



February 2026

EDUCATION BULLETIN



FEB
2026

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CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

It is important to understand that education is one of the most crucial vehicles for shaping broader societal values as always carrying particular messages, both explicitly and implicitly. For this reason alone, this truism must be understood as a basis for approaching the tasks at hand. Truly speaking, in the South Africa context, like in many other post-colonial societies, education carries and imparts particular racial, gender and class messages as education is not ideological neutral as it perpetuate the interest of the ruling class through manipulating the world opinion through various social institutions to impose the supremacy of its ideals in society.

It is the task of revolutionaries and instruments of the working class to lead discussions on a question of

values and ideology in the education system through leading national debates on curriculum change to advance values of solidarity, equality and economic system that benefits the overwhelming majority of our people. Let us, in line with our ideological commitments, use this process of curriculum change as a platform to open debates in these universities on values we seek to build against the evil and barbarism of capitalism, racism and gender inequality.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of June 16. In paying homage to the students' uprising that erupted in SOWETO and spread to other parts of the country from the 16th June 1976 onwards, we should not consider that tragic historical moment in isolation. A meaningful understanding of June 16 is not one that



CDE. ZOLA SAPHETHA
GENERAL SECRETARY

is narrowly focused on a specific day in that year's calendar, as it was part of the broader reawakening of the masses of our people on the back of the 1973 Durban strikes that catalysed the re-emergence of the black trade unions throughout the 1970s. At the same time, this organic development of workplace organisation of black workers was a manifestation of a growing defiant consciousness amongst the broader black masses after more than a decade of sustained draconian repression during the 1960s.

Instead, we must honour this day in its proper historical context of the trajectory of our national liberation struggle, in which the revolts of the 1970s and 1980s were preceded by the lull and repression of the 1960s. This ignited students' political consciousness and militancy spilled over as some of these young people of the generation of 1976 uprisings entered universities, which led to the formation of AZASO in 1979.

This development intersected with the growing shopfloor militancy that eventually led to the formation of a militant giant trade union federation, in COSATU in 1985. The founding of AZASO and COSATU in themselves were also manifestations of an ideological shift within the internal resistance politics in the late 1970s - which was a period that had a strong presence of the black consciousness movement.

And so this development marked the reemergence of the banner of the Freedom Charter as both AZASO and COSATU quickly adopted it after their formation. The NUM is one example of the founding unions of the federation that were originally heavily influenced by elements of black consciousness, even though it became the main affiliate within COSATU that propagated the adoption of the Freedom Charter.

On the other hand, on the 1st September 2026 it would be the 35th anniversary of the founding of SASCO at Rhodes University, as a product of the merger between NUSAS which

was founded in 1924 and SANSCO which was founded in 1986 as a predecessor of AZASO. Indeed, this should be a joyous celebration of the founding of a progressive non-racial student movement, which would now be coming of age after 35 years of existence. The current generation of students should draw inspiration from the pioneering activism of the founding generation of SASCO that succeeded in placing the overarching question of transformation at the centre of national discourse, even before the demise of the Apartheid regime in 1994

So, in heightening these two important and remarkable anniversaries in the history of our liberation struggles and education transformation in our country, what would be the role of NEHAWU as a reliable and consistent force in the broader struggles of society especially in the Post-School Education and Training in the overall context of student-worker alliance? In my view, this meeting should serve as a critical platform to elaborate deeply on this opportunity presenting its self through these anniversaries as a tool or strategy to forge the realisation of education front with concrete program to transform vigorously education in South Africa.

Through this front, we should campaign for a national conference on transformation of Education with specific focus on Post School Education without negating the dialectical relationship with basic education. The fundamental basis for the conference should be what broader congress movement call "the overarching vision of South Africans on education - People's Education for People's Power" as a yardstick to measure progress registered in the last 31 years of the democratic breakthrough, having missed the assessment last year when we were celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Freedom Charter last year.

It is therefore the responsibility of this committee to preoccupy itself with form and content of this national conference together with the realisation of education front amidst the complexities of our revolution brought about sharpening class

contradictions characterising the world outlook.

NEHAWU must immediately convene or organise an urgent meeting with SASCO and COSAS separately and later a PYA meeting to jointly develop a concrete program to celebrate the milestones of student movement registered over the years.

So, on the 30th of January 2025, NEHAWU had an opportunity to engage with SASCO through its NEC and took an advantage to pose complex and difficult questions as we consider ourselves as giants in this terrain of the PSET as NEHAWU and SASCO, why are we satisfied with our presence in the institutions in which we have traditionally existed and only on issues with which we are familiar, without intentionally reorientating ourselves to broaden our scopes. The fact is that the PSET today comprises:

- About 26 public universities, 50 TVETs, 9 CET, 132 and 185 private higher institutions and private colleges, including 21 SETAs where learners are also engaged in post-matric learning and vocational training. Why are we satisfied with our absence in many of these institutions, if we desire to be impactful in driving transformation?
- The government's guiding policy is the White Paper for Post-School Education, which commits to an overarching framework of an expanded, integrated and effective PSET system. Why on a yearly basis are we not ensuring that the allocated budgets are practically geared at realising the promise and commitment to make post-school education expanded, integrated and effective?
- Since 1994, there has been notable increase in access, but there has not been comparable improvement in the student success rate - more so regarding students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds and in the historically black universities. Why are we not actively engaged in raising the objective obstacles or impediments that are causing this poor success rate?

- Whilst the vast majority of student that are enrolled are now Africans, which is still far too low in relation to the population (the participation rate) compared to other middle-income developing countries, why are we not calling for the expansion of access?

- This is not necessarily about building new institutions, as such. In many instances it can be about the expansion of the capacity of the established institutions in order to take advantage of the existing facilities, administrative and teaching capabilities of these institutions.

- The National Development Plan (NDP) targets 1.6 million enrolments for universities, 2.5 million and 1 million for TVETs and CET colleges respectively by 2030. We are four years away from this horizon and yet the current enrolment trends clearly shows that the TVET and CET subsectors are most likely to fail to achieve NDP enrolment targets by 2030, with a huge margin. Why are we not engaged with the DHET on the issues behind the actual decline or reversal of the enrolment trend in CET and TVETs?

- There are regular outbreaks of corruption scandals across the entire sector primarily because of the Neoliberal corporatisation of universities and weak governance and management capacities in colleges, through their adoption of the wholesale external procurement of services or the tenders for outsourcing service provision. Many of the functions that are currently externally procured have become channels of the massive misallocation of vital resources and corruption.

And so, why are we not having a joint campaign on insourcing to ensure better pay and conditions of service for the workers and accountable provision of services for the students, as opposed to the current situation of the pervasive reliance on contracted companies that are focused on

cutting the cost of their operations to raise the level of their profits?

Comrades, historically SASCO and its predecessor organisations have built vibrant Student-Worker Alliance on campuses with NEHAWU and its predecessor unions such as the Transport and General Workers' Union and the Union of Democratic University Staff Associations (UDUSA) for the lectures. Whilst this did not exist in all campuses, in some campuses the branches of the progressive student movement formed their own Workers' Desks which operated more like labour service organisations in providing support to workers in an environments where there were no progressive and worker-controlled unions.

As NEHAWU we seek to build Popular Education Front. By definition a popular front means that it must be rooted in practical activities that would galvanise the student and worker constituencies around the cross-cutting issues in the sector at the national level and around the pertinent issues at specific institutional or campus level. In form, this envisaged Popular Education Front would assume a character of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), but in substance it would be different as it would be dealing with different issues and in a different epoch as compared to the NECC which was preoccupied with the struggle against Apartheid in order to resolve the multiple crises in education.

NEHAWU and SASCO would have to be the backbone of such a front. Because we are an education trade union as NEHAWU, rather than a narrow trade union preoccupied with workplace issues in post-school education, our conceptualisation of education and concern is not narrowly limited by our organising scope. Education is an ecosystem in which the challenges faced by students at the post-school level, for example issue of the poor success rate, are often directly caused by crisis situations at the level of early child development, primary and secondary education levels. Therefore, we

envisage to help build a front that would include progressive formations concerned with early child development and basic education issues.

But as SASCO and NEHAWU we already have a history of practical collaboration at campus level and nationally in terms of the Right To Learn Campaign. Therefore, rather than waiting for other progressive organisations to reorient themselves to the broader societal issues on education, we propose to practicalise our working relation on the immediate issues affecting workers and students such as those that you are elevating in your Right To Learn Campaign and our issues around the outsourcing of services that often relate to the interests of students such as security, catering, cleaning, gardening, etc. In the recent past, we have not succeeded in practicalising the Student-Worker Alliance as we have not dedicated time to develop a joint programme that would incorporate relevant issues of transformation, governance and management of institutions and in dealing with the department.

So, in our engagement with YCL will pose the same questions and arguments as well as in the Progressive Youth Alliance.

Of course, part of the purpose of this meeting is to receive perspectives on the Right to Learn Campaign from SASCO and YCL in a form of Joe Slovo, presentations on our submission on the funding model, student intake in institutions of higher learning, on the outcomes and program of action as well as 2025 education alliance including the state of the organisation in PSET sector and impact of close ranks defend the case campaign in the sector. At the end, after robust discussions we should conclude by outlining a clear way forward from this meeting to the next one.

We wish you well in your deliberations!

Amandla!

COMPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE AND TERMS OF REFERENCE



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CDE. CASPER NANTO
OSEC HEAD

The national union in 2011 resolved to have sub-committees of the national executive committee of the union that must assist with the sectoral work of the national union where we are organising. In terms of our reviewed strategic policy framework of 2021 and in understanding our socio economic pillar we make a point that "the pillar pivots the union beyond the workplace as it deals with issues that are located and arise from the colonial structure of the economic base of our society.

This therefore, it constitute another site of our struggle, which is mutually reinforcing with our political and workplace sites of struggle and Post School Education and Training is one of those workplace site.

The Post-Schooling Education system is woefully inadequate in terms of its quality of provision, size and shape amidst crisis level of the high proportion of the youth that is out of the education system and out of work. As well as the urgent need for its expansion, the PSET

system must also be inverted so that its largest component must be in technical and vocational education and training to address the national goals of industrialisation and to address the mismatch between size and quality of the skills required and the degrees and certificates. Therefore, the engineering skills revolution is key in building the developmental state and transforming the structure of the economy to private decent jobs as the median wages of workers with a degree are more than six times as large as those of workers without a matric qualification. This against a background of a society whereby only a third of adults have secondary schooling as their highest level of education attainment and only 6 percent of adults have a degree, which makes South Africa to compare unfavourably with its peer middle-income countries.

In this regard, we seek to advance transformative economic and social policies and to drive the related campaigns that are geared at addressing the three underlying and intersecting contradictions of our society, i.e. class, race and gender contradictions. As a class-oriented union our socioeconomic pillar seeks to place us in the forefront of advancing such transformative policies and campaigns in the domains that are within our organising scope and these include the state, healthcare, social security and post-schooling education, whilst at the same time contributing in overarching economic and social policies and campaigns advanced and driven by COSATU and SACP.

Having made the point above, the 2022 national executive committee directed that the composition of the national sub-committee must be as follows:

- - 2nd Deputy President as a Chairperson, Cde Patrick Makhafane;
- General Secretary, Zola Saphetha;
- Deputy General Secretary December Mavuso;
- Acting Head: Secretariat, Cde. Mothusi Mongale
- Head: OSEC, Cde Casper Nanto;
- Head: PDU, Cde Sidney Kgara;
- National Organiser Higher Education, Cde Rodney Sibuyi
- National Organiser TVETs, Cde Takalani Ratshilumela,
- Head: Edusec, Cde Mbulelo Mandlana;
- National Spokesperson, Cde Lwazi Nkolonzi;
- PDU Social Policy Researcher, Cde. Nyiko Sehlangu
- PDU Parliamentary Officer Cde. Barry Mitchell
- DHET Branch Secretary, Cde Thabang Lehola
- NSFAS (WC); Branch Secretary Cde. Kevin Carlse
- TUT Faculty of Humanities , Prof Rasigan Maharajah;
- COSATU, Cde Bhabhalikamaphikela "Babsy" Nhlapho;
- COSATU Cde Sekete Moshoeshe
- National Organiser (TVET Council Board Member) Cde. Morongwa Mothiba- Mdletshe
- The progressive comrades in education
- 2 X SASCO Representatives
- 2 X YCLSA representatives;
- 2 X SACP Representative ;
- 2 X SAUS
- 9 X Chairpersons of Provincial Education Subcommittees.

TERMS OF REFERENCE – ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

The 2021 central executive committee had considered the terms of reference that had been developed and adopted the following:

- a. Assist in developing organisational perspectives on transformation of the PSET sector including policies that responses about the sector, particularly those on which campaigns should be undertaken.
- b. Participate in government meetings and committees in order to make presentations in the policy formulations and responses when necessary.
- c. Work with various progressive organisation and formations in policy formulations and responses as well as in the transformation processes.
- d. Assist with information relating to NEHAWU

activities, in particular NEHAWU campaigns and convening education seminars.

- e. Assist in the preparation of articles for distribution to members via NEHAWU media and/or publication in the printed media.
- f. Raise additional issues which NEHAWU should consider incorporating in its policy development and member education.
- g. Assist with the establishment of provincial education subcommittees. This include supporting provincial education subcommittees.

As we are convening this meeting we are directed by the central executive committee to look at the following issues:

- Composition of the Committees at National and Provincial level
- The decision of the DHET of the funding model and its implementation. To develop a concrete program to reverse the DHET decision of imposing a new funding model without proper consultation with workers and students
- The infrastructure challenges in the sector including student accommodation
- The state of the union in the sector
- The Right to Learn Campaign and our approach to the campaign
- The outcomes of the 2025 education alliance committee
- The approach to the progressive youth alliance and progressive forces in the sector
- The convening of provincial education sub-committees and what they must focus on

PROVINCIAL EDUCATION SUB COMMITTEES

The December 2025 CEC decided that

immediately after convening the national sub-committee we will convene provincial committees and we would launch them where they were not launched. Composition of the provincial sub-committees will be same as the national sub-committee as follows:

- Provincial Office Bearer deployed
- Provincial Secretaries
- Deputy Provincial Secretaries
- Regional Office Bearers deployed
- PHOSECs
- Provincial Paralegal Officers
- Provincial Education Officers
- Regional Organisers responsible for Higher Education, TVET and CET
- 1 X COSATU Provincial Deployee
- 1 X SACP Provincial Deployee
- 2 X SASCO Representatives
- 2 X YCLSA Representatives
- Three progressive comrades in education (Academics, Researchers or Management)

The focus of the provincial subcommittee should include:

- a. These committees are convened to discuss the state of the education PSET sector in the province
- b. To receive the outcomes and programs from the national education sub-committee and develop provincial programs on the right to learn campaign linked to our close ranks defend the base.
- c. In the Free State the provincial education sub-committee will also develop a program to fight against the unilateral abolishment of provisional registration by the University of Free State.
- d. Discussions in the North West on the state of the North West University.
- e. Develop campaigns linked to our public service delivery campaign frame work
- f. Preparing / assisting in the preparation of articles for distribution to members via NEHAWU media and / or publication in the printed media'
- g. Raising additional issues which NEHAWU should consider incorporating in its policy development and member education.

SASCO Right To Learn Campaign

Using the Students' Charter to transforming the Higher Education System in post-apartheid South Africa, as it relates to access, success and support

South African Students Congress

Presented to National Education Health and Allied Workers Union



Presented By Cde T. Lalla (NEC)

What is the Right to Learn Campaign (RTLCL)?

- SASCO's **mass-based campaign** to implement the Students' Charter for **access, success and transformation** in PSET
- Fights barriers to access: fees, registration, accommodation, funding
- A **continuous program**, not just for registration periods
- The campaign runs across **universities, TVET, and CET colleges, and some Private Institutions.**



RTLCLink to Broader Struggles

- RTLCL is **not just a student issue**—it is part of the broader struggle for:
 - **Publicly funded education**
 - **Decent work and training** post-graduation
 - **Anti-privatisation and anti-commercialisation** of education
- Aligns with **NEHAWU's focus** on public sector rights, worker-student solidarity, and social justice.



Principle aims of the RTLC

Access for All

- Fight barriers to access, including exorbitant fees, upfront payments, and cost-shifting
- Ensure that NSFAS funding commitments in Universities and TVETs are fully implemented
- Assist Students with registration, academic challenges, and access to support services
- Scrapping Student Debt
- Defend Students unfairly excluded financially or academically

Safe & Conducive Learning Environments

- Safe, affordable and accessible Student Housing
- Campus safety and security
- Physical and Mental Health Services for Students and Workers

Transformed Curriculum

- Language Justice
- Indigenous knowledge incorporation
- Fit-for-purpose curriculum

Employment & Skills Post-Graduation

- Mandatory internships
- Placement support.

Student Governance

- Democratic decision making to the benefit of Students and Workers
- Institutional accountability

SASCO



UNITY FOR DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION

How the RTLC Works – Structures & Committees

- **Branch-level committees:** Accommodation, Registration, Financial Aid.
- **Regional & Provincial oversight** – RECs, PECs, NEC War Room.
- **Weekly reporting systems** to track cases, challenges, and progress.
- **Collaboration with PYA and MDM components**, including NEHAWU, ANCYL, YCL, SADTUSC etc.



The SASCO Member in the RTLC

- We are **servants of the students**, not leaders for ourselves.
Our duties:
- Assist students with registration, funding, accommodation
- Popularise the Students' Charter in every engagement
- Reject individualism—work collectively & with accountability
- Demand transparency from institutions

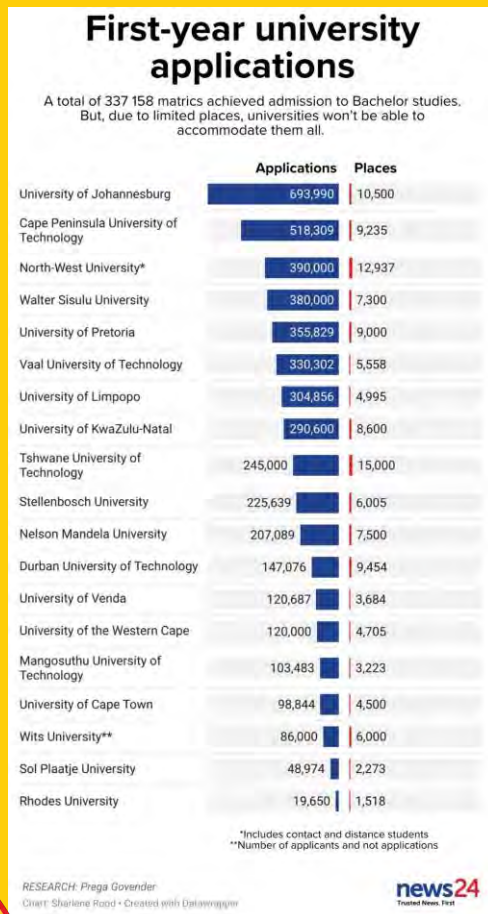


The Dual Character of SASCO

- SASCO exists as both
 - a Students' vanguard
 - a mass-based Students' Front
- Therefore, SASCO has to address the issues of Students on two levels:
 - The material conditions that Students are subjected to
 - The systemic underpinnings of those issues



Key Challenges: Application vs Admission



- Solution:
 - Short-term: SASCO assists Students with placements through Universities and TVETs;
 - Long-term: overhauling admission targets of institutions; building new institutions
- NEHAWU's potential role:
 - Assist in Admission's Office with an understanding of Students' material conditions
 - Supporting the call for new institutions



Key Challenges: Registration and Application fees

- Problem Statement:

- Institutions use registration fees to exclude Students from Quintile 1 – 3 Schools; as seen in the re-opening of applications during registration
- Application fees direct Student Applications towards Historically Black Institutions, overburdening under-capacitated Offices with excess applications

- Solution:

- Waiver Registration and Application Fees
- NEHAWU's Potential Role:
 - Support SASCO's call for waiving these fees



Key Challenges: Historical Debt

- Problem Statement:

- Historical Debt prevents Degree completion, and inhibits the process for Students to move out of PSET into the workplace
 - ~ R9.3 Billion
 - 120 000 Students
- Historical debt is the systemic injustice, not a poor personal choice

- Solution:

- Use institutional Reserves to pay off debt
- Innovative policy solutions:
 - SASWF
 - Wealth Tax to fund increased Social Program
- NEHAWU's potential role:
 - Support SASCO's call for increased transparency around institutional reserves



Key Challenges: Accommodation

- Problem Statement:

- Students in campuses across the country, are sleeping in corridors, bathrooms and libraries
- Institutions lack intentionality in build and maintaining institutionally-owned accommodation, choosing instead to outsource the service to Private Sector
- Private landlords choose profit over People

- Solution:

- Short-term: Placement programs on campuses that prioritise Student Safety, and wellbeing; Regular accreditation-compliance visits; Zero-residence Levy; Removing legacy admissions
- Long-term: Building Publicly-owned accommodations and Students Villages; Land Expropriation Act



What does a successful RTALC look like

- No student is left behind due to fees, accommodation, or unfair exclusion
- Every student knows their rights under the Charter
- SASCO is seen as the **first friend on campus**
- The Charter becomes the **students' document**



SASCO's RTLC Positions

- Accommodation:
 - **Wavering of the residence levies in institutionally-owned and privately owned accommodations;**
 - **Placement of every Student**, regardless of funding status, in institution-owned accommodation;
 - the thorough **assessment of accredited Student accommodations;** and
 - mass mobilisation for **publicly funded, Student-centred accommodation** and opposition to profiteering in Student housing.



SASCO's RTLC Positions

- Financial Aid and Access:
 - **Wavering of ALL application fees and registration fees;**
 - **The removal of historic debt using institutions' reserves;**
 - **All NSFAS Funded Students are to be allowed to register and access accommodation without delay;**
 - extension of registration periods where necessary;
 - all institutions are to **publicly declare** the following:
 - **Institutional Reserves and other financial capacities**
 - **Registration data, including data as it relates to total registered vs expected, and registration demographic breakdowns, by race, class (Quintile School System) and gender.**
 - **Budget allocations vs expenditure for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 fiscal years.**
 - coordinated action against financial exclusion, historical debt, and administrative barriers to registration



SASCO's RTLC Positions

- Academic and Institutional Governance:
 - **Strengthening Student participation in decision-making** and resisting policies that undermine access and transformation
 - Removal of barriers for activists and Students to access the necessary structures to resolve their issues



NEHAWU's Role in RTLC

- As part of the **Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA)** and **Education Alliance**, NEHAWU is a key ally.
- **Support areas:**
 - Advocacy for **public funding** of education
 - Solidarity during **student protests & strikes**
 - Engagement in **policy dialogues** on education and training
 - Mentorship and **post-graduate workplace integration**



How SASCO Organises: Tactics and Alliances

- Understand the terrain – who is an enemy of Students, and who is an ally
- Use mass meetings, BGMs, protests when needed
- Work within the **Education Alliance** (ANCYL, YCL, COSAS, SADTU, NEHAWU)
- SASCO leads—RTLCL is our campaign framework
- Link every student case to the broader Charter demands



Mass Action & Protest – A Shared Responsibility

- Protests are a **last resort**, but sometimes necessary.
- SASCO commits to:
 - **Disciplined, peaceful protests**
 - **Protecting Students from victimisation**
 - **Legal support via Black Lawyers Association, NADEL, etc.**
- **Campuses have already taken to Mass Action – WITS, UCT, TUT etc.**
 - SASCO may call Mass Meetings in the next 2 weeks to assess the state of affairs of Students
- NEHAWU's role: **solidarity actions, media support, institutional pressure.**





The Students' Charter

- A responsive framework for transforming Higher Education
- Modeled after the Freedom Charter, informed by SASCO's Strategic Perspective on Transformation
- Articulates a vision for democratic, accessible, developmental education system
- 6 Pillars of Transformation that define our struggle

Currently:

Commercialised system
that produces educated
labour to be exploited

**STUDENTS'
CHARTER**

Where we are going:

Developmental system that
seeks to advance collective
prosperity of South African
Students within our national
interests



The Six Pillars of Transformation

The **6 pillars of transformation** are the broader areas that Students exist within – they are the elements of the Students' Lived Reality that the Charter seeks to transform.



Access

Environment

Curriculum

Success and
Graduate Alive

Employment

Institutions belong
to Students

The Six Pillars of Transformation

ACCESS TO POST SCHOOLING EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ALL!
STUDENTS SHALL STUDY IN ENVIRONMENTS THAT FOSTER SUCCESS!
THE CURRICULUM SHALL BE TRANSFORMED AND DECOLONISED!
THE STUDENTS SHALL GRADUATE ALIVE!
EMPLOYMENT AFTER EDUCATION SHALL THRIVE !
INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING SHALL BELONG TO THE STUDENTS!



1. ACCESS TO POST SCHOOLING EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR ALL!

- a. Education shall be free and open to all at all institutions of learning and training!
- b. Expanding institutions of higher learning and legislating day and night classes and online classes.
- c. Higher Education and Training shall be reclaimed as a public good and a powerful instrument for social development!
- d. The state supported by the private sector shall fund Higher Education and Training through innovative and progressive fiscal policy interventions!
- e. Student debt shall be scrapped, never to shackle the future of our youth again!



2. STUDENTS SHALL STUDY IN ENVIRONMENTS THAT FOSTER SUCCESS!

- a. All campuses shall be centres of multilingualism, multiculturalism, non racialism, non-sexism, and collective prosperity & achievement!
- b. Institutional cultures born of colonial and apartheid oppression shall be dismantled and transformed!
- c. All students shall be free from violence, sexual assault, rape, gender-based violence, and danger of any kind!
- d. Every student shall be housed in dignified, safe residences within communities that promote learning and academic success!
- e. The rights, dignity and recognition of all student minorities of race, gender, sexuality, religion and ability shall be upheld and protected!



3. THE CURRICULUM SHALL BE TRANSFORMED AND DECOLONISED!

- a. All institutions and programmes shall be rooted in the lived realities, histories, and hopes of our people!
- b. Indigenous Knowledge Systems shall be integrated across all disciplines, enriching and affirming our heritage!
- c. TVET institutions shall be repurposed to focus solely on technical and vocational excellence, serving the needs of society and industry!
- d. Language justice and inclusivity shall be affirmed in every lecture hall, classroom, and training centre!
- e. Critical Theory and Transformative Perspectives shall be embedded in all programmes of study and training!



4. THE STUDENTS SHALL GRADUATE ALIVE!

- a. No student shall be denied access to medical services within institutions and residences!
- b. Mental and emotional health services shall be made accessible and freely available to all students, in every institution and place of residence!
- c. Campuses must be clean, healthy, sustainable and energy efficient!



5. EMPLOYMENT AFTER EDUCATION SHALL THRIVE !

- a. Mandatory employment, internship, and placement support shall be the right of all who complete their studies!
- b. All graduates shall have access to deliberate, structured post-graduation training and skills development!
- c. Internships and graduate programmes in both private and public sectors shall be set aside for the immediate benefit of graduates!



6. INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING SHALL BELONG TO THE STUDENTS!

- a. The Higher Education Act shall be amended to uphold democracy and student power!
- b. It shall be unlawful for any institution to appoint student leaders - all representatives shall be freely and fairly elected by students themselves!
- c. Institutional autonomy shall not override the democratic voice of students; no university policy shall be implemented without the approval of elected student representatives!
- d. The processes of electing Student Representative Councils shall align with the National Elections Act and reflect the values of democracy and accountability!
- e. All university and college policies shall be aligned with the revised Higher Education Act and reflect the national development interests of South Africa!
- f. The campus economy shall serve the students, and its wealth shall be restored to their benefit!



How the RTALC Brings the Charter to Life

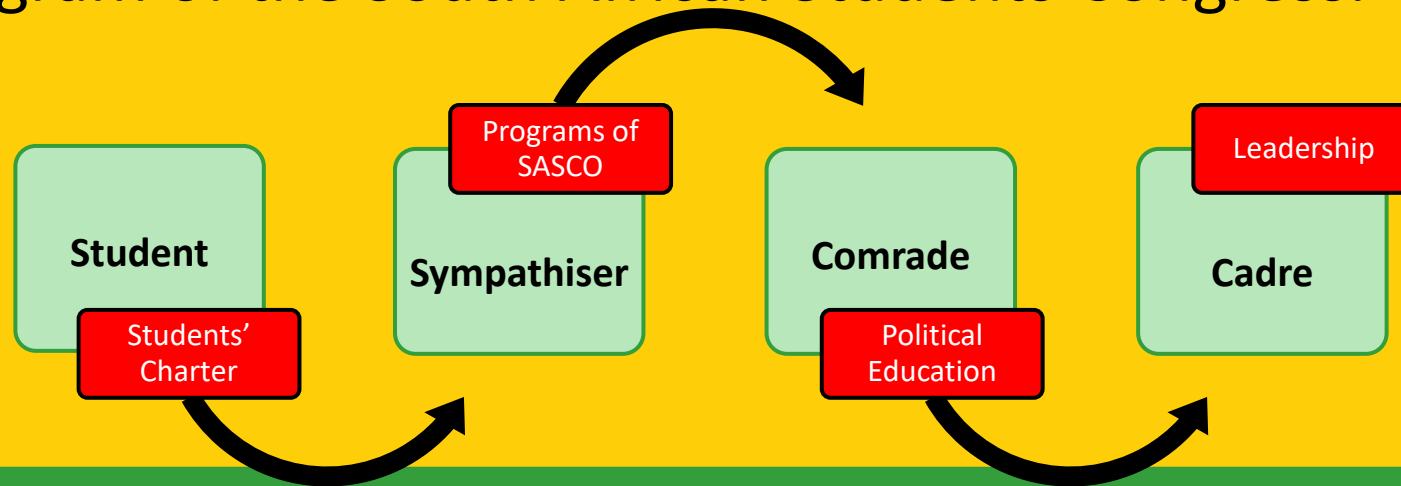
- The Charter = Our **vision**
- The RTALC = Our **action**
- Example links:
 - Charter: “Education shall be free” → RTALC: “Fight fee increments & debt exclusion”
 - Charter: “Safe, dignified residences” → RTALC: “Struggle for accommodation & campus safety”



RTLCL as a mechanism of organising Students

The Students' Charter speaks to the lived reality of each and every Student.

- Every Student must feel represented in the Charter, and subsequently, every Student must resonate with the political program of the South African Students Congress.



Build the Branch. Advance the Charter

The dual character of SASCO is such that we must ensure we are on the ground fighting for Students' "Bread-and-butter" issues, but also fighting the underlying system that benefits a minority over a majority

Conscientise



Organise



Mobilise



SASCO POA

Program	Start date	End date
Right to Learn Campaign	Dec 2025	March 2026
Students Charter Roll Out	Jan 2026	April 2026
Internationalist petition	Jan 2026	March 2026
TVET college SRC elections	Feb 2026	April 2026
International Women's Month	March 2026	March 2026
Autumn Graduation	April 2026	May 2026
Freedom Month/Mandela Month	April 2026	April 2026
Mid- Year Exams	June 2026	July 2026
Worker's Month	May 2026	May 2026
Graduate Alive/Save the Semester	June 2026	July 2026
Youth Month	June 2026	June 2026



SASCO POA

Program		Start date	End date
RTL		July 2026	August 2026
Mandela Month		July 2026	July 2026
Women's month		August 2026	August 2026
University SRC elections		August 2026	Oct 2026
SASCO's 35 th Anniversary		September 2026	September 2026
Heritage Month		September 2026	
Disability Month		September 2026	
Mental Health Awareness		October 2026	October 2026
Pride Month		October 2026	
Final Exams		Nov 2026	Nov 2026
Graduate Alive/Save semester		Nov 2026	Nov 2026
16 Days of Activism		Nov 2026	December 2026



Call to Action for NEHAWU Comrades

Endorse the Students' Charter – organisationally and individually.

Participate in RTLC workshops & inductions.

Support Student struggles on campuses where NEHAWU is present.

Advocate for post-education employment and internship policies.

Strengthen the Worker-Student alliance for a transformative education system.



Commitment to the Students' Charter

We, the Students of South Africa,

drawn from all Universities, Universities of Technology and TVET Colleges, together with progressive formations in labour, civil society, the public sector, the international community, and all others committed to justice and transformation, declare before our country and the world:

That we acknowledge the progress made in the Post Schooling Education and Training Sector (PSET) in the democratic era;

However; the doors of learning and of culture still remain closed to many;

Despite the progress the Post Schooling Education and Training Sector (PSET) still reflects the fault lines of inequality, exclusion, and commercialisation;

That our generation cannot prosper while education is treated as a privilege and not a right;

That only a democratic, accessible, and developmental education system can secure for all our people the knowledge, skills, and dignity promised by our Constitution and liberation heritage.

Therefore, we, the students of South Africa, united in struggle and vision, proclaim this Student Charter as a living framework for the total and fundamental transformation of the Post Schooling Education and Training system.

We pledge ourselves to work hand in hand with all who share our mission, to spare neither strength nor courage until this vision is realised.



SASCO



UNITY FOR DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION

A Luta Continua!



YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF SA

SPECIAL NATIONAL COMMITTEE PLENARY

**JOE SLOVO RIGHT TO LEARN
CAMPAIGN CONCEPT NOTE**

YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF SOUTH AFRICA MANDATORY PROGRAMME

Joe Slovo Right To Learn Campaign 2026

"Youth to the Front: Rescue the NDR, Advance Towards People's Power"

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Comrade Joe Slovo vehemently opposed apartheid and played a significant role in the liberation struggle. As a dedicated Marxist-Leninist revolutionary, he served as the leader and theorist of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and as the Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the joint military arm of the SACP-ANC.

After the re-establishment of the Young Communist League South Africa (YCLSA) in 2003, following its banning under the Suppression of Communism Act (1950), the YCLSA honours the legacy of Comrade Joe Slovo by initiating the Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign. This campaign focuses on addressing the challenges faced by working-class youth and aims to advocate for their right to education.

The Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign (JSR2LC), an annual yearlong initiative by the Young Communist League of South Africa (YCLSA), celebrates the legacy of Comrade Joe Slovo by bringing together various YCLSA campaigns into a festival of events. This includes the ID campaign for learners aged 16 and above, Operation Khula for membership recruitment (ages 14-35), and a sanitary towel campaign for girls from disadvantaged families. Additionally, it encompasses activities such as Bua Thursdays, Ruth First sporting games, educational and career expos, and more.

The campaign also incorporates our 1 million sanitary towel campaign, addressing the needs of learners from previously disadvantaged families. Furthermore, it mobilises communities to address issues like Gender-Based Violence and femicide through school assemblies and other interactions.

Education is a microcosm of society and thereby reflects the social dynamics, and the campaign emphasises the Marxist-Leninist perspective that the ruling ideas are those of the ruling class. The disconnection between education levels, required skills, and job prospects is highlighted, with an acknowledgement that the education sector plays a crucial role in social reproduction.

The Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign serves as a platform to reflect on the successes and and confront the failures of the movement, particularly in the struggle for people's education and empowerment. The dominance of liberal academics in educational institutions is addressed, emphasising the need to contest this influence effectively.

The content of education is scrutinised, questioning whether it aligns with national imperatives and societal challenges or merely produces labour for the market. The campaign advocates for education that instils revolutionary class consciousness, emphasising values of love, respect, social responsibility, and patriotism. It calls for qualitative, compulsory, and universal education that serves humanity and prepares individuals to contribute meaningfully to society.

In 2026, the JSR2LC assumes heightened significance as the YCLSA positions the youth at the forefront of rescuing the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) and advancing towards People's Power. This campaign year serves as a critical mobilisation platform ahead of our Early National Congress, scheduled from 24th to 27th April 2026, where we shall consolidate our programme and chart a revolutionary path forward.

ALIGNMENT WITH THE 2026 THEME: YOUTH TO THE FRONT – RESCUE THE NDR, ADVANCE TOWARDS PEOPLE'S POWER

The declaration of 2026 under the theme "Youth to the Front: Rescue the NDR, Advance Towards People's Power" represents a clarion call to the young revolutionaries of South Africa. The Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign must be understood within this broader political context and serve as a vehicle for realising this historic mandate.

Understanding the Theme

Youth to the Front: This directive positions young people not as passive beneficiaries of revolutionary gains but as active agents in the socialist transformation of society. The education sector represents a primary site of struggle where the youth must assert leadership, challenge bourgeois hegemony, and advance working-class interests.

Rescue the NDR: The National Democratic Revolution faces unprecedented threats from neoliberal policy drift, corruption, state capture remnants, and the demobilisation of mass formations. The JSR2LC must contribute to rescuing the NDR by:

- Defending and advancing progressive education policies
- Combating privatisation and commodification of education
- Strengthening people's organs of power in education governance

Advance Towards People's Power: People's Power in education in reality means democratic control over educational institutions by workers, students, communities, and progressive intellectuals. The campaign must galvanise communities to participate actively in School Governing Bodies, Student Representative Councils, and other democratic structures.

Strategic Pillars for 2026

1. Revolutionary Education Content: Intensifying the call for curriculum transformation that includes the Materialist Conception of History and decolonised knowledge systems.
2. Mass Mobilisation: Utilising the JSR2LC to build organisational capacity and political consciousness among the youth as we prepare for the Early National Congress and 2026 LGE.

Alliance Building: Strengthening unity within the Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA) and broader mass democratic movement behind the education agenda.

1. Policy Advocacy: Campaigning for policies that advance the NDR in education, including free quality education, expanded access, and transformed governance.
2. Cadre Development: Using every campaign activity as an opportunity for political education and organisational development.

BRIEF LANDSCAPE OVERVIEW AND CAMPAIGN JUSTIFICATION

Government Educational Reforms:

Significant strides have been achieved by the democratic government in transforming the education system through the evolution of systems, structures, policies, and legislation.

Youth Exclusion:

Despite government efforts, there exists a substantial population of South African youth not engaged in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET). This crisis of youth exclusion represents a fundamental threat to the NDR and demands that the youth be placed at the forefront of efforts to address it.

Scholar Transport in Rural Areas:

Urgent attention is needed from the government to address the critical issue of scholar transport, particularly in rural areas, to ensure equal access to education.

Early Childhood Development Integration:

The integration of Early Childhood Development Centres must comprehensively address the challenges faced by children, owners, and personnel involved in these centres.

High Dropout Rates and Low Throughput:

Psychosocial factors contributing to high dropout rates and low throughput in the education system need immediate attention.

Educational Challenges:

Challenges such as high school burglary rates and low literacy levels underscore the need for robust intervention strategies.

Financial and Academic Exclusion:

Rampant financial and academic exclusions, particularly among working-class youth and the missing middle, need to be addressed in higher education institutions. The advancement of People's Power in education governance is essential to address these exclusions.

Provincial Limitations on Funding:

Agricultural and Nursing Colleges, entities of provincial governments, limit students' access to funding tools like NSFAS, creating bottlenecks in institutional access.

Mismatched TVET Courses:

Courses offered by most Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges do not align with local needs and comparative advantages.

Delayed Allocations:

Delays in allocating study material, transport, accommodation, and tuition fees hinder academic excellence and student success.

Under-Recognised Skills Development:

Lack of awareness among youth regarding skills development programs highlights the need for better dissemination of information.

Limited University Expansion:

Only two universities have been built from scratch since the democratic breakthrough over 30 years ago, resulting in insufficient student intake. Rescuing the NDR requires bold infrastructure investment in higher education.

Workplace Training Advocacy:

Advocacy for every workplace to become a training space under the Work Integrated Learning policy is essential for practical skills development.

Practical Learning in Education:

Encouraging practical work and community service for all courses, not just select ones, is crucial for a comprehensive education.

Infrastructure Challenges:

Insufficient infrastructure remains a barrier to access, particularly in higher education institutions.

Local Government Involvement:

Local governments should play a role in providing student accommodation by utilising practical Intergovernmental Relations, such as providing land and renovating abandoned buildings.

Inadequate Facilities:

The lack of libraries, laboratories, and basic healthcare facilities in schools must be urgently addressed.

Overcrowded Classrooms:

Non-compliance with the learner-to-teacher ratio norm leads to overcrowded classrooms, affecting the quality of education.

Limited Sporting and Recreational Facilities:

Schools, especially those in previously disadvantaged areas, lack adequate sporting and recreational facilities.

Decline in Extracurricular Activities:

The decline in school sports, debates, public speaking, indigenous games, and creative arts demands immediate attention.

Proximity of Alcohol Outlets:

The prevalence of alcohol-selling outlets near schools poses a significant challenge to maintaining a conducive learning environment.

Social Challenges in Schools:

Issues such as substance abuse, drug and alcohol addiction, gangsterism, Gender-Based Violence, Femicide, Bullying, and Rape culture are pervasive in schools.

Minimal Mental Health Support:

Adequate mental health and psychosocial support services are currently minimal, requiring urgent enhancement.

YOUTH TO THE FRONT: MOBILIZE, EDUCATE AND AGITATE THE YOUTH FOR SOCIALISM

Building upon the foundations laid by the various Plenary sessions of the 6th National Committee of the YCLSA, the 2026 Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign intensifies the call for districts and all structures to actively participate in the life and activities of the organization.

The guiding Pillars of our JSR2LC remain – MOBILIZE, EDUCATE & AGITATE the YOUTH for SOCIALISM now elevated by our 2026 theme:

"Youth to the Front: Rescue the NDR, Advance Towards People's Power."

As the Young Communist League of South Africa, we shall seek to mobilize the youth of this country across the breadth and length of this country in the Rural parts of the country, in the urban parts. The Youth in any society is an important stratum. It remains a vital stratum that needs to be constantly mobilized toward a particular perspective and ideological outlook that outlook for us as the YCLSA and our political outlook is that of Marxism-Leninism.

In 2026, as we prepare for the Early National Congress from 24th to 27th April, this mobilization takes on added urgency. The Congress provides a platform to consolidate the gains of our campaigns and chart the path forward for rescuing the NDR and advancing People's Power.

We will rigorously mobilize the Youth because of the challenges they face precisely because the legacies of colonialism, apartheid, and segregation in the prevailing capitalist system have produced and reproduced the challenges of youth unemployment, poor quality education, lack of skills, high levels of HIV/AIDS, and low levels of entrepreneurship amongst the youth. This is despite the fact significant strides since the advent of democracy in 1994, the majority of young South Africans remain doubtful of a better life endowed with education, skills, jobs, and opportunities for social and economic progress. Youth between the ages of 14 and 35 constitute approximately 42% of the total population in South Africa and the youth population is growing at a faster rate than the adult population. This large youth population cohort can create new socioeconomic opportunities if adequately supported. At the same time, if not properly supported, it could result in social and developmental catastrophes.

We need to mobilize the youth toward a deliberate, political, and radical approach to challenge the status quo. So youth Mobilization shall take center stage.

Educate – The need to prioritize and heighten Political Education among the youth is by far the most important pillar of the campaign because just like Comrade Thomas Sankara said, a soldier without any political training is a potential criminal. The assertion stands firmly and quite pointedly, especially for the youth.

In this Year's campaign, we shall seek to educate young people in the ideals of socialism, inspired by Marxism-Leninism. This is done in creative ways such as screening movies, playing political games (30 Seconds, Quizzes), seminars, Bua Thursdays, poetry nights, and Red Picnics. These are all activities that shall seek to propagate socialist ideas across. This is also appreciating that political education is a daily and ongoing activity that requires one to make efforts to assimilate politics.

In 2026, political education must specifically focus on the concepts embedded in our theme: What is the NDR? Why must it be rescued? What threatens it? What is People's Power and how do we advance towards it? How does education relate to these questions?

Agitate – The program is to agitate the youth for Socialism through programs that make them realize that the system of capitalism is evil and disastrous. It has severe repercussions for humanity. This we shall do by staging protests against any issue that might be troublesome to society. For instance,

there shouldn't be a water problem and young people in that locality do and say nothing. There are questions that must be asked by young people across schools and universities and in communities – in all spaces where there are young people gathered it should be treated as an area to agitate the youth against the heinous system called capitalism.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the preparedness of educational institutions for the upcoming academic year.
2. Serving as a comprehensive data collection tool, the campaign aims to provide insights into the state of education and its evolving dynamics within the country.
3. To bring the YCLSA closer to the plight of the working class youth.
4. To advocate for the realization of a universally accessible, free, compulsory, and high-quality education system.
5. Aiming for curriculum enrichment, the campaign pushes for the inclusion of the Materialist Conception of History up to Grade 9.
6. Championing digital inclusion, the campaign strives for increased accessibility to the people's data economy through enhanced Wi-Fi and connectivity.
7. To intensify efforts to enhance infrastructure development in schools, creating conducive learning environments.
8. To address rising mental health challenges among teenagers and youth, the campaign calls for the employment of one Circuit, One Social Worker, and One Psychologist.
9. To advocate for Universal application of Recognition of Prior Learning policy to accommodate the youth and the rank and file.
10. Campaign to ring-fence skills development levy to serve the purpose of skilling and reskilling the workforce.
11. To campaign for the migration of Agricultural and Nursing Colleges to the Department of Higher Education to widen access.
12. To establish School Vegetable gardens and preserve the environment while championing environmental preservation and food security.
13. To advocate for the amendment of the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998, enabling a more extensive benefit for the youth.
14. To raise awareness and advocacy for the workplace skills Plan and annual skills development reports especially the expenditure patterns when compared to progress made.

- 15.To position the youth at the forefront of rescuing the National Democratic Revolution through education sector activism and transformation.
- 16.To advance People's Power by strengthening democratic participation in education governance structures including School Governing Bodies and Student Representative Councils.
- 17.To build organizational capacity and political consciousness ahead of the Early National Congress (24th-27th April 2026).
- 18.To coordinate effectively with the People's Red Caravan while maintaining the distinct identity of the JSR2LC as a YCLSA Mass Campaign.
- 19.To ensure all YCLSA structures – National, Provincial, District, and Branch – are actively on board and implementing the campaign programme.

PROGRAM AND OUTLINE OF ACTIVITIES

Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign: February – April 2026

The Official Launch of the Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign 2026 shall take place in Limpopo Province during February 2026. This launch shall set the tone for the campaign under the theme "Youth to the Front: Rescue the NDR, Advance Towards People's Power" and shall mobilize all structures towards active participation.

Week 1: LIMPOPO PROVINCE – OFFICIAL LAUNCH

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
OFFICIAL LAUNCH: Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign 2026	February 2026	Limpopo	TBC	Limpopo Provincial Secretary / National Secretariat
School Readiness - Painting, Cleaning	February 2026	Limpopo	TBC	Limpopo Provincial Secretary
School Visit – Book Covering and Preparations	February 2026	Limpopo	TBC	Limpopo Provincial Secretary
Interaction with Learners and Address Assembly	February 2026	Limpopo	TBC	Limpopo Provincial Secretary

Week 2: LIMPOPO PROVINCE (CONTINUED)

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
TVET College Visit	February 2026	Limpopo	TBC	Limpopo Provincial Secretary
University Visit / Campus Base Visit	February 2026	Limpopo	University of Limpopo	Limpopo Provincial Secretary

Week 3: MPUMALANGA PROVINCE

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
School Readiness - Painting, Cleaning	February 2026	Mpumalanga	TBC	Mpumalanga Provincial Secretary
Visit to School – Dispensation of Menstrual Hygiene Products	February 2026	Mpumalanga	TBC	Mpumalanga Provincial Secretary
School Visit – Book Covering and Preparations for reopening	February 2026	Mpumalanga	TBC	Mpumalanga Provincial Secretary
Bua Thursday Youth Discussion Series - School Debate and Article writing	February 2026	Mpumalanga	TBC	Mpumalanga Provincial Secretary
Advancing People's Power: SGB and SRC Engagement	February 2026	Mpumalanga	TBC	Mpumalanga Provincial Secretary

Week 4: MPUMALANGA PROVINCE (CONTINUED)

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
TVET College Visit	February 2026	Mpumalanga	TBC	Mpumalanga Provincial Secretary
University Visit / Campus Base Visit	February 2026	Mpumalanga	University of Mpumalanga	Mpumalanga Provincial Secretary
Rescue the NDR: Youth Mobilization Rally	February 2026	Mpumalanga	TBC	Mpumalanga Provincial Secretary
People's Red Caravan Integration Activity (where applicable)	February 2026	Mpumalanga	TBC	Mpumalanga Provincial Secretary

Week 5: MOSES KOTANE PROVINCE (NORTH WEST)

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
School Visit – Distribution of Sanitary Towels	March 2026	Moses Kotane	TBC	Moses Kotane Provincial Secretary
School Visit – Book Covering and Preparations	March 2026	Moses Kotane Province	TBC	Moses Kotane Provincial Secretary
TVET College Visit	March 2026	Moses Kotane Province	TBC	Moses Kotane Provincial Secretary
Bua Thursday Youth Talk Series - School Debate and Article writing	March 2026	Moses Kotane Province	TBC	Moses Kotane Provincial Secretary
Rescue the NDR: Community Dialogue on Education Transformation	March 2026	Moses Kotane Province	TBC	Moses Kotane Provincial Secretary

Week 6: MOSES KOTANE PROVINCE (CONTINUED)

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
TVET College Visit	March 2026	Moses Kotane Province	TBC	Moses Kotane Provincial Secretary
University Visit / Campus Base Visit	March 2026	Moses Kotane Province	North West University	Moses Kotane Provincial Secretary
Interaction with Learners and Address Assembly	March 2026	Moses Kotane Province	TBC	Moses Kotane Provincial Secretary
Mini Rally Distribution of Planting Seeds	March 2026	Moses Kotane Province	TBC	Moses Kotane Provincial Secretary

Week 7: GAUTENG PROVINCE

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
School Readiness - Painting, Cleaning	March 2026	Gauteng Province	Soweto	Gauteng Province Provincial Secretary
School Visit – Workers Interaction	March 2026	Gauteng Province	TBC	Gauteng Province Provincial Secretary
TVET College Visit	March 2026	Gauteng Province	TBC	Gauteng Province Provincial Secretary
University Visit / Campus Base Visit	March 2026	Gauteng Province	University of Johannesburg	Gauteng Province Provincial Secretary
Bua Thursday Youth Talk Series	March 2026	Gauteng Province	TBC	Gauteng Province Provincial Secretary

Week 8: GAUTENG PROVINCE (CONTINUED)

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
School Visit – Distribution of Sanitary Towels	March 2026	Gauteng Province	TBC	Gauteng Province Provincial Secretary
Interaction with Learners and Address Assembly	March 2026	Gauteng Province	TBC	Gauteng Province Provincial Secretary
Youth to the Front: Education Transformation Summit	March 2026	Gauteng Province	TBC	Gauteng Province Provincial Secretary

Week 9: FREE STATE PROVINCE

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
School Visit – Book Covering and Preparations for reopening	March 2026	Free State	Primary School TBC	Free State Provincial Secretary
School Visit – Workers Interaction	March 2026	Free State	TBC	Free State Provincial Secretary
Interaction with Learners and Address Assembly	March 2026	Free State	High School TBC	Free State Provincial Secretary
TVET College Visit	March 2026	Free State	TBC	Free State Provincial Secretary
University Visit / Campus Base Visit	March 2026	Free State	University of the Free State	Free State Provincial Secretary

Week 10: FREE STATE PROVINCE (CONTINUED)

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
School Visit – Distribution of Sanitary Towels	March 2026	Free State	TBC	Free State Provincial Secretary
Bua Thursday Youth Talk Series – School Debate and Article Writing	March 2026	Free State	TBC	Free State Provincial Secretary
People's Power in Education Seminar	March 2026	Free State	TBC	Free State Provincial Secretary
Early Congress Mobilization Drive	March 2026	Free State	TBC	Free State Provincial Secretary

Week 11: NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
College Visit	March 2026	Northern Cape	Nursing College	Northern Cape Provincial Secretary
College Visit	March 2026	Northern Cape	Agricultural College	Northern Cape Provincial Secretary
University Visit / Campus Base Visit	March 2026	Northern Cape	Sol Plaatje University	Northern Cape Provincial Secretary
School Visit – Book Covering and Preparations	March 2026	Northern Cape	TBC	Northern Cape Provincial Secretary
Bua Thursday Youth Talk Series	March 2026	Northern Cape	TBC	Northern Cape Provincial Secretary

Week 12: NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE (CONTINUED)

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
School Visit – Distribution of Sanitary Towels	April 2026	Northern Cape	TBC	Northern Cape Provincial Secretary
Interaction with Learners and Address Assembly	April 2026	Northern Cape	TBC	Northern Cape Provincial Secretary
Rescue the NDR: Youth Dialogue	April 2026	Northern Cape	TBC	Northern Cape Provincial Secretary
People's Red Caravan Integration Activity (where applicable)	April 2026	Northern Cape	TBC	Northern Cape Provincial Secretary

Week 13: EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
School Visit – Book Covering and Preparations for reopening	April 2026	Eastern Cape	TBC	Eastern Cape Provincial Secretary
University Visit / Campus Base Visit	April 2026	Eastern Cape	Nelson Mandela University / Rhodes University	Eastern Cape Provincial Secretary
TVET College Visit	April 2026	Eastern Cape	TBC	Eastern Cape Provincial Secretary
School Visit – Distribution of Sanitary Towels and Awareness of Pit Toilets	April 2026	Eastern Cape	TBC	Eastern Cape Provincial Secretary
Bua Thursday Youth Talk Series	April 2026	Eastern Cape	TBC	Eastern Cape Provincial Secretary

Week 14: EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE (CONTINUED)

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
TVET College Visit	April 2026	Eastern Cape	TBC	Eastern Cape Provincial Secretary
Interaction with Learners and Address Assembly	April 2026	Eastern Cape	TBC	Eastern Cape Provincial Secretary
Youth to the Front: Community Dialogue on Education	April 2026	Eastern Cape	TBC	Eastern Cape Provincial Secretary
Early Congress Final Mobilization	April 2026	Eastern Cape	TBC	Eastern Cape Provincial Secretary

Week 15: MOSES MABHIDA PROVINCE (KWAZULU-NATAL)

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
School Visit – Book Covering and Preparations for reopening	April 2026	Moses Mabhida	TBC	Moses Mabhida Provincial Secretary
Interaction with Learners and Address Assembly	April 2026	Moses Mabhida	TBC	Moses Mabhida Provincial Secretary
Mini Rally Distribution of Planting Seeds	April 2026	Moses Mabhida	TBC	Moses Mabhida Provincial Secretary
TVET College Visit	April 2026	Moses Mabhida	TBC	Moses Mabhida Provincial Secretary
University Visit / Campus Base Visit	April 2026	Moses Mabhida	University of KwaZulu-Natal	Moses Mabhida Provincial Secretary

Week 16: MOSES MABHIDA PROVINCE (CONTINUED)

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
School Visit – Distribution of Sanitary Towels	April 2026	Moses Mabhida	TBC	Moses Mabhida Provincial Secretary
Bua Thursday Youth Talk Series – School Debate and Article Writing	April 2026	Moses Mabhida	TBC	Moses Mabhida Provincial Secretary
Advancing People's Power: SGB and SRC Engagement	April 2026	Moses Mabhida	TBC	Moses Mabhida Provincial Secretary
People's Red Caravan Integration Activity (where applicable)	April 2026	Moses Mabhida	TBC	Moses Mabhida Provincial Secretary

Week 17: WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
School Visit – Book Covering and Preparations for reopening	April 2026	Western Cape	TBC	Western Cape Provincial Coordinator
Engagement with Students and Delivering Speech to the Assembly	April 2026	Western Cape	TBC	Western Cape Provincial Coordinator
Bua Thursday Youth Talk Series - School Debate and Article writing	April 2026	Western Cape	TBC	Western Cape Provincial Coordinator
Political and Ideological Outing – Session of Poetic Expression	April 2026	Western Cape	TBC	Western Cape Provincial Coordinator
TVET College Visit	April 2026	Western Cape	TBC	Western Cape Provincial Coordinator

Week 18: WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE (CONTINUED) – PRE-CONGRESS WRAP-UP

Item	Date	Province	Venue	Responsible Person
University Visit / Campus Base Visit	April 2026	Western Cape	University of Cape Town / UWC	Western Cape Provincial Coordinator
School Visit – Distribution of Sanitary Towels	April 2026	Western Cape	TBC	Western Cape Provincial Coordinator
Youth to the Front: Education Summit	April 2026	Western Cape	TBC	Western Cape Provincial Coordinator
JSR2LC National Wrap-Up and Early Congress Mobilization Summit	April 2026	Western Cape	TBC	Western Cape Provincial Coordinator / National Secretariat

MANDATE AND DIRECTIVES TO OUR STRUCTURES

ALL STRUCTURES MUST BE ON BOARD. The successful implementation of the Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign 2026 and the realization of the theme "Youth to the Front: Rescue the NDR, Advance Towards People's Power" requires the active participation and commitment of every level of the organization. No structure shall be a spectator in this revolutionary undertaking.

National

- National Committee Members to be part of ECD, School and Institutional visits.
- National Office Bearers to visit various provinces and districts led by the National Secretary.
- Compile school sheets from NC members and Provincial structures.
- Consolidate the information gathered from school sheets forms and develop a report.
- Make follow up on the visits outcome.
- Work with Department of Basic Education, and the Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology, and Education Alliance (COSAS, SASCO, YCLSA, ANCYL, SADTU and NEHAWU).
- Lead and Monitor provinces and districts on school visits programme.
- Coordinate the integration of JSR2LC activities with the People's Red Caravan where intersections exist, while maintaining campaign ownership.
- Ensure all activities align with and advance the 2026 theme.
- Lead preparations for the Early National Congress (24th-27th April 2026) alongside campaign activities.
- Develop political education materials focusing on rescuing the NDR and advancing People's Power.

Provinces

- Visit at least 4 schools, 3 TVET Colleges (Not campuses from same TVET) and 2 universities.
- Report to the National Office through the Secretariat.
- Convene Joe Slovo Commemoration events (Each province convenes a provincial memorial lecture).
- Work with Provincial Department of Education on the information gathered during school visits.
- Mobilize PYA structures, Unions and other stakeholders on Education behind our campaign.
- Identify opportunities for coordination with People's Red Caravan activities in the province.
- Organize at least one seminar on "Youth to the Front: Rescue the NDR, Advance Towards People's Power."
- Ensure all districts are actively implementing the campaign programme.

Districts

- Mobilize branches for organizational activities and community engagement.
- Hold at least a seminar on the JSR2LC campaign.
- Convene Bua Thursdays.
- Report to YCLSA provincial structures.
- Coordinate branch programmes on the campaign.
- Organize at least one activity themed around rescuing the NDR and People's Power in education.
- Ensure active participation in the campaign and readiness for Early Congress.
- Coordinate with branches to maximize coverage and impact.

Branches

- Community based branches to visit schools.
- Campus-based branches run activations for the visit of upper structures.
- Campus based structures deal with issues affecting both students and young workers.
- Report to districts.
- Intensify Operation Khula during this campaign.
- Every branch must implement at least one JSR2LC activity.
- All branch members must understand and be able to articulate the 2026 theme.
- Prepare membership for Early Congress through political education activities.

REPORTING AND INFORMATION SHARING MECHANISM

- Branches should draft weekly plans, adopt in branch committee meetings and submit to the Districts.
- Branches should submit weekly progress reports to Districts and host Branch General Meeting for this purpose.
- District Should submit Bi-Weekly to the province the overarching reports of progress made on the campaign.
- Provinces Should furnish the Headquarters monthly on the progress made and the provincial observations.

Additional Reporting Requirements for 2026:

- All reports must include a section on how activities advanced the 2026 theme: "Youth to the Front: Rescue the NDR, Advance Towards People's Power."
- Reports on any coordination with People's Red Caravan activities must be submitted separately, clearly distinguishing JSR2LC activities.
- The War Room shall compile weekly consolidated reports for the National Secretariat.

TOWARDS THE EARLY NATIONAL CONGRESS: AFFIRMING OUR PROGRAMME

The Early National Congress of the YCLSA, scheduled from 24th to 27th April 2026, represents a historic moment for our organization. Sitting under the theme "Youth to the Front: Rescue the NDR, Advance Towards People's Power," this Congress will consolidate our organizational gains, assess our campaigns, and chart the revolutionary path forward.

Role of the JSR2LC in Congress Preparation

The Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign serves as a critical preparatory platform for the Early National Congress:

1. Membership Recruitment: Operation Khula activities during the campaign must intensify membership recruitment, ensuring a robust delegate base for Congress.
2. Political Consciousness: Campaign activities must elevate the political consciousness of members, preparing them for the ideological deliberations of Congress.
3. Organizational Assessment: The campaign provides data and experiences that will inform Congress discussions on the state of education and YCLSA's role in transformation.
4. Mandate Building: Engagements during the campaign help structures develop mandates and resolutions for Congress consideration.
5. Cadre Identification: The campaign allows for the identification of capable cadres for organizational deployment.

Congress-Related Campaign Activities

- February – March 2026: All provincial JSR2LC activities to include Congress mobilization components.
- March – April 2026: District Congress preparation meetings to incorporate JSR2LC report-backs.
- Mid-April 2026: Final mobilization activities aligned with Congress registration.
- Pre-Congress (Week before 24th April 2026): National JSR2LC Wrap-Up Summit and final Congress preparations.

Expected Congress Outcomes Related to Education

The Early National Congress is expected to:

- Adopt resolutions on advancing people's education for people's power
- Strengthen the organizational framework for the JSR2LC
- Affirm the YCLSA's role in rescuing the NDR through education sector activism
- Develop a comprehensive youth education policy framework

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGETARY PROJECTIONS

Role of Host Province

- Provinces are requested to identify the Districts and venues for the aforementioned program.
- Provinces working close with districts are required to draft mobilization plans for the activities as outlined with the Organizing Department of the HQ.
- Provinces are requested to in collaboration with interact with local donors of resources, school shoes and uniforms, calculators – this should be done in collaboration with the National Treasurer.
- Provinces are expected to popularize the activities coming to their province; the graphics department of the HQ will be forever active. Local Media and radio stations should be utilized in liaison with our Media and Liaison Officer.
- Provinces are expected to cascade this mandate and directives to our structures and garner active participation and involvement by our structures.
-

Additional Fiscal Considerations for 2026:

- Early Congress Budgeting: Provinces must factor Early Congress delegate transport and related costs into their planning.
- People's Red Caravan Coordination: Where JSR2LC activities intersect with People's Red Caravan events, cost-sharing arrangements may be explored with approval from the National Treasurer.
- Resource Mobilization for 2026 Theme: Additional resources may be required for materials specifically developed for the 2026 theme (banners, educational materials, etc.).

CONCLUSION

The responsibility falls on the youth from the working class to break these shackles and introduce a fresh order and perspective to achieve the South Africa we desire, reminiscent of the ideals of Comrade Harry Gwala and Comrade Joe Slovo.

In constructing the South Africa we aspire to create, we need to embrace a resourceful and forward-thinking materialistic strategy. This strategy should formulate an action plan specifically designed to address the needs of the 21st-century youth. It is imperative to engage with progressive individuals both domestically and internationally to seek guidance on how the YCLSA can play a role in fostering significant advancements within our education system, encompassing its ultimate goals.

Our collective objective is to confront and reshape the inherently bourgeois education system by taking a prominent leadership role. When questions arise regarding the sustainability of progress, it is crucial for the working class to provide direction on the nature, structure, and substance of the skills that need to be developed. The working class must collaborate internally to bolster learning, enhance employability, and generate opportunities for advancement in industry and other areas for the less privileged.

In 2026, we affirm that the youth must be at the front of all efforts to rescue the National Democratic Revolution and advance towards People's Power. The Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign is our weapon in the education sector – a YCLSA Mass Campaign that mobilizes, educates, and agitates the youth for socialism.

As we prepare for the Early National Congress from 24th to 27th April 2026 and 2026 LGE, let every structure, every cadre, and every young revolutionary understand their role and execute their mandate with revolutionary discipline.

The People's Red Caravan marches across our land, and where it intersects with our campaign, we shall coordinate and collaborate. But let it be known: the Joe Slovo Right to Learn Campaign is fundamentally a YCLSA Mass Campaign, and we own it with pride.

Youth to the Front! Rescue the NDR! Advance Towards People's Power!

WAR ROOM

A war room shall be set up to mainly oversee and coordinate the daily operations of the JSR2LC, shall be constituted by members of National Committee, the Provinces and Districts. Their main role is to provide support and political guidance, be a responsive team to the prevailing situation. This war room shall respond to issues on a timeous basis and in a rapid way.

War Room Functions for 2026:

1. Theme Integration: Ensure all campaign communications and activities align with the 2026 theme.
2. People's Red Caravan Coordination: Serve as the coordination point for any JSR2LC integration with People's Red Caravan activities.
3. Early Congress Liaison/Engagements: Coordinate between campaign activities and Early Congress preparation committees.
4. All-Structures Monitoring: Track participation across all structures (National, Provincial, District, Branch) to ensure full organizational mobilization.
5. Rapid Response: Address emerging education sector issues through the lens of the 2026 theme.
6. Reporting Consolidation: Compile and analyze reports from all structures for National Secretariat.

NEHAWU PAPER ON THE FUNDING MODEL

I. CONTEXT SETTING

In presenting existing funding models to the National Education Sub-Committee, a brief overview of the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) is required.

The PSET system refers to learning that takes place after basic education, where basic education encompasses all learning from Grade R to 12. Therefore, PSET in South Africa consists of all education and training opportunities available to those who have completed school, those who did not complete their schooling, and those who never attended school.

The PSET system comprises several key sectors with different areas of specialization, namely: public and private

universities, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, Community Education and Training (CET) colleges, private colleges, Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), apprenticeship programmes, and in-service training. There are currently 26 public universities, 50 TVET colleges, 9 CET colleges, 137 private higher institutions, 144 private colleges, and 21 SETAs (DHET, 2025a). The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), established in 2009, is responsible for coordinating and monitoring all institutions within the PSET system. South Africa's higher education system has undergone major transformation since the mid-1990s. It has moved away from an apartheid-era structure defined by



CDE. BARRY MITCHELL
PARLIAMENTARY OFFICER

racial segregation and a rigid divide between universities and technikons, toward a unified and inclusive framework aligned with national development priorities.

In the post-apartheid era, the higher education system differentiates between public and private institutions, and among various categories of public institutions offering distinct types of programmes and qualifications. Traditional universities offer a comprehensive range of academic and professional qualifications—formal and professional certificates, diplomas, and bachelor's degrees at undergraduate level, as well as bachelor's honours, master's, and doctoral degrees, and certain postgraduate diplomas. Examples include the University of Cape Town, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Pretoria, Stellenbosch University, University of the Western Cape, University of the Witwatersrand, and Rhodes University.

Comprehensive universities were created through mergers between traditional universities and technikons, as outlined in the 2004 Concept Document on Creating Comprehensive Universities in South Africa. These institutions provide qualifications across all levels and a full range of academic, vocational, and professional fields. They were established to enhance access to higher education, promote articulation between career-focused and academic programmes, strengthen applied research, and improve responsiveness to labour market needs. Examples include the University of Johannesburg, Nelson Mandela University, University of South Africa, University of Venda, Walter Sisulu University, and University of Zululand.

Universities of Technology offer career-oriented qualifications such as certificates, diplomas, and postgraduate diplomas, with limited master's and doctoral programmes focused on niche research areas. These include the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Central University of Technology, Durban University of Technology, Mangosuthu University of

Technology, Tshwane University of Technology, and Vaal University of Technology.

The PSET system faces multiple challenges, including capacity constraints, funding shortages, and inadequate infrastructure. Labour and student unrest are symptomatic of these underlying weaknesses. A well-structured PSET sector can be a vital catalyst for addressing unemployment, poverty, and inequality.

II. PERSISTENT CHALLENGES IN THE SECTOR

(a) Capacity

According to the National Development Plan (NDP), enrolment targets are set at 1.6 million for universities, 2.5 million for TVET colleges, and 1 million for CET colleges by 2030 (National Planning Commission, 2012). However, enrolment trends suggest that TVET and CET colleges are unlikely to achieve these targets. At the start of the 2025 academic year, available student spaces across the PSET system included 941 189 at universities, 346 608 in the private higher education sector, 481 513 in TVET colleges, and 75 000 in CET colleges—a total of 1 844 310 available spaces. However, the public PSET system could accommodate only 1 497 702 students (DHET, 2025b, p. 18).

The 2025 National Senior Certificate (NSC) results marked the highest pass rate in South African history at 88%, representing more than 650 000 learners. Of these, 46% (345 000) achieved bachelor's and qualified for university study. Yet, with approximately 200 000 university spaces available, more than 100 000 eligible matriculants could not be placed at public universities. This imbalance underscores the severe capacity limitations within the PSET system. Addressing the gap will require expanded institutional access, improved efficiency, and well-located infrastructure.

(b) Infrastructure

The PSET sector continues to experience infrastructural deficits, resulting in shortages

of student housing and overcrowded lecture halls as enrolment increases while completion rates stagnate. Contributing factors include insufficient funding for infrastructure development, repair, and maintenance.

To address these challenges, the DHET has prioritized the implementation of an infrastructure development programme to expand access to quality education and training. The programme includes:

- Establishing new university campuses in Limpopo and the North West Province.
- Refurbishing the former Giyani College of Education to establish a Tshwane University of Technology campus.
- Conducting a feasibility study for a new University of North West Mining Campus.

(c) Student accommodation

Student accommodation remains a critical challenge across the PSET system. Many universities lack sufficient on-campus residences, forcing them to outsource accommodation at often higher costs than their own facilities. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has implemented a funding cap for student accommodation at R52 000 in metropolitan areas and R42 640 in non-metro areas (NSFAS, 2025). Students are required to cover any shortfalls between actual costs and the capped amount.

In 2025, NSFAS received over 900 000 applications and funded approximately 800 000 students, leaving many new entrants uncertain about funding and unable to secure accommodation (NSFAS, 2025). A standoff between NSFAS and accommodation providers affiliated with the Private Student Housing Association over unpaid bills for 7 000 students led to some student evictions (DHET, 2025b). The DHET has confirmed a shortage of over 500 000 beds for student accommodation in public tertiary institutions, particularly at rural-based universities and TVET colleges (DHET,

2025b, p. 30). As of January 2026, nearly 900 000 first time entering students applied for NSFAS funding, and over 600 000 applications were approved; however, it remains a problem as to where all these approved students will be accepted as PSET can only accommodate a significantly lower number of students for the 2026 academic year.

For the medium-term period, a total of R51.2 billion has been allocated for the Infrastructure and Efficiency Grant (DHET, 2025b, p. 26). While this represents a substantial investment, it is widely regarded as insufficient to meet the full infrastructural needs of universities across South Africa. According to the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities (2011), the average cost per new student accommodation bed is approximately R 240,000. When multiplied by 500,000 beds, this amounts to R 120 billion, and it excludes the costs of refurbishing lecture halls, laboratories, technology infrastructure, new campuses, maintenance, and other related expenses.

This demonstrates that while the current allocation is a positive step, additional funding, partnerships, and strategic planning will be necessary to address the growing infrastructure backlog and ensure that universities can adequately support rising enrolments.

III. THE MISSING MIDDLE

In 2012, DHET established a Working Group on Fee Free University Education for the Poor and working class. Subsequent to this, the MTT report was tasked with developing support and funding models for poor and "missing middle students". The definition of the notion of the "missing middle" has been expanded in a monetary sense since its inception into the DHET analysis in 2012. Initially the notion was characterised as: "... children from families who earn above the R122 000 per annum qualification threshold, but who still cannot afford to attend university." Subsequently, the definition of the

notion was expanded to: "... students who come from households who earn from R0 to R600 000."

In the 2025 context of higher education funding in South Africa, the term "missing middle" refers to students whose families earn too much to qualify for NSFAS bursary funding, but too little to afford university or TVET college fees. This group falls within the R350,000–R600,000 annual household income bracket. They are often excluded from financial aid because they do not meet the low-income threshold, yet they lack sufficient disposable income to self-fund tertiary studies. On 14 January 2024, the DHET announced a R3.8 billion fund within the NSFAS aimed at assisting the country's "missing middle" students to pay for tuition, learning materials and accommodation (DHET, 2024). According to the department, the new Comprehensive Student Funding Model introduces measures to support a wider category of students, including those who do not qualify under the existing NSFAS bursary and funding policy.

The newly introduced category targets students whose families earn more than R350,000 but not more than R600,000 per annum. Previously, NSFAS funding was available only to households in the low-income bracket, defined as those earning less than R350,000 per annum (NSFAS, 2024). According to the most recent National Income Dynamics Study, 85.6% of households fall into the low-income category and 11% fall within the missing-middle category (NIDS, 2024). DHET states that this new funding category will ensure that missing-middle students can now access government financial support in the form of a loan.

The Comprehensive Student Funding Model will be implemented in phases:

Phase one (2024–2025) allocates R3.8 billion, with R1.5 billion from the National Skills Fund (NSF) and R2.3 billion from the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). This funding is expected to support 31,884 missing-middle

students, representing 47% of the estimated 68,446 eligible students.

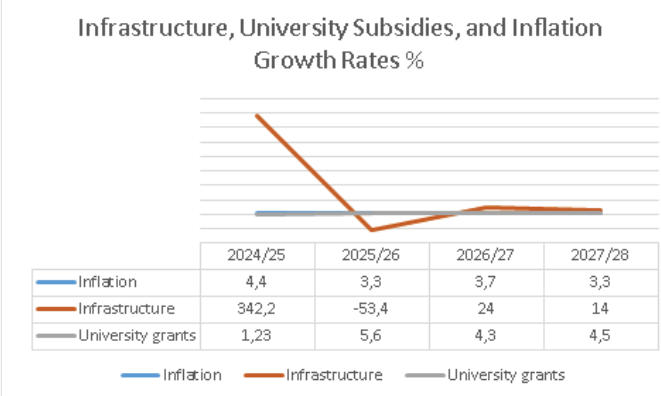
Phase two (2025–2034) seeks to increase government funding from R31.6 billion to R42.1 billion over ten years, which is equivalent to annual increases from R3.1 billion to R4.2 billion. To qualify for the government loan, students must meet the following requirements:

- Household income between R350,000 and R600,000;
- Must be enrolled at a TVET college or public university;
- Can be undergraduate or postgraduate;
- 70% of funds allocated to STEM programmes;
- 30% allocated to humanities;
- Must sign a loan agreement.

Furthermore, the funding involves conditionalities that require students to maintain a 60% average pass rate, and those who achieve 70% or higher within the prescribed time may qualify for a 50% reduction on their loan. While the initiative is presented as a means to broaden access, the reliance on a loan-based model is deeply problematic. Most missing-middle students are already under significant financial strain, and shifting support from grants to loans risks exacerbating their economic vulnerability rather than alleviating it. Moreover, the requirement for students to maintain a 60% average imposes an unrealistic academic burden, particularly on those who face structural and socio-economic obstacles that affect performance. This elevated pass-rate threshold is unjustifiable, especially considering that the standard university pass mark is typically 50%, making the policy both inequitable and misaligned with existing academic norms.

Figure 1: Infrastructure, University Subsidies, and Inflation Growth Rates

Figure 1 shows the growth rates of university infrastructure funding, university subsidies, and



inflation over the medium term. Infrastructure funding growth spikes to 342.2% in 2024/25, drops by 53.4% in 2025/26, and is projected to rise again by 24% and 14% in 2026/27 and 2027/28 respectively. University grants grow more steadily and remain slightly above inflation, with grants averaging 4.8% compared with an inflation average of 3.4% over the medium term. These trends highlight the importance of consistent and predictable public investment, especially in education and infrastructure, to support equitable development and prevent instability caused by large year-to-year funding swings.

Source: National Treasury: Budget Review 2025

IV. FUNDING

South African higher education institutions depend on a combination of government grants, tuition fees, and private contributions. However, most students rely heavily on government-funded support, primarily through NSFAS (NSFAS, 2025). Although funding for higher education has grown modestly, it has not kept pace with the rising demand for access. The budget for university education increased from R91.7 billion in 2024, to R96 billion in 2025, and is projected to reach R100.4 billion in 2026 (DHET, 2025b). Despite this, universities reported a R1.4 billion deficit in the 2025 academic year (DHET, 2025b).

The NSFAS budget for 2025 stood at R48.7 billion, which was insufficient to cover the funding needs of all qualifying students. The system recorded a R12 billion shortfall, later offset by R13.3 billion reprioritized within the scheme (DHET, 2025b). According to the Medium-Term Budget Policy Statement (MTBPS, 2025), overall funding for the PSET sector will grow by only 4% over the medium term, a rate insufficient to meet rising demand.

a. 2022 Proposed Funding Models

These continued annual constraints and strains on the PSET sector were raised in our November 2022 submission to DHET on the newly proposed funding model. On 01 November 2022, DHET convened a number of stakeholders to present recommendations from the Department's Ministerial Task Team (MTT) on a sustainable funding model that would ensure the provisions contained in Section 29 of the Constitution find resonance within the higher education landscape. In particular, seeking to address persistent features of the colonial-apartheid legacy on our education system whilst also attempting to tackle many contemporary symptoms associated with a highly unequal society. The presentation by DHET's MTT was prefaced by the tabling of the MTBPS on 26 October 2022 before Parliament, wherein the Minister of Finance indicated that a comprehensive funding model was in development by DHET which would feature in the 2023 Budget Speech.

In our 2022 submission, we recognized the following aspects of the PSET sector as it relates to funding models:

Since the inception of the Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (TEFSA) and the NSFAS, DHET has received substantial increases in funding;

Policy changes have also seen a prioritization

of ensuring students from working class and poor backgrounds (characterised as a family earning an income of less than R350 000 per annum) have access to institutions of higher learning through a fully-subsidised model;

DHET is now in the process of exploring different funding models to ensure financial sustainability and affordability for students from working class and poor backgrounds (as well as the so-called Missing Middle);

Student debt in public universities equated to approximately R16.5 billion in 2020 (currently standing at R24 billion in 2025).

In June 2021, the MTT was appointed to develop recommendations on a new student financial aid model for the South African higher education and training system.

Our expectation from the MTT was that any review on funding models must build on the existing gains on a sustainable basis in order for the state to progressively make available and accessible measures for the realisation of Section 29 of the Constitution. In our understanding, this meant:

- Addressing the "missing-middle" issue;
- Closing shortfalls going forward;
- Making proposals on how to fund students who are currently eligible for bursaries into postgraduate studies;
- Analysing the issue of R16.5 billion (now R24 billion) student debt – to find out its drivers – based on the understanding of the fact that this debt represents the lack of money on the students' behalf and the lack of comprehensive funding mechanism on government's behalf and therefore some consideration of closing the gap must be looked into.

The 2022 MTT new funding model proposal put forward the following options:

- **Option 1** - Continuing with the status quo, Government to continue with the fully subsidised model. DHET has deduced that

this option is unsustainable due to increases in costs and growth in student number.

- **Option 2** - Introduce a hybrid model. This will take the form of a combined loan/ bursary model using income thresholds. Different loan models include: a Direct Lending Arrangement (similar to NSFAS but stricter regulation through SARS), *Wholesale Lending Model Government contributes equity to independent loan schemes for investment) and Credit guarantees (Government de-risks lending to Missing Middle).
- **Option 3** - Introduce a modified status quo model which contains a range of controls on a fully subsidised model. This model forecasts higher course pass rates, capped accommodation allowances, constrained growth in other allowances and slower than inflation increases.

In response to the 2022 MTT presentation on the new funding models, NEHAWU put forward the following critique:

- The MTT chose to primarily benchmark developed states from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) such as Denmark, France, Germany etc. This was highly illogical. None of the countries are South Africa's peers in terms of per capita GDP, university participation rate and let alone the crisis level of poverty and inequality. The MTT could have included a broader variety of states to benchmark higher education funding models. In particular, states that are located within the periphery of international markets, states that are developing but constrained by colonial manifestations in their respective economies, states in Latin America and Asia by example.
- The models presented were narrowly focused on the existing fiscal envelope – fitting funding within the MTBPS envelope, which were not even guided by the imperatives of

youth unemployment, national participation rate or even the White Paper/NDP targets, especially in the TVET sector. We also demanded that the short-term initiative of "exploring the possibility of a government guarantee for commercial bank loans" must be clarified: What would be the government's demands or conditions on commercial banks in providing them with this captive market? What would "guaranteed loans" mean in terms of the current extortionate spread between the Repo rate and the bank's lending rate and who is to address defaulting students? Why would the banks be willing to forfeit the current profit margins from the usurious rates they are charging on those who are not eligible for funding by NSFAS for a government guaranteed scheme? Why would this privatised funding approach even be regarded as comprehensive on the part of the government?

In finality, we presented to the MTT that the new funding model proposals were little more than the recycling of the recommendations in the Heher Commission report, which were correctly widely rejected. Lastly, the continued shortfalls are budgetary shortfalls informed by an austerity budget linked to the debt/deficit targets that have been set whilst giving away corporate tax cuts. The recommendations are abstract from the reality of youth unemployment and the national imperatives of addressing poverty and unemployment.

As a result of our submission, DHET invited NEHAWU leadership to engage Department officials and the MTT in 2023 on the new funding models. In this session, we provided an overview of our submission and placed forward a number of recommendations. The outcomes of this engagement led to a commitment by the 6th Administration DHET to establish a Task Team with NEHAWU on the new funding models, which never materialised. Since the inception of the 7th administration, NEHAWU has been engaging the new Minister in relation

to the PSET sector, including attempts to resuscitate engagement on the introduction of new legislation or amendments to existing law.

This includes proposals yet to be made public contained in "NSFAS Master Plan", which is set to include a multilayered funding model consisting of three pillars –

- i) Bursaries;
- ii) Loans and;
- iii) Scholarships.

In this regard and, an aspect that has yet to be made public, is the establishment of a new fund administrator to replace NSFAS, referred to as the South African National Financial Aid Scheme (SASFA). Our interactions with the department indicate that the publication of these new regulations and the establishment of the new entity will be announced in December 2025.

V. THE CONCLUSION

The PSET sector is central to South Africa's efforts to build an inclusive, skilled, and competitive economy. However, ongoing challenges—limited capacity, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient funding—continue to undermine its transformative potential. A sustained commitment from government and stakeholders is required to expand access, improve institutional efficiency, and ensure that the PSET system fulfills its role in addressing unemployment, poverty, and inequality. NEHAWU must apply additional pressure to DHET in 2026 on the above challenges, this must include a commitment to maintaining constant updates and clarity around the vagueness of future funding models. NEHAWU must also break from our tacit acceptance of maintaining a commodified PSET sector, our calls for the complete transformation of the sector, for free education and a People's Education for People's Power must be elevated and find resonance within provincial Education Sub-Committees.

Between Basic and Higher Education- Data Chasms & Labour Dynamics

Rasigan Maharajh, PhD, MASSAf.

Presentation to the NEHAWU Education Sub-committee.

6 January 2026, Braamfontein.



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Outline

NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE



**Peoples' Education for
Peoples' Power!**

Durban, 29/30 March '86

- Introduction
- Selected south African Labour Dynamics
- Post-School Education & Training Data
- Conclusions
- References

Introduction

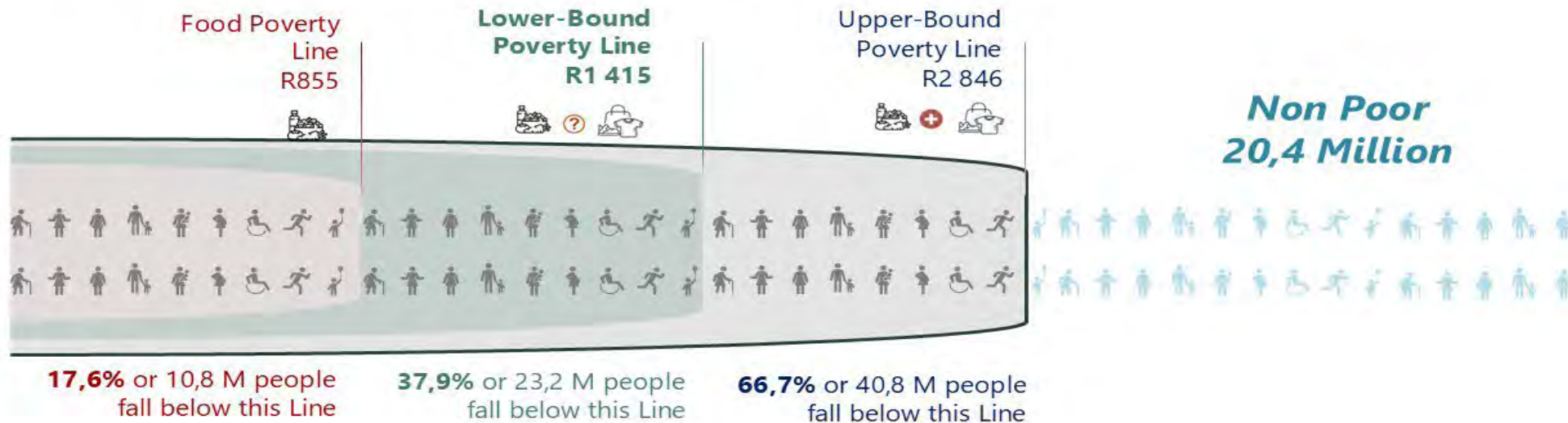
“[People] make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living” (Marx, 1852)

- Our Common Era was forged through the violent brutality of Expropriations, Extractions, Exploitations, and Epistemicides ...
- Our Contemporary Conjuncture remains characterised by Uneven and Combined Development which is reproduced and maintained through unequal exchanges
- global South/ global North Asymmetries and Inequities define a world majority and a global minority (golden billion) seeking development within Planetary Boundaries

South African Poverty Prevalence

37,9% of South Africans (23,2 Million) **fall below** the **Lower-Bound Poverty Line**

Money-metric **poverty headcounts in 2023** and **national poverty lines for 2025** (per person per month in Rands)



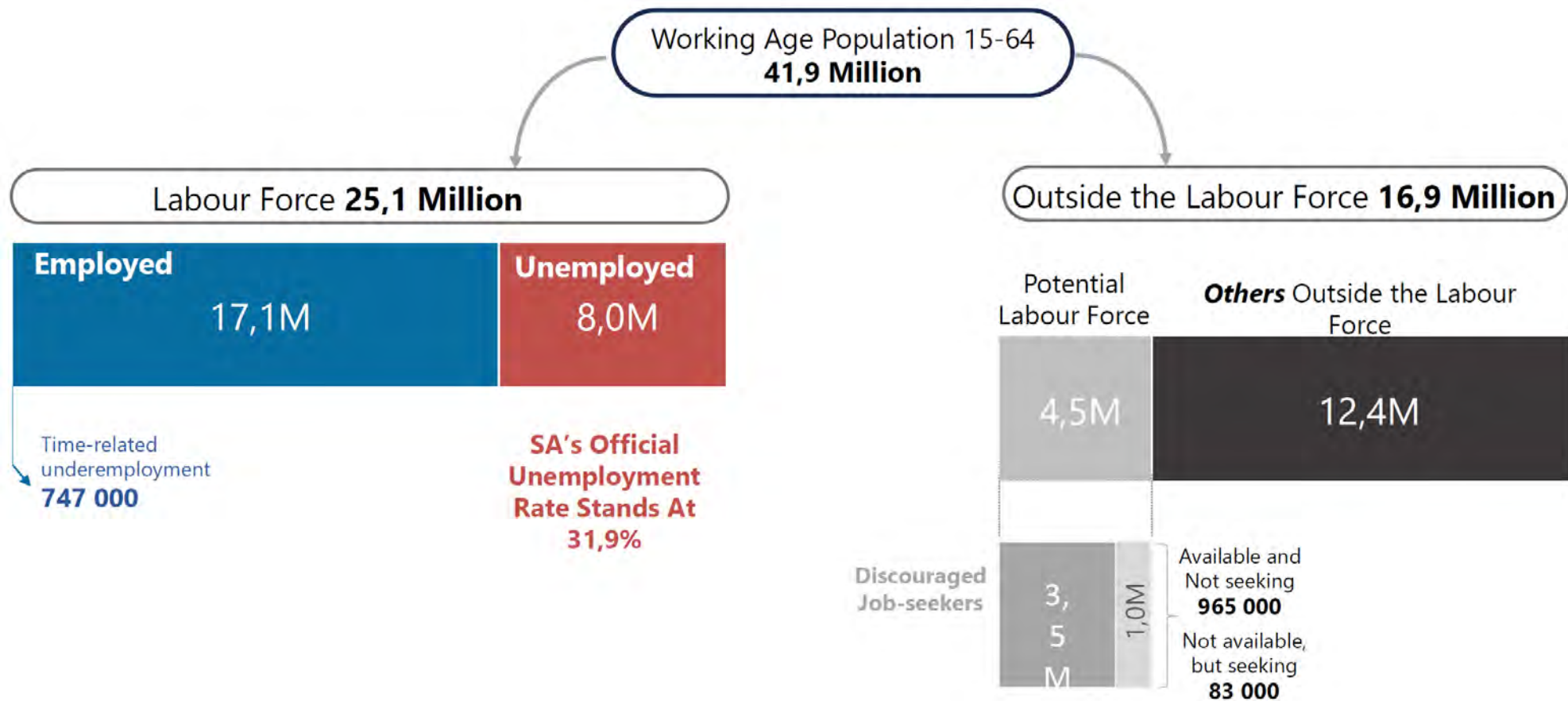
This is threshold of absolute deprivation. The amount of money required to purchase the minimum required daily energy intake.

The poverty threshold that forces difficult trade-offs between food and other necessities.

The poverty line below which people cannot afford the basic lifestyle that most South Africans consider necessary.

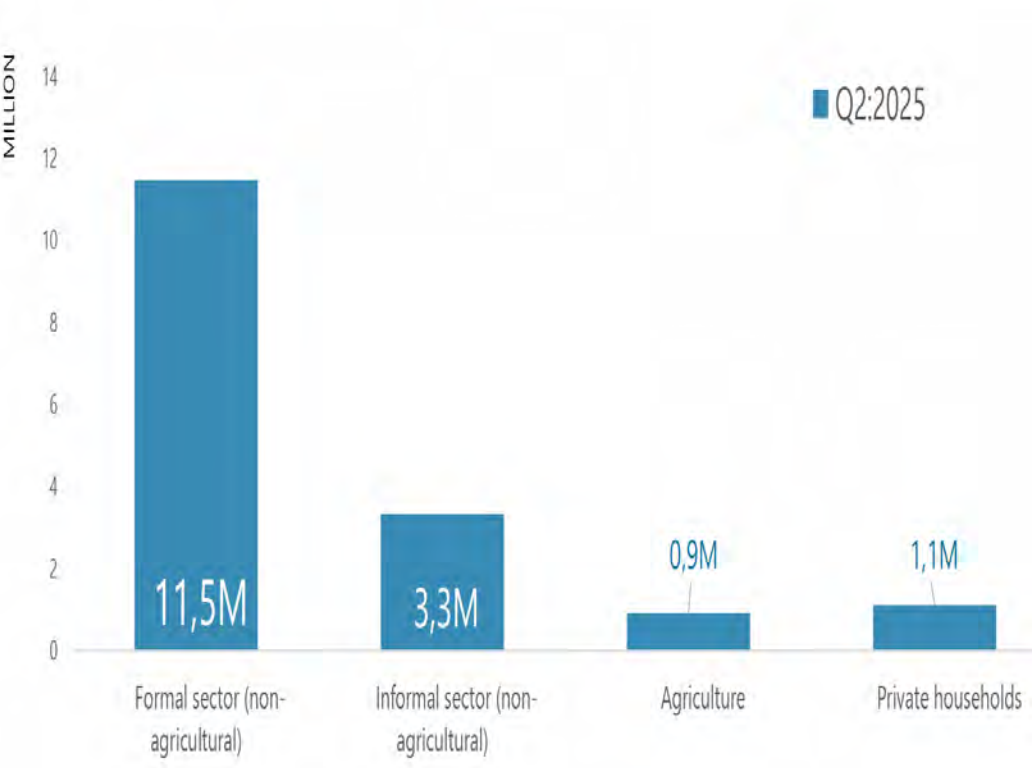
The poverty line series was rebased in 2025 using new household expenditure data sourced from the Income & Expenditure Survey (IES) 2023/23.

Macro-view of South African Workers as @ Q3 of 2025

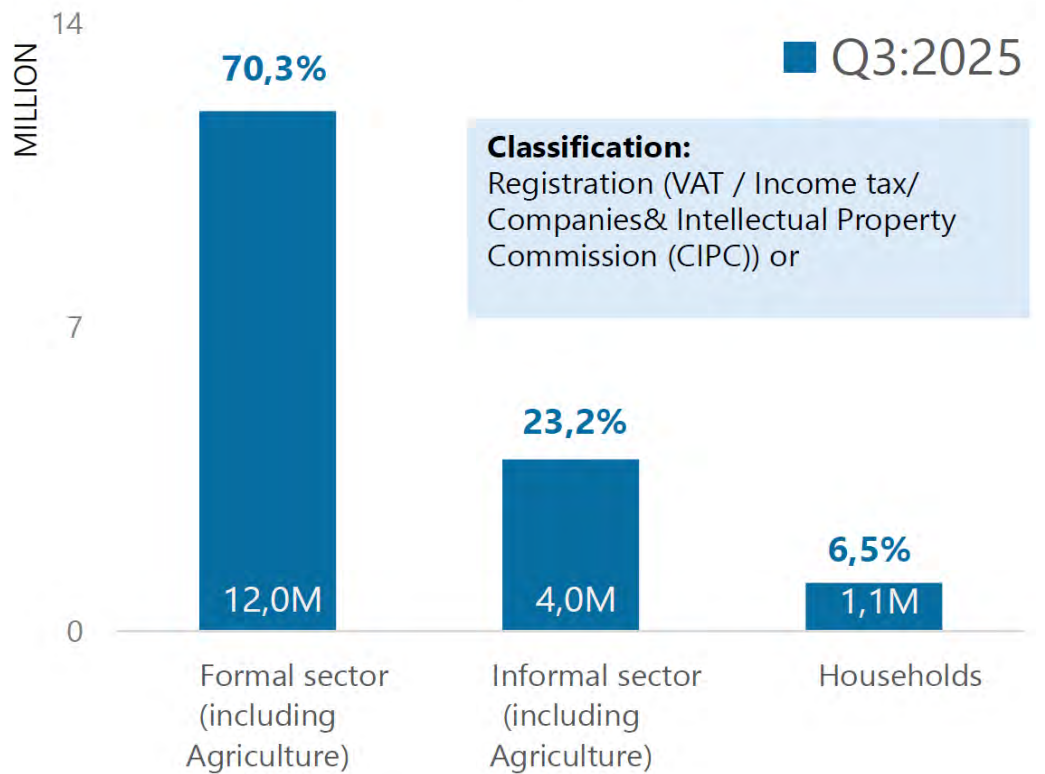


South African Employment (2025)

Employment by sector, (Old standard)

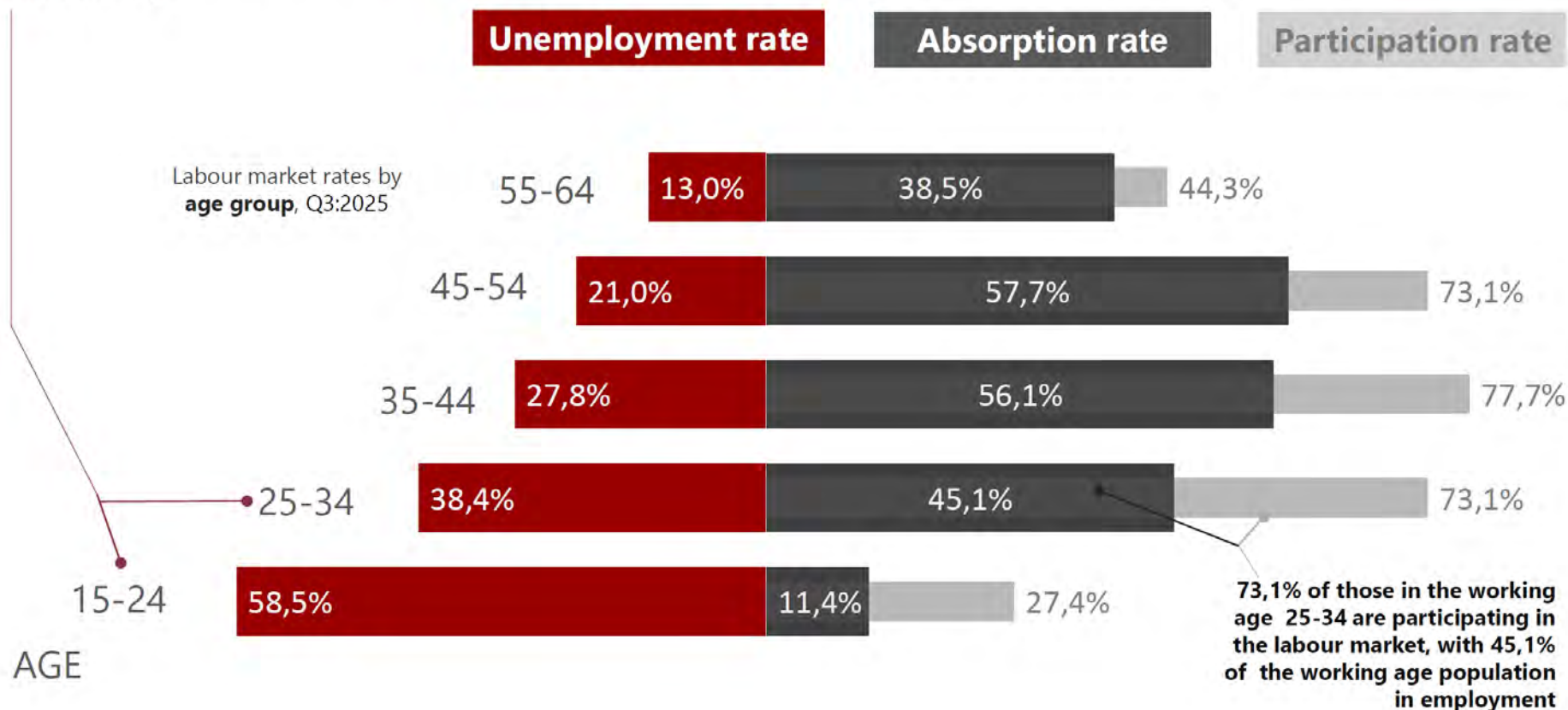


Employment by sector, (*New standard*)



Un- Employment & Under- Employment (2025)

Youth aged 15-24 years and 25-34 years continue to have the highest unemployment rates at **58,5%** and **38,4%**, respectively.



Not in Employment, Education or Training (2025)

Approximately **3,5 million out of 10,3 million (or 33,9%)** young people aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education or training (NEET).



Number of NEET for ages 15-24
Q3:2025

**3,5 Million
NEET**

6,8 Million

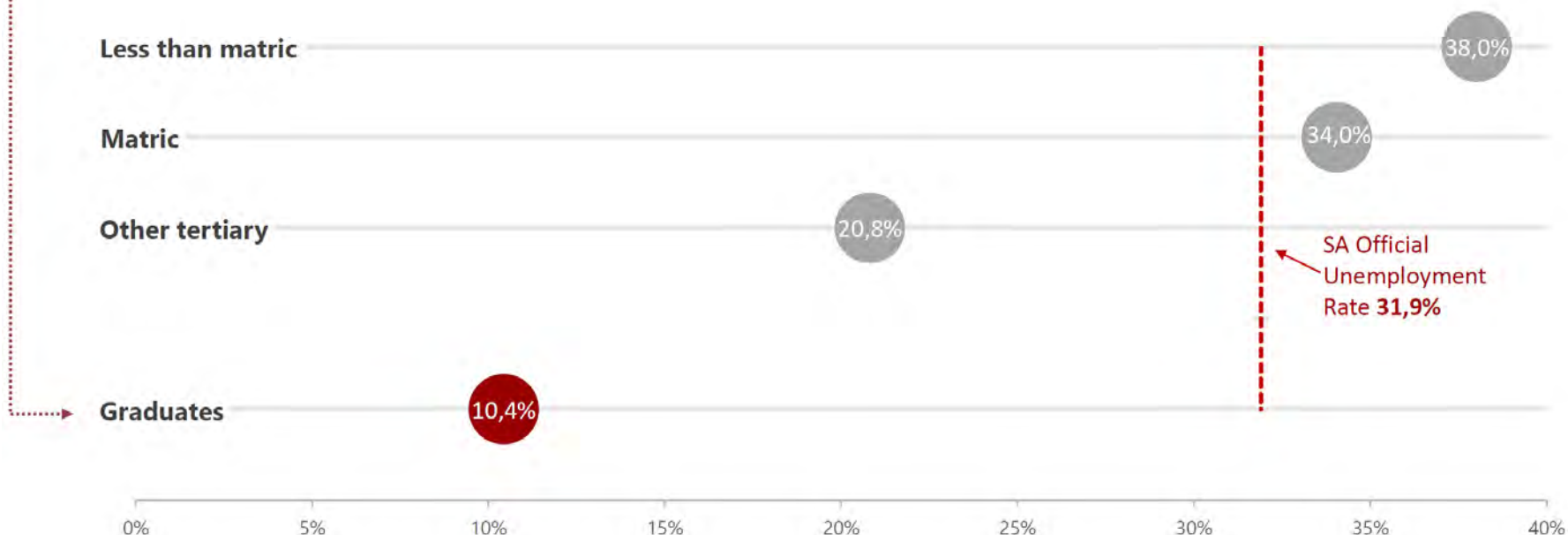
**Employed or in
Education or Training**

Due to rounding numbers may not add up

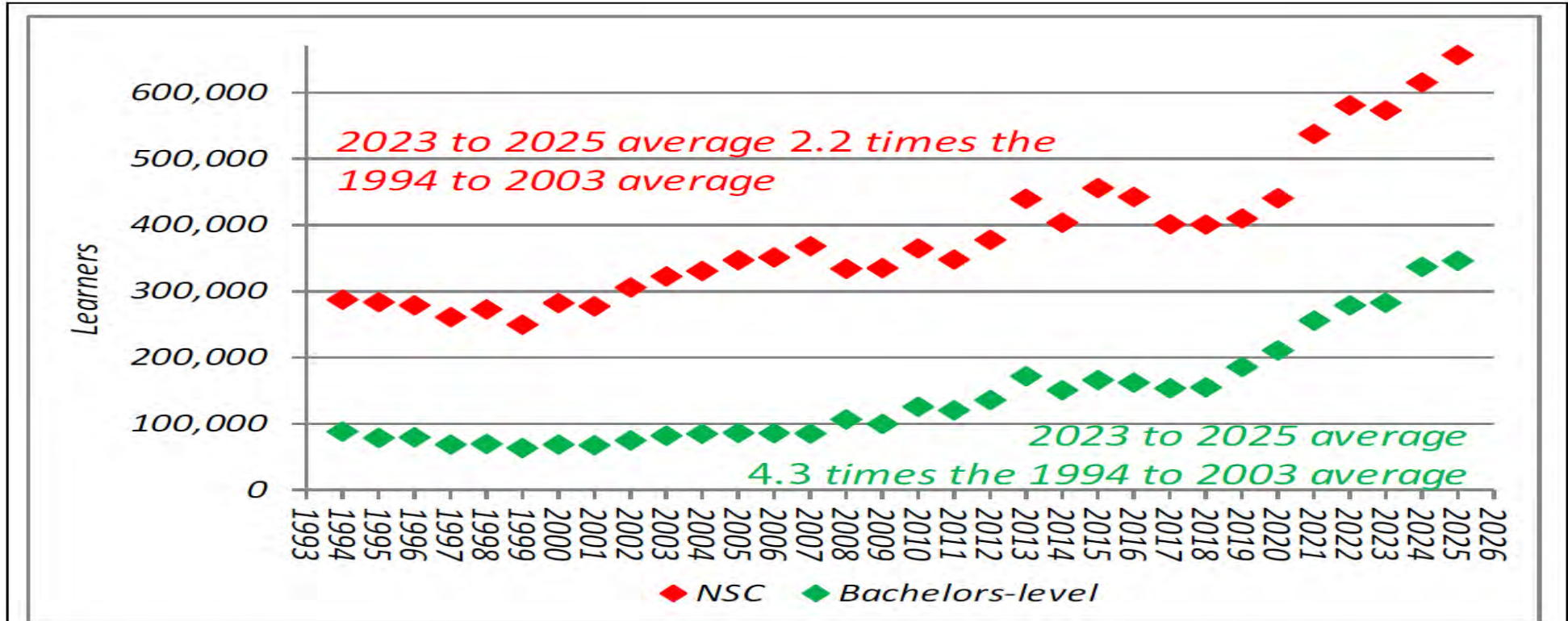
Graduate Un- Employment (2025)

The Graduate unemployment rate decreased by 1,8 percentage points from 12,2% in Q2:2025 to **10,4%** in Q3:2025. Those with **matric** and **less than matric** remain vulnerable with unemployment rates of 34,0% and 38,0%, respectively.

Official Unemployment rate by level of education, Q3:2025



Admission to Bachelor Studies & NSC (1993-2026)

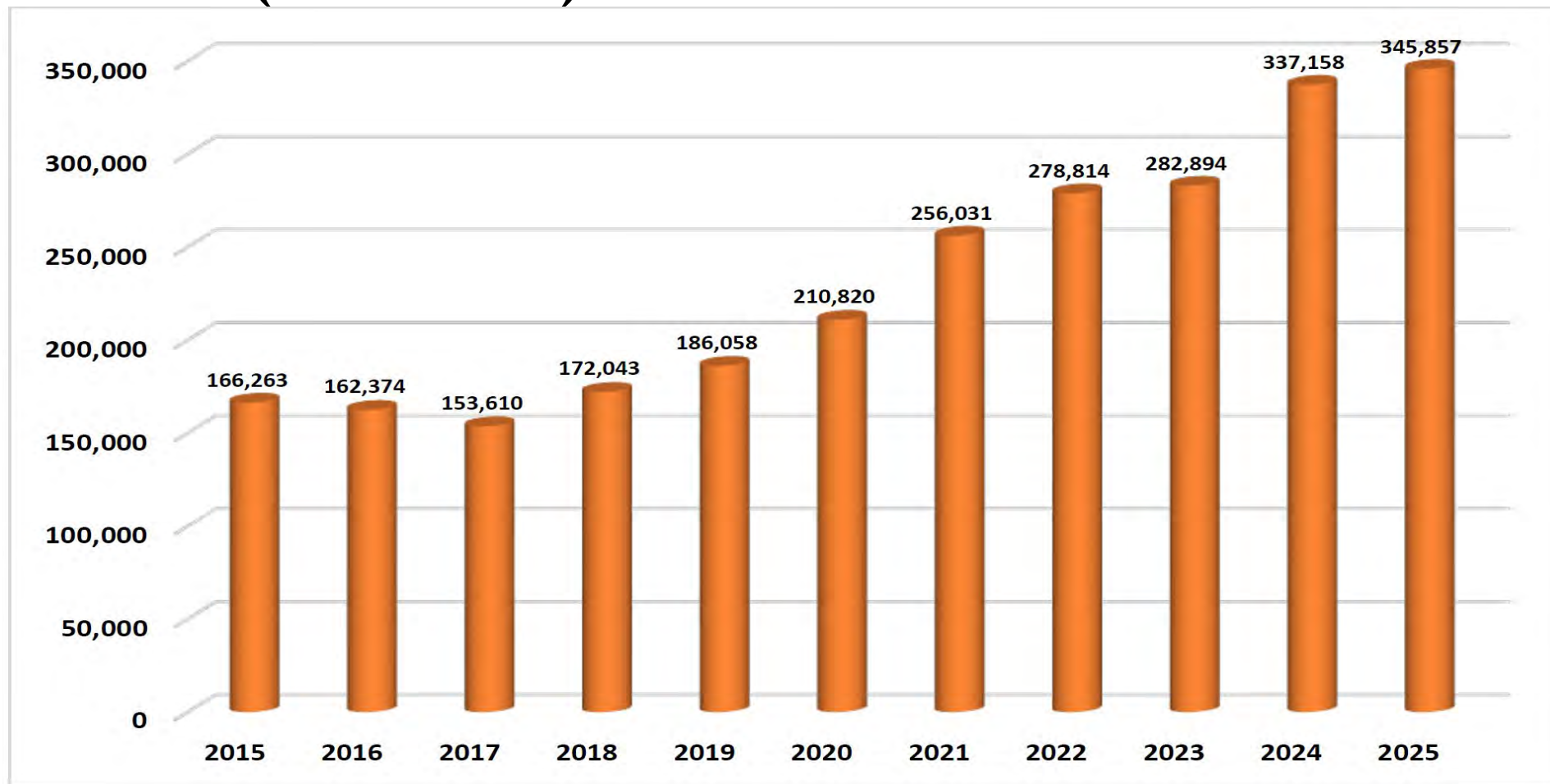


Note: Prior to 2008, a Bachelors-level pass was referred to as a Matriculation Exemption. Values reflect only results of full-time candidates.



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Number of learners Achieving Admission to Bachelor Studies (2015-2025)



Source: DBE, 2026

DHET Historical Macro-Data

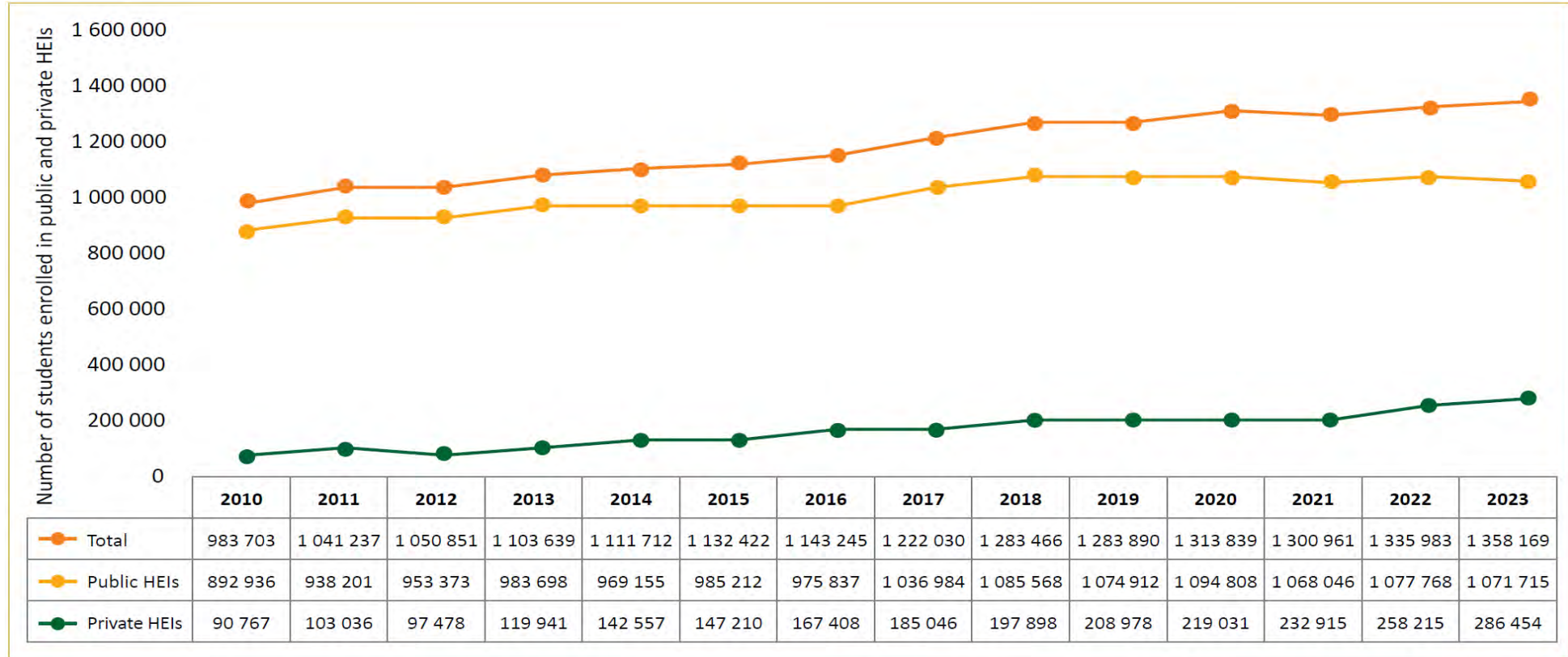
- In 2023, the Post-School Education and Training system had **365 institutions** namely:
 - 26 public Higher Education Institutions,
 - 131 private Higher Education Institutions,
 - 50 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges,
 - 149 registered Private colleges, and
 - 9 Community Education and Training (CET) colleges.
- The total funding allocated to public HEIs, TVET colleges and CET colleges during the 2023/24 financial year was R59.43 billion,
 - R1.76 billion (2.9%) less than R61.20 billion that was allocated in 2022/23
- R44.63 billion transferred to public HEIs
- R12.00 billion transferred to TVET colleges
- R2.80 billion transferred to CET colleges

DHET 2023 Overview

	HEIs			Colleges				Total PSET
	Public	Private	Total	TVET	CET	Private	Total	
Number of institutions	26	138	164	50	9	149	208	372
Number of students enrolled	1 071 715	286 454	1 358 169	564 089	120 081	80 785	764 955	2 123 124

- *Sources: 2023 HEMIS database, data extracted in November 2024.*
- *Annual report submitted by private HEIs to DHET for the 2023 year of reporting.*
- *2023 TVET College Enrolment_Final_02 April 2025.*
- *2023_Private_Annual_Survey_Integrated_29_January_2025, extracted in January 2025.*
- *CETMIS 2023, data extracted in April 2025.*
- Note 1: Private and public Higher Education Institutions figures were audited.
- Note 2: The number of private colleges shown in Table 3.1 reflects the number of institutions registered with the Department.
- Note 3: On 01 April 2015, AET centres merged into nine, and the erstwhile AET centres became Community Learning Centres (CLC) under the respective nine community colleges, one per province.
- Note 4: Students in TVET colleges are counted once in every enrolment cycle i.e. annual, semester and trimester, and this may result in students being counted more than once if they enrol in every trimester/semester cycle. For example, this means that a student enrolled for N2 and repeating N1 subjects in the same enrolment cycle will be counted once.
- Note 5: Total enrolment for CET colleges is based on a response rate of 83.5%.
- Note 6: The 2023 figure represents enrolment at only 98 of the 149 registered private colleges that responded to the departmental Annual Survey.

Number of students enrolled in public and private HEIs, 2010–2023



Sources: *Statistics on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa, 2022.*
2023 HEMIS database, data extracted in November 2024.
Annual report submitted by private HEIs to the DHET for the 2023 year of reporting.

Note: Enrolment figures for private HEIs for 2010-2015 were unaudited.

Source: DHET, 2025



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Student enrollment by gender, field of study and qualification type, 2023

Qualification Type	Female					Male					Unspecified gender	Total enrolment
	SET	Business and Management	Education	Other Humanities	Total	SET	Business and Management	Education	Other Humanities	Total		
Occasional	877	773	126	1 541	3 317	916	628	38	555	2 137	4	5 458
Undergraduate Certificates and Diplomas	37 944	76 537	11 594	46 383	172 458	41 444	39 046	2 018	21 190	103 698	7	276 163
Undergraduate Degree	88 717	59 699	104 337	125 969	378 722	78 871	39 908	36 152	57 879	212 809	239	591 770
Advanced Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Education	4 929	8 602	7 109	2 026	22 666	5 383	4 772	3 743	1 184	15 081	4	37 751
Postgraduate below Master's Level	10 711	15 580	9 404	11 976	47 671	8 244	10 644	3 531	4 677	27 096	36	74 803
Master's Degrees	15 665	5 935	3 089	9 804	34 494	13 113	5 307	1 584	5 695	25 698	103	60 295
Doctoral Degrees	6 024	1 528	1 473	3 636	12 660	6 285	1 956	1 095	3 404	12 739	76	25 475
Total	164 867	168 653	137 132	201 335	671 988	154 255	102 261	48 160	94 583	399 258	469	1 071 715

Source: 2023 HEMIS database, data extracted in November 2024.

Note 1: As a result of rounding off, numbers may not necessarily add up to totals.

Note 2: Gender information was provided for records in the following fields of study: SET (178), Business and Management (32), Education (53) and other Humanities (206).

Source: DHET, 2025



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Student graduation by gender, field of study and qualification type, 2023

Qualification Type	Female					Male					Unspecified gender	Total number of graduates
	SET	Business and Management	Education	Other Humanities	Total	SET	Business and Management	Education	Other Humanities	Total		
Undergraduate Certificates and Diplomas	8 088	13 411	2 883	9 920	34 302	7 408	5 794	399	3 615	17 216	1	51 519
Undergraduate Degrees	15 634	9 814	19 963	20 378	65 789	12 195	6 558	5 114	8 231	32 098	41	97 928
Advanced Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate in Education	2 183	4 148	4 303	1 506	12 140	1 780	1 962	2 011	768	6 521	2	18 662
Postgraduate below Master's Level	5 898	7 274	3 371	5 865	22 408	4 117	5 218	1 263	2 181	12 779	24	35 211
Master's Degrees	3 599	1 640	581	2 087	7 907	2 983	1 442	261	1 215	5 901	12	13 819
Doctoral Degrees	811	216	211	504	1 742	953	265	200	459	1 877	2	3 620
Total	36 213	36 503	31 312	40 259	144 287	29 436	21 238	9 247	16 469	76 389	82	220 758

Source: 2023 HEMIS database, data extracted in November 2024.

Note: The total number of graduates includes 82 students who did not specify their gender, and one record with unspecified Classification of Educational Subject Matter (CESM).

Source: DHET, 2025



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Permanent staff in public HEIs, by population group, personnel category and gender, 2023

Population Group	Instruction and Research Staff		Administrative Staff		Service Staff		Total		
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Total
African	4 389	5 715	11 228	9 481	5 730	4 908	21 347	20 104	41 451
Coloured	872	718	3 352	1 906	515	401	4 739	3 025	7 764
Indian/Asian	952	713	1 073	631	6	38	2 031	1 382	3 413
White	3 986	3 211	3 840	1 740	22	41	7 848	4 992	12 840
Unknown	104	286	32	49	3	1	139	336	475
Total	10 303	10 643	19 525	13 807	6 276	5 389	36 104	29 839	65 943

Source: 2023 HEMIS database, data extracted in November 2024.

Note: Total includes unknown population group and gender.

Source: DHET, 2025

Staff in private HEIs, by personnel category, 2023

Employment Period	Academic/Research	Service Staff	Support Staff	Total
Full-time	4 016	1 037	6 175	11 228
Part-time	4 109	94	1 277	5 480
Total	8 125	1 131	7 452	16 708

Source: Annual report submitted by PHEIs to DHET for the 2023 year of reporting.



Number of staff in CET colleges, by college, staff category and gender, 2023

College	Management Staff			Lecturer Staff			Support Staff			Total		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Eastern Cape CET College	1	2	3	1 853	316	2 169	10	5	15	1 864	323	2 187
Free State CET College	3	1	4	555	249	804	82	63	145	640	313	953
Gauteng CET College	1	1	2	1 115	580	1 695	148	120	268	1 264	701	1 965
KwaZulu-Natal CET College	2	2	4	1 781	422	2 203	33	11	44	1 816	435	2 251
Limpopo CET College	1	2	3	774	152	926	3	0	3	778	154	932
Mpumalanga CET College	0	4	4	993	101	1 094	4	1	5	997	106	1 103
Northern Cape CET College	0	4	4	109	36	145	5	1	6	114	41	155
North West CET College	1	2	3	435	117	552	170	57	227	606	176	782
Western Cape CET College	2	1	3	194	82	276	88	47	135	284	130	414
National	11	19	30	7 809	2 055	9 864	543	305	848	8 363	2 379	10 742
Percentage	36.7%	63.3%	100.0%	79.2%	20.8%	100.0%	64.0%	36.0%	100.0%	77.9%	22.1%	100.0%

Source: Annual Survey Staff Data_30 April 2025.

Note 1: The category "Management Staff" means the principal and the vice principals of a public college; (CET Act 16 of 2006).

Note 2: The category "Lecturing Staff" refers to any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services at any college, and who is appointed in a post on any lecturer establishments under this Act; (CET Act 16 of 2006).

Note 3: The category "Support Staff" refers to staff who render academic support services; student support services; human resource management; financial management; administration; maintenance of the buildings and gardens; catering services; and security services; (CET Act 16 of 2006).

Note 4: Total staff reported excludes volunteering staff.

Note 5: Staff information is based on a response rate of 81.9%.

Source: DHET, 2025

DHET Data Sources

- The Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), which contains data provided to the Department by public HEIs;
- Annual reports submitted by registered private HEIs;
- Unit level record data submitted by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges to the Department, which contains student enrolment data;
- Community Education and Training Management Information System (CETMIS) for student enrolment data and Annual Survey data which contain staff data for CET colleges;
- Annual Survey data submitted to the Department which contains data for registered private colleges;
- The National Examinations Database, which contains administrative data about student examinations and certification for the General Education and Training Certificate-Adult Basic Education and Training (GETC-ABET), the National Certificate (Vocational) [NC(V)] and the N part-qualifications;
- Unit level record data submitted to the Department by the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs);
- Data provided to the Department by the National Artisan Development Support Centre (NADSC);
- Data provided to the Department by the National Skills Fund;
- Data extracted from the DHET levy system; and
- Data obtained from NSFAS Annual Reports and NSFAS database.
- **The quality of the data obtained from PSET institutions and public entities is being improved continuously to ensure the validity and reliability of the data the Department reports on. The Department thus aims to replace the data collection processes for all the sub sectors from aggregated reporting to unit level record submissions in the future.**



Conclusions

- Match objective data with subjective strategies and tactics
- Utilising real-time data to fully quantify costs and prices
- Allocate and deploy resources across appropriate time frames based on real experiences
- Align Capacities, Capabilities, and Competences towards Redressing Root Causes!



*Union of Workers and Science, merged together, will
crush in their iron embrace all obstacles on the path to
progress (1919)*

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Dankie

Thank you

Ngiyathokoza

Enkosi

Ngiyabonga

Ke a leboga

Ke a leboha

Ke a leboga

Siyabonga

Ndo livhuwa/ Ro livhuwa

Inkomu



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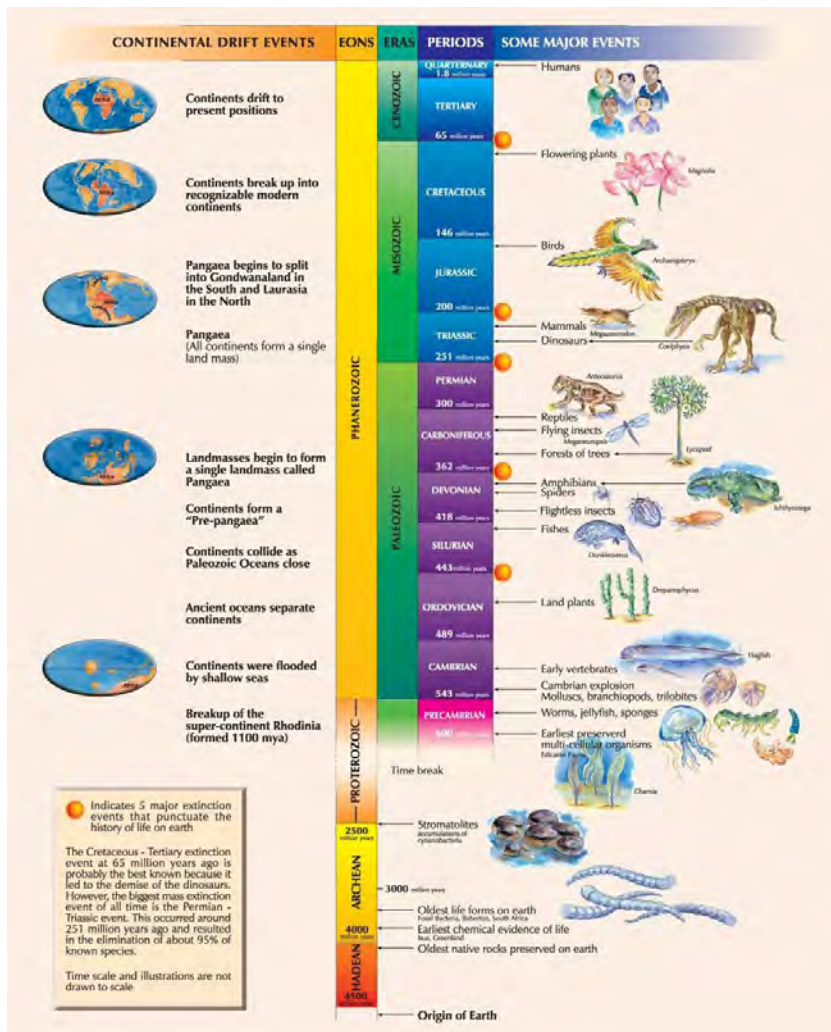
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City of Tshwane,
Gauteng Province,
Republic of South Africa.



Demographic Changes



WORLD POPULATION IN 2025

8.2 billion people around the world by November 2025

75 million more people every year

URBAN POPULATION

1990: **43%** 2020: **56%** 2050: **68%**

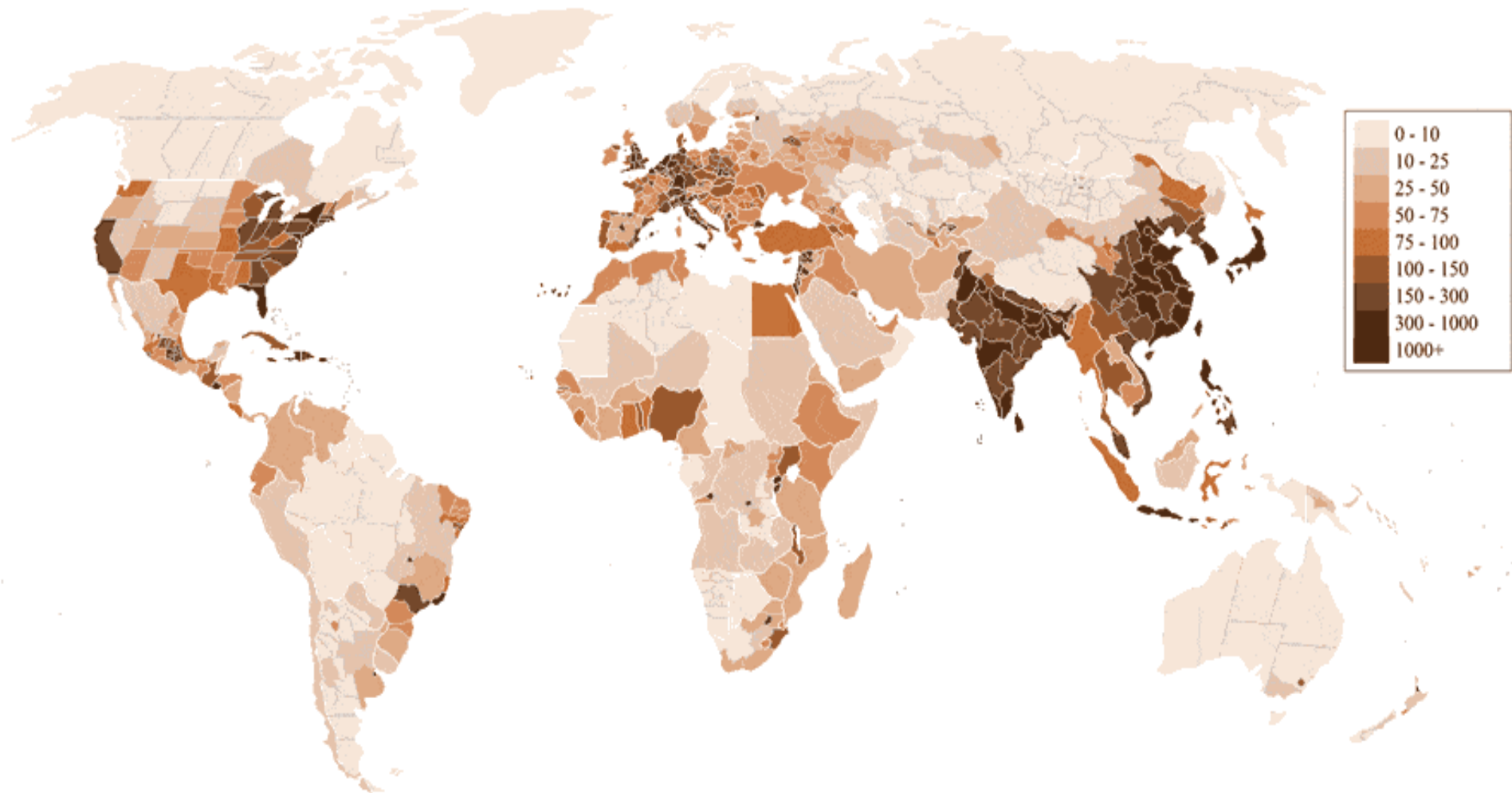


LARGEST COUNTRIES BY POPULATION

India	1.464 billion
China	1.416 billion
USA	347 million
Indonesia	285 million
Pakistan	255 million
Nigeria	237 million
Brazil	212 million



Global Population Distribution (2025)

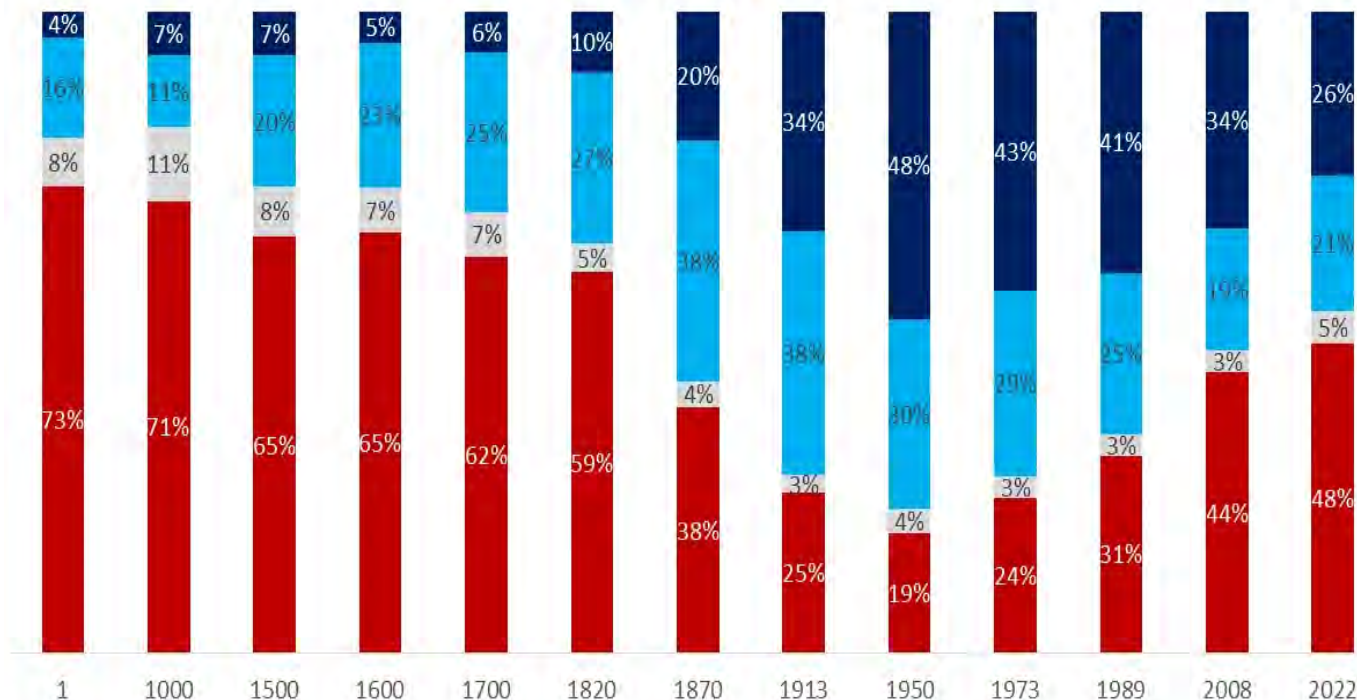




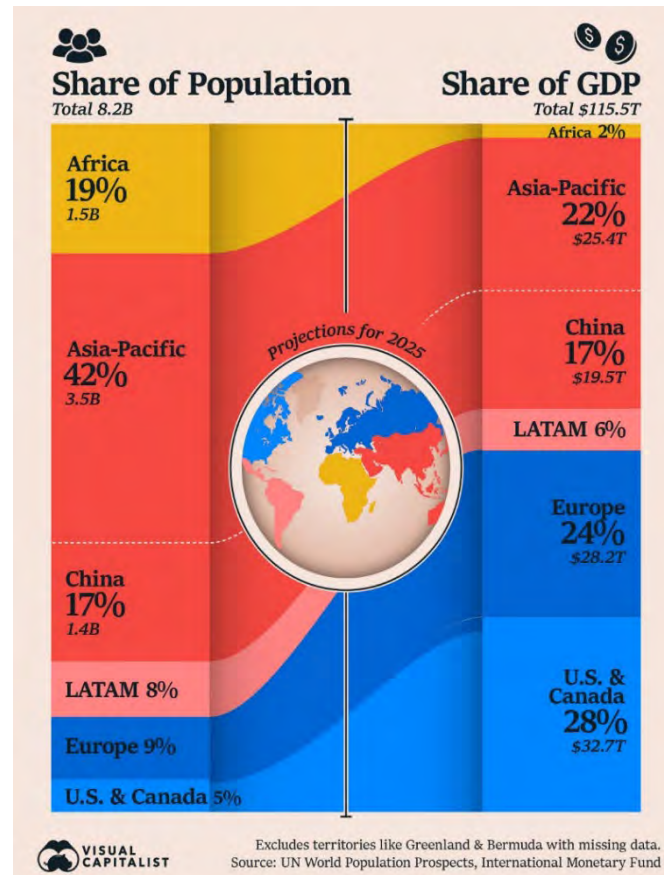
Global Gross Domestic Production Distribution

% of worldwide GDP (PPP)

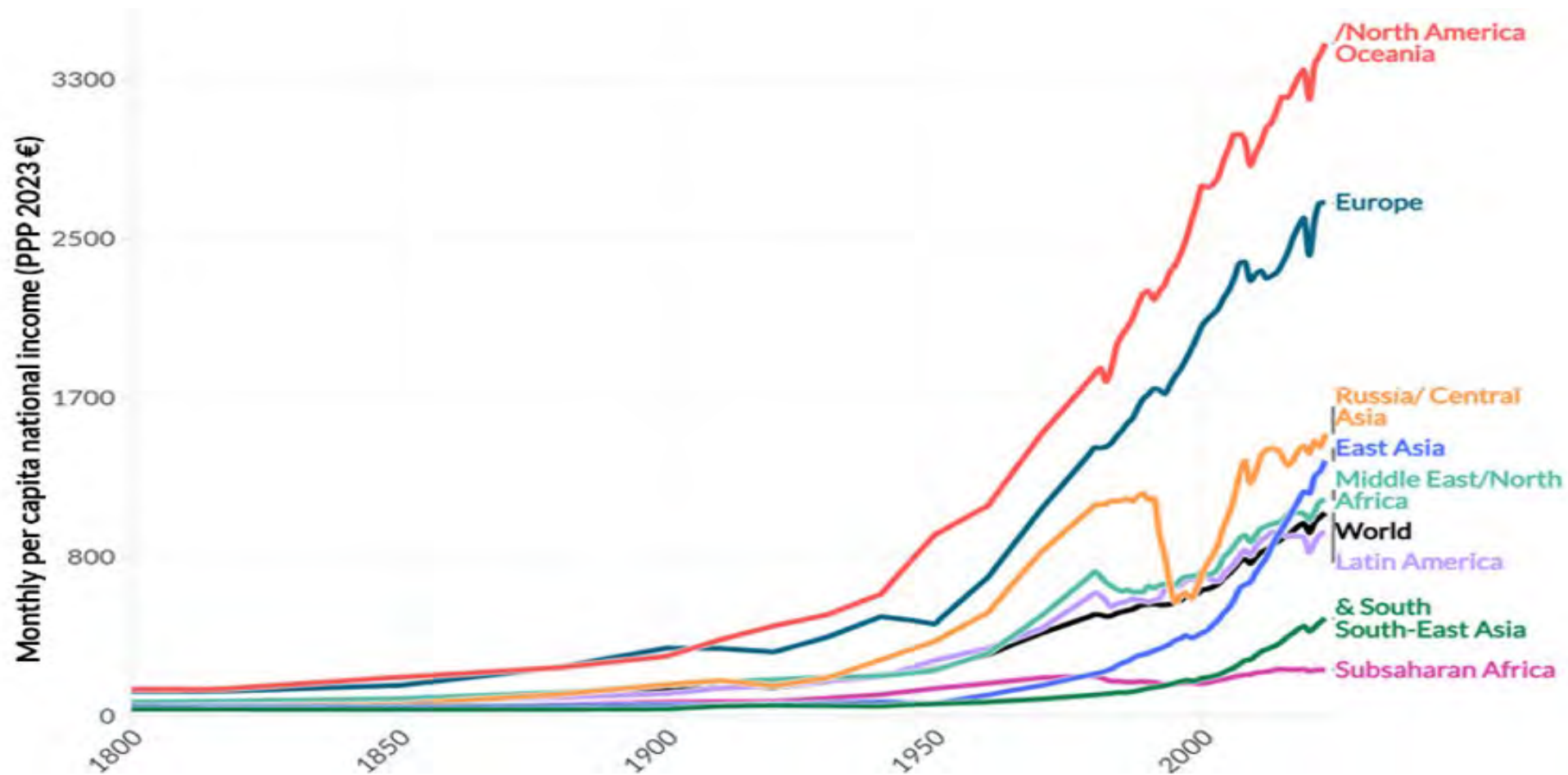
■ Asia ■ Africa ■ Europe ■ Americas + Oceania



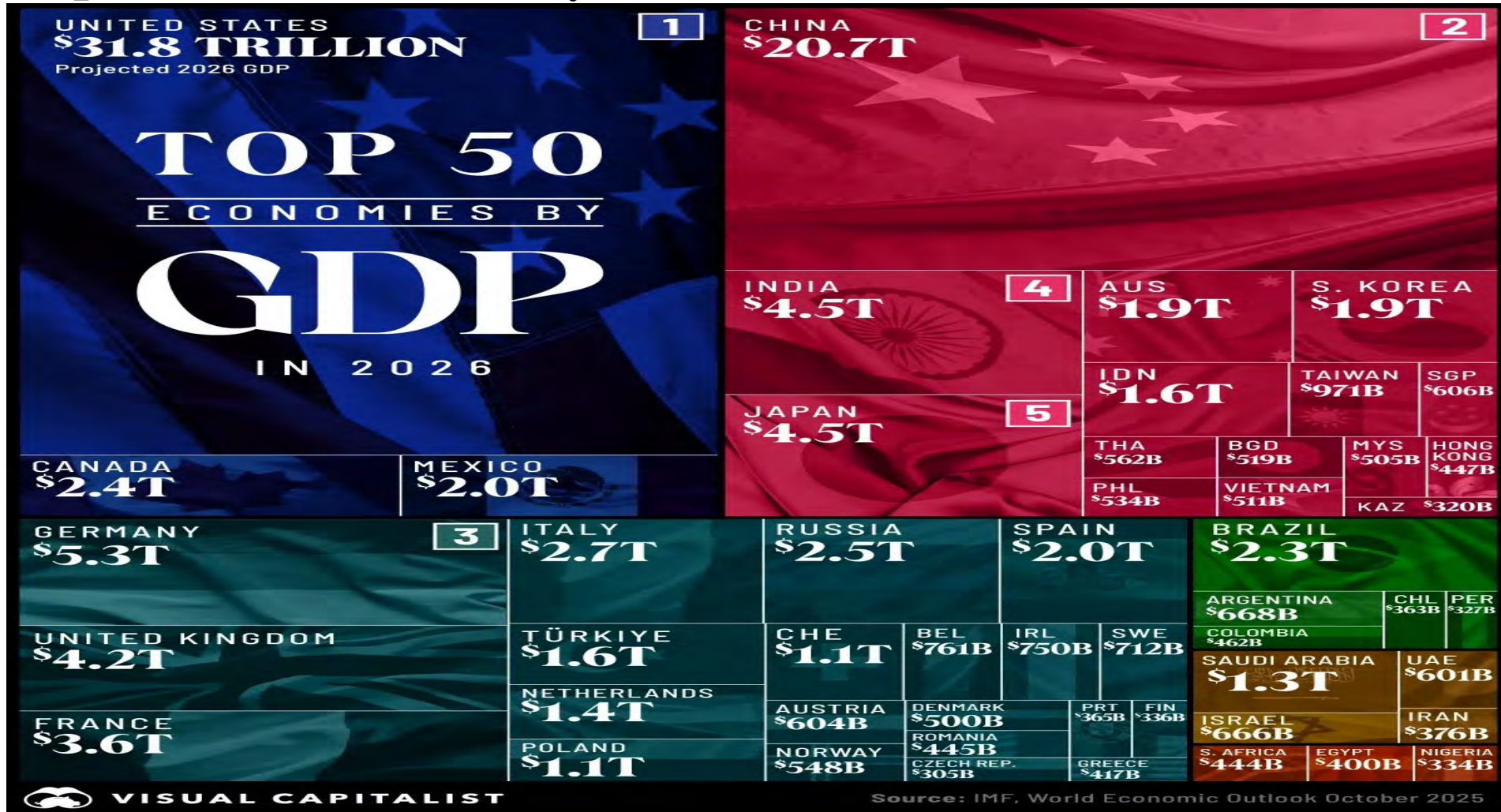
Source: Maddison, Angus (2007): "Contours of the World Economy, 1–2030 AD. Essays in Macro-Economic History", Oxford University Press, ISBN 978-0-19-922721-1, p. 379, table A.4.
International Monetary Fund (2022). https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PPPGDP@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEO_WORLD/AFQ



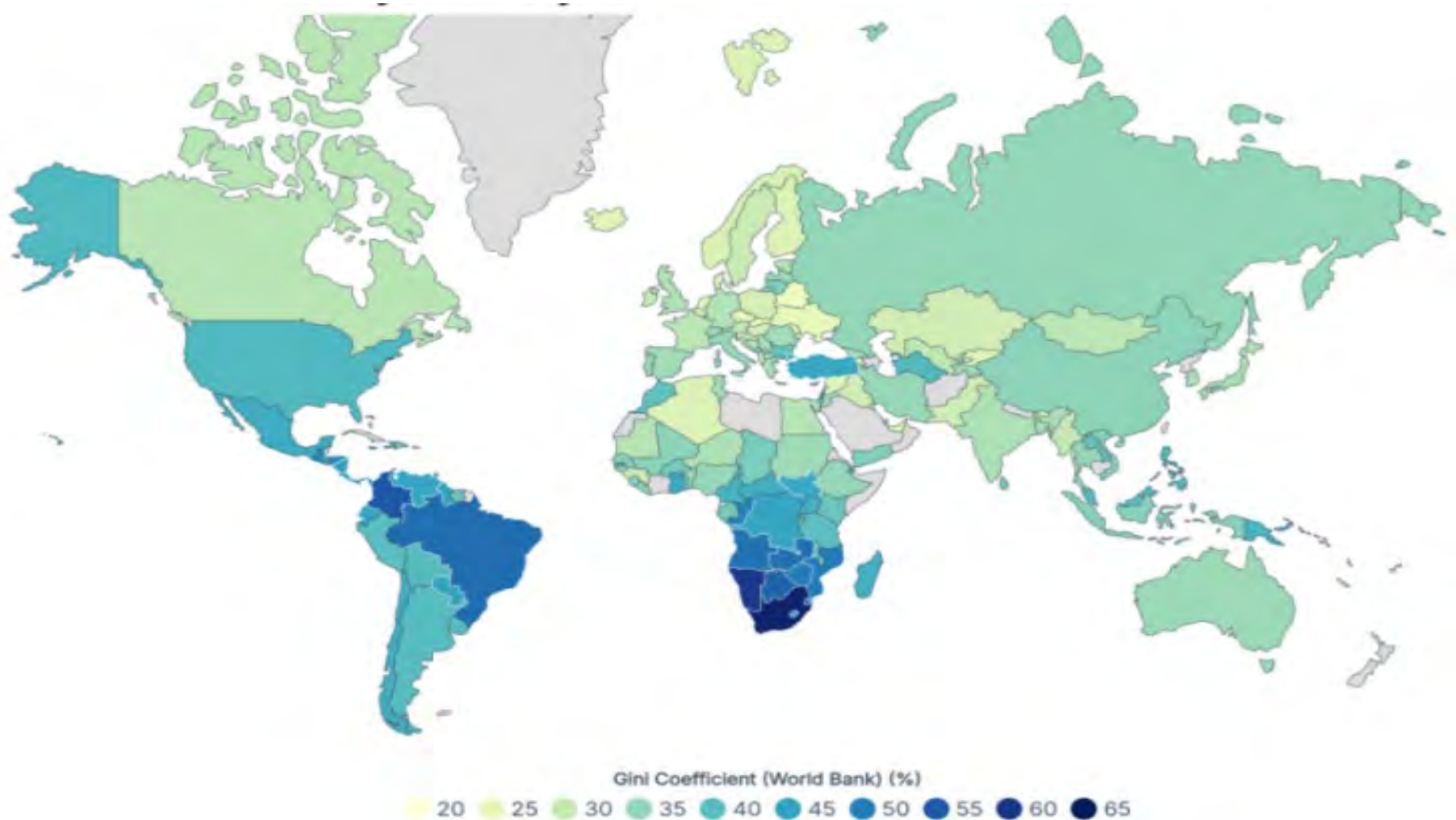
Long-run Income Growth (1820-2023)



Top 50 Economies by GDP (2025)



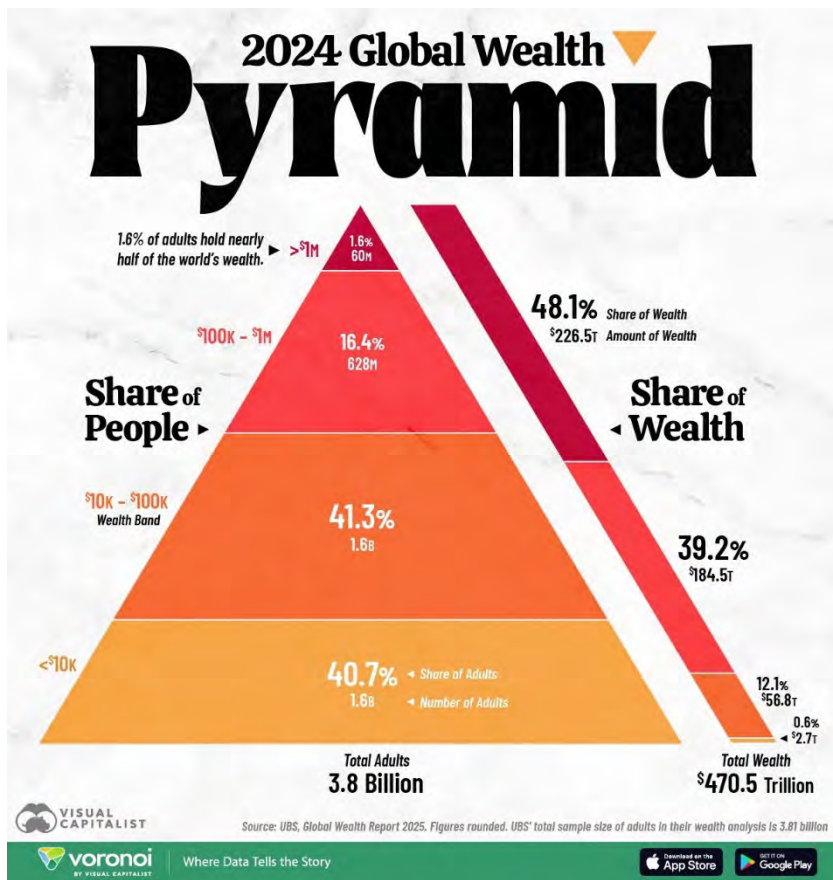
Gini Coefficients (2025)



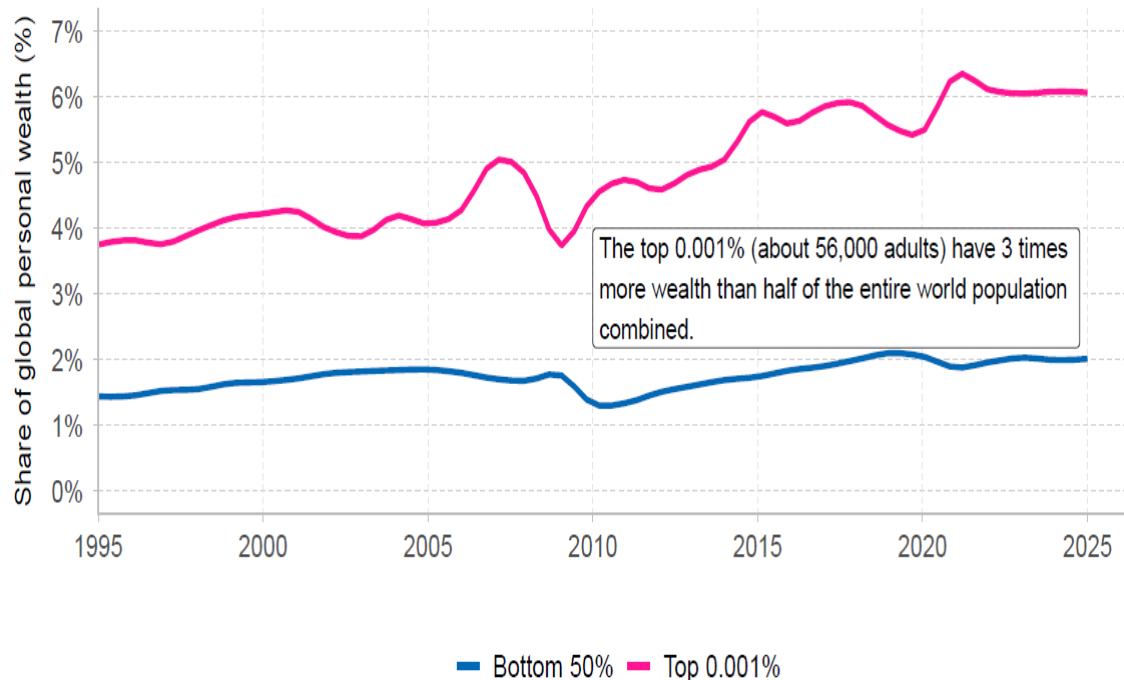


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In-Equality Rising



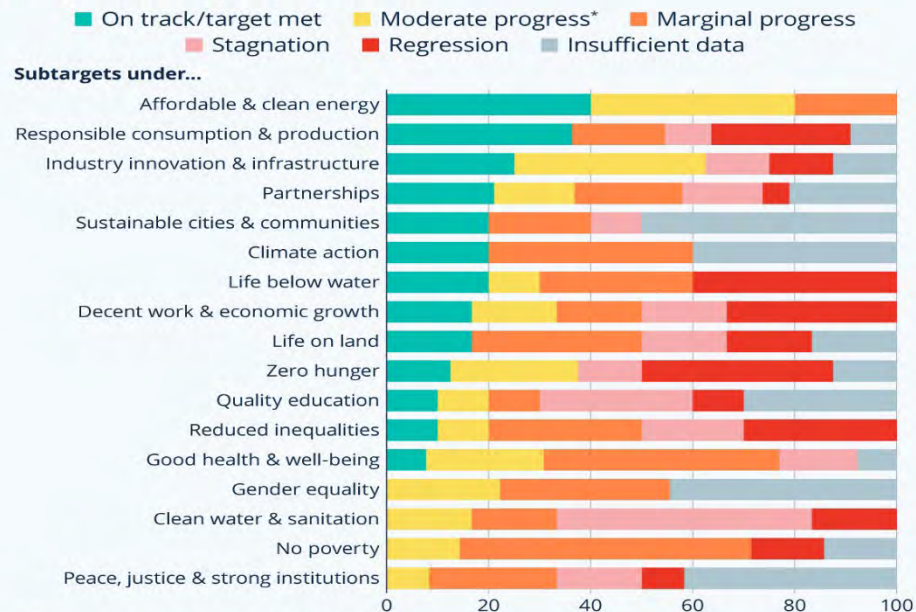
Extreme wealth inequality, 1995–2025



Interpretation. The share of personal wealth held by the richest 0.001% of adults rose from around 3.8% of total wealth in 1995 to nearly 6.1% in 2025. After a very slight increase, the share of wealth owned by the poorest half of the population has stagnated since the early 2000s at around 2%. Net personal wealth is equal to the sum of financial assets (e.g. equity or bonds) and non-financial assets (e.g. housing or land) owned by individuals, net of their debts. **Sources and series:** Arias–Osorio et al. (2025) and wir2026.wid.world/methodology.

Off Track? Progress on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

Progress of UN SDG subtargets in 2025, by main target (in percent)



* But not enough to reach goal by 2030

Source: UN Sustainable Development Goals Report 2025



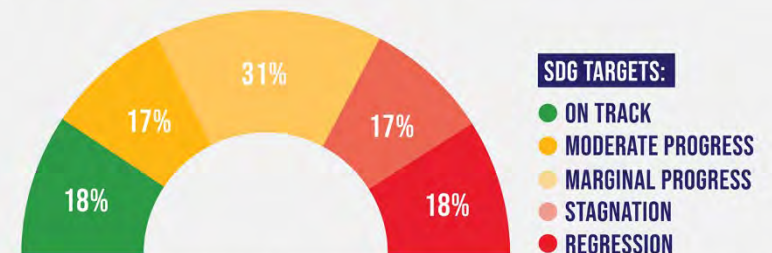
statista



THE SDG REPORT 2025

ONLY **35%** OF TARGETS ARE ON TRACK OR MAKING MODERATE PROGRESS

WE MUST MAXIMIZE THE FINAL FIVE YEARS FOR REAL COMMITMENT AND DELIVERY



SDG PROGRESS BASED ON AN ASSESSMENT OF SDG TARGETS WITH TREND DATA.

NOTE: PERCENTAGES DO NOT ADD UP TO 100% DUE TO ROUNDING.



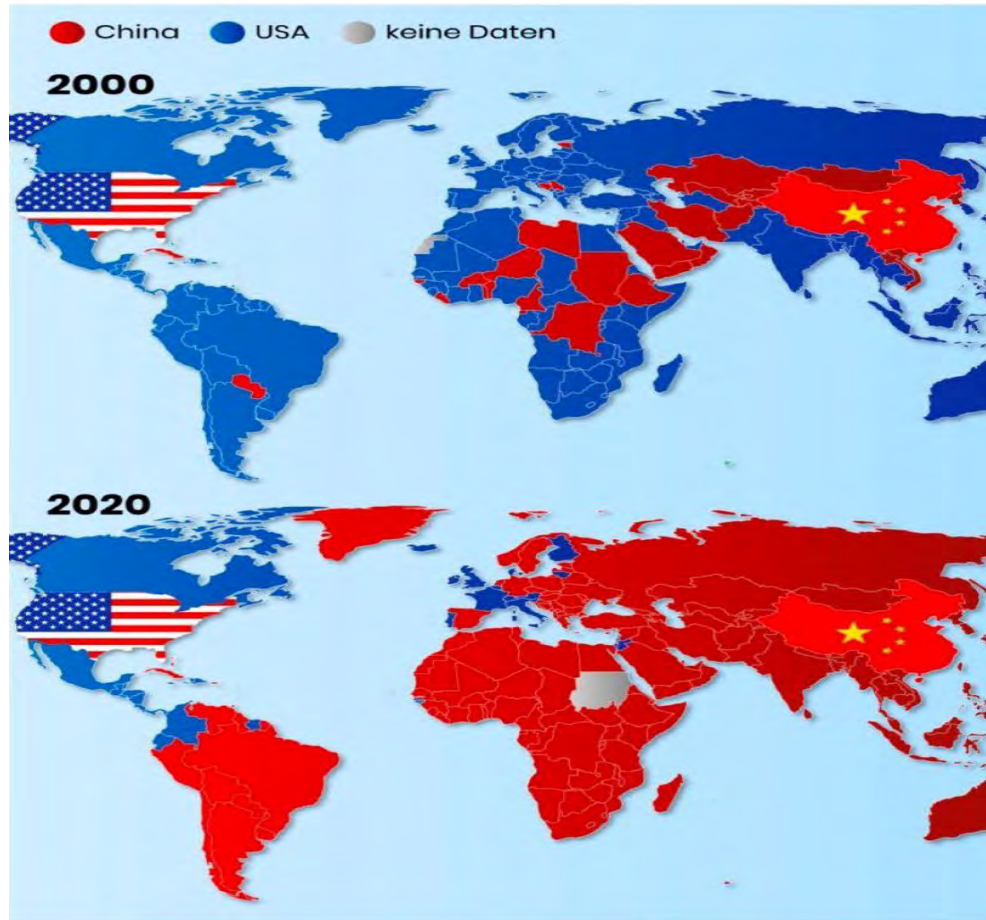
United Nations

Department of Economic and Social Affairs

FOR FULL REPORT

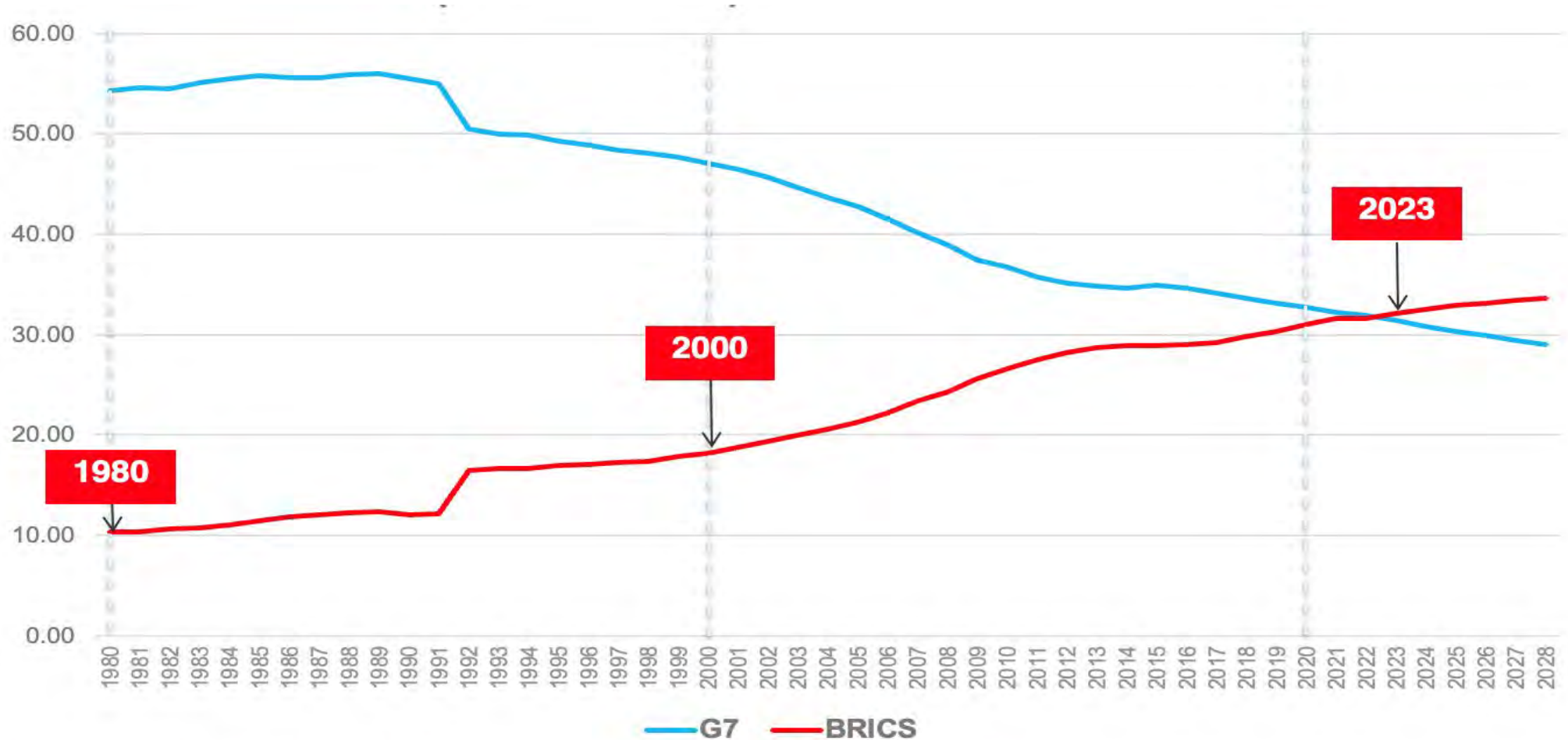
UNSTATS.UN.ORG/SDGS/REPORT/2025

Trade influencing GeoPolitics ...



- United Nations
 - Bretton Woods Institutions
- G7 & NATO
- World Economic Forum
- G20
- IBSA
- BRICS+
- Belt & Road
- Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

G7 & BRICS GDP (PPP) World Shares (%)



Contemporary GeoPolitical Blocs

- G7 = Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, and United States
- OECD = Austria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, United Kingdom, and United States [38 countries]
- NATO = Albania, Albania, Belgium, Belgium, Bulgaria, Bulgaria, Canada, Canada, Croatia, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, United Kingdom, and United States [32 countries]
- G20 = Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States
- IBSA = India, Brazil, and South Africa
- BRICS+ = Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and United Arab Emirates [9 Countries]
- G77 = Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, *China*, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Federated States of Micronesia, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, State of Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe [134 Countries]

Source: Various, 2025

STATE OF THE UNION UNIVERSITIES



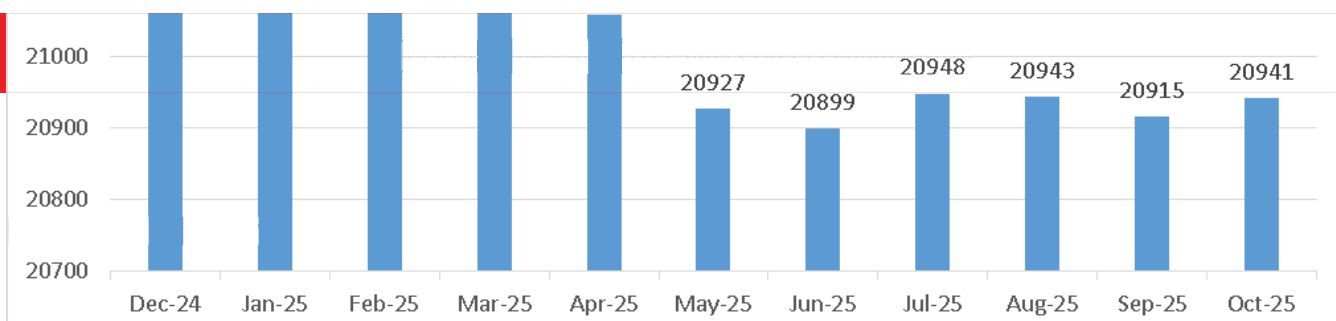
CDE. RODNEY SIBUYI
NATIONAL ORGANISER HIGHER EDUCATION

The higher education sector comprises of 25 Public Institutions with various campuses, with some cutting across various regions and provinces. The sector is also made of 21 SETA's which the union is organized with signed recognition agreements in place. Added to the sector is NSFAS, USARF, and Pearson Institute of Higher Education (EDUVOS). NEHAWU remains the most popular and effective union in the sector. The union is organized as a majority union in most institution of higher learning. The union is present in all the 25 universities in the country.

Membership trends National in the period Dec 2024 until October 2025

National Picture:

Month	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug 2025	Sept 2025	Oct 2025	Dec 2025
Members	21 237	21 253	21142	21 137	21 058	20 927	20 899	20 948	20 943	20 915	20 941	



The total membership of the union in the universities as of October 2025 is at 20 941, which equates to 31.97% of the 65,482 total workforce. From December 2024 to October 2025 the union has lost 296 members which equates to 1.4% membership decline in the period under review. There is a huge potential to grow from the 68.3% of either unorganized workers, and some belonging to rival unions in the sector.

Rival Unions in the sector

Name of the Union
NTEU - National Tertiary Education Union
Solidarity
SAPTU – South African Parastatal and Tertiary Institutions Union
PSA – Public Servants Association

BRANCHES OF THE UNION IN UNIVERSITIES

The union has 30 branches in the universities located in all Nine (9) provinces and regions, the table below indicates the branches of the union in the universities and the regions where these branches are located.

Province	Region	Branch	Membership
Eastern Cape	King Sabatha Dalindyebo	WSU NMD Branch	316
	Matthew Goniwe	Queenstown	66
	Yure Mdyogolo	Ibika Branch	175
		Buffalo City	152
	Max Madlingozi	University of Fort Hare-Alice Campus	428
		Rhodes University	597
	Thabo Moshoeshoe	Nelson Mandela University	1643
Free State	Central West Region	Central University of Technology	659
	Kopano Region	Central University of Technology	212
	Central West Region	University of Free State	820
	Maluti Region	University of Free State	190
Gauteng	Vuyani Mabaxa	University of Johannesburg	1079
		University of Witwatersrand	1919
	Sedibeng	Vaal University of Technology	615
	Tshwane	Tshwane University of Technology- Pretoria Campus	1097
		Tshwane University of Technology- Soshanguve Campus	426
		Tshwane University of Technology- Garankuwa Campus	283
		University of Pretoria	
		University of South Africa	2731
		Sefako Makgatho	594
	Sedibeng	North West University-	

Kwazulu Natal	Durban Region	Durban University of Technology	750
		University of Kwazulu Natal	566
	Harry Gwala Region	Durban University of Technology	
	PM Burg Region	University of Kwazulu Natal	
	Durban Region	Mangosuthu University of Technology	315
		University of Zululand	108
Limpopo	Mike Tauyatswala	University of Limpopo	785
		Tshwane University of Technology- Polokwane Campus	85
		University of Venda	379
Mpumalanga	Ehlanzeni	University of Mpumalanga	171
		Tshwane University- Mbombela Campus	94
	Nkangala	University of Mpumalanga	105
		Tshwane University- Emalahleni Campus	73
Northern Cape	Francis Baard	Sol Plaatje University	55
North West	Mafikeng	North West University	207
	Tlokwe	North West University	186
Western Cape	Ikapa South	University of Cape town	609
	Ikapa North	University of Cape town	
	West Coast Winelands	Cape Peninsula University of Technology	453
	Ikapa South	Cape Peninsula University of Technology	

Impact of austerity measures in the sector

Introduction

South African university austerity measures is driven by budget cuts and funding constraints, negatively impact access, quality, and transformation by straining university finances, worsening student debt/ hardship (especially for the 'missing middle'), hindering infrastructure/research, increasing reliance on private funding and limiting the system's ability to expand quality education, ultimately compromising transformation goals and societal development.

Key Impacts on Universities & Students:

- **Reduced Funding & Sustainability:** Government quarterly grants haven't kept pace with rising costs, forcing universities to absorb debt and seek unsustainable third-party income, jeopardizing financial stability.
- **Worsened Student Hardship:** Budget cuts compound NSFAS challenges, leaving many poor and "missing middle" students struggling with living costs, accommodation, and books.
- **Compromised Quality & Transformation:** Budgetary pressures force universities to cut corners, potentially sacrificing quality education, research, and vital transformation/community responsiveness goals.
- **Increased Reliance on Market Logic:** Reduced public funds push universities towards private funding, potentially subordinating them to market demands rather than public good, notes this academic article.
- **Infrastructure & Digital Gaps:** Underfunding strains resources, impacting essential digital infrastructure (Wi-Fi, labs) needed for quality education, widening the digital divide for many students, according to

this article.

Impact of Declining Student Access

- **Enrolment Caps:** Shrinking budgets have forced universities to limit placements despite rising demand. In early 2025, approximately 337,000 matriculants with bachelor passes competed for only 202,000 university spots.
- **High Dropout Rates:** Between **50% and 60%** of first-year students in South Africa are projected to drop out before completing their qualifications in 2025/2026, a trend exacerbated by inadequate financial support and overcrowded facilities.
- **Financial Exclusion:** Reduced funding for the **National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)** has led to stricter eligibility and defunding of certain qualifications, often leaving "missing middle" students without a pathway to higher education.

Long-Term Consequences:

- Austerity risks reversing gains in access and quality, hindering long-term social and economic development.

Close ranks and defend the base focal areas

University of Pretoria

Post the 2024 industrial action for salary increase and other benefit the branch experienced serious attacks from the university management. None implementation of the signed strike settlement by the university of Pretoria management. The university intended to charge members as a results of the strike. Hostility of the management towards our shop stewards after the 2023/24 strike.

The university working with some disgruntled NEHAWU shop stewards spearhead the resurgence of NUPSAW in the university, as a results lost a results the branch lost more than 200 members.

Fort Hare University

The branch has lost the majority status due to the continuous decline in membership. The University has been issued with a notice to terminate the recognition agreement after the dwindling membership below the required threshold. The union convened an urgent meeting with university management in October 2024, the meeting resolved that the termination of the recognition agreement should be stopped, and parties agree to review the recognition agreement.

The union continued to intensify the recruitment campaign, and the membership improved from 344 to 465. The university management has confirmed a meeting for the 04th -05th of February 2026 for the finalization of the recognition agreement but later cancelled the meeting citing the absence of key management members, and made a commitment to finalize this matter by the first quarter. The university is currently dealing with the allegation of the interference and maladministration by the vice chancellor on the affairs of the university.

A multi stakeholder committee including amongst others, UFH SRC, Gauteng Alumni Chapter, NTEU & NEHAWU have written to the minister and raised the following issues of serious concern:

The violent protest at the university is a serious concern to the university community, and all stakeholders involved. The burning of the university property poses a danger to students, workers and it works against the progress made in the advancement of education.

NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

The university has initiated a section 197 processes on the protection services, there are 197 members of the union to be affected by the process. Key to note is that the affected employees are the same employees who were absorbed during the fees must fall protest, this action is a direct reversal of the gains made by the union.

The university has presented the following reasons for initiating section 197:

- i. The loss of valuable university assets and property.
- ii. The loss of motor vehicles for both staff and students
- iii. Vandalism
- iv. A proliferation of serious crime incidents which transpired at the Missionvale Campus.
- v. The operation of illegal shebeens in some of the residence facilities.
- vi. The perturbing series of other incidents which transpired in on-campus residences, some of which had culminated in the devastation of death - the loss of life for some students.

The union convened an urgent meeting to discuss this matter and parties agreed that further engagements in this regard is needed. The university management promised to engage the union in good faith. The process has been temporarily halted but it is clear that management is reversing the gains of the fees must fall campaign.

Sol Plaatje University

The union lost the recognition agreement in the university, this due to the subjective weaknesses of the union in serving the members. The introduction of PSA in the university further compromised the union. From the total workforce of about 690 employees, the union has 50 members. The university initiated a section 189 for the catering employees, fortunately the union was able defend the members, ultimately all employees were absorbed in other departments in the university. There is a need for the union to re-organize itself and regain its ground.

University of Free state

Free State the provincial education sub-committee will also develop a program to fight against the unilateral abolishment of provisional registration by the University of Free State, the union view this back-ward move which will disadvantage the majority black students.

Durban University of Technology

The university management unilaterally terminated the recognition and organizational rights agreements and stopped the lawful deduction of union subscriptions with effect from 1 January 2026. The union must pay attention to this matter and urgently develop a program of action working with the province and the region. An urgent management meeting is required to understand the rationale for such a decision but also for union to fully express itself on the matter.

STATE OF THE UNION TVET AND CET



CDE. TAKALANI RATHI LUMELANA
NATIONAL ORGANISER TVET/CET

TVET and CET sector over the past three years has been identified as a priority sector and as such the union had directed that we include the sector in our close ranks defend the base in the form of launching functional branches, convening membership meetings, BEC's in line with the constitution, appointing and launching sub-structures for bargaining, academics, OHS, Gender in the main for both TVET and CET, Launching and ensuring that we have functional regional and provincial structures and subsequently the national structures.

We were directed to ensure we pay due attention to collective bargaining in the sector, and provinces must indicate the state of the organisation in the sector. The National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union is organising in all fifty (50) registered and accredited public TVET Colleges and nine (9) Community Education and Training colleges across the country and in all provinces. The sector has a workforce of approximately 28,000.

MEMBERSHIP TRENDS

CET/TVET: In the period under review, the Sector started at 7688 in February 2020 and by December 2025 had grown to 11,673. The graphs show an upward trend in membership growth.

Year Membership

Year	Membership
February 2020	7688
February 2021	9130
February 2022	9840
February 2023	9879
February 2024	11318
December 2026	11673

Trend Analysis

1. Consistent Growth:

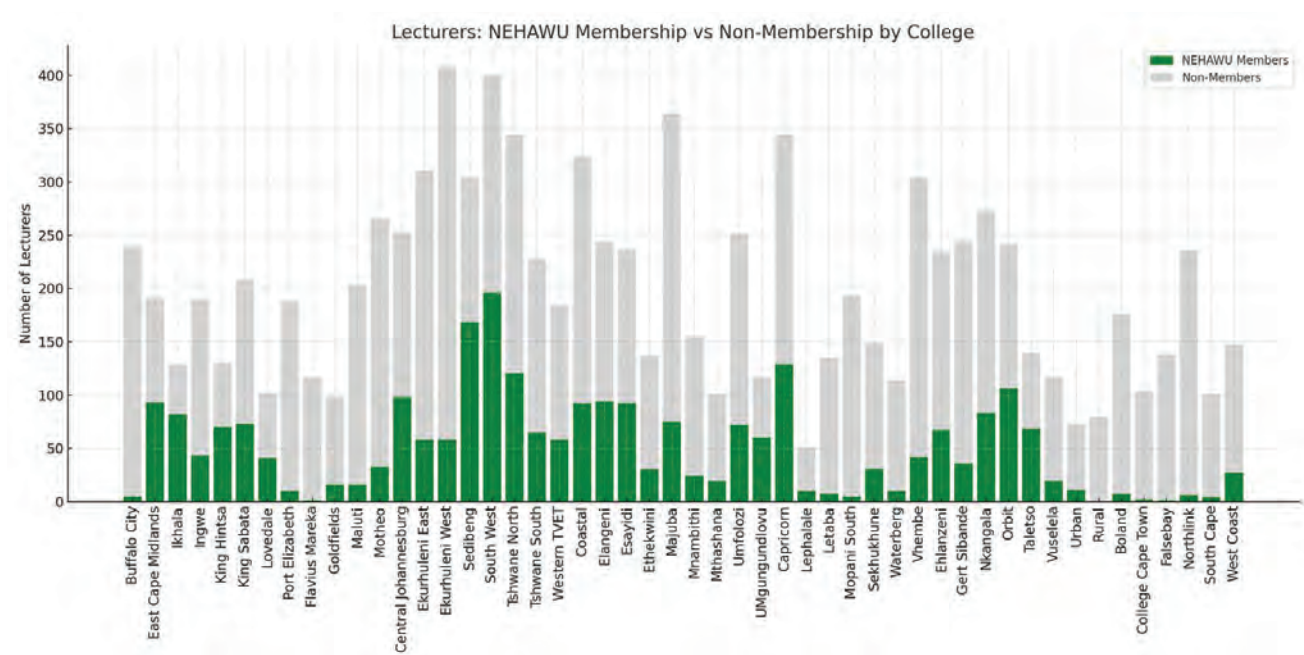
- There is a steady upward trend in membership over the seven-year period.
- The largest jump occurred between 2023 and 2024 with an increase of 1,439 members.

2. Plateaus:

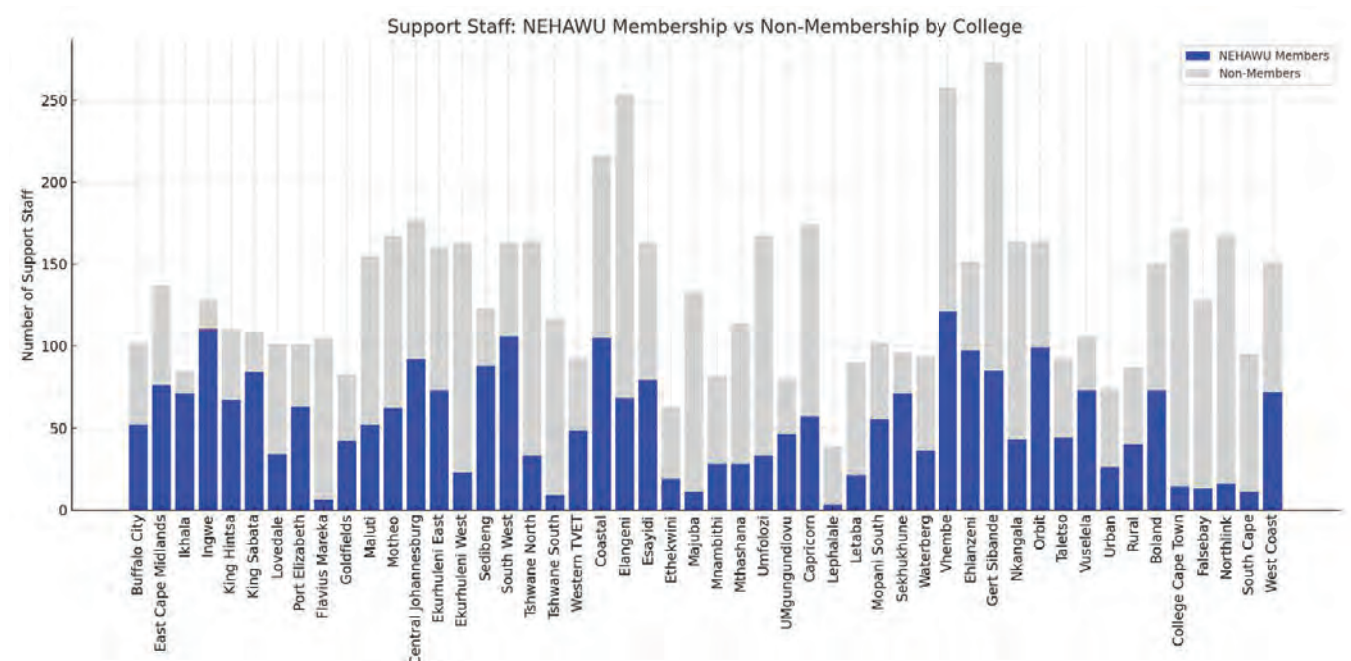
- Between 2022 and 2023, growth was minimal (only 39 new members), indicating possible stagnation or external constraints during that period.

3. Overall Growth:

- From 2020(7688 to 2025 (11673), membership increased by 3985 members, representing 65.9% growth.



Support Staff



COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

	CET	Total workforce	Nehawu membership
Eastern Cape	EC CET		
	Lecturers	2454	1232
	Officials (Support Staff)	12	2
Free State	FS CET		
	Lecturers	904	263
	Officials (Support Staff)	30	2
Gauteng	GP CET		
	Lecturers	1805	168
	Officials (Support Staff)	214	9
Kwazulu-Natal	KZN CET		
	Lecturers	2493	586
	Officials (Support Staff)	31	2
Limpopo	LP CET		
	Lecturers	1069	349
	Officials (Support Staff)	21	0
Mpumalanga	MP CET		
	Lecturers	1159	357
	Officials (Support Staff)	23	1
North-West	NW CET		
	Lecturers	891	207
	Officials (Support Staff)	17	3
Northern Cape	NC CET		

	Lecturers	144	5
	Officials (Support Staff)	16	0
Western Cape	WP CET		
	Lecturers	184	31
	Officials (Support Staff)	15	1

Student Number Capping and Curriculum Reform at Public Colleges

1. TVET Colleges

Enrolment Trends

- TVET enrolments increased from 345,000 in 2010 to approximately 650,000 in 2013. However, enrolments were capped at 710,535 in 2015 as a result of funding constraints (DHET, 2023; White Paper, 2013).
- Between 2015 and 2023, enrolments fluctuated, with a significant decline in 2020 attributed to the impact of COVID-19. Recovery has been partial, with 564,089 students enrolled in 2023 and projections ranging from 527,000 to 588,000 for 2024 to 2026.
- The NDP 2030 target for TVET colleges is 2.5 million students, indicating that current enrolments remain significantly below this goal (DHET, 2023; NDP, 2012).

2015	710,535	Capped
2016	705,395	Decrease
2017	657,133	Decrease
2018	688,028	Increase
2019	673,490	Decrease
2020	409,438	COVID-19 impact
2021	452,277	Increase
2022	508,600	Increase
2023	564,089	Increase
2024	482,244	Projected decline
2025	587,671	Projected increase
2026	527,000	Projected

Sources: DHET (2023); Gov.za (2024–2025); NDP (2012); White Paper on PSET (2013).

CURRICULUM REFORM: REPORT 191 AND OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMMES

- Report 191 (NATED) programmes, long-standing vocational pathways (N1–N6), are being phased out between 2024–2027/2028.
- Occupational qualifications under QCTO are being introduced to improve industry alignment, competency-based skills, and workplace readiness.
- Evidence suggests occupational programmes improve employability and address skills shortages, but require industry partnerships and infrastructure development (LearnSETA, 2024; EduCoast, 2023).

Impact on enrolment and NDP targets:

Short-term uncertainty is likely to temporarily reduce TVET enrolments.

In the medium to long term, occupational programmes are anticipated to increase student enrolment, improve **completion rates, and enhance employability**, thereby supporting NDP targets provided sufficient funding is available.

Effective implementation requires colleges to have trained lecturers, access to workplace placements,

and updated facilities (SciELO, 2023).

2. Community Education and Training (CET) Colleges

2011	265,000	Baseline
2023	120,081	Declining trend
2025	97,951	Further decline
2030	1,000,000	NDP target

- CET colleges aim to provide **second-chance education** for adults, expanding vocational and non-formal skills.
- Current enrolments remain substantially **below the NDP 2030 target**, underscoring the necessity for increased **investment and systemic support** (DHET, 2023; Parliament Report, 2025).

3. Integration with NDP 2030 Targets

- TVET target: **2.5 million by 2030**
- CET target: **1 million by 2030**

The significant gap in current enrolments indicates a need for additional **resources, effective policy implementation, and curriculum modernization**.

Occupational programmes within TVET colleges represent a **key intervention** for achieving NDP skills targets and enhancing graduate employability.

4. Key Observation

- TVET and CET colleges are currently not meeting NDP 2030 targets.
- Curriculum reforms, including the phase-out of Report 191 and the introduction of occupational programmes, are essential for alignment with labour market demand.
- Enrolment growth depends on funding, workplace integration, and student support, alongside modernised curriculum pathways.
- Monitoring, evaluation, and policy alignment across TVET and CET colleges are critical for closing the gap toward achieving 2030 targets.

REPORT 191 (NATED PROGRAMMES): PHASE-OUT AND TRANSITION

1. What is being phased out?

- Report 191 NATED programmes (N1–N6) have been central to TVET education historically, offering vocational training in engineering,

business, hospitality, and related fields.

- These qualifications are being phased out gradually between 2024 and 2027/2028 to make way for more modern, industry-aligned occupational qualifications developed under the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

2. Why the change?

The **Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)** and sector stakeholders have indicated several reasons:

Industry relevance & employability

Traditional NATED qualifications are considered more **theoretical and less aligned with current labour market requirements**, often necessitating additional workplace training for graduates after college.

Occupational qualifications are designed to incorporate **structured workplace learning and practical training**, thereby increasing graduates' **job readiness**.

Curriculum modernisation

The new framework seeks to **update curricula in accordance with global and industry standards**, reduce outdated content, and establish clearer qualification pathways.

Streamlined education system

The replacement of legacy NATED programmes with occupational qualifications is intended to simplify the qualification framework and enhance articulation across the post-school sector.

3. Transition timelines

- N1–N3 programmes have already been phased out or are being removed from 2024.
- N4–N6 enrolments are being reduced, with final intakes expected to conclude by mid-2026. Completion of the traditional National N Diploma pathway is scheduled for June 2029.
- By 2027–2028, the DHET intends for most NATED qualifications to be fully replaced by occupational qualifications.

4. What occupational programmes are

Occupational qualifications:

- Are **competency-based** and focus on specific jobs or trades.
- Include **workplace-based learning**, practical

assessments, and collaboration with employers.

These programmes are shorter in duration, typically ranging from 12 to 36 months, and are more skill-specific and closely aligned with industry needs than previous systems.

Examples include occupational certificates in electrician, fitter and turner, office administrator, and food and beverage management, replacing older NATED equivalents.

IMPACT OF THE TRANSITION

On Students and Enrolments

Mixed effects on enrolments

Short-term uncertainty may result in some students delaying enrolment or selecting alternative pathways due to confusion or unfamiliarity with the new system.

Learners currently enrolled in NATED programmes must complete their studies before established deadlines, such as 2029 for diplomas. Failure to meet these deadlines may require transitioning to occupational programmes.

Improved employability

Occupational qualifications are intended to enhance workplace readiness, which may improve graduate outcomes and employability relative to traditional theoretical programmes.

Bridging the skills gap

For students pursuing fields with practical components, such as trades, occupational programmes offer a more coherent pathway to employment, **apprenticeships, or internships**.

On Colleges and Curriculum

Implementation challenges

- Many TVET colleges are still adapting infrastructure, lecturer preparedness, and partnerships needed for workplace learning requirements.
- Some colleges face shortages of workplace placements and staff trained in the new occupational curricula.

Teaching capacity and resources

Colleges require new workshops, partnerships with employers, and updated curriculum materials to effectively deliver occupational qualifications.

Stakeholder engagement

The DHET has established task teams and frameworks to manage the transition in collaboration with industry, SETAs, quality councils, and student bodies.

On the Labour Market and Economy

Industry alignment

Graduates of occupational programmes are likely to be more closely aligned **with employer needs**, thereby reducing the time required to achieve productivity after graduation.

Skills pipeline

Occupational qualifications could help address **skills shortages** in key sectors (engineering, construction, ICT, hospitality).

Economic responsiveness

TVET is regarded as central to industrialisation and workforce development. The transition aims to reinforce this role by producing a workforce with more work-ready and demand-driven skills.

Conclusion

The phasing out of Report 191 NATED programmes in South African TVET colleges, alongside their replacement with occupational qualifications, constitutes one of the most significant curriculum shifts in vocational education in recent decades.

This change is intended to modernise TVET curricula, improve employability, and strengthen sector relevance, all of which are essential for achieving broader national skills and economic objectives.

However, this shift introduces practical challenges for both institutions and students. The overall impact on enrolment trends and graduate outcomes will depend on the effectiveness of the transition's implementation.

FUNDING TRENDS FOR TVET & CET COLLEGES (2019–2024)

Overall DHET Post-School Funding

The Post-School Education and Training (PSET) sector includes universities, TVET colleges, CET colleges, NSFAS, SETAs and other programs.

- In 2021/22, total public PSET spending was R116.4 billion, with TVET colleges receiving ~10.4% and CET colleges ~1.9% of that total.
- In 2023/24, total PSET funding (operational, transfers, subsidies) was R59.43 billion specifically allocated to HEIs and colleges; about R12.00 billion went to TVET colleges and R2.80 billion to CET colleges.

These figures indicate that, while funding for TVET and CET colleges is substantial, it remains considerably lower than university allocations

(R44.63 billion in 2023/24). This disparity highlights ongoing prioritisation challenges within the DHET budget.

TVET College Funding Patterns Funding Allocation Trends

Between 2019/20 and 2023/24, overall funding for TVET college subsidies declined by approximately 9%, whereas operational costs increased during the same period.

- In 2023/24, TVET operational funding was ~R7.27 billion and subsidies ~R4.74 billion.
- Between 2022/23 and 2023/24 the subsidy portion fell by ~R754.04 million (13.7%) even as operational costs grew by about 7.5%.

• Budget Vote Indicators

In the **2023/24 Budget Vote**, DHET reported record participation in NSFAS funding for TVET students, with over **R8.9 billion** allocated through NSFAS. This represents a notable increase in financial support for TVET learners.

CET College Funding Patterns Allocation Growth

- Although funding for CET colleges remains much lower than for TVET colleges, it has increased in recent years.
- In **2023/24, R2.80 billion** was allocated to CET compared with earlier smaller amounts recorded over the past decade.
- Between 2022/23 and 2023/24, CET funding **grew by 7.8%**, reflecting increased prioritisation.

Strategic Reprioritisation

- Over the **medium term**, DHET reprioritised approximately **R1.1 billion toward CET infrastructure development**. This aims to **reduce CET dependence** on basic education infrastructure and enhance responsiveness to adult learning needs.
- This shift is intended to promote greater stability and quality within the CET college system, which has historically been underfunded relative to its needs.

Medium-Term Trends and Projections Policy & Budget Context

DHET's medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) projects overall PSET funding increases of approximately 5% per year. TVET and CET colleges are included within a combined R15 billion budget range for 2023/24.

A medium-term reallocation of infrastructure spending is intended to strengthen the capacity and accessibility of TVET and CET colleges.

Funding vs Enrolment Growth

Although DHET funding has increased overall, the proportion allocated to TVET and CET colleges remains limited. This constraint contributes to **enrolment caps and slow growth** in these sectors, making it difficult to achieve the ambitious NDP targets of 2.5 million for TVET and 1 million for CET by 2030. These challenges underscore the need for policy reforms, prioritisation of occupational programme expansion, and more strategic allocation of limited financial resources.

Interpretation and Implications TVET Colleges

- *Flat or declining subsidy allocations* over the past five years, particularly when adjusted for inflation, have hindered colleges' ability to expand capacity in alignment with NDP targets.
- Rising operational costs, such as staff compensation, consume an increasing share of college budgets. This trend reduces the resources available for programme offerings, infrastructure, and learner support.

CET Colleges

- CET colleges have historically received significantly lower budgets. However, recent reprioritisation and increased infrastructure funding indicate **growing government recognition** of the importance of adult and skills-based education.
- Despite recent increases, funding remains insufficient to achieve the scale required for **1 million CET enrolments by 2030**.

Summary

TVET Colleges	Subsidies declined slightly; operational costs rose; total allocation still significant but constrained relative to needs.
CET Colleges	Funding increased moderately; significant reprioritisation to infrastructure and programme support.
DHET Overall	PSET funding growing ~5% yearly; combined support for TVET/CET remains limited vs universities and NSFAS.

IMPACT OF AUSTERITY MEASURES

Austerity measures have constrained funding for TVET and CET colleges, limiting their capacity to expand, upgrade infrastructure, and achieve NDP

2030 targets for enrolment and skills development.

- Over the last decade, the South African government has faced budgetary pressures due to slower economic growth, high public debt, and competing demands across sectors.

DHET budgets for TVET and CET colleges have been constrained by these austerity measures, resulting in flat or limited increases in operational and infrastructure funding. (DHET, 2023; Vukuzenzele, 2022)

Impacts on TVET Colleges

Enrolment Expansion	Funding caps contributed to student number capping, preventing TVET colleges from expanding enrolments in line with the NDP target of 2.5 million by 2030. (DHET, 2023)
Infrastructure & Maintenance	Limited capital funding led to deferred maintenance and inadequate workshops, labs, and classrooms. This impacts the quality of teaching and practical training required for occupational programmes. (SciELO, 2023)
Staffing & Lecturers	Austerity constrained the hiring of new academic staff, leading to high lecturer-to-student ratios and challenges in offering new occupational programmes. (EduCoast, 2023)
Programme Offering	Limited funding slowed the roll-out of occupational programmes, reducing the ability to replace NATED Report 191 programmes efficiently. (LearnSETA, 2024)
Student Support Services	Financial constraints reduced tutorials, counselling, and transport support, affecting student retention and completion. (DHET, 2023)

Although enrolment demand persists, austerity measures have restricted expansion, infrastructure upgrades, and staff development. These constraints are critical barriers to achieving NDP targets and to ensuring the quality of occupational learning.

Impacts on CET Colleges

Enrolments	CET enrolments declined from 265,000 in 2011 to ~97,951 in 2025. Budgetary constraints limited expansion of facilities and recruitment of students, hampering adult education targets. (Parliament, 2025)
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Infrastructure	Many CET centres operate in shared or inadequate facilities, making it difficult to introduce vocational and skills programmes. (Vukuzenzele, 2022)
Staffing	Lack of funds limited the hiring of full-time lecturers, reducing the capacity to offer new programmes or enhance quality. (DHET, 2023)
Programme Development	Fewer resources slowed the implementation of formal qualifications such as NASCA and occupational programmes, which are critical for adult learners. (LearnSETA, 2024)
Student Support	Adult learners often require additional support (literacy, counselling), but austerity reduced available services, contributing to high dropout rates. (Parliament, 2025)

CET colleges are especially vulnerable to austerity measures, as historical underfunding is further exacerbated. This limits the government's ability to achieve the 1 million enrolment target set by the NDP for 2030.

4. Broader Sector Implications

- Delayed NDP Goals: Both TVET and CET sectors are unlikely to reach their enrolment targets without increased and sustained investment.
- Limited Skills Pipeline: Austerity slows the rollout of occupational programmes, reducing the number of work-ready graduates for critical sectors.
- Equity Concerns: Budget constraints affect the poorest and most marginalised learners disproportionately, notably in rural areas where infrastructure and support are already limited.
- Quality Compromise: Reduced funding for maintenance, staff development, and resources risks lower quality of education, affecting employability outcomes.

Over the past five years, austerity measures have constrained DHET's ability to expand enrolments, improve infrastructure, and implement occupational programmes in both TVET and CET colleges. These limitations directly impede progress toward NDP 2030 targets and undermine efforts to produce a skilled workforce aligned with labour market requirements.

OUTCOMES OF THE

EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

The national union as informed by the December 2024 Central Executive Committee convened the National Education Alliance Committee which was attended by some formations including SASCO, YCL, SACP and COSATU to discuss the coordination of the education left popular front and a develop a detailed program for the period January and February 2025 and consider convening the national conference on education in 2025. The meeting was held on 22 January 2025 and was attended by COSATU, SASCO, YCL, SACP and NEHAWU Secretariat including the GS and DGS, Heads of OSEC, EDUSEC, International and PDU including the Collective Bargaining Officer, OSEC Researcher and the National Spokesperson. The meeting received an input by the General Secretary on the purpose for the meetings and the objectives of convening the meeting, a presentation by Head of PDU on the Overview

of the Post-Schooling and Education System in General and later a presentation by the General Secretary on the need for an education popular front to respond to the current societal challenges that the working class in general and the society are facing. After deliberations and inputs from the formations that attended the meeting, the following conclusion were adopted as the way forward of the meeting:

1. That education is another terrain of our struggle and we ought to pay attention to it as part of our programme of transformation of basic and post basic education in the country.
2. Student-worker alliance is important as part of the education front of the national union and the relationship between the union and progressive student formation ought to be harnessed and nurtured.



CDE. ZOLA SAPHETHA
GENERAL SECRETARY

- Meeting agreed that SASCO, YCLSA and COSAS must be continuously engaged and their programmes supported in particular the right to learn campaign in order to achieve *people's education for people's power*.
3. The ANCYL and SADTU needs to be part of the Education Committee as part of the progressive youth structures and allies of the federation.
 4. The meeting agreed that there must be a continuous sharing of experiences across the progressive forces and to develop a shared integrated approach to the immediate task in terms of transformation of education in the country.
 5. Agreed on the establishment of the Education Front as a component of the Popular Left Front as part of the fight against the dominant and hegemonic forces in society as a whole. The Education Front should include broader progressive formations and not only limited to the MDM structures but include broader progressive forces who are fighting in the education sector to bring about transformation in the education sector. The Education Front must bring about radical change and transformation in the education sector and empowering society to take charge their education.
 6. The meeting noted the austerity measures that are faced by education sector especially Higher Education and thus agreed on a need to develop a programme of action and campaign against austerity measures in the sector.
 7. Political and ideological training ought to be at the centre of the Education Front and push for content taught in classes to be working class bias.
 8. The push for working class representation in SETAs boards and university councils to push for working class biasness in these institutions and push against neo-liberal policies and austerity in these institutions.
 9. Worker education: the education front should push for worker education and SETA funding of worker education as part of their mandate and obligation to fund worker education.
 10. Push for the improvement of infrastructure development in the education sector which impacts on the quality and outcomes of these education institutions.
 11. The education front should define the kind of education we want, the content, the infrastructure needed to achieve it.
 12. All other comments that were made in the meeting will be consolidated in order to strengthen what comrade the Head of PDU Cde Sidney presented.
 13. The meeting agreed to convene a 2 day seminar or workshop to take the discussions forward and develop a programme of action that will respond to the current challenges as presented in the meeting. This workshop or seminar must be attended by all progressive forces involved in the education including NEHAWU, COSAS, COSATU, ANC-YL, YCL, SACP, SADTU and other progressive forces in the education sector.
 14. A Task Team must be established to brainstorm and develop a detailed program for the seminar or workshop and that each organisation should submit a name of people to sit in the task team.
 15. Each organisation must develop and submit a paper on its perspective on education to the task team closer to the date of the seminar/ workshop. These papers will be consolidated as part of the seminar/workshop material and will inform the focus and discussion of the workshop. The workshop will focus on the shape, form and content of the education front.
 16. The Task team must also consider inviting the Minister of Higher Education noting that she is from our ranks. This task team must immediately commence with the preparation for the workshop or seminar.
 17. SASCO and YCL should share their programme of *Right to Learn Campaign* and Joe Slovo campaign and NEHAWU will support this programme.
 18. The formations that attended the meeting agreed that they will forward names of the comrades who will constitute the task team and

that NEAWU will engage SADTU and COSAS on the submission of their comrades to the task team and their participation.

PROPOSED PROGRAM OF ACTION POST THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

(a) CONVENING OF THE PROVINCIAL EDUCATION SUB-COMMITTEE

The provincial education sub-committees will be convened between the 10th and 17th of February as follows:

- Western Cape : 10/02/2026
- North West : 10/02/2026
- Eastern Cape : 11/02/2026
- Gauteng : 17/02/2026
- Limpopo : 12/02/2026
- Kwa-Zulu Natal : 12/02/2026
- Mpumalanga : 12/02/2026
- Northern Cape : 13/02/2026
- Free State : 13/02/2026

Head office will support these provincial committees through content development and deployment.

The meetings will also talk to the joint war rooms of SASCO, YCL and the composition of the provincial sub-committees will be same as the national sub-committee as follows:

- Provincial Office Bearer deployed
- Provincial Secretaries
- Deputy Provincial Secretaries
- Regional Office Bearers deployed
- PHOSECs
- Provincial Paralegal Officers
- Provincial Education Officers
- Regional Organisers responsible for Higher Education, TVET and CET
- 1 X COSATU Provincial Deployee
- 1 X SACP Provincial Deployee
- 2 X SASCO Representatives
- 2 X YCLSA Representatives
- Three progressive comrades in education (Academics, Researchers or Management)

The focus of the provincial subcommittee should include:

- (a) These committees are convened to discuss the state of the education PSET sector in the province
- (b) To receive the outcomes and programs from the national education sub-committee and

develop provincial programs on the right to learn campaign linked to our close ranks defend the base.

- (c) In the Free State the provincial education sub-committee will also develop a program to fight against the unilateral abolishment of provisional registration by the University of Free State.
- (d) Discussions in the North West on the state of the North West University.
- (e) All provinces must develop campaigns on campus safety and security but also mobilising and organising the unorganised securities and cleaners
- (f) Develop campaigns linked to our public service delivery campaign frame work
- (g) Preparing / assisting in the preparation of articles for distribution to members via NEHAWU media and / or publication in the printed media'
- (h) Raising additional issues which NEHAWU should consider incorporating in its policy development and member education.

STRATEGIC REGIONS

- (i) The national union has directed that as part of our public service delivery campaign we focus on the following regions: EC (Thabo Moshoeshe), NW (Mafikeng), GP (Vuyani Mabhaxa) and LP (Mike Tauyatswala) as we go to the war rooms as directed by the CEC we must lift the sector and in the main talk on the following areas:

- The state of the union in the sectors (membership, branches, academic forums, SASCO/YCL structures and the link to our structures)
- How various campuses of the same institution functions in line with our organisational and bargaining system
- Conditions of service of our members
- Functioning of the university councils and how we relate with the processes

(b) THE POPULAR LEFT FRONT

Popular Left Front as part of the fight against the dominant and hegemonic forces in society as a whole. The Education Front should include broader progressive formations and not only limited to the MDM structures but include broader progressive forces who are fighting in the education sector to bring about transformation in the education sector.

- We will share the input made by the General Secretary on the popular left front both in the

education alliance committee meeting in 2025 and in the national education sub-committee in 2026 to all the members and formations for inputs and comments as we prepare for the two day seminar to take the discussions forward and develop a programme of action that will respond to the current challenges as presented in the meeting. These documents will be shared by the 09th of February 2026 and inputs on these documents must be submitted back before the seminar.

- This workshop or seminar must be attended by all progressive forces involved in the education including NEHAWU, COSAS, COSATU, ANC-YL, YCL, SACP, SADTU and other progressive forces in the education sector.

(c) THE RIGHT TO LEARN CAMPAIGN

- Noting the presentations made by SASCO and YCL on the right to learn campaign we will align the campaign in the remaining period to the NEHAWU close ranks defend the base campaign and the modalities thereof will be discussed in the coming provincial sub-committees.
- SASCO and YCL will be invited in these provincial meetings and given space to talk on their programs with the view of developing detailed programs
- As part of the program we must talk to curriculum symposiums and how we can occupy the space

(d) PREPARATIONS FOR THE SEMINAR

- The meeting once more agrees to convene a 2 day seminar to take the discussions forward and develop a programme of action that will respond to the current challenges as presented and the launching of the popular left front on education.
- A task team constituted by comrades from NEHAWU, SASCO, COSAS, COSATU, ANC-YL, YCL, SACP, SADTU will be convened in the first week of March 2026 to prepare and brainstorm on the approach to the seminar.
- The task team must incorporate the work done by the SACP in their work as they prepare for the seminar.
- The mentioned formations above are expected to forward names of the comrades who will constitute the task team by the 28th of February 2026.

- The seminar will also get a proposal for the 50th anniversary of June 16
- SASCO 35 year anniversary
- The seminar will be convened in the month of May 2026

(e) FIGHT AGAINST AUSTERITY MEASURES

- All the formations will form part of the pickets actions scheduled for the 25th of February 2026, the day the Minister of Finance will be presenting his budget speech and we will lift education issues in all our memorandums.
- The picket actions are scheduled to take in Cape Town and in Tshwane.
- We must have a joint meeting of NEHAWU, COSATU, YCL, SACP, SASCO and progressive formation on this funding model, amendment of the Higher Education Act, reviewal of the skills system, increase of the skills levies and commodification of PSET sector

(f) THE FUNDING MODEL

- The meeting has received the presentation from NEHAWU on its perspective on the funding model. Members of the sub-committee are to make inputs and so is SASCO, YCL, COSATU and SACP
- We must prepare and finalise our joint paper on the following issues:
 - Funding model
 - Reviewal of the skills system by DHET
 - Free fee (where they suggest that they only focus on the fees and not accommodation and other issues)
 - Decentralisation of NSFAS
 - Levy increment to help subsidise universities
 - 1400 medical graduates that are not employed
- This paper must be finalised by March 2026 as we prepare for a joint meeting with DHET and the formations mentions and as we prepare for the seminar.
- Further led by COSATU we must engage and prepare our paper on the reviewal processes of the skill system