

The National Education Collaboration Trust presents to you the mid-year newsletter with progress updates regarding our efforts towards mobilizing national capacity to assist government achieve distinctive substantial and sustainable improvements in education.

Remote & Digital Learning Campaign boosts learning continuity for 13 million learners

The Covid-19 pandemic has deeply impacted the systematic functioning of various institutions including the basic education system. In South Africa, the disruption to schooling and learning of an estimated 13 million learners since March 2020, has been acutely felt, with an estimated 50% loss in curriculum learning for all grades and , even higher losses reported for the matric class of 2021.

The need for additional capacity to support the education recovery imperatives of the Department of Basic Education (DBE), led to the establishment of a Remote and Digital Learning programme by the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) and partners.

Following considerable successes and gains made with the **Woza Matrics 2020 Catch up** and the **Tswelopele General Education and Training (GET) Campaign**, the Remote and Digital Learning programme has continued to build on the successes of the year 2020 through the continuation of these campaigns in 2021 to further consolidate capacity to support teaching and learning.

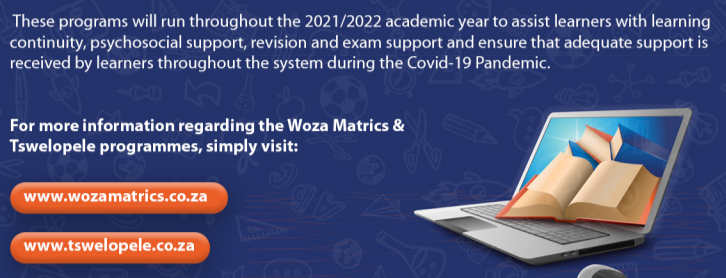
Woza Matrics 2021 Catch up Campaign

The **Woza Matrics 2021 Catch Up Campaign** by the DBE, NECT and EDP/SETA focuses on Grade 11 and 12 learners as well as teachers and parents. It is a supplementary remote learning support programme that seeks to benefit an estimated 1.3 million matriculants with learning continuity, matric revision and exam preparation.

The **Woza Matrics television broadcast** program commenced on 01 April 2021 on DBE TV Openview Channel 122 and DSTV Catch Up. From 01 May revision lessons were additionally broadcast 6 hours every week on Monday and Thursday and Saturday and Sunday.

The catch up program is also available on multiple digital and non-digital platforms, including print media, community radio programmes, Virtual Educator-Led Learning Experiences and Teacher Connect Platform.

The Woza Matrics television broadcasts focused on revision in the following subjects:



Partners:



Tswelopele Campaign 2021

The **Tswelopele campaign** is an initiative of the DBE in collaboration with the NECT, aimed to support over 600,000 South African learners from Grade R to 9 with supplementary support content. The programme enables the learners to catch up on learning losses, through the provision of learning material, study tools and tips on how to manage stress via broadcast on TV channels, online platforms and radio.

The **Tswelopele education broadcast campaign** commenced on 01 March 2021 on DBE TV on Openview Channel 122. Revision lessons are broadcast for 6 hours every day from Monday to Sunday.

Tswelopele offers support in the following subjects:



Partners:



The **Woza Matrics** and **Tswelopele Campaigns** have been driven to complement a range of education recovery & support initiatives endorsed by the DBE that are already underway. In this way, the programs strive to be established as part of the national network of Remote and Digital Learning programs, that unifies and connects with support programs across South Africa.

These programs will run throughout the 2021/2022 academic year to assist learners with learning continuity, psychosocial support, revision and exam support and ensure that adequate support is received by learners throughout the year during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

For more information regarding the Woza Matrics & Tswelopele programmes, simply visit:

www.wozamatrics.co.za

www.tswelopele.co.za



Presidents Virtual Reading Club Gathering Momentum

The National Reading Coalition (NRC) in partnership with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Government and Communication and Information System (GCIS) has continued with its efforts to extend reading networks across all ages through coordinating 12 Virtual Reading Club (VRC) sessions per annum, in support of the President's Reading Circle campaign.

The NRC has so far coordinated six VRC sessions where several books have been reviewed and used to drive discussions of reviewers' life experiences and how they are relevant to our daily lives.

Through the VRC sessions, the NECT and its partners have created an opportunity for influential people in society to share their life experiences and respond to the President's call to encourage South Africans to participate in the Presidential Reading Circle.

The VRC has seen an increase in participation since hosting the first event on 14 December 2020, where South Africans discussed the book *Americanah* by **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**.

This is a summary of the events previously hosted:

	DATE	BOOK REVIEWED	AUTHOR OF THE BOOK REVIEWED	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS	PANELISTS	DESIGNATION OF PANELIST
VRC 1	14 Dec 2020	Americanah	Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	140	Professor Tsholele Maramba, Honorable Angie Makhanya, Mfisenko Mthembu	Vice-Chancellor of UJ Honorable Minister, COB-NECT
VRC 2	28 Jan 2021	The Longest March	Fred Motswagole	140	Mt Cuthy Enyane, Mt Bandy Tshane	Transport Actor, Asean Exam Award-winning SACB Broadcaster
VRC 3	24 Feb 2021	We Need New Names	Nokwanda Ndlovu	231	Mt Siphele Tshabalala, Mt Mphahlele Ndlovu	Football Legend, TV and Radio Personality
VRC 4	23 March 2021	The Suit	Can Themba	177	Mt Lorraine Ndaba, Mt Cuthy Mkhambane	Journalist, News Broadcaster
VRC 5	22 April 2021	The Warning	Mogae Madiiso	309	Dr Gcina Hope	Actor, Spgoc, author
VRC 6	27 May 2021	The Witched of the Earth	Francis Fanon	317	Mt Mphahlele Ndlovu, Mt David Kabane	Secretary General, SACLU, Commissioned Youth Footballer

The NRC will host the 7th Session on 24 June Month to discuss **'Becoming Men: Black Masculinities in a South African Township'** by author Malose Langa.

The session will be joined by various learners from schools across the country, as we celebrate youth month and engage in discussions around the importance of reading.

The NRC and partners would like to urge everyone to continue participating in the Virtual Reading Club events and to encourage your families and friends to continue participating.

You too can join the reading club by subscribing to the VRC events on the NRC website:

nrc.org.za



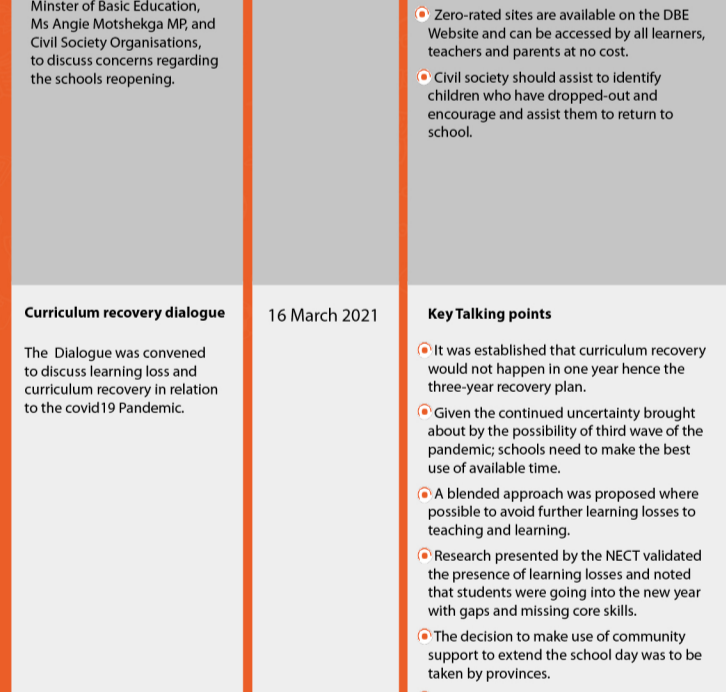
NECT, UNICEF and EU Strengthen Reading and Leadership in SA schools

In 2020, the UNICEF identified the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) as the implementing partner for the European Union-funded programme titled: **Reading and Leadership Strengthening in South African Schools for learning During Covid-19 and Beyond (REALS-SA)**.

The partnership programme was officially launched on 21 April 2021 and draws social capital from Universities, the EU as Funder, the NECT and NGOs in support of government in its education continuity and recovery efforts over the next two years.



Who will this project impact:



The programme prioritises the three areas shown in the diagram below:



Reading Recovery

The reading recovery programme will storybook package resources and radio programmes for teachers and learners by working with relevant NGOs and Community Radio Stations.

Curriculum and assessment recovery

The intention of curriculum and assessment recovery programme is to conduct a review of the recovery curriculum, capacity building of Subject Advisers and teachers on the use of assessment for learning practices, development of monitoring and feedback tools for use by teachers and Subject Advisers and report on how the Recovery Curriculum is affecting teaching and learning.

Leadership, management and governance support

The leadership and management programme will focus on capacity building of district officials and School Management Teams, whereas governance support programmes will focus on enhancing parental involvement in supporting learners with reading and homework.

While the NECT will drive and spearhead the REALS-SA project, the DBE has identified Champions within the department to work closely with the NECT to address and implement the three programme priorities areas aforementioned.

POST GRADUATE SUPPORT PROGRAM EMPOWERS STUDENTS

The NECT partnered with three universities, namely, University of Limpopo, Venda and Nelson Mandela to strengthen the research capacity of master's and PhD students in education by developing a cadre of academics and scholars in the field of education, and in bringing to bear more research and intellectual capacity in contributing to the educational development agenda in South Africa. The table below shows enrolment by university and by academic programme.

University	PHD Students	Masters Students	Total
University of Limpopo	6	22	28
University of Venda	23	51	74
Nelson Mandela University	10	14	24
Total	39	87	126

Pursuant to research capacity, the NECT, DBE and university partners developed annual plan for supervisors and students alike. For 2021 period, the focus of the plan is on: (1) building capacity in the conceptualization and presentation of research proposals; (2) strengthening the capacity of research supervisors; (3) creating opportunities for research support and mentorship and (4) creating opportunities to present research ideas and papers.

Monthly Seminars

At the core of the programme are monthly seminars for students on a critical area of need – the preparation of the research proposal. The seminars are intended not as lectures, but as discussion and problem-solving sessions that are hosted by a panel of experts. The seminar began with presentations but focuses on problems and issues experienced and the lessons learnt for best practice.



In the first session on proposal development, we sought to share a research agenda for the sector noting topics and issues which are in dire need for research. This was shared in a session where students were exposed to the methods for selecting research topics.

The second session which took place in May was dedicated to embedding the understanding of "research problem". The session assumed panel discussions with presenters and students. The session was a success in that both supervisors and students were able to share information and lessons learned about how the research problem/problem statement could be defined.

The third session to be held on July will focus on the value of literature review in a research project. Essentially, the purpose of this seminar will be to explore methods, problems, issues and pitfalls in preparing the literature review for a research proposal. Similarly, the method of delivery is panel discussions with presenters and students. The plenary session will be used to highlight challenges, and lessons from both students and supervisors on the value of literature review project by illustrating areas of best practice and lessons which students need to internalise.

What to expect?

The forthcoming session will focus on data collection, instrument design, methods and pitfalls. We are pleased to note that the programme has been positively received by students and supervisors as it addresses some of the key issues and challenges. This assertion is based on the outcome of the monitoring and evaluation done on the programme rollout to date. The NECT will continue to work with DBE and partner universities to ensure quality research output that is relevant and needed to address gaps at DBE and in the sector.

SANDBOX RESEARCH RESEARCH COMPENDIUM

After a year of trialing interventions at the Sandbox Schools, the NECT EdHub is pleased to share initial learnings from efforts to explore what the future of education could look like in South African public schools.

This second document outlines key insights from the research conducted in 2020, and gives an indication of how the Sandbox Schools Project is evolving. We are conducting deeper research in 2021 and we plan to share findings with education stakeholders as a way of providing inputs to the sector and growing the evidence-base on the topic of education in a fast-changing world.

The NECT EdHub welcomes any feedback on the articles and approach as we explore ways to improve the quality and relevance of basic education in South Africa.

For the Executive Summary, click here:

https://nect.org.za/publications/technical-reports/nect-sandbox-2020-research_executive-summary.pdf

For the full compendium of short articles, click here:

https://nect.org.za/publications/technical-reports/nect-sandbox-2020-research_compendium.pdf

For monthly updates and emerging learnings, visit the **Sandbox Blog:**
<https://sandboxblog.home.blog/>
 Follow us on Twitter: [@EdHub_NECT](#)

Education Dialogue SA Update report

The NECT's Education Dialogue SA has hosted a wide array of dialogue sessions involving civil society, business, government and unions in its aim create an avenue for open, honest engagement towards educational reform in South Africa.

The NECT together with the Department of Basic Education has convened four virtual dialogues since February 2021.

DIALOGUE	DATE	KEY TALKING POINTS
Civil Society Consultative Forum The consultative meeting was held between the hon. Minister of Basic Education, Ms Angie Motshagka MP, and Civil Society Organisations, to discuss concerns regarding the schools reopening.	04 February 2021	Key Talking points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools will still be required to adhere to the health and hygiene protocols for COVID-19, including physical distancing. Zero-rated sites are available on the DBE Website and can be accessed by all learners, teachers and parents at no cost. Civil society should assist to identify children who have dropped-out and encourage and assist them to return to school.
Curriculum recovery dialogue The Dialogue was convened to discuss learning loss and curriculum recovery in relation to the covid19 Pandemic.	16 March 2021	Key Talking points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was not established that curriculum recovery would not happen in one year hence the three-year recovery plan. Given the continued uncertainty brought about by the possibility of third wave of the pandemic; schools need to make the best use of available time. A blended approach was proposed where possible to avoid further learning losses to teaching and learning. Research presented by the NECT validated the presence of learning losses and noted that students were going into the new year with gaps and missing core skills. The decision to make use of community support to extend the school day was to be taken by provinces. The loss of learning time affects all grades, therefore priority should not be given only to FET phase (Grade 12 in particular). Digital material should be made freely available for learning outside of school. Remote learning is a challenge as other issues such as lack of connectivity and devices negatively affect access to remote learning by majority of learners.
Early Childhood Development (ECD) migration dialogue In partnership with the Department of Basic Education, the dialogue was convened to share developments regarding the migration of the ECD, function, and to solicit inputs, comments and recommendations from civil society.	09 April 2021	Key Talking points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal and regulatory processes regarding the migration. The roles of different spheres of government. The relationship between the public and private sectors. The registration of ECD Centres. Concerns regarding salaries and funding. Data management and information systems. Post provisioning norms. Training of practitioners and qualification requirements.
Presidential Youth Employment Initiative–Basic Education Employment Initiative Ms. Angie Motshagka MP, Minister of Basic Education updated on progress of Phase 1 of PVEI-BEEI programme.	24 April 2021	Key Talking points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The success of the programme was noted also highlighting the need for improvement regarding skills and training, and the payment system. A desire for the institutionalization of the programme was expressed emphasizing the importance of long-term teacher support. It was noted that Phase 1 had been implemented as a relief to the pandemic, and that a second phase would serve more as a platform for skills transfer and a pathway into future opportunities within the basic education sector. Positive Testimonials were given by teachers, school assistants on the impact made by the programme and the desire for a second phase. The Minister of Basic Education, Hon. AM Motshagka MP, applauded the work done by and the support provided by civil society, acknowledging that collaboration with civil society and across government departments had led to the success thus far. The Minister further highlighted that the impact of the BEEI programme should last well beyond the duration of the initiative, and that youth should be equipped with portable skills that will enable them to enrich their lives going forward.

PRIMARY SCHOOL READING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (PSRIP) kicks off Phase 4

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) in collaboration with the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) and EDP/SETA, is implementing the National Primary School Reading Improvement Programme (PSRIP).

Adopted as the DBE sectoral approach to reading, the PSRIP aims to improve literacy and reading outcomes in learners from Grades 1 to 6 through teacher development and support. The training aspect includes the provision of teaching and support resources which will be supported through rigorous monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance processes.

Since its inception in 2017 and in the three iterations of implementation, the PSRIP has upskilled and supported 341 Foundation Phase Subject Advisers, 221 Intermediate phase Subject Advisers, 29 391 Teachers, that is 20 003 FP teachers and 9 388 IP teachers in 6 926 schools. The programme has also supported 5 154 School Management Teams.

Due to the demonstrated successes in phases one, two and three, the PSRIP is currently in its fourth iteration, which will upskill and develop a minimum of 200 Subject Advisers, 5500 teachers, 18 provincial SMT teams and at least 1200 school level SMTs.

Comprehension Across the Curriculum (CATC) Overview

In leading the drive to support the holistic development of reading and literacy across the basic education system, the NECT and EDP/SETA will launch the Comprehension Across the Curriculum (CATC) program.

The CATC is an online course that will be hosted on the NECT's zero-rated website to commence during the second half 2021.

PURPOSE	AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME	PLATFORM
To upskill teachers to better teach reading comprehension skills across the curriculum. The timing of the programme also lends itself to provide Covid-19 related support. Which includes focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum catch-up. Psychosocial support. And health and safety guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ETDPSETA funded programme. Initially available to 10 000 teachers across the country. Upskills teachers of all grades and subjects. Online self-paced learning (estimated 6 hours). Uses DBE's TeacherConnect platform. SACE endorsed for 5 CPD points. 1-hour TV programme on the topic will be aired on national television. 	TeacherConnect WhatsApp platform Free access to users: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All non-video files accessed via a zero-rated website (NECT). All videos accessed on the CATC. Websites - data costs reversed billed. The platform will navigate users through a series of resources, videos, stories and activities.

NECT-SADTU ensures Continuous Teacher Development

SADTU-NECT PSS Collaboration

The NECT works in collaboration with teacher unions to strengthen their capacity to implement their professional development programmes. In May 2021, the NECT and SADTU collaborated in the roll out of the care and support initiative to train teachers on Psychosocial Support (PSS).

The collaboration was aimed at empowering SADTU gender and education convenors with knowledge and tools to exercise self-care, to manage stress, fear, anxiety; and recognize the increased risk of violence; in order to create a safe and healthy learning environment at schools and homes.

The workshop took place on Zoom over two sessions for a total dosage of 9 hours on Friday 7th and Monday 10th May 2021. The workshop was attended by 55 (89%) Education Convenors and 57 (92%) Gender convenors from all 9 provinces as well as 8 (100%) SADTU National officials inclusive of the Vice-Presidents for Education and Gender.

The workshop assisted participants to identify, understand and build awareness of psychosocial needs in schools and the community to facilitate learning spaces where children are listened to and can express their thoughts and feelings. As a way forward, the SADTU Vice President for Education, Fasega Solomon indicated that the Education and Gender Convenors would roll out the training to other teachers in the various regions for greater impact in schools.

Lessons and Observations

While the workshop was aimed at equipping the teachers with PSS skills for the community and schools, it was observed that the teachers themselves needed the support. This workshop was not only beneficial for professional development but proved to be beneficial at an individual level.