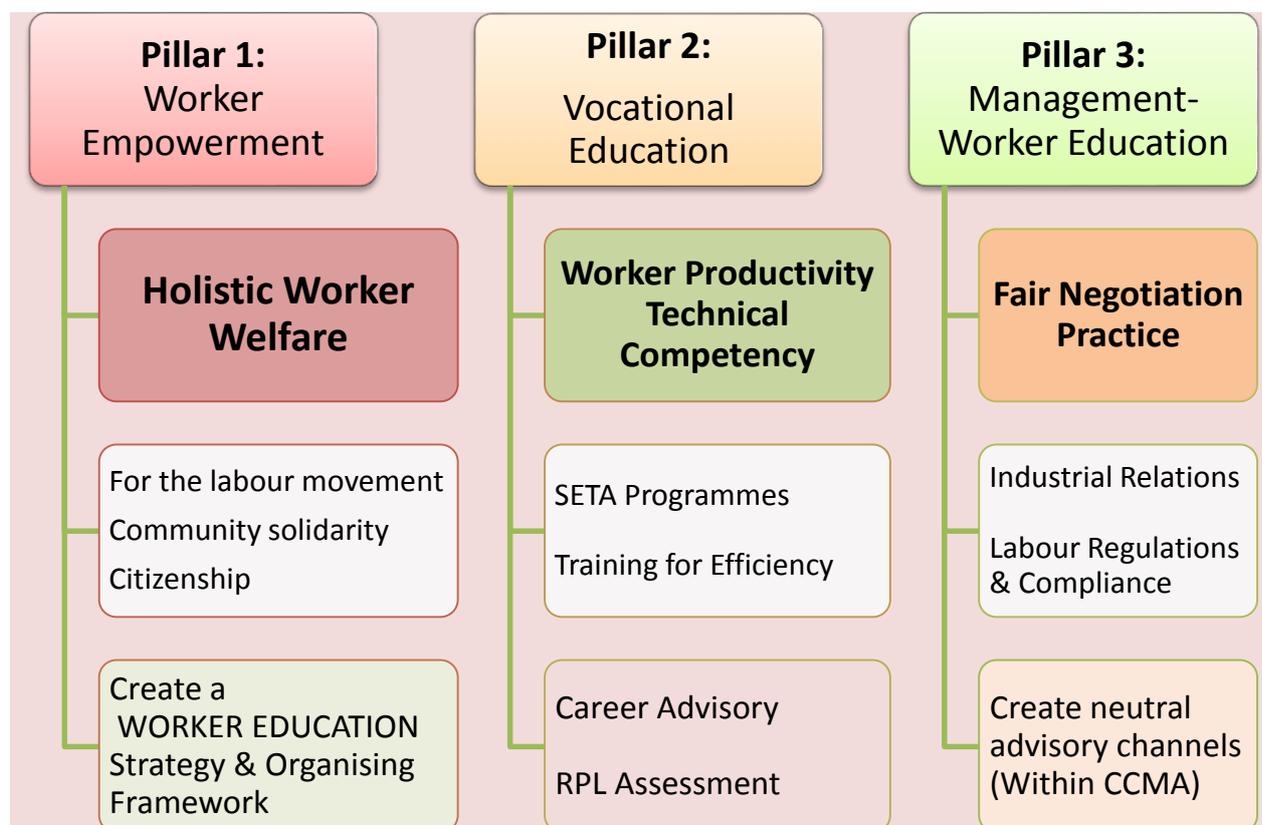
Training for unemployed / underemployed groups was mainly championed by civil society organisations who struggled with issues of funding

Worker-Management Education

Little is known about the broader context of promoting common understanding between workers and management. Current initiatives are narrowly focused by commercial enterprises to explore particular issues – but building common ground between managers and workers holds substantial benefits for both parties

Generally, many providers could benefit from providing more formal registration and administration processes.

5. Worker Education Organising Framework



6. Conclusion

The WE TTT believes that the WE framework needs to be viewed holistically and adopted as a policy for implementation by all SETAs. That it is the adoption of the Framework with the three pillars as identified and described must be approved and adopted in order to achieve the integration that is envisaged.

Hence there is no specific programme or target audience until the audit is complete and this information is made available. The costs of such an audit forms part of the funding requirements presented to the TWG for council approval. Once an audit is complete each sector will allocate funding for the training through the SETAs, where the current focus is largely towards technical and vocational training, SETAs must include funding for political and citizenship/ empowerment education, training and capacity building. The audit will also assist in devising and implementation plan for the roll out of key programmes to specific target audiences.

Finally, the task team is of the view that employers generally release employees for training especially if such workshops have become the priority of each SETA. It will become imperative that the WE committee monitor and evaluate the adoption of the WE Framework.

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In closing our general recommendations are to

- Work at integrating worker education to mainstream HRD practices in South Africa to develop and support ordinary South Africans in their road to becoming committed Citizens
- Build on what is already being done by progressing with an audit we can limit re-inventing the wheel at the same time we can work on helping others by sharing best practices
- Creating a populated and coordinated framework which can be read and understood not only by skills development practitioners but even ordinary South Africans – we hope that this start will be built into a roadmap individuals can follow to empower themselves

Outcome of the presentation to HRDC:

1. The HRDC has approved the proposed framework for Worker Education.
2. The HRDC has requested that the task team review:
 - i) The time frames of the to be established committee
 - ii) Review the proposed budget of **R 8 413 064.40**