

More student enrolments at colleges

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The Department of Higher Education and Training plans to raise the number of student enrolments in colleges and post-school institutions to 4 million by 2030, Minister Blade Nzimande announced on 12 January 2012.



(Image: GCIS)

The move is part of the Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training launched on Thursday by the minister. The Green Paper aims to revitalise the higher education system in the country and aligning it with South Africa's overall development agenda.

"We aim for 4 million enrolments (approximately a 60% participation rate) in colleges or other post-school institutions (both full time and part time), an approximately six-fold increase over the numbers in 2011," he said.

Nzimande said approximately 3 million young people between 18 and 24 were not accommodated in either the education and training system or labour market. This, he said, prevented many of them from participating in shaping a democratic South Africa as informed citizens.

Change by 2030

The minister said that by 2030 this should change, with South Africa having a post-school system that provides a range of accessible alternatives for young people.

The post-school institutions will include a new institutional type - Community Education and Training Centres - to address the needs of out-of-school youth and adults.

"We propose to absorb and transform the existing public adult learning centres into this category of institution and believe that they will serve to strengthen significantly the provision of education and training to adults," said Nzimande.

He added that the key area of focus for expansion will be the public Further Education and Training (FET) college sector which will play the central role in expanding the development of artisan and other mid-level skills for the economy.

"Such skills are in extremely short supply and colleges, working together with employers (both public and private), will be our spearhead in tackling this problem," he said.

As the central part of the strategy of FET colleges is to improve the quality of education, the green paper proposes the establishment of the South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training (SAIVCET) to build institutional capacity.

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