CONTENT

Editorial: Take Action, Inspire Change, and Make Every Day a Mandela Day 2
Opinions: 94+ Projects for Madiba Campaign 2
Soshanguve youth call for Government’s intervention to develop their community 3
94+ Projects for Madiba Campaign 4-5
Profile on Social Cohesion 6-7
Kha Ri Gude workshop opens doors for the blind and visually impaired 7
National Assessment And Public Examinations 8-9
New NEEDU head appointed 10
IRC Book Review 11
Renaming on the cards for DBE Building 12
Cuban Medal of Friendship awarded 12
Your Monthly Labour Tips 12
Editorial: Take Action, Inspire Change, and Make Every Day a Mandela Day

Nelson Mandela once said, “What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we lead.” The overarching objective of Mandela Day (18 July) and the 94+ Projects for Madiba Campaign is to inspire individuals to take action to make a difference in the lives of those in need.

Along with our business partners, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) is taking action and inspiring change. On 22 June 2012, a wide range of young people converged at the Giant Stadium in Soshanguve, Pretoria. The aim of the event was to empower the youth and to provide them with information about education, employment and entrepreneurship.

Pula introduces our new Opinions feature in which we focus on the views of our fellow-colleagues. We interview Mrs Hestie van Zyl who expresses her opinion in support of the 94+ Projects for Madiba Campaign.

Tidimalo Nkotoe joined the DBE in 2010 as a Chief Director in the Ministerial Advisory Services. Pula interviewed her as the Project Leader for the 94+ Projects for Madiba Campaign.

Dr Shermain Mannah is currently the Director for Social Cohesion, Community Mobilisation and Equity in Education at the National Department of Basic Education. Pula profiles Dr Mannah and her competent team.

In preparation of the next academic cycle of the Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign, the DBE gathered blind and visually impaired volunteers in Pretoria for an intensive workshop to ensure they are prepared to conduct the classes to others involved in the programme.

Pula spoke to Dr Rufus Poliah, Chief Director at the National Assessment and Public Examinations Chief Directorate to establish the important role it plays in the education system.

Dr Nick Taylor has recently been appointed Head of the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU). We interview Dr Taylor to establish the way forward for NEEDU.

Lefika Chetty, Acting Deputy Director; South African National Commission for UNESCO, and NEHAWU Branch Secretary for the National Department of Basic Education, is one of three South Africans and leaders of the Friends of Cuba Society (FOCUS) who was granted the Medal of Friendship, conferred by the Vice President of the Council of State of Cuba.

This month the Information Resource Centre (IRC) Review is comprised of titles around management issues that range from personal development plans to motivating employees. This practical selection is applicable to all staff and management members.

An employee has a number of obligations under common law, which he/she must meet. The main focus of the Monthly Labour Tips is on the first Common Law rule - to provide the employer with his/her services and to be at work.

Preparations are underway to officially rename the DBE’s headquarters at 222 Struben Street, Pretoria, as Sol Plaatje House after noted journalist and educator Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje. A team of DBE officials recently travelled to Kimberley, Northern Cape, to meet with representatives of the Sol Plaatje Educational Trust. Negotiations around the renaming of the building are ongoing, and should be finalised towards the end of 2012.

And on the topic of meaningful contributions, Pula would like to hear what you, your Branch or your Chief Directorate will be doing on Mandela Day? Forward your contributions, along with good quality photographs, to the Communication Unit. Take Action, Inspire Change, Make Every Day a Mandela Day.

At a recent information session, that was held at Sol Plaatje House, Mrs Hestie van Zyl expressed her opinion in support of the 94+ Projects for Madiba Campaign:

Q: “When did you join the Department and what are your responsibilities?”
A: “I joined the Department in December 1987 when it was still known as “Die Departement van Nasionale Opvoeding”. I was a public servant when the entire country went through the transformation process in 1994. This gave me the fantastic opportunity to get to know various people from a number of cultural backgrounds. I love interacting with people from all walks of life and enjoy my duties as a secretary. I currently work in the Safety, Enrichment and Sport in Education Directorate with Ms Kulu-Mabumo and the team.”

Q: “Where did you learn seTswana?”
A: “My father was a farmer on the Botswana border, so I was very privileged to grow up on a farm in the North West Province. My father always encouraged the Tswana-speaking people on the farm and in the district to interact with us in seTswana in order for us to learn an additional language. My brothers and I sometimes spoke the language at home, and can recall our mother asking us to not exclude her from conversations because she could not speak seTswana – this memory is quite an amusing one.

It is wonderful to know another South African language, because it really makes it much easier for people to interact and understand one another irrespective of our cultural differences. I have made lots of friends by being able to communicate in another language. I intend to learn to speak isiZulu or another South African language.”

Q: “What advice will you share with other colleagues regarding the Mandela Campaign?”
A: “Please open up your hearts and support this project, and encourage others to take part in making a difference in our schools. There is so much value in not having to worry about the basics and being able to focus on studying.”

Q: “Do you think that the campaign will help the Department to improve the schools infrastructure in the country?”
A: “Yes, absolutely. If every province selects a certain number of schools that they adopt as part of 94+ Projects for Madiba Campaign it will make a huge contribution while adding value to education. Children are the future leaders of South Africa.”

Credits

Readers are welcome to send letters, news and information for publication

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Please note that the Communications Directorate reserves the right of publication.

Opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Department of Basic Education.
On 22 June 2012, a wide range of young people, including grade 12 learners, school leavers, unemployed and unsuccessful entrepreneurs, converged at the Giant Stadium in Soshanguve, Pretoria, for a skills development dialogue.

The event was aimed at empowering the youth with the necessary information and knowledge regarding issues around education, employment and entrepreneurship. Deputy President Mr Kgalema Motlanthe was accompanied to the Dialogue by Deputy Minister of Basic Education, Mr Enver Surty MP, to ensure that the concerns of the youth were heard. Deputy President Motlanthe promised the youth that he would take their concerns to the relevant Departments for an urgent response. He pledged that government will always support all the youth to ensure they achieve their goals.

During the proceedings, the Department of Basic Education, along with other Government Departments and private sector companies, had an opportunity to exhibit their materials to the young people in the area. Amongst others, the Department of Higher Education and Training, Department of Defence, City of Tshwane Municipality, Microsoft South Africa; Google South Africa, Alexander Forbes; University of Limpopo, Tshwane University of Technology and the University of the Witwatersrand were all present at the dialogue.

The Dialogue was an opportunity for DBE officials to provide the community with a range of informative documents, covering the following:

- Funza Lushaka Bursary Scheme;
- Subject Choices Towards a Career; Drug Abuse;
- 2010/11 Grade 12 Exemplar NSC Question Papers and Memorandum;
- Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement Orientation Guideline;
- Measures and Guidelines on Learner Pregnancy;
- Commemoration of Significant Historical Anniversaries and Building a Culture of Humanity in Schools; and
- Values in Action in South Africa Public Schools.

Addressing the event, Acting Executive Mayor of Tshwane, Terrence Mashego, said the Municipality is committed to improving education in the country. He told the Grade 12s that each year the Municipality offers bursaries and bursaries to top achievers from the class with distinction.

The Municipality had also offered laptops and bursaries to top achievers from the class of 2011. Mr Mashego highlighted that the Municipality would not allow learners to bunk classes. “If we find a learner roaming around during the school hours he/she will be arrested, and parents will have to go to the police station to have them released,” said Mr Mashego.

During the interactive session, the youth indicated that the universities neglect them and parents will have to go to the police station to address the situation. Responding to these issues, Deputy Minister Enver Surty said that the Department would engage with the Department of Higher Education and Training to ensure that institutions of higher learning value Mathematics Literacy on an equal basis with other subjects.

However, Mr Surty advised the youth to choose the correct combination of subjects for their career path. “If you want to be a medical practitioner it is important to make proper combination in choosing subjects, for example Maths and Science,” said Deputy Minister Surty, adding that the introduction of Mathematics Literacy was intended to ensure that all South African children learn the basics of numeracy.

One other challenge raised by the youth was the difficulty in securing financial assistance for further education. With regards to entrepreneurship, the youth indicated that although they are willing to start their own businesses, lack of funding for their projects remain an obstacle.

Microsoft South Africa Managing Director, Mr Mtheto Nyathi, promised the youth that Microsoft SA is willing to pursue partnerships with both the DBE and DHET to improve the quality of education in South Africa. Nyathi informed the community that the company has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the DHET to provide relevant teacher development programmes.

The CEO of Alexander Forbes told the youth that, last year, the company adopted schools in Soshanguve and pledged to adopt more schools around the country. Further, he encouraged other companies to adopt schools so that they develop the children of South Africa.
Mrs Tidimalo Nkotoe: Project Manager

Tidimalo Nkotoe is a South African citizen born in Johannesburg. She qualified as an educator at Tshabane College of Education and later graduated at UNISA (BA and HED with 2 and 7 cum laude respectively). She further obtained a B.Ed at Witwatersrand University and her research was based on School Management as a Technology of Power. In pursuit of academic excellence, Tidimalo obtained an M.Ed degree with RAU (now the University of Johannesburg), and her thesis focussed on: Prejudice Reduction in Multicultural Mathematics Education.

She has contributed significantly in the education fraternity since 1978. She was a co-ordinator for a science and mathematics project in which she enhanced the teaching methodology and effectiveness of educators in Gauteng, North West and Limpopo.

She is highly passionate about education, subsequently led the transformation of curriculum in Gauteng and participated nationally in Curriculum Development initiatives. She has successfully transformed various educational sectors in Gauteng, e.g. ECD, SGB, Special Schools, Independent Schools, etc. She assumed several managerial and strategic positions including project management at various levels in education and private sector. She is also playing a significant role in community development, especially in women empowerment programmes.

She joined the Department of Basic Education in 2010 as a Chief Director in the Ministerial Advisory Services. She was later recruited to serve as the Project Manager for the 94+ Projects for Madiba Campaign in May 2012.

Mandela Day was declared in 2009 by the United Nations as an annual international day in honour of Nelson Mandela and is celebrated on his birthday (18 July).

The overarching objective of Mandela Day is to inspire individuals to take action to help change the world for the better, and in doing so build a global movement for good. Ultimately it seeks to empower communities everywhere – Take Action, Inspire Change, Make Every Day a Mandela Day.

In light of the above, Tidimalo Nkotoe encourages everyone to partner with the Department of Basic Education and the Nelson Mandela Foundation to make this 94th birthday a memorable one for Madiba by honouring thousands of South African learners on his behalf. Let our united front as South Africans participate meaningfully on the 18 July 2012 to make a difference in the lives of those in need. You are also requested to adopt school/s of your choice and celebrate this memorable international day.

Early Years

Rolihlahla Mandela was born in Mvezo, a village near Mthatha in the Transkei (Eastern Cape Province), on 18 July 1918. After receiving a primary education at a local mission school, where he was given the name Nelson, he was sent to the Clarkebury Boarding Institute for his Junior Certificate and then to Healdtown, a Wesleyan secondary school of some repute, where he matriculated. He then enrolled at the University College of Fort Hare for the Bachelor of Arts Degree where he was elected onto the Students’ Representative Council. He was suspended from the college for joining a protest boycott, along with Oliver Tambo.

Mr. Mandela was introduced to Walter Sisulu in 1941 and it was Sisulu that arranged for him to do his articles at Lazar Sidelksy’s law firm. Completing his BA through the University of South Africa (UNISA) in 1942, he commenced study for his LLB shortly afterwards (though he left the University of the Witwatersrand without graduating in 1948). He entered politics in earnest while studying, and joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1943.

At the height of the Second World War, in 1944, a small group of young Africans who were members of the ANC, banded together under the leadership of Anton Lembede. Among them were William Nkomo, Sisulu, Oliver R Tambo, Ashby P Mda and Nelson Mandela. Starting out with 60 members, all of whom were residing around the Witwatersrand, these young people set themselves the formidable task of transforming the ANC into a more radical mass movement.

In September 1944 they came together to found the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL). Nelson soon impressed his peers by his disciplined work and consistent effort and was elected as the league’s National Secretary in 1948.

Emerging as Leader

Spurred on by the victory of the National Party which won the 1948 all-white elections on the platform of apartheid, at the 1949 Annual Conference the Programme of Action, inspired by the ANCYL, which advocated the weapons boycott, strike, civil disobedience and non-co-operation, was accepted as official ANC policy.

When the ANC launched its Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws in 1952, Mr Mandela, by then the President of the Youth League, was elected National Volunteer-in-Chief. Filling his responsibility as Volunteer-in-Chief, Mr Mandela travelled the country organising resistance to discriminatory legislation. Charged, with Moroka, Sisulu and 17 others, and brought to trial for his role in the campaign, the court found that Mr Mandela and his co-accused had consistently advised their followers to adopt a peaceful course of action and to avoid all violence.

For his part in the Defiance Campaign, Mr Mandela was convicted of contravening the Suppression of Communism Act and given a suspended prison sentence. Shortly after the campaign ended, he was also prohibited from attending gatherings and confined to Johannesburg for six months.

During this period of restrictions, Mr Mandela wrote the attorneys admission examination and was admitted to the profession. He opened a practice in Johannesburg in August 1952, and in December, in partnership with Tambo, opened South Africa’s first black law firm in central Johannesburg.

Their professional status didn’t earn Mr Mandela and Tambo any personal immunity from the brutal apartheid laws. They fell foul of the land segregation legislation, and the authorities demanded that they move their practice from the city to the back of beyond, as Mr Mandela later put it.

In 1953 Mr Mandela was given the responsibility to prepare a plan that would enable the leadership of the movement to maintain dynamic contact with its membership without recourse to public meetings. This was the M-Plan, named after him.

During the early fifties Mr Mandela played an important part in leading the resistance to the Western Area removals, and to the introduction of Bantu Education. He also played a significant role in popularising the Freedom Charter, adopted by the Congress of the People in 1955. Having been banned again for two years in 1953, neither Mr Mandela nor Sisulu were able to attend but “we found a place at the edge of the crowd where we could observe without mixing in or being seen”.

During the whole of the fifties, Mr Mandela was the victim of various forms of repression. He was banned, arrested and imprisoned. A five year banning order was enforced against him in March 1956.

The Trials

For much of the latter half of the decade, he was one of the 156 accused in the mammoth Treason Trial, at great cost to his legal practice and his political work, though he recalls that, during his incarceration in the Fort, the communal cell “became a kind of convention for far-flung freedom
fighters”. After the Sharpeville Massacre on 21 March 1960, the ANC was outlawed, and Mr Mandela, still on trial, was detained, along with hundreds of others.

The Treason Trial collapsed in 1961 as South Africa was being steered towards the adoption of the republic constitution. With the ANC now illegal the leadership picked up the threads from its underground headquarters and Nelson Mandela emerged at this time as the leading figure in this new phase of the struggle.

Forced to live apart from his family, moving from place to place to evade detection by the government’s ubiquitous informers and police spies, Mr Mandela had to adopt a number of disguises. Sometimes dressed as a labourer, at other times as a chauffeur, his successful evasion of the police earned him the title of the Black Pimpernel.

He managed to travel around the country and stayed with numerous sympathisers. It was during this time that he, together with the other leaders of the ANC, constituted a new section of the liberation movement, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), as an armed nucleus with a view to preparing for armed struggle, with Mr Mandela as its commander in chief.

In 1962 Mandela left the country, as “David Motsamayi”, and travelled abroad for several months. In Ethiopia he addressed the Conference of the Pan African Freedom Movement of East and Central Africa, and was warmly received by senior political leaders in several countries including Tanganyika, Senegal, Ghana and Sierra Leone. He also spent time in London and met the first group of 21 MK recruits on their way to Addis Ababa for guerrilla training.

Prisoner 466/64

Not long after his return to South Africa Mr Mandela was arrested, on 5 August, and charged with illegal exit from the country, and incitement to strike. He was in Natal at the time, passing through Howick on his way back to Johannesburg, posing as David Motsamayi, now the driver of a white theatre director and MK member, Cecil Williams.

Since he considered the prosecution a trial of the aspirations of the African people, Mr Mandela decided to conduct his own defence. He applied for the recusal of the magistrate, on the ground that in such a prosecution a judiciary controlled entirely by whites was an interested party and therefore could not be impartial, and on the ground that owed no duty to obey the laws of a white parliament, in which he was not represented. Mr Mandela prefaced this challenge with the affirmation: “I detest racism, because I regard it as a barbaric thing, whether it comes from a black man or a white man.”

Mr Mandela was convicted and sentenced for five years imprisonment. He was transferred to Robben Island in May 1963 only to be brought back to Pretoria again in July. He and ten others were charged with sabotage.

The Rivonia Trial, as it came to be known, lasted eight months. Most of the accused stood up well against the prosecution, having made a collective decision that this was a political trial and that they would take the opportunity to make public their political beliefs. Three of the accused, Mr Mandela, Sisulu and Govan Mbeki also decided that, if they were given the death sentence, they would not appeal.

Mr Mandela’s statement in court during the trial is a classic in the history of resistance to apartheid, and has been an inspiration to all who have opposed it. He ended with these words:

“I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

All but two of the accused were found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment on 12 June 1964. The black prisoners were flown secretly to Robben Island immediately after the trial was over to begin serving their sentences.

Nelson Mandela’s time in prison, which amounted to just over 27 and a half years’, was marked by many small and large events which played a crucial part in shaping the personality and attitudes of the man who was to become the first President of a democratic South Africa.

In March 1982, after 18 years, he was suddenly transferred to Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town and in December 1988 he was moved to the Victor Verster Prison near Paarl, from where he was eventually released. While in prison, Mr Mandela flatly rejected offers made by his jailers for remission of sentence in exchange for accepting the banxituan policy by recognising the independence of the Transkei and agreeing to settle there. Again in the ‘80s Mr Mandela and others rejected an offer of release on condition that he renounce violence. Prisoners cannot enter into contracts – only free men can negotiate, he said.

Nevertheless Mr Mandela did initiate talks with the apartheid regime in 1985, when e wrote to Minister of Justice Kobie Coetsee. They first met later that year when Mr Mandela was hospitalised for prostate surgery. Shortly after this he was moved to a single cell at Pollsmoor and this gave Mr Mandela the chance to start a dialogue with the government – which took the form of “talks about talks”. Throughout this process, he was adamant that negotiations could only be carried out by the full ANC leadership. In time, a secret channel of communication would be set up whereby he could get messages to the ANC in Lusaka, but at the beginning he said: “I choose to tell no one what I was about to do. There are times when a leader must move out ahead of the flock, go off in a new direction, confident that he is leading his people in the right direction.”

Released on 11 February 1990, Mr Mandela ploughed wholeheartedly into his life’s work, striving to attain the goals he and others had set out almost four decades earlier. In 1991, at the first national conference of the ANC held inside South Africa after being banned for decades, Nelson Mandela was elected President of the ANC while his lifelong friend and colleague, Oliver Tambo, became the organisation’s National Chairperson.

Negotiating Peace

In a life that symbolises the triumph of the human spirit, Nelson Mandela accepted the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize (along with FW de Klerk) on behalf of all South Africans who suffered and sacrificed so much to bring peace to our land.

The era of apartheid formally came to an end on 27 April 1994, when Nelson Mandela voted for the first time – along with his people. Rolihlahla Nelson Dalibunga Mandela was inaugurated as President of a democratic South Africa on 10 May 1994. He stepped down in 1999 after one term as President.

Nelson Mandela never wavered in his devotion to democracy, equality and learning. Despite terrible provocation, he has never answered racism with racism. His life has been an inspiration, in South Africa and throughout the world, to all who are oppressed and deprived, to all who are opposed to oppression and deprivation.

Source: Nelson Mandela Centre of Memory (www.nelsonmandela.org)
Dr Shermain Mannah is an activist, trade unionist and educationist, who joined the Department in June 2009. She holds a MED from Arizona State University (USA) and a doctorate in education from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (RSA).

She started her career as a school teacher before joining the South African Democratic Teachers Union as the Head of the union’s National Education Desk. She then moved on to the United Nations where she occupied the post of HIV, AIDS and Gender Officer. Dr Mannah is currently the Director for Social Cohesion, Community Mobilisation and Equity in Education at the National Department of Basic Education. Throughout her career, Dr Mannah has been a passionate activist promoting human rights and social justice.

Pula interviewed Dr Mannah to establish what Social Cohesion is all about.

Q: “What does Social Cohesion entail?”

A: “National governments increasingly look to education and training as a means to enhance social cohesion – or, in the words of one newspaper headline, as ‘a social glue to fix the cracks in society’. In South Africa, the MTSF 2009 indentifies social cohesion as a strategic priority for our young democracy. It defines social cohesion as that which gives members of a society the capacity to cooperate in ways that create the possibility for positive change. Similarly, the ANC’s 10 point plan for the schooling system motivates for a social compact in education that mobilizes communities at all levels to be aware and participate in education issues. This is reinforced by the President’s call to make education a societal issue.

There is a growing body of evidence that schools are a reflection of their communities. This is further supported by empirical research that human rights cultures and social cohesion in school communities are fundamental to the promotion of sustained educational success. Schools do not operate in silos but rather their successes are influenced by the homes, neighbourhoods and peer environment of their learners. Surely, any attempt to improve the quality of education in schools and increase learner achievement (key priorities of the Department of Basic Education) has to consider how to leverage the agency of communities to maximise school success. The strength of the agency of a community is largely determined by their sense of commitment, and their desire or capacity for social cohesion.

Social cohesion programmes can serve to counter the social ills (violence, drug abuse, etc.) that plague our schools and unlock the social binaries in our school communities inherited from apartheid and entrenched by continuing inequalities. Social cohesion involves building shared values and communities of interpretation thereby enabling people to have a sense of solidarity as they engage as a collective facing shared challenges. This collective consciousness forms the invisible thread that holds the fabric of depressed communities together and motivates them to aspire for success. Such a community takes ownership of the future of its children by investing in their education.

The overall output of the directorate is to improve learner performance, retention and well-being by promoting rights and responsibilities, and promoting gender inclusive, democratic and socially cohesive public schools.

The vision of the Directorate is a public education system that is socially cohesive, highly equitable and imbued with learners, educators and key stakeholders committed to quality education.

The mission of the Directorate is to:

• Build a culture of non-discrimination, rights and responsibilities in schools that promotes effective and disciplined teaching and learning;
• Promote gender equality and gender empowerment in and through the education system; and
• Build socially cohesive school communities with responsible citizenry who are invested in education.

Q: “Do you think the Department provides ample support to learners in respect of social cohesion or could we do more?”

A: “The curriculum of the Department is premised on the overall values of the Constitution and offers an education that promotes “unity in diversity” and the former Race and Values in Education Directorate promoted programmes that promoted nation building. However, in reality much of South African society continues to remain polarized. The Department has recognised this and has, in the past two years, embarked on a project to develop an evidenced based toolkit that promotes social cohesion in school communities. The toolkit was developed out of a participatory research process that involved the major stakeholders in schools and their surrounding communities. The toolkit is currently in the process of being piloted in selected schools and then will be finalised for scaled up implementation.”

Q: “What are the projects currently running in public schools?”

A: “Rights, Responsibilities & Non Discrimination in Education:

• Support SGB/RCL training on Values in Action.
• Coordinate the Moot Court Programme & NHC Education Outreach Programme.
• Develop a National Action Plan to address racism, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance and discrimination in basic education.
• Support Youth Dialogues.

Gender Equity and Gender Empowerment in Education:

• Revise existing material on addressing sexual abuse & violence in schools (Speak Out against Abuse etc.).
• Use diverse platforms to mediate distribution of & training in prevention of GBV e.g. GEMBEM Clubs; social media etc.
• Finalise Regulations on Managing Learner Pregnancies in public schools.
• Promote gender empowerment programmes for at risk girls e.g. AKGIS, Techno Girls etc.
• Develop a gender equity policy and implementation plan for basic education.
• Commemoration of Days & Events of National Significance aligned to Gender: Women’s Month; International Women’s Day, 16 Days of No Violence Against Women and Children, Torch of Peace.

Social Cohesion and Citizenship Education:

• Phased-in implementation of the social cohesion toolkit in selected provinces.
• Revision of the toolkit as per evolving evidence from implementation.
• Extension of activities in the toolkit to focus on nation-building activities.
• Coordinate and institutionalize Nkosi Albert Luthuli History programme through the toolkit.
• Coordinate Youth Citizen Action Programme, Project Citizen, Democracy project and partnership with IEC.

Q: “Is there any relationship between your directorate and the provincial departments. How do you link?”

A: “Our programmes are implemented in the provinces by provincial Race and Values coordinators and gender focal points.”

Q: “How will your Directorate contribute to 94+ Projects for Madiba Campaign?”

A: “The Department of Basic Education’s core business is to educate learners thus improving
the quality of life of the communities. This is what Madiba stands for and believes in. Some of the schools identified in this project need support in terms of development, leadership skills, educational material and so on. My directorate will support the schools to promote the Constitutional values and build cohesive communities through the implementation of the Bill of Responsibilities and training on the Values in Action manual that targets SGBs and RCLS.

Q: “What is your opinion regarding the project; do you think it will improve infrastructure in South African schools?”
A: “To honour Madiba’s legacy, we are called to Take Action; Inspire Change; Make Every Day a Mandela Day. Addressing the backlogs in schools’ infrastructure needs a concerted effort from all South Africans including partnership from all sectors and hence it gives credence to making education a societal issue. This project is an example of all sectors coming together to invest in the future of education and it has great potential for success.

Q: “Tell us about your team and your synergy.”
A: “Our team is made up of a mix of energetic and resourceful individuals who are dedicated to making a difference in our schools. They work well as a team and on their own and have been instrumental in the success of our programmes. Their energy emerges from their activism and dedication to support the future citizens of our country to ensure our democracy.”

Q: “What message would like to share with staff?”
A: “It is not often that a Director is given the privilege to manage a staff that exudes the very values they are expected to inculcate in young learners, hence I feel extremely honoured to be part of this team. Given the challenges we have encountered, my team has shown that the only thing to fear is poverty of the mind.”

Q: “What motivates you and your team to keep doing what you do?”
A: “The belief that we can make a difference and that we have been given the privileged opportunity to shape the future of our beautiful country.”

In preparation of the next academic cycle of the Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign, which kicks off in July, the Department of Basic Education gathered visually impaired volunteers in Pretoria for an intensive workshop to ensure they are properly prepared.

The two-and-a-half day workshop, saw Kha Ri Gude supervisors, co-ordinators and monitors come together to be trained on how to train the voluntary educators who will eventually conduct the classes to blind people involved in the programme.

The Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign was launched in February 2008, with the intention of enabling 4.7 million adults above the age of 15 years to become literate and numerate in one of the eleven official languages. Achieving this goal will enable South Africa to reach its UN: Education For All commitment made at Dakar in 2000 - that of halving the country’s illiteracy rates by 2015. Initiated and managed by the Department of Basic Education, Kha Ri Gude delivers across all nine provinces in a massive logistical outreach.

The Campaign enables adult learners to read, write and calculate in their mother tongue in line with the Unit Standards for Adult Basic Education and Training level 1, and also to learn spoken English. The specifically designed Campaign materials teach reading, writing and numeracy and integrates themes and lifeskills such as health, gender, the environment and civic education. These materials have been adapted for use in Braille in eleven languages, and for use by the deaf.

Dr Obert Maguve, Director for Learners with Special Education Needs within the Kha Ri Gude programme described the workshop as a session to train the trainers who will be monitoring and supervising the Campaign’s classes aimed at the blind.

“We are hoping to equip trainers here with the skills that will see an improvement in teaching. Hopefully the work put in during this process will show in the Learner Assessment Portfolios of adults who enrol in the programme,” said Dr Maguve.

“These people at the workshop will go on to train 260 to 280 Voluntary Educators and we hope to reach at least 1500 blind learners through the programme this year.”

Dr Maguve said that through the programme, formerly illiterate blind people have been able to realise their rights and empower themselves and regain confidence in their abilities. Shenika Davids, a first-time supervisor from the Western Cape, expressed delight and excitement at being part of the Kha Ri Gude Campaign.

“I am new to the programme and was attracted by the opportunity to teach people as I have a passion for teaching,” said Davids. “Hopefully this is the first step towards better things for me as my dream is to one day open my own learning institution for blind people.”
Pula recently interviewed Dr Rufus Poliah, Chief Director at the National Assessment and Public Examinations Chief Directorate.

What was the National Examination Unit initiated and what role does it play in the education system?

The first common matric examination was administered in 1996. Prior to 1994, there were nineteen (19) Departments of Education and each of these departments administered its own examination. In essence, therefore, nineteen different standards were maintained across racial lines as well as between the African populations in the different homelands. So the National Assessment and Public Examinations (NAPE) unit has played a key role in establishing a single examination system across all provinces and simultaneously enhancing and improving the credibility, reliability, and validity of public examinations in the country. While the introduction of the Annual National Assessment (ANA), the unit has now taken on the responsibility for the administration of these national tests to the 7 million learners in grades 1-6 and 9. Hence the name change to National Assessment and Public Examinations.

What are your objectives for this year?

In terms of the Action Plan 2014, towards Schooling 2025, there are specific targets relating to improving Numeracy and Literacy in Grades 3, 6 and 9 and also targets relating to increasing the number of learners who become eligible for Bachelor’s programme at a university and increasing the Mathematics and Physical Science passes. The Unit has a prime responsibility of conducting national assessment for learners in Grades 1-6 and 9 and a National Senior Certificate examination for Grade 12 learners. These assessments and examinations must provide valid and reliable data on learner performance so as to inform the South African public to what extent are we achieving the targets and what are the learner shortcomings that need to be focused on in achieving these targets moving forward. For 2012 the unit will ensure that the National Senior Certificate examinations are conducted without any irregularities and the Annual National Assessment is successfully administered across the country.

Do you think the unit has achieved most of the goals that were targeted during the past few years?

NAPE has tirelessly persevered in promoting examination and assessment reliability and credibility and the absence of any serious examination irregularities over the last two years bears testament to the fact that public examinations are improving in the country. The unit continues to pursue the goal of a fully fledged national examination system that is internationally comparable. In the area of national assessments there is still much work to be done in institutionalising this form of assessment in every school, district and province in the country. However, in examinations and assessment we have come to learn that there is never an arrival at one’s destination, the horizon of assessment and examination credibility, always moves a little further.

What challenges do you encounter in the education system?

The challenges faced by NAPE are similar to the challenges that confront the education system as a whole. One of the main challenges that we are currently grappling with is the quality of school based assessment that constitutes 25% of the final NSC promotion mark. The standard of these assessments are often inflated and therefore there is a need for more rigorous moderation systems across all levels in the system.

How do you deal with irregularities in the provinces? What authority do the provinces have?

The National Examination Irregularities Committee (NEIC) is a committee established by the Minister, to support the provincial departments of education in ensuring that the credibility of the examination is maintained. This committee coordinates the handling of irregularities on a national level, and ensures that a consistent approach is implemented in the handling of irregularities across all nine provincial education departments.

Each Provincial Education Department (PED) has established a Provincial Examination Irregularities Committee (PEIC) which takes responsibility for the handling of irregularities in the province. The PEIC amongst others, investigate irregularities and make recommendations regarding appropriate action to be taken by the Head of Department or his representative. Prior to the Head of Department, making a ruling on these irregularities, the NEIC engages with each of the recommendations from the PEDs to ensure that the action taken is in keeping with national policy.

In addition PEDs have established the District Assessment Irregularities Committee (DAIC) which is headed by the District/Regional Manager. This committee takes responsibility for the handling of irregularities relating to internal assessment conducted at school level. This is done by ensuring a consistent approach in the handling of irregularities across all schools in the district/region. The DAIC is involved in the handling of examination related irregularities, only on instruction of the PEIC or the Head of Examination in the province. The primary focus of the DAIC is the internal assessment irregularities.

Each school has established a School Assessment Irregularities Committee (SAIC). The committee ensures the credibility of internal assessment and examination conducted at different schools by coordinating the handling of irregularities and ensuring a consistent approach in the handing of irregularities at the school level.

Is there any improvement in respect of the enrolment of matriculants for 2012?

Statistics for 2008 to 2011 have shown a gradual decrease in enrolments for full time candidates and an increase in the enrolment of part-time candidates. The enrolment figures for 2012 are currently being finalised and the Unit will make this information available to the Minister shortly.

Learners are enrolled as full-time candidates and others as part-time candidates. How does this work?

There are two categories of candidates who are eligible to write the NSC examination. These are full time and part-time candidates. Full time candidates are learners who attend school on a full-time basis and receive tuition either at a public or a private school. Part-time candidates are learners who do not attend school on a full-time basis but register with the PED to write the examination. Part-time candidates would have written the NSC examination previously but may have failed to meet the NSC requirements and are therefore repeating these subjects. However, candidates who have failed to meet the NSC requirements may also choose to repeat the examination on a full time basis, which implies that they must attend school and must re-do all the subjects and comply with all the assessment requirements of the NSC.

When are the trial and final examinations going to be written this year?

Provinces normally decide on the dates for the trial examination, which is scheduled for September 2012. However, the final examinations would be written from 22 October to 30 November 2012. The information is also available on the DBE’s website http://www.education.gov.za.
How are the examinations from Grades 7 to 11 administered? Are the questions papers set at national level or by provincial departments?

Schools set their own examination question papers which are quality assured internally by Heads of Departments and approved by Principals. The mark schedules are then submitted to District or Circuit office to be checked by the District officials. However, provincial Departments of Education can and sometimes do set common question papers in selected subjects.

What happens if a learner fails matric for the second time? Do you have other options available for such learners?

First of all, candidates that have not met the minimum promotion requirements but require a maximum of two subjects to obtain the NSC may register for the supplementary examinations, to be written in February/March of the year following the examination. Those who have not succeeded in their examination and who do not qualify for a supplementary examination must re-enroll at their old school if they are younger than 21 years of age. If they are over 21 years of age, they can enroll as part-time candidates. Those enrolled as part-time candidates will not attend school, but will write the examination in the subjects they have failed.

Is there any monitoring mechanism that you use to check the question papers set for Grade 12 are suitable for learner capability? Please elaborate.

Question Papers are set by carefully selected classroom practitioners, curriculum specialists and subject advisors with years of experience in the classroom. The Question Papers are further quality assured by internal moderators who verify fairness in terms of the balance of the question paper relating to cognitive levels, depth of knowledge required and a fair spread of challenges to cater for a diversified cohort of learners sitting for that particular examination. All question papers are then submitted to Umalusi, the Quality Assurance Council for external moderation. Umalusi appoints seasoned experts in the various subject fields to review and scrutinise the question papers before they are finally approved.

In addition the international benchmarking of the national question papers will continue to provide useful inputs into the setting and moderation of question papers to ensure that the papers are of the appropriate quality and standard. In 2008 and 2011 the NSC question papers were benchmarked by the three reputable international assessment bodies namely Cambridge International examinations, Scottish Qualifications Authority(SQA) and Board of Studies New South Wales. Inputs from the evaluation process have confirmed that the South African NSC question papers are internationally comparable. In addition, in 2011 Higher Education South Africa (HESA) was also included in the evaluation process. NAPE continues to review and improve the quality and standard of the NSC question papers.

What advice would like to share with the department for improving the quality of basic education in South Africa?

In January 2012, a National Diagnostic Report on learner attainment in the 2011 NSC examination was compiled by NAPE and released by the Minister. The aim of this report is to provide teachers and subject advisors and other support officials with information that could assist in planning the teaching and learning practices for 2012. The report was compiled from reports presented by the chief markers and internal moderators during the marking of the scripts of candidates that wrote the 2011 NSC examination. The report therefore highlights those aspects of the curriculum that have been identified as problematic, based on a detailed question by question analysis of the responses of candidates. Suggestions are also made in this report for learner improvement, in terms of teaching and learning, support to be provided for teachers, and for the development of support material. It is therefore expected that all teachers of these subjects together with the subject advisors and curriculum implementers will read through the report and identify aspects that need to be given special attention in the teaching and learning going into the future.

This Diagnostic Report together with the other data on learner performance made available on the DBE website is critical in the drive to improve learner performance. As a Department of Basic Education we are on the correct trajectory towards learner improvement, based on the road map of Action Plan 2014, towards Schooling 2025. Examinations in the country have improved based on the strong collegial relationships that have developed over the years with our provincial colleagues. We in examinations believe: Together, Each Achieves More.
Dr. Nick Taylor has recently been appointed Head of the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU). The launch of NEEDU in 2011 marked the start of the journey to better education in South Africa, which forms part of government’s new focus on accountability. Improving the quality of basic education is the number one priority of government and these targets are outlined in Action Plan 2014. The Unit is tasked with identifying critical factors for school improvements and making recommendations to enable these improvements to be put in place to ensure there is a credible school performance review system, implemented countrywide and with integrity.

Dr Taylor is former CEO of JET Education Services. He is also a member of the Umalusi Standards Committee and a contributor to the National Planning Commission. He takes over from former Head of the Unit, Prof John Volmink.

He was Senior Research Fellow at JET Education Services where he worked from 1993 to 2012 before joining the DBE. JET, a non-profit organisation working to improve educational opportunities for poor South Africans, is a major project management and research agency in the field of education.

It is interesting to note that his career started as a Field Geologist at the Tsumeb Corporation in South West Africa in 1970. Four years later he was appointed Research Geologist, JCI Mineralogical Research Laboratory in Germiston.

From 1989 – 1992 he was a Senior Policy Researcher, Education Policy Unit at the University of the Witwatersrand where he provided policy advice and information to the mass democratic movement prior to the transition to democracy.

As Subject Advisor, Mathematics in the Soweto Region of the Department of Education and Training (1985 - 1988), he was responsible for teacher development in mathematics for 60 high schools and over 200 primary schools in one of South Africa’s largest townships. The work comprised designing and running in-service training programmes for teachers, visiting schools, and organising participation in events such as the annual Maths Olympiad.

As the Vice Principal of King David High School (1984 – 1985), one of Johannesburg’s top private schools, he also headed the Science Department, oversaw the management of the curriculum and depuited for the principal when necessary.

He taught maths and science at high school level for 10 years, followed by a period as subject advisor for mathematics in Soweto in the years 1984-88. He was also active on the sports fields, coaching rugby and cricket, and initiated a photographic society at the school.

In the last five years he has completed major assignments for the Presidency [‘Education scenarios for 2019’ (2007), ‘Changes in education since 1994’ (2008), and ‘Service delivery research project: the school sector’ (2009)], for SAQA [‘Evaluation framework for the NQF’ (2010)], and for the National Planning Commission [‘Priorities for addressing SA’s education and training crisis’ (2011) and ‘A five-year plan for SA schooling’ (2011)].

He completed his BSc in 1969, his BSc (Hons) in 1970 and his MSc in 1974 at Rhodes University in Grahamstown. He then obtained his Higher Education Diploma at the University of South Africa in 1978 and later completed his PhD (Maths Ed) at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1990.

Dr Taylor is a member of various professional associations and has been involved in a range of education publications such as chapters in books, edited collections, journal articles, selected conference presentations, selected research reports and curriculum materials.

### A focus on NEEDU

**Mission**

NEEDU’s mission is to facilitate school improvement through systemic evaluation.

**Functions**

The functions of NEEDU are to:

- identify, on a system-wide basis –
  - the factors that inhibit school improvement;
  - and
  - the factors that advance school improvement, including evidence of good practice;
- analyse and identify approaches and strategies necessary for achieving equality in the provision of quality education, with due regard to the human and financial resources and other relevant institutional and governance structures that will be needed to achieve such equality;
- evaluate the monitoring and evaluation of schools by the provincial and their substructures and national department.
- evaluate the support provided to schools, school governing bodies, professional managements and educators by the national department and the provincial departments;
- evaluate the state of South African schools – in particular, the quality of school leadership, teaching and learning.

**Action**

NEEDU will make proposals in regard to –

- remediing shortcomings in educational practice;
- eliminating barriers to quality education;
- ways in which the education system as a whole can implement examples of good practice;
- developing the knowledge and professional capacity of educators; and
- improving the support provided to school governing bodies, professional managements and educators by the national department and the provincial departments;
- publish reports on the state of the education system.

Undertake any task consistent with the future Act at the request of the Minister.

NEEDU will assist greatly to achieve the outputs and deliverables set out in the education sector based plan – Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025 to ensure that the Department delivers on quality and better learning outcomes.
This month’s book review is comprised of quite light weight and thus very readable, titles around management. They all share the Dewey Decimal Classification of Personnel Management 658.3. and range from:

### Business Etiquette for Dummies  
by Sue Fox

Chapters include, amongst others, working in a diverse environment, keeping up with electronic etiquette, crossing cultural lines e.g. exploring business etiquette in Europe and Africa and finally creating a professional style and presence.

### Essential Managers Manual  
by Robert Heller and Tim Hindle

This title was published by Dorling Kindersley and is something of a tome so we have made it Reference. Chapters cover communicating clearly, managing time, making decisions, delegating successfully, motivating people, managing teams, managing meetings, presenting successfully, negotiating successfully, interviewing people, managing change and minimizing stress. As with all DK books it is beautifully illustrated and the layout accessible.

### The Rules of Management: a definitive code for managerial success  
by Richard Templar

The Templar titles all follow the same format – each page has a new rule – but the simple and direct style allows one to pick and choose relevant issues throughout the book. In this particular one around Team Management there are rules on positive reinforcement motivation, adapting your style to each team member, respecting individual differences and similarly in the section on Managing Yourself there are rules of being proactive, not reactive, filling your time productively and profitably and having a Plan B and C.

### The Rules of Work: a definitive code for personal success  
by Richard Templar

Chapters in this title include walk your talk, know that you are being judged at all times, have a plan, act one step ahead and cultivate diplomacy. Although some of the content might seem fairly obvious it presents a helpful reminder of how to manage in the workplace when pressures might be extreme.

### The 10-Day MBA: a step-by-step guide to mastering the skills taught at top business schools  
by Steven Silbiger

For those aspirant managers, chapters are described as Days and they are Marketing, Ethics, Accounting, Organisational Behaviour, Quantitative Analysis, Finance, Operations, Economics, Strategy and MBA mini courses such as negotiating, public speaking etc. Although intended for the business environment, the book gives an excellent overview of elements seated in any corporate environment, government included.

### Motivating Today’s Employees  
by Lin Grensing-Pophal

The title discusses the basics of motivation, facts and fallacies about motivation, coaching and counselling, communication, involvement and advancement and recognition and reward. Personnel Management is a separate discipline and if in the absence of formal training, the book gives some useful tips on managing people.
Renaming on the cards for DBE Building
By Ryan Hoffmann

Preparations are underway to officially rename the Department of Basic Education’s headquarters at 222 Struben Street, Pretoria, as Sol Plaatje House after noted journalist and educator Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje.

A team of officials from the DBE travelled to Kimberley, Northern Cape, on 9 June 2102 to meet with representatives of the Sol Plaatje Educational Trust to get their blessing to rename the building after the celebrated wordsmith. The Trust was established to perpetuate the legacy of Sol Plaatje and to pay tribute to his work.

The DBE team, led by Mr Vernon Jacobs, Director: Conditional and Donor Grant Monitoring, held a fruitful meeting with members of the trust and progress was made with regards to renaming the current DBE headquarters.

Pending final agreement between the two parties, it is envisioned that a statue of Sol Plaatje will be erected at the entrance of the building as well as signage indicating the name of the building as Sol Plaatje House.

As part of the proposed agreement with the Sol Plaatje Educational Trust, it is envisaged that the Department will collaborate with the Trust on a number of projects, including an annual Sol Plaatje lecture and an educational book of Sol Plaatje’s writings.

Cuban Medal of Friendship awarded
Information supplied by Lefika Chetty

On 26 May 2012, three South Africans and leaders of the Friends of Cuba Society (FOCUS) were granted the Medal of Friendship, conferred by the Vice President of the Council of State of Cuba, His Excellency Esteban Hernandez Lazo in Pretoria.

Lefika Chetty, Acting Deputy Director: South African National Commission for UNESCO, is one of three South Africans who were honoured in recognition of their repeated demonstrations of friendship and solidarity towards Cuba for the systematic support to the struggle of the Cubans against the blockade imposed by the United States of America and to the release of our Five Heroes. They also contributed to disseminate and promote abroad the true image of The Republic of Cuba and enhance the strong bilateral relations between Cuba and South Africa.

In 1998, five Cubans, Rene Gonzalez, Ramon Labanino, Fernando Gonzalez, Antonio Guerrero and Gerrardo Hernandez were arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in Miami. They were charged with espionage against the USA, convicted on 8 June 2001 and sentenced in December 2001. Before their trial, they were held without bail for 33 months. They were not only denied bail, but kept for 17 months in solitary confinement. They were completely cut off from their families and children. They were charged with conspiracy which removed the burden from the prosecution to produce evidence that the offences actually occurred. Subsequently, they were sentenced to many years in jail ranging from two life sentences and 15 - 20 years prison terms. The case has made world headlines, including in the legal fraternity.

Ms Chetty is the Treasurer of FOCUS Gauteng Chapter. She serves in NEHAUWU structures as the Branch Secretary for the National Department of Basic Education. Her activism grew organically from an early age, inspired by her family background. She is the daughter of Kay Moonsamy who spent years in exile and is one of the oldest serving Central Committee members of the South African Communist Party (SACP). She was active in student politics including in SASCOC where she held various elected positions. She is a member of the SACP and was elected to the YCL National Committee at its re-launch congress in 2003. Her passionate Cuba solidarity work represents a symbol of her conviction to social, political and economic justice epitomised by Cuban society towards its people and her ardent belief in the future of Socialism.

The three South Africans have led various FOCUS missions to Cuba to advance political ties between the two countries.

The conferring of their Friendship Medals have been signed into law by the President of the Council of State of Cuba, His Excellency President Raúl Castro Ruz, on 18 November 2011.

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By David N Nitoana

Your Monthly Labour Tips

Common Law is not laws that have been legislated by Parliament, but rather laws that arise from court judgments, general practice and precedent. It is law that has developed over the years; it is what people have come to accept as recognised norms and standards, and which are enforced by courts. An employee has a number of obligations under common law, which he/she must meet. It should be noted that these obligations exist even if they are not specifically stated in the Contract of Employment.

Examples of employees’ obligations:

- to provide the employer with his/her services (labour) – i.e. to be at work;
- to obey reasonable and lawful instructions;
- to act in good faith and to protect the employer’s interests;
- to behave properly according to the accepted norms of society (steer clear of misconduct); and
- to perform his/her duties and to work in a satisfactory manner.

For the purpose of this topic the main focus is on the first Common Law rule - to provide the employer with his/her services (labour) and to be at work.

To do this, the employee must not only come to work, but he/she must come to work on time, and be at the workstation during the agreed hours - even if the employer has no work for him to do. That may sound a bit strange, but remember that the employer is paying the employee to come to work and to be at the workstation, even if the employer has no work for him/her to do. If the employee was paid only for work done then he/she would be entitled to leave the workstation if there was no work to be done. However, this is not usually the case.

If the employee does not deliver on the above, he/she may well be in breach of the Common Law conditions of his/her employment contract and is potentially an ex-employee.

There is a further legal concept that bears mention: The Principle of Unjust Enrichment implies that nobody may be enriched at the expense of another. The contract of employment provides (perhaps not in as many words, but certainly by implication) that the employee shall offer his/her services and that the employer shall pay him/her for such services rendered.

If the employee does not provide those services (because of absenteeism) then it is unfair for the employer to have to pay for something that is his/her contractual right to receive. It is equally unfair for the employee to benefit, by means of being paid, for something he/she did not do in terms of the Employment Contract. Put differently, it means very simply: no work, no pay.

Source: The South African Labour Guide