

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**  
**IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**4.1 Introduction**

Chapter Three has outlined the nature and functioning of the American community college. Among others, it has emerged from the chapter that:

- There are several reasons, which led to the establishment of American community colleges.
- American community colleges are providing diverse services to a wide range of students.
- American community colleges have played a vital role in the betterment of the lives of millions of American adults whose educational opportunities had been limited by a variety of circumstances.

It is now necessary for us to focus our attention on the South African situation in order to find out whether community colleges, established in South Africa on principles similar to those on which American community colleges were established, can do for South Africans what they did for the citizens of the USA.

Millions of South Africans today find themselves in a situation similar to that in which many Americans found themselves prior to the introduction of community colleges in the USA. They are illiterate, without marketable skills, unemployable and poor. This is so because many citizens of the country were denied

educational opportunities as a result of the apartheid policies of the previous government. Some drastic measures need to be taken to equip them with skills that will make it possible for them to earn a living and to improve their educational qualifications if they so desire.

Since the coming to power of the present government in South Africa, many efforts have been taken towards the improvement of the education and training levels of victims of apartheid education who are beyond school-going age and towards the improvement of the standard of education being offered to current recipients of school education. These include, among many others, the passing and implementation of the South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996, the Skills Development Act (SDA) No. 97 Of 1998, the Further Education and Training (FET) Act No. 98 of 1998 and the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Act No. 52 of 2000. These Acts, together with other legislation on education laid the foundation on which democratic education for all South Africans is being built.

Although community colleges are not specifically enacted in any of the above-mentioned Acts, they are not in any way excluded either. In fact, the National Committee on Further Education (NCFE), which was commissioned by the National Minister of Education in 1996 to investigate all aspects of post-compulsory education and training prior to entry into Higher Education (HE), stated in its report to the Minister:

**“Within a diverse and flexible FET college system, the community college should be seen as a new and innovative model of provision providing a comprehensive range of programmes in accordance with community needs and providing open-access and learner support.”**

**(DoE, 1997(a): 33)**

It is clear from the above statement that in the opinion of the NCFE, community colleges do have a role to play in the provision of education to adults in South Africa. It can also be inferred from the statement that community colleges are not expected to compete with the Department of Education or with the government departments in the provision of adult education and training but to supplement their efforts.

Chapter Four therefore seeks to examine the education situation in South Africa for the purpose of the identification and better understanding of the measures that are currently being taken to improve the lives of South Africans through education, as well as the determination of the role that community colleges can play in the process. South African potential students who are comparable to American community college students and are likely to benefit from community college education, are those who are beyond school-going age and are at levels

1-4 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.

**Figure 4.1: The National Qualifications Framework**

GRADE	NQF LEVEL	BAND	TYPES OF QUALIFICATIONS AND CERTIFICATES	
	8	HETC	Post-Doctorate	
	7		Post-Graduate Degrees	
	6		Degrees	
	5		Diplomas	
		Further Education and Training Certificate FETC		
12	4		Schools, FET Institutions, Private Providers, Workplace-Based Training (learnerships) Adult learning Centres etc.	
11	3			
10	2			
9		General Education and Training Certificate		
7 – 9	1	GETC	Senior Phase	ABET Level 4
4 – 6			Intermediate Phase	ABET Level 3
R – 3			Foundation Phase	ABET Level 2
			Pre - School	ABET Level 1

Source: Hoppers, 2000: 7.

They are students who are in need of basic education qualifications that will give them access to Further Education and Training and those who have acquired Basic Education and Training qualifications and wish to acquire Further Education and Training qualifications. The Department of Education (DoE) (1997(c): 5) collectively refers to the education and training needed by this category of students as Adult Education and Training (AET). Similarly, Zuma (1996: 314) refers to this type of education as Adult Basic and Further Education and defines it as:

**“Education and training outside the compulsory phase of formal schooling and ranging from basic literacy to the Higher Education access programmes.”**

In Chapter Two, vocational education was defined as:

**"Education designed to develop skills, abilities, understandings, attitudes, work habits and appreciations needed by workers to enter and make progress in employment on a useful and productive basis."**

**(Thompson, 1973:111)**

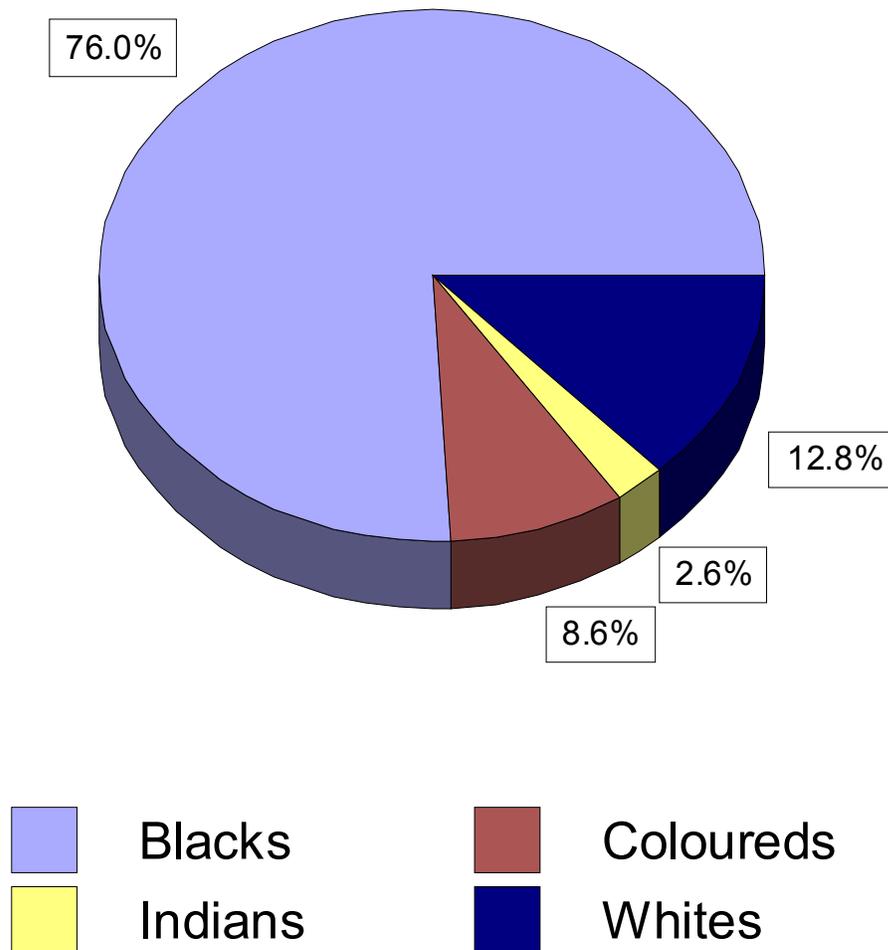
Vocational education as defined by Thompson, cannot be possible for a person who has not acquired basic education. Although most of the development of the skills, abilities, understandings, attitudes, etc., mentioned in Thompson's definition takes place beyond the level of basic education, it still needs to be preceded by basic education. This definition therefore does not exclude basic education. For this reason the concepts Adult Basic Education and Training as defined by the DoE and Adult Basic and Further Education as defined by Zuma are not in conflict with Thompson's concept of vocational education. The concept of vocational education as used in this chapter will include Adult Basic Education and Training, Further Education and Training and all other education programmes intended to equip their recipients with skills needed in the workplace.

For the purpose of a better understanding of vocational education in South Africa, this chapter will focus on the historical overview of education in South Africa, which will be followed by an analysis of the current situation, which is a direct consequence of what transpired in education in the past. Also to be considered in this chapter, are the efforts being taken to remedy the situation prior to and after the passing of the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998, the FET Act No. 98 of 1998 and the ABET Act No. 52 of 2000. The chapter will be concluded with a consideration of community college initiatives in South Africa and the role that these colleges are intended to play in the provision of technical-vocational education in the country.

## **4.2 Historical Overview of Education in South Africa**

According to Central Statistics (1996: 3.1), in 1994 South Africa had a population of 40 436 000 people who were classified into four groups, namely, Blacks, Coloureds, Indians and Whites. Figure 4.2 below shows the number of people in each population group as a percentage of the total population:

**Figure 4.2: RSA Population Figures: 1994**



Source: Central Statistics, 1996: 3.1

Just before the 1994 National Elections which led to the present democratic government in South Africa, the type of education which was offered to each of the four population groups differed with regard to administration, funding and

student enrollment. Christie (1991: 101; see also, Zuma, 1996: 304-306 and Barnard and Vos, 1980: 55) summarises these differences as follows:

#### **4.2.1 Administration**

Education for Blacks was, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, dependent mainly on voluntary efforts and funded by missionary societies and churches. Between 1904 and 1953 it was jointly administered by churches and provincial education departments. From 1954, in accordance with the Bantu Education Act of 1953, it became the responsibility of the central government. From 1968 Black education was gradually decentralised into regions and self-governing territories. A Department of Education which was responsible for all education in the territory excluding Higher Education was established in each of the self-governing territories. Between 1976 and 1982 four of the self-governing territories, namely, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei became independent and took responsibility for their own education. The Education and Training Act of 1979 came into effect in 1980 and took control of all education for Blacks outside the self-governing territories including the universities, which were mainly for this population group. The Act also made provision for technical and trade training, advanced technical education and adult education. Advanced technical education was offered at technical colleges such as Edendale Technical College, Mmadikoti College, Mabopane College and Mangosuthu College of Technology. Most of these colleges were later changed into technikons.

Up to 1910 education for the Coloured population was provided by the missionary societies and churches. After 1910 their education was provided by the provincial education departments. Other departments which also took responsibility for the education for Coloureds from 1 June 1980 and 1 October 1980 respectively were the Department of Coloured Affairs and the Department of Internal Affairs. In terms of the 1983 constitution, all education for Coloureds fell under the Minister of Education and Culture: House of Representatives. This included the University of the Western Cape and the Peninsula Technikon.

Education for Indians was, until 1964, provided by the provincial education departments, which were also responsible for education for Whites. From 1965 Indian education became the responsibility of the Directorate of the Department of Internal Affairs. After the introduction of the 1983 constitution all education for Indians, including the University of Durban-Westville and the former M.L. Sultan Technikon, became the responsibility of the Minister of Education and Culture: House of Delegates. Provision for vocational-technical education for Indians was made by the 1968 Advanced Technical Education Act for Indians. This Act declared the former M.L. Sultan Technikon an autonomous College for Advanced Technical Education under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Indian Affairs.

Education for the White population group was administered by five departments, namely, the Cape, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal Provincial Departments of Education and the Department of National Education: House of

Assembly (HoA). The four Provincial Departments of Education provided all education except that which was defined as Higher Education. The Department of National Education: HoA was responsible for Higher Education which included specialised education offered at technical colleges and technikons. As from 1986, all education for Whites fell under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Education and Culture: HoA. Vocational-technical education was provided for through the Advanced Technical Education Act of 1967. In accordance with this Act, several technical colleges, namely, Cape Technical College, Natal Technical College, Pretoria Technical College, Witwatersrand Technical College and, later, Port Elizabeth and Vaal Technical Colleges, became Colleges for Advanced Technical Education. In 1979 the name College for Advanced Technical Education was changed to Technikon.

This brief history of the administration of education in South Africa reveals that there were differences in the administration of education for the different groups constituting the population of the RSA. As a result of these differences there were more opportunities for vocational education for Whites than there were for the other population groups.

#### **4.2.2 Funding**

The above mentioned differences in the administration of education for the different population groups in South Africa were accompanied by differences in the funding of the education for the different groups. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below

show the differences in the per capita expenditure in rand for selected years between 1953 and 1989:

**Table 4.1: Per Capita Expenditure on Education  
in South Africa**

Year	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
1953 – 54	17	40	40	128
1969 – 70	17	73	81	282
1975 – 76	42	140	190	591
1977 – 78	54	185	276	657
1980 – 81	139	253	513	913
1982 – 83	146	498	711	1211
1984 – 85	227	639	1112	1702
1986 – 87	369	887	1714	2299
1988 – 89	656	1221	2067	2882

Source: Christie, 1991: 108

**Table 4.2: Per Capita Expenditure on Education  
in South Africa in Ratio Form**

Year	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
1953 – 54	1	2,35	2,35	7,53
1969 – 70	1	4,29	4,76	16,59
1975 – 76	1	3,33	4,52	14,07
1977 – 78	1	3,43	5,11	12,17
1980 – 81	1	1,82	3,69	6,57
1982 – 83	1	3,40	4,86	8,27
1984 – 85	1	2,81	4,9	7,5
1986 – 87	1	2,4	4,64	6,23
1988 – 89	1	1,86	3,15	4,39

Source: Christie, 1991: 110

It can be seen from the above tables that the education of White people received the highest funding followed by that of Indians and Coloureds. The education of Blacks who, according to the statistics in Figure 4.1 were in the majority, received the least funding.

#### **4.2.3 School Enrollment**

Available evidence (see Table 4.3) shows that there were inequalities among the different population groups insofar as school enrollment is concerned. It can be seen that enrollment for population groups other than Whites has been

increasing year after year. Christie (1991: 114) contends that this increase cannot only be attributed to population increases but also to the fact that school provisioning for these groups has been expanding. In Table 4.4, school enrollment for the population group, which is in the majority, namely, Blacks and the one in the minority, namely, Whites is being compared. Analysis of figures in this table shows that although school enrollment for Blacks was increasing, so was the dropout rate. It also shows that the dropout rate of Blacks was far higher than that of Whites. This is evident from the fact that the percentages of Black children who went to school in 1988 are dropping year by year. They are high at lower grades and lower at higher grades. The pattern is different with White children where there are slight differences in the percentages as they move up the grades (Christie, 1991: 117).

**Table 4.3: School Enrollment in South Africa:  
Selected Years**

Year	Black	Coloured	Indian	White
1970	2 738 564	490 351	161 676	859 352
1972	3 081 162	534 613	172 142	879 755
1974	4 488 043	591 850	180 800	896 819
1976	3 900 454	635 347	188 008	928 640
1978	4 311 616	722 326	205 136	962 561
1980	4 839 806	748 896	217 170	959 243
1982	5 313 016	766 179	223 745	986 276
1984	5 795 711	773 543	229 686	976 880
1986	6 237 070	798 507	232 468	997 964
1988	7 218 972	832 329	233 910	935 903

Source: Christie: 1991: 114

**Table 4.4: School Enrollment for Blacks and Whites in 1988**  
**Including Homelands**

School grades	Blacks		Whites	
	Number	%	Number	%
Sub A	1 168 204	16,6	83 571	8,9
Sub B	870 087	12,4	76 937	8,2
Std 1	804 574	11,4	73 389	7,9
Std 2	706 021	10,1	73 258	8,8
Total lower primary	3 548 886	50,5	307 155	32,8
Std 3	696 241	9,9	74 473	7,9
Std 4	600 454	8,5	76 376	8,2
Std 5	519 966	7,4	77 878	8,3
Total higher primary	1 816 661	25,8	228 727	24,4
Total primary	5 365 547	76,3	535 882	57,2
Std 6	497 837	7,1	83 595	8,9
Std 7	403 619	5,8	82 902	8,9
Std 8	318 728	4,5	82 801	8,9
Std 9	250 443	3,6	78 603	8,4
Std 10	191 399	2,7	72 120	7,7
Total secondary	1 662 026	23,7	400 021	42,8
Combined total	7 027 573	100	935 903	100

Source: Christie, 1991: 116

Table 4.5 below compares standard 10 enrollment and results of Black and White students in 1986 which do not differ much from those of other years before the 1994 general elections:

**Table 4.5: RSA Standard 10 Results in 1986: Blacks and Whites**

	Std 10 Enrollment	Wrote Examination	Passed Matriculation	%	Passed Senior Certificate	%	Total	%
Blacks	127 515	99 715	13 360	13,4	37 867	38,0	51 227	40,2
Whites	61 309	57 964	26 243	45,3	26 986	46,5	53 229	86,8

Source: Christie, 1991: 122

It can be seen from the table that there were many dissimilarities between the two population groups. Firstly, one can see that some of the students who enrolled for standard 10 at the beginning of the year, i.e., 21,8% of Blacks and 5,4% of Whites, did not sit for the examinations. This confirms what has been noted earlier, namely, that the dropout rate was higher among Black students than among White students. Secondly, more White students (53 229) than Black students (51 227) passed standard 10 in 1986. This was so despite the fact that far more Black than White students enrolled and sat for examinations during the year in question. It can therefore be deduced from Table 4.5 that more Whites than Blacks had better opportunities for further study and better jobs than Blacks (Christie, 1991: 123).

The foregoing historical overview of education in South Africa brings to light some important issues which will have an impact on the current state of affairs in South Africa as well as on the planning and provisioning of vocational-technical education to the majority of South Africans. These factors include the following:

- The majority of the population of South Africa received low quality education during the period prior to the 1994 general elections. This can be deduced from the fact that up to the year 1989, the education of Blacks who are in the majority in South Africa, received the least funding. For instance, during the period 1975-1976 the amount of money spent on a Black child was only 7% of that spent on a White child and, ten years later, (1986-1987) the amount spent on a Black child had only risen to 16% of that spent on a White child.
- The dropout rate among Black children far exceeded that among White children. Considering the fact that Blacks are in the majority in South Africa, this means that a considerably high number of people in South Africa have received little or no education at all.
- Provision was made for vocational-technical education at technical colleges some of which later changed into technikons. It has emerged that there were far more of these institutions for Whites than there were for the other population groups. One of the entrance requirements at these educational institutions was a senior certificate and, since more Whites had senior certificates and there were more institutions available to them than to other population groups, it can be concluded that vocational

technical education was a privilege more readily available to Whites than to other population groups.

It would now be of interest and helpful to this study to consider the impact that apartheid education had on the citizens of South Africa insofar as workforce training and its consequences are concerned. This will hopefully be achieved by analysing the current state of affairs.

### **4.3 Analysis of the Current Situation**

In this section an attempt will be made to analyse the current situation in South Africa. This is done with the purpose of understanding in a better manner the impact that the inequalities in education have had on the citizens of South Africa. Focus will be on the extent of workforce training in South Africa, literacy, unemployment and poverty levels in the country as well as on efforts being made to remedy the situation.

#### **4.3.1 Workforce Training**

There is worldwide recognition of the fact that education and training are the cornerstones of economic and social development. Education and training are actually becoming a strategic good, in that a country's ability to compete effectively in the global economy is going to depend on the skills of its people (Department of Education, 1997(a): 1). As evidenced by the current state of

affairs summarised below, South Africa still has a long way to go before it can compete globally as far as workforce training is concerned.

There is a considerably high number of South Africans who are considered illiterate. According to Central Statistics (1996: 7.1), adult literacy refers to:

**“Persons who are 15 years and older who can read, write and speak their home language.”**

In accordance with this definition, the literacy rate in South Africa in 1991 was 82,16%. In the Free State Province the figure stood at 84,42% during the same year. To clarify the issue of literacy in South Africa even further, it was observed that in October 1994, out of a total of about 21,5 million South Africans aged 20 years and older, 2,7 million have never had any education. Of these, 2,5 million were Blacks. The number of those who had primary education, i.e., grade 1 to 7 was 5,5 million and that of those with secondary education, which is grade 8 to 12, was 11,2 million (Central Statistics, 1996: 6.9). These figures show distinctly that a lot of adults in South Africa still need to be equipped with primary and secondary education before they can be considered for further training. Employers and labour market experts have been claiming since the boom years of the late 1960s that South Africa has an acute skills shortage in certain fields. These claims have had special validity in certain specific occupations requiring high skills and high technology inputs. These include new technological skills

such as Informatics, Biotechnology and High Technology Artisanhip. Among other reasons, the generalised claim regarding skills shortages has been found to be due to the dissatisfaction among employers regarding the poor outputs of apartheid schooling (DoE, 1998 (a): 10).

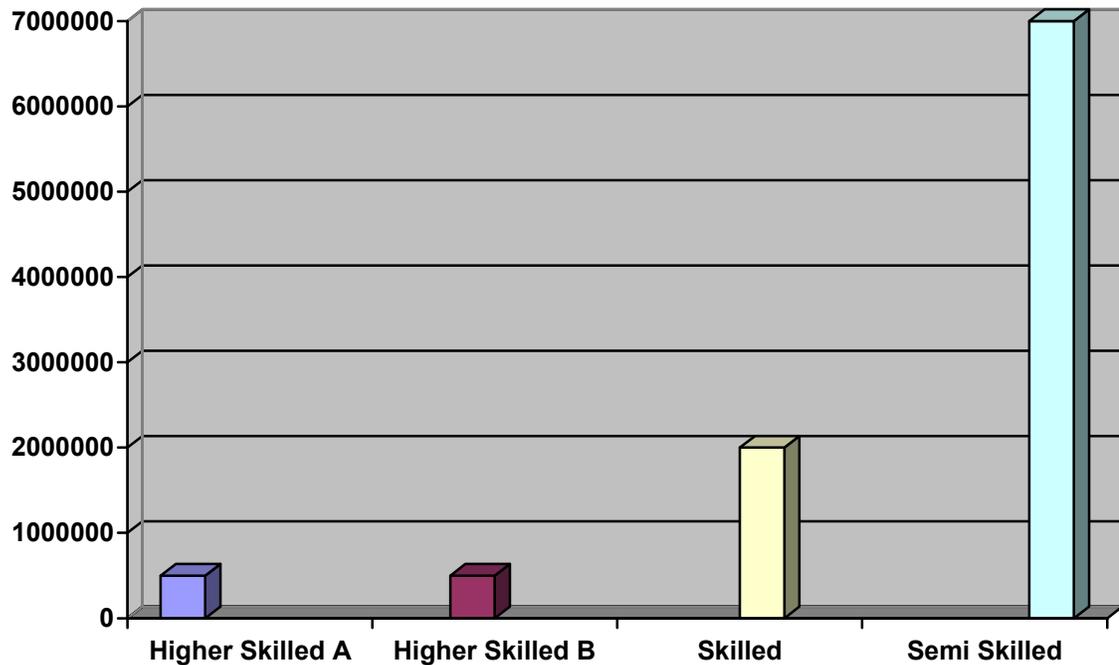
The above claims were validated by the results of a survey of several South African companies conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in 1998. The survey revealed that almost three-quarters of the surveyed companies were experiencing shortages of skilled human resources. More than half (52%) of the companies indicated shortages in the professional category. The lack of highly skilled Black South Africans was repeatedly stated. The survey revealed a need for more civil, electrical and industrial engineers as well as engineering technicians. It was also discovered that there were shortages in Information Technology (IT) related occupations such as Computer Programmers, Systems Analysts and Software Systems engineers. Shortages in these IT related occupations were found to be intensified by loss of skills to the international market. Shortages of registered as well as unregistered accountants also featured prominently in the survey (Hall, 1999: 7).

Furthermore, although South Africa is an upper middle income country with a gross national product (GNP) per capita of \$3 040 in 1994, making it comparable to Malaysia, Chile and Mauritius, the country's human capital stock is very under-developed. There are only 3 million skilled and highly skilled people in South

Africa. Highly skilled individuals are divided into categories A and B. The highly skilled A category comprises individuals in possession of grade 12 plus a degree, while the highly skilled B category encompasses individuals with grade 12 plus a diploma. Compared to other middle income and advanced industrialised countries, South Africa is confronted with specific shortages of professionals, craft and other related trade workers. Because of this poor skills mix in the labour market, South Africa was judged 44<sup>th</sup> out of 53 participating countries in the 1997 World Competitiveness Report. Malaysia and Chile, both with more highly skilled populations, obtained positions 9 and 13 respectively (DoE: 1997(a): 1).

In conclusion, Figure 4.3 below indicates the extent of workforce training in South Africa. It can be seen from the graph that the number of persons in each category decreases with an increase in the level of skilling. Thus, the category with the highest number of people is the semi-skilled category.

Figure 4.3: Workforce Training in South Africa



Source: DoE, 1997(a): 28

There is surely a relationship between people's level of skill and their employment/unemployment level. The following section will focus on this relationship.

#### 4.3.2 Unemployment Levels

The higher the level of skills people have received, the higher their chances of being employed and *vice versa*. Considering the high number of unskilled people in South Africa as referred to above, it is to be expected that the level of

unemployment in the country will also be high. Unemployed persons are defined as:

**“Persons who are 15 years and older, who are not in paid employment or self-employed, are available for paid employment or self-employment and have the desire to work and to take up employment or self employment.”**

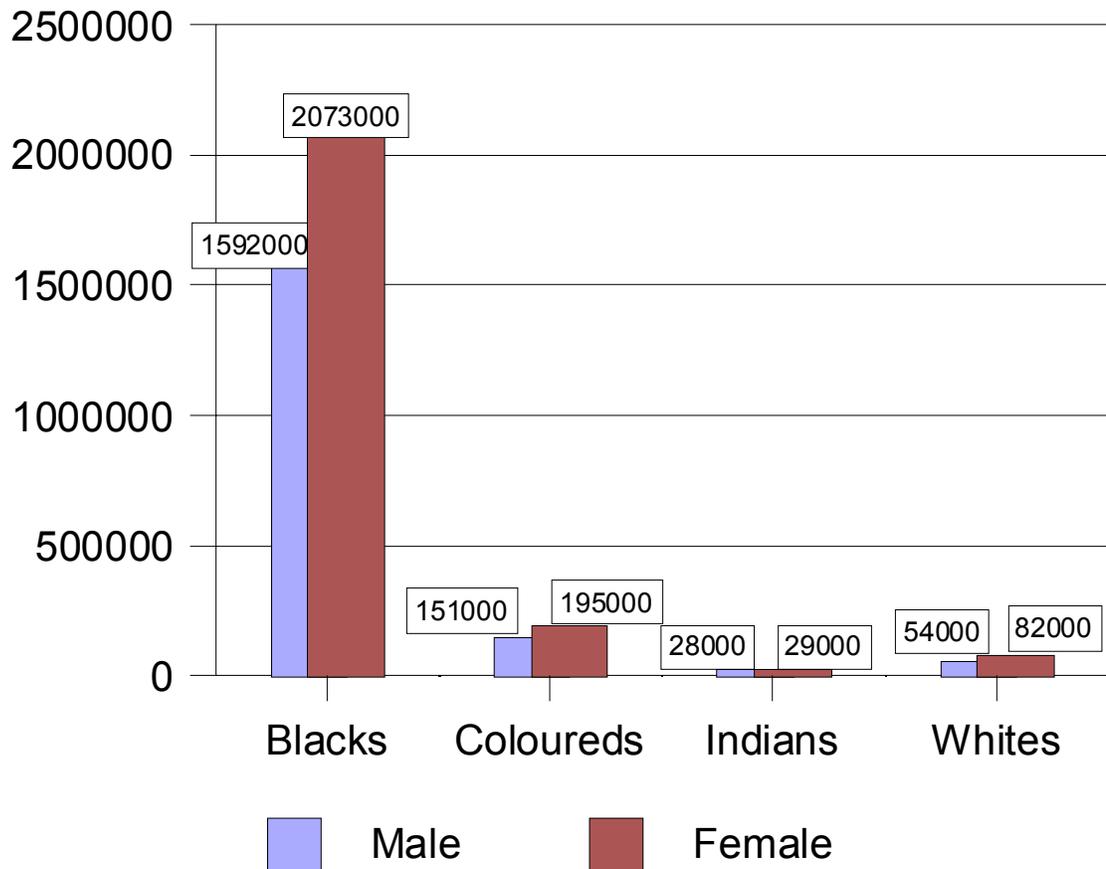
**(Central Statistics, 1996: 10.2)**

Unemployed persons in South Africa can therefore be classified into two main categories, namely, young persons with nine or more years of schooling and older people with less education. According to the 1995 household survey, there were 4,2 million unemployed people in South Africa. The majority of the unemployed (87,2%) were Blacks and women constituted 56,6% of the unemployed with Black women being in the majority (Central Statistics, 1996: 10.5).

Youth unemployment appears to be a serious problem. Half of the unemployed are young people under the age of 30, with at least 9 years of schooling. First-time entry into the labour market is a problem particularly for the Black young job seekers. Most White youth have entered their first jobs at age 21 while this is delayed until age 27 for Blacks (DoE, 1997(a): 29).

Figure 4.4 below indicates the unemployment levels in South Africa according to the 1995 household survey:

**Figure 4.4: RSA Unemployment Levels in 1995**



Source: Central Statistics, 1996: 10.5.

Analysis of the graph reveals that the quality of education one receives ultimately has an impact on one's level of skill and employability. Thus, considering the

quality of education provided to the different population groups in the past, it is not surprising that the most among the unemployed are Blacks and the least are Whites. Unemployment leads to lack of income and ultimately to poverty. Poverty levels in South Africa will therefore be the next to focus on.

#### **4.3.3 Poverty Levels**

The logical consequence of illiteracy and unemployment levels of the magnitude described above is poverty of corresponding immensity. Thus, it is not surprising that the majority of South Africans are living in poverty. The socio-economic context for potential and current adult learners reflects extreme inequalities in levels of income and poverty. The lowest 20% of income earners have been found to access 1,5 % of the national income while the wealthiest 10% of households access 50%.

Between 36% and 53% of South Africans fall below the poverty datum line. As to be expected, poverty is overwhelmingly racial in character with the majority of the poor being Blacks, and Coloureds while Indians and Whites account for only a relatively smaller percentage of the poor (Everatt and Jennings, 1996: 22).

Since the South African situation described above is a direct consequence of lack of educational opportunities among the majority of the citizens of the country, it can be anticipated that the best way of remedying this unacceptable state of affairs is the provision of education to the majority. Our next area of focus

will therefore be the nature of the potential recipients of the needed education, institutions providing this education, the type of education being provided as well as how it is being financed. Legislation which is intended to streamline the provision of vocational education and training in South Africa, namely, the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998, the FET Act No. 98 of 1998 and the ABET Act No. 52 of 2000 have recently been passed and have not yet been fully implemented. For instance the DoE has declared 2003 the year of FET which signals the Department's commitment to FET in 2003 (Sunday Times Career Junction, 3 November 2002:1). This means that between the passing of the above-mentioned legislation and full implementation thereof, there have been other means of vocational education provisioning in South Africa. For this reason the following section will concentrate on these other means as well as provision brought about as a result of the implementation of the above-mentioned Acts.

#### **4.3.4 Students**

In this section focus will be on potential recipients of vocational-technical education in South Africa. These can be divided into three categories, namely, the pre-employed, the employed and the unemployed.

The pre-employed category of students is composed of two groups: Firstly, there are those students who have completed general education, i.e., level 1 of the NQF and, in line with the NQF, these students are beyond the school-going age and have chosen to continue their education in various secondary schools in the

country in pursuance of the grade 12 certificate. Secondly, there are others who are presently enrolled in operating FET technical colleges, private colleges, youth colleges, finishing schools and community colleges throughout the country.

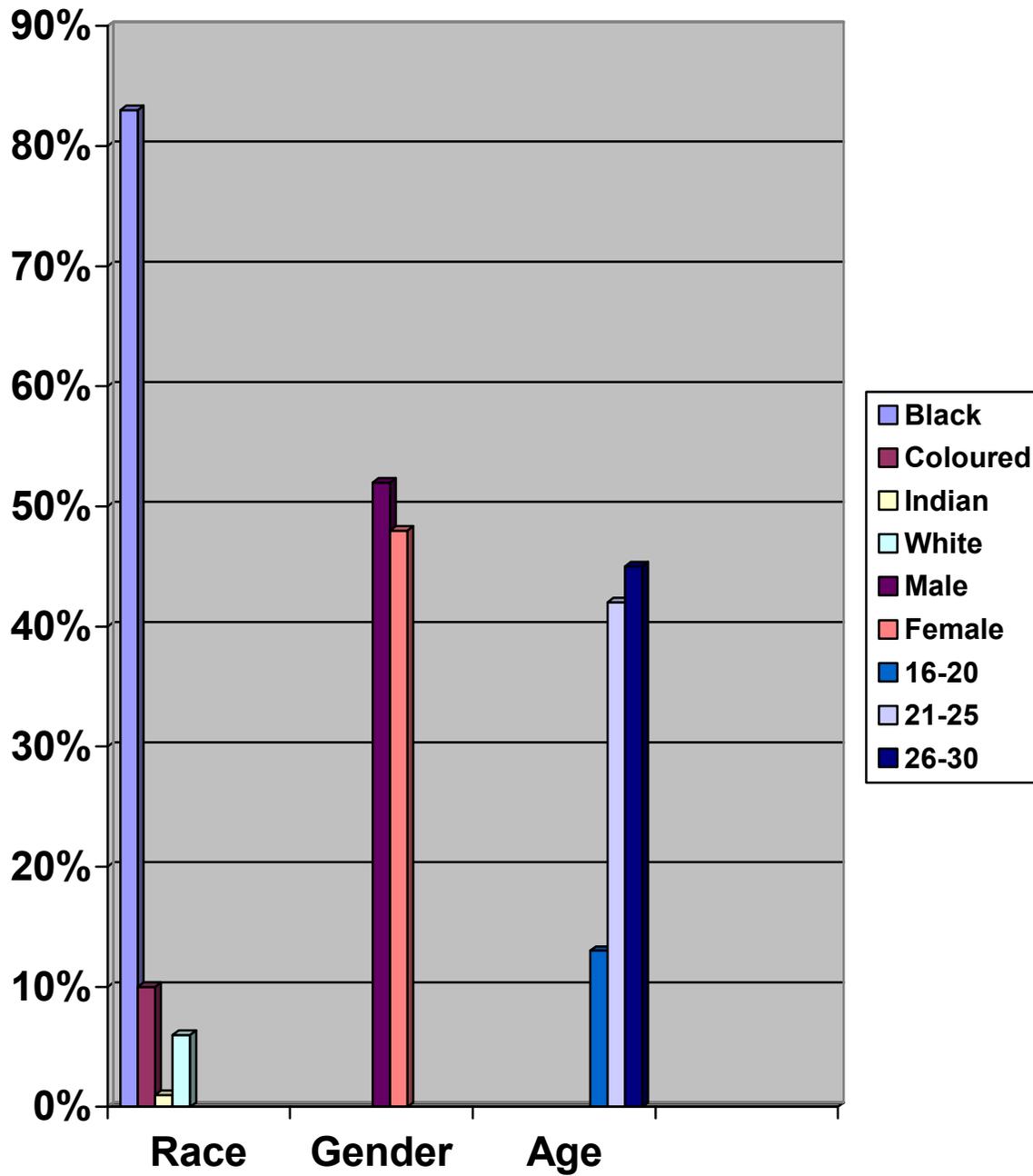
Included among the unemployed and the employed are old persons with little or no education and the group referred to as out-of-school youth. Older people include those who wish to be equipped with marketable skills, to be re-tooled or have their skills upgraded.

Everatt and Jennings (1996: 6) define an out-of-school youth as:

**“A person being between the ages of 15 and 30 (inclusive), not currently being engaged in studies, having not studied as far as they wanted to in their education and expressing the desire to return to some form of education and training.”**

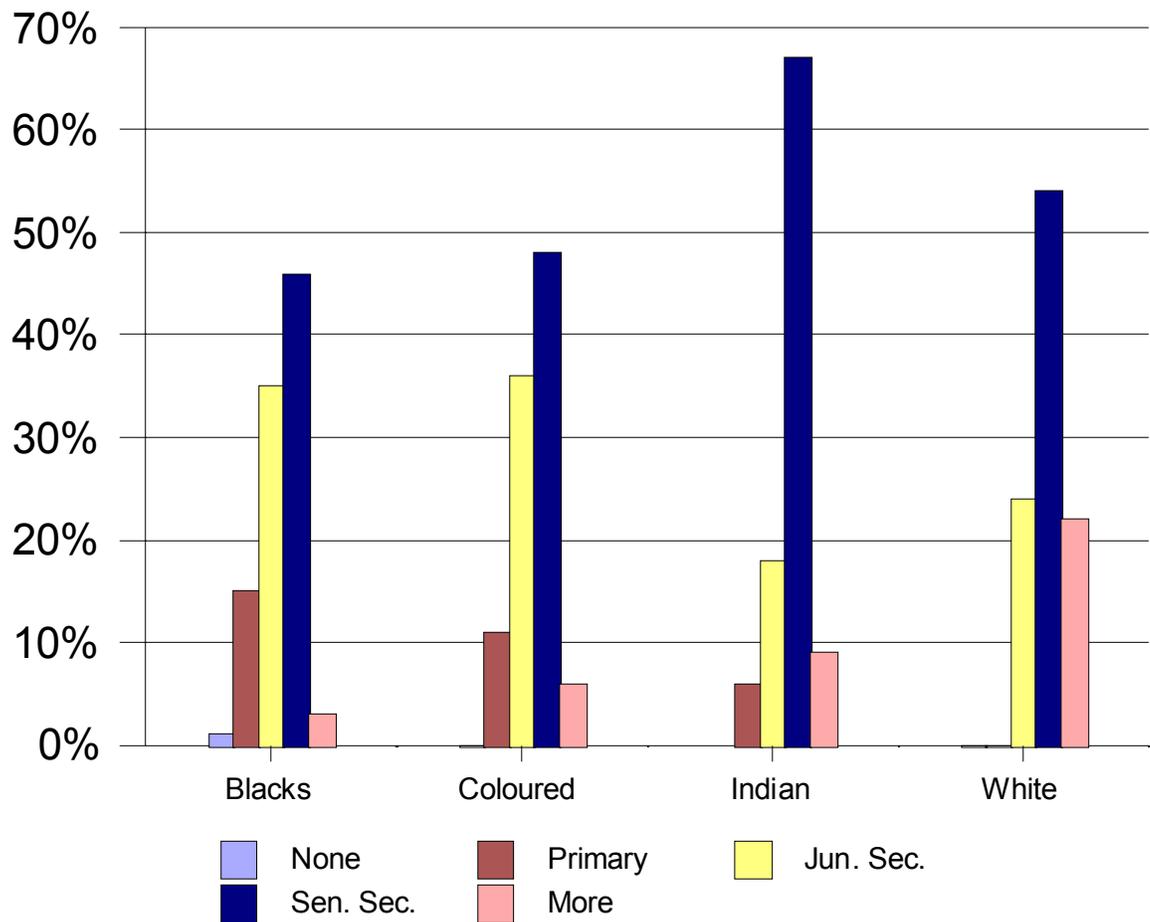
In consonance with this definition, it was estimated that in 1993 (there are no recent figures available in this regard) there were approximately 3,5 million out-of-school youth in South Africa. As pointed out in the above definition, this number does not include those youngsters who left school earlier than they wished but who do not express a desire to study further. Figures 4.5. and 4.6 below are an indication of the profile of the 1993 out-of-school youth in terms of race, gender, age and educational attainment:

Figure 4.5: Profile of Out-of-School Youth: 1993



Source: Everatt, D. 1996: 17

**Figure 4.6: Educational Attainment Among  
Out-of-School Youth**



Source: Everatt, D. 1996: 5

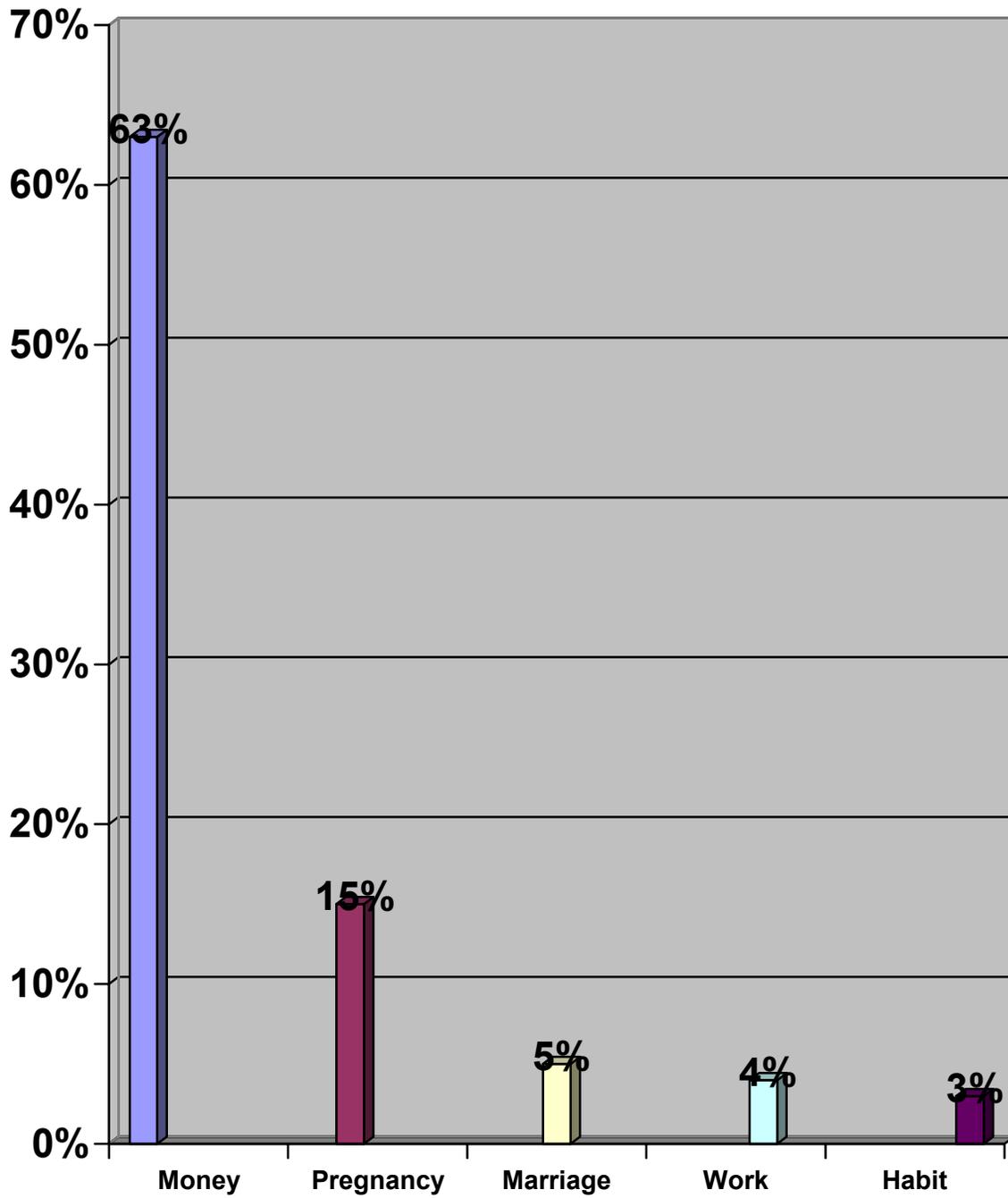
As manifested in Figure 4.5 above, the highest number of out-of-school youth is Blacks at 83%, followed by Coloureds at 10 %, Whites at 6% and Indians at 1%. It is not surprising that Blacks and Coloureds are in the majority in this category of youngsters considering the type of education the two racial groups received under the apartheid government, as well as the conditions under which this education was offered. It can also be seen from the figure that there is not much difference between the percentages of males and females in the group, with males being slightly in the majority at 52% and females at 48%. Insofar as the age groups are concerned, the majority, more than 80%, are in the age group 21 to 30.

An analysis of the data in Figure 4.5 indicating the educational attainment of young people reveals that the racial imbalances in the former educational system in South Africa have ensured that the phenomenon of out-of-school youth differs across racial groups (Everatt, 1996: 18). The educational attainment of the two racial groups, which were favoured by the apartheid education system, namely, Whites and Indians, is higher than that of the groups, which were less preferred by the system. A total of 76% and 75% of Whites and Indians respectively, have attained secondary education and higher and wish to study further, while the corresponding figures for Blacks and Coloureds are 49% and 54% respectively. Among Blacks 16% of the youth wish to obtain basic literacy by completing primary school education and 35% have obtained junior secondary education and wish to study further. These figures are very similar to those of Coloureds,

namely, 11% and 36 % respectively. In the case of Whites and Indians only 6% of Indians and 0% of Whites need primary education and 24% of Whites and 18% of Indians still need to study beyond the junior secondary level. Finally, it can be observed that out-of-school youth are predominantly those who have reached the last two-years of secondary school and wish to study further (Everatt, 1996: 18).

It would be useful to the planners of education and training for out-of-school youth to acquaint themselves with circumstances, which forced this group of youngsters out of school and are also preventing them from returning to school. Research conducted by Everatt and Jennings (1996: 22) in the Free State showed that widespread poverty, which affects much of South Africa, was the root cause of youth ending their education pre-maturely. The other causes were found to be pregnancy, marriage, work and habit in order of importance. The results of the research are graphically presented in Figure 4.7 below:

**Figure 4.7: Main Reasons for Leaving School Among Out-of-school Youth in the Free State**



Source: Everatt and Jennings, 1996: 22

The types of students described above are broad categories within which are specific groups and individuals whose needs must be addressed. Examples of such specific groups are those:

- Seeking alternate access paths to tertiary education.
- Who have incomplete secondary education.
- In need of adult basic education.
- Wishing to enter vocational education but have no background or experience of this field.
- Who are employed and want to improve their skills.
- Those seeking new skills after being retrenched.

(Figaji, 1995: 70)

We will now briefly devote our attention to the institutions that are, or were serving these students prior to the full implementation of the SDA, FET and ABET Acts.

#### **4.3.5 Providing Institutions**

A variety of educational institutions are presently involved in the provision of education and training programmes for the students described above. The following are some of them:

- Public, special and private schools which offer senior secondary schooling from grade 8 to 12.
- Technical schools.
- State and state-aided technical colleges offering programmes from N1 to N3.

- Adult education centres, sometimes referred to as “night schools” which serve students who are beyond the compulsory school-going age.
- Youth colleges and finishing schools in provincial departments of education.
- Government departments other than Education and Labour. Examples of such departments are Trade and Industry, Correctional Services, Defence and South African Police Services (SAPS) (DoE, 1997(a): 14).
- Universities and technikons through their community outreach programmes.
- Training trusts, regional training centres (RTCs) and private providers, which deliver training funded by the Department of Labour (DoL).
- Industrial training boards.
- Community colleges/centres and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Private, for-profit institutions.

There are no easily available figures showing the clear-cut number of these providing institutions. In 1996 they were estimated to be more than 8 000 countrywide excluding enterprise-based employer training where no estimates have been made. In the Free State there were approximately 520 of them. (DoE, 1997(a): 10; see also, DoE, 1997(b): 30). In line with the Further Education and Training Act (DoE, 1998(b): 10) some of these institutions may be changed into FET institutions and provide education and training leading to qualifications from levels 2 to 4 on the NQF. As may be expected, these institutions offer a variety of programmes as detailed below.

#### 4.3.6 Programmes

The above-mentioned providing institutions offer a diversified range of programmes with few points of articulation and little equivalence between them. These programmes also differ with regard to quality, standards of provision, outcomes and curriculum. The provision of programmes is usually defined by the type of institution in which they are offered as shown in the following section (DoE, 1997(a): 20):

*Secondary schools* offer programmes that have an academic focus. The following factors characterise most secondary school programmes:

- Most secondary schools offer subjects that have little relationship to the needs of the country and the economy. It was found for instance that in 1992 the four most popular subjects for Black grade 12 students were Biology, Geography, History and Biblical Studies and the least popular were Accounting, Economics, Physical Science and Business Economics. It was also found that only 26,6% of the learners took the urgently needed Mathematics and 15,8% took Physical Science (Grobbelaar, 1995: 43).
- There are high levels of repetition in secondary schools.
- Most students in secondary schools do not get proper guidance and counselling about careers and the economic needs of the country.
- In recent years the culture of teaching and learning has deteriorated in most secondary schools. However, many measures, such as the Culture of

Learning, Teaching and Service (COLTS) campaign, have been taken to remedy the situation.

- The majority of secondary schools channel their outputs mainly to universities and technikons and only a few of them offer vocational education.

The situation outlined above will hopefully improve in the near future as a result of amendments to be made in the curriculum of these institutions. According to *The Star* (3 October 2002: 1) the current 124 subjects from which each student chooses a minimum of six will be reduced to 35. The qualification emanating from the amended grade 12 curriculum will be purposeful, with subjects chosen from specific learning fields covering either academic or career-oriented subjects.

*Technical schools* offer an array of vocationally focused subjects with a practical orientation. Included among these are Travel and Tourism, Typing, Motor Mechanics, Woodwork and Farm Mechanics. Recently, Commercial Subjects and Hospitality have also been added. Some technical schools are leaning towards a more general focus while others are consolidating their emphasis on vocationally focused programmes.

*Technical colleges* have distinguished themselves from other institutions by offering programmes which are vocationally oriented but are principally theoretical. Most of these programmes are in the field of Engineering, Manufacturing and Technology; some are in the field of Physical Planning and Construction while a few are courses

such as Childcare and Sports Administration. Only a few technical colleges have facilities for strong Technical training in Engineering capabilities. Most depend on theoretical studies with little access to technological facilities linked to apprenticeship.

*Adult education centres* offer evening programmes for adults, which are similar to those offered to children in schools. Numerous shortcomings have been identified in their curriculum, staffing and management. Some of them are summarised below:

- They are directly managed by district offices and lack autonomy and self-reliance.
- They depend on part-time staff drawn from schoolteachers in after-hour employment.
- Most of them are staffed with newly trained and inexperienced teachers who cannot find employment in day schools.
- They do not operate from dedicated sites or campuses.
- Most of the teaching personnel in these centres have not received training on the facilitation of adult learning.

*Youth colleges* and *finishing schools* usually offer grade 12 subjects to students who did not succeed at their respective schools in previous years and are not allowed back. In addition to the grade 12 subjects being offered, some of these

institutions also offer additional programmes such as Computer Literacy, Hospitality and Travel and Tourism.

*Universities and technikons*, through their community outreach programmes, offer diversified services to their communities. Three kinds of community outreach programmes have been identified, namely, occupation-related programmes, general academic development programmes and cultural/community development programmes.

The majority of *Regional training centres* offer programmes in the fields of physical training and construction, which include skills such as Bricklaying, Carpentry, Plastering, and Plumbing. Other programmes are in the fields of manufacturing and engineering with subjects such as Welding, Electrical and Motor Mechanics. A few are related to fields such as Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Service. According to the Department of Education, RTCs presently lack quality assurance, are protectionist, biased against rural areas, ineffective and wasteful (DoE, 1997(a): 23).

*Government departments* other than the DoE and the Department of Labour (DoL) offer a variety of programmes to their members. The Department of Correctional Services for instance is committed to applying measures with regard to convicted prisoners and probationers as may lead to their reformation and rehabilitation. These measures include, among others, offering education and

training opportunities in all fields and areas of learning. In the Service Corps of the South African National Defence Force all skills training is preceded by adult basic education to ensure that all adult learners have the opportunity to reach ABET sub-level 3 prior to embarking upon vocational and skills training. The Department of Trade and Industry trains entrepreneurs and also offers public works programmes (DoE, 1997(b): 31).

*NGOs* including *community colleges* and *community-based organisations (CBOs)* operate as multi-purpose education and training providers in, among others, the areas of health, distance education support and ABET for employed and unemployed youth and adults. They also offer bridging and access courses for universities and technikons. Their impact in terms of massive provision, accreditation and articulation with Higher Education is still limited.

*Private colleges* offer an array of general education programmes as well as those with particular emphasis on the fields of commerce and management studies. Since these institutions are profit-making organisations, they are only of benefit to those students who can afford to pay, are linked to urban areas and can access the other necessary urban infrastructure such as telecommunication and transport.

It can be seen from the above exposition of the providers and programmes of vocational education and training that there are as many different types of

programmes as there are providing institutions. It is therefore to be expected that there will also be as many and varied sources of funding for the programmes. The following section will focus on these sources of funding.

#### **4.3.7 Funding**

As stated earlier potential recipients of vocational-technical education in South Africa can be grouped into three major categories, namely, the pre-employed, the unemployed and the employed. There are currently several measures being taken to address the educational needs of these groups. These groups will be funded differently as shown below.

Since, as seen above, ABET and FET are being offered by a variety of providers, it is to be expected that this type of education will also be funded jointly by the various organisations. The exact amounts involved differ from sector to sector, from year to year and also depend on the programmes being offered and the number of students involved. The funds are being used to cover expenses such as administration costs, salaries, materials, equipment, furniture, travel and publishing (DoE, 1997(b): 46).

The major source of funding for the pre-employed is the Department of Education. These are mainly students who have completed general education and are engaged in Further Education and Training. Apart from relatively small amounts of earmarked funds, allocations to provinces are on the basis of block

grants and provincial legislatures are able to determine amounts to be spent on education (DoE, 1997(a): 12).

Among the unemployed and the employed are students in need of basic education and training. The major source of funding for this group is also the Department of Education. In the year 2000 an amount of R248 million was spent on ABET and the amount was increased to R822 million in 2002 (DoE, 2002:4). The DoE is assisted by other sectors which are also the providers of ABET such as the private sector, government departments, NGOs, CBOs parastatals, municipalities and religious organisations.

Funding for FET is also mainly by the DoE which accounts for 69% of funding for this sector. The DoL contributes around 1% while other government departments account for about 4%. The rest of funding for FET is accounted for by business, user funds and others.

The South African situation as manifested by the above analysis, reveals that:

- The illiteracy rate in South Africa is high with an unacceptably large number of people who never received any education at all.
- As a result of the above, South Africa has an acute skills shortage in certain fields. These fields happen to be critical ones such as Engineering, Accounting, Information Technology, Biotechnology, etc.

- There is a high level of unemployment in South Africa with the majority of the unemployed being Blacks, women and the youth.
- The majority of the citizens of South Africa live in poverty. More than 90% of the poor are Blacks.
- There are three categories of potential students in need of vocational education and training, namely, the pre-employed, the employed and the unemployed. Among the latter two categories are many out-of-school youth.
- A variety of education institutions are providing adult education and training to the above-mentioned students.
- These providing institutions offer a diversified range of programmes, which differ with regard to quality, standard of provision, outcomes and curriculum.
- The government through the DoE and other government departments provides most of the funds for vocational education and training. Other sources of funds are student fees and business.

It would now be of interest to find out what measures are being taken to normalise the situation described above. This is important especially with regard to increasing access to education.

#### **4.4 Coordinated Vocational Education and Training**

It became clear from the above description of providers of vocational education and their programmes that the provision of this type of education involves a variety of providers and that as noted by the DoE (1997(a): 20), there are few

points of articulation; little equivalence between them; differences with regard to quality, standards of provision, outcomes and curriculum. For this reason government intervention became necessary in order to streamline provisioning in this sector.

The African National Congress (ANC), in its policy framework entitled the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), states as one of its objectives, human resource development which must address the development of human capabilities, abilities, knowledge and know-how to meet the people's ever-growing needs for goods and services, to improve their standard of living and quality of life (ANC, 1994: 59). To ensure the achievement of this objective, the right to Basic and Further Education and Training was enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996: 14). To ensure that the right to basic and Further Education and Training is extended to the millions who were denied the opportunity in the past, the SDA, ABET and FET Acts were passed in 1998 and 2000. These Acts are intended to ensure coordination of vocational education provided at educational institutions as well as at the work place. This section will focus on these Acts with the purpose of finding out how the government is dealing or intends dealing with the plight of the potential students of community colleges in South Africa.

#### **4.4.1 Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)**

The Department of Education (2000: 6) defines Adult Basic Education and Training as:

**“All learning and training programmes for adults from level 1 to 4 where level 4 is equivalent to-**

- (a) grade 9 in public schools: or**
- (b) national qualifications framework level 1 as contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act 1995 (Act No. 58 of 1995).”**

The DoE (1997(c): 10) sees ABET as the general conceptual foundation towards life-long learning and development embracing knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts. Consequently, the DoE formulated the following vision of ABET to ensure that in time there would be:

**“A literate South Africa within which all its citizens have acquired basic education and training that enables effective participation in socio-economic and political processes to contribute to reconstruction, development and social transformation.”**

**(DoE, 1997(c): 14)**

It is the view of the DoE that this vision reflects the changes in direction that the ABET sector has undergone internationally, resulting in bringing together efforts aimed at community development, vocational and technical training, literacy and basic education with popular education programmes. In this way, it is believed that Adult Basic Education and Training has to address four key growth and development concerns, namely,

- Developing the capacity of adults and out-of-school youth to understand the reality in which they live to enable them to identify and apply the most relevant and appropriate ways of responding to this reality.
- Creating critical and participative citizens.
- Opening up and laying the foundations for Further Education and Training at every level and aspect of personal and social life and development.
- Improving the quality of life of the large numbers of people who are not able to satisfy their basic needs by enabling them to access or create employment opportunities.

The DoE announced its ABET initiative in September 1995 and launched it as the Ithuteng Campaign on 11 February 1996. In order to ensure the realisation of the above vision, the DoE formulated a National Multi-year Implementation Plan for Adult Education and Training. The national objective of this plan is the provision of general education and training to adults for access to Further

Education and Training and employment. It is envisaged that the achievement of this objective will lead to an increase in the quantity and quality of relevant and appropriate learning and services to adults and out-of-school youth who have been unable to access adequate education and training in the past (DoE, 1997(b): viii). According to the DoE, (1997(b): 10) the national objective of the plan can only be achieved if the following national sub-objectives are also achieved:

- A significant increase in national provisioning.
- A significant increase in the numbers of learners enrolled in the system.
- A significant increase in the numbers of learners being retained within the system.
- A significant increase in the numbers of learners successfully obtaining credits and certificates.
- The implementation of a national monitoring and evaluation system.
- The implementation of a national quality assurance system.

The National Multi-Year Implementation Plan mentioned above was divided into two phases. Phase one which comprised the years 1998 and 1999, aimed at small increases in learner enrollment, development of curricular framework, the introduction of learning unit standards and support materials, the development and establishment of monitoring, evaluation and assessment standards as well as the establishment and transformation of current providers into a network of adult learning centres. Phase two of the plan which included the years 2000 and 2001,

aimed at mass mobilisation of learners so that the overall target of 2,5 million could be reached in 2001(DoE, 1997(b): x).

To further enhance the chances of successful implementation of ABET, the Adult Basic Education and Training Act No. 52 was passed in December 2000. The Act makes provision for:

- The establishment of public ABET centres.
- Governance and management of ABET public centres.
- Funding of ABET public centres.
- The establishment of private ABET centres.
- Quality assurance and promotion in ABET.
- Transitional and other arrangements.

(DoE, 2000: 8-32)

ABET in the Eastern Free State will now be considered. This is done with the purpose of finding out the extent to which the above plan and Act are being implemented in the region.

#### **4.4.1.2 ABET in the Eastern Free State**

The provision of ABET in the Eastern Free State is the responsibility of a division of the Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District. The head of **administration** of ABET is a Chief Education Specialist (CES) who is also responsible for Special Needs and Remedial Support Services. There are also three Deputy Education

Specialists (DES) two of whom are in charge of administration and the other one is in charge of the curriculum. A First Education Specialist is also in charge of administrative matters and eight Senior Education Specialists (SES) are each responsible for administration and governance.

A total of 54 **ABET Centres** are distributed throughout the 19 towns constituting the Eastern Free State with at least one in each town. The centres are housed in public schools and operate after normal school hours. Each centre is managed by a Centre Manager who is accountable to the SES in charge of the area in which the centre is located. Most of the Centre Managers are unemployed educators. There are also a few who are employed educators serving the centres on a part-time basis. Each centre has a School Governing Body (SGB) composed of educators, learners, community members and the principal of the hosting public school.

The majority of the **Educators** serving the centres are also unemployed educators who are hired on a one-year contract. A few others are employed in public schools and serve the ABET centres on a part-time basis. The educators work for a maximum of 3,5 hours per day and are paid monthly on an hourly basis. They receive training on the teaching of adults through workshops that are organised by the SESs. In 2002 there was a total of 295 educators serving ABET Centres in the Eastern Free State. Of these, 219 were females and 76 were males.

The **programmes** offered at these ABET Centres are at levels 1 of the NQF, comprising ABET levels 1 to 4, i.e., the equivalent of grades R to 9 of the school system. In addition to the ABET programmes being offered at the centres, are also programmes at level 4 of the NQF which is the equivalent of grade 12. In accordance with the NQF, these programmes fall within the FET band. Programmes at NQF levels 2 and 3 which are the equivalent of grade 10 and 11 of the school system, are not offered at any of the centres. After completing programmes leading to the General Education Certificate (GETC), students enroll for grade 12 programmes and sit for the same examinations with regular high school students.

**Students** enrolling at ABET Centres are Blacks. Hence, the centres are located in areas that are predominantly occupied by Blacks. As manifested in Table 4.6 below, the majority of students enrolled in ABET Centres in the Eastern Free State are women.

(Interview: SES Thabo Mofutsanyana District, 23 September 2002)

The problems related to these centres, which were mentioned earlier, still characterise these centres. There is therefore little difference between the ABET centres established in terms of the ABET Act and the "Night Schools" which were in operation before the passing of the Act.

**Table 4.6: Student Enrollment at ABET Centres  
in the Eastern Free State: 2002**

ABET LEVEL 1		ABET LEVEL 2		ABET LEVEL 3		ABET LEVEL 4		FET		TOTAL	
F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
543	177	341	148	453	202	837	471	2311	1349	4485	2347

Source: Thabo Mofutsanyana Education District.

#### 4.4.2 Further Education and Training (FET)

In 1996 the National Minister of Education constituted the National Committee on Further Education (NCFE) whose purpose was to establish the vision and goals for FET so as to attain equality of access, advance life-long learning within the NQF and to strengthen the integrated approach to education and training. The report of the NCFE was presented to the Minister in August 1997.

The NCFE conceptualised FET as:

- A band consisting of learning programmes between levels 2-4 of the NQF.
- Offering multiple entry and exit points and a range of qualifications at different levels that allow for articulation within FET and with general and Higher Education.
- Allowing for more specialisation than general education for more context-based skills in preparing learners for Higher Education and the world of work.

- Involving a range of providers such as secondary schools, colleges and industry that may offer some programmes below and above the FET band (DoE, 1997(a): 4).

Thus, Further Education and Training is defined as:

**“All teaching and training programmes leading to qualifications from level 2 to 4 on the National Qualifications Framework as determined in the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act No. 95 of 1995. Thus, FET includes learning programmes that correspond with grade 10 to 12 in the school system and N1 to N3 in the technical college system.”**

**(Mokgatlé, 2000: 22)**

The NCFE formulated the following vision, mission and purpose for FET

(DoE, 1997(a): 4-5):

**Vision:** A system which offers flexible, diverse, accessible, high quality education and training programmes at NQF levels 2-4, responds to individual and socio-economic needs, and meets the demands for redress and democratisation in a changing South African society.

**Mission:**

- To foster mid-level skills.
- Lay the foundation for Higher Education.
- Facilitate the transition from school to the world of work.
- Develop well-educated, autonomous citizens.
- Provide opportunities for continuous learning, through the articulation of education and training programmes.

**Purpose:**

- Preparing learners for work.
- Preparing learners for further learning and Higher Education.
- Developing effective citizenship and democratising society.
- Meeting the holistic needs of individuals.
- Contributing to economic and social development.

The report of the NCFE laid the foundation for the FET Act No. 98 of 1998. The Act makes provision for:

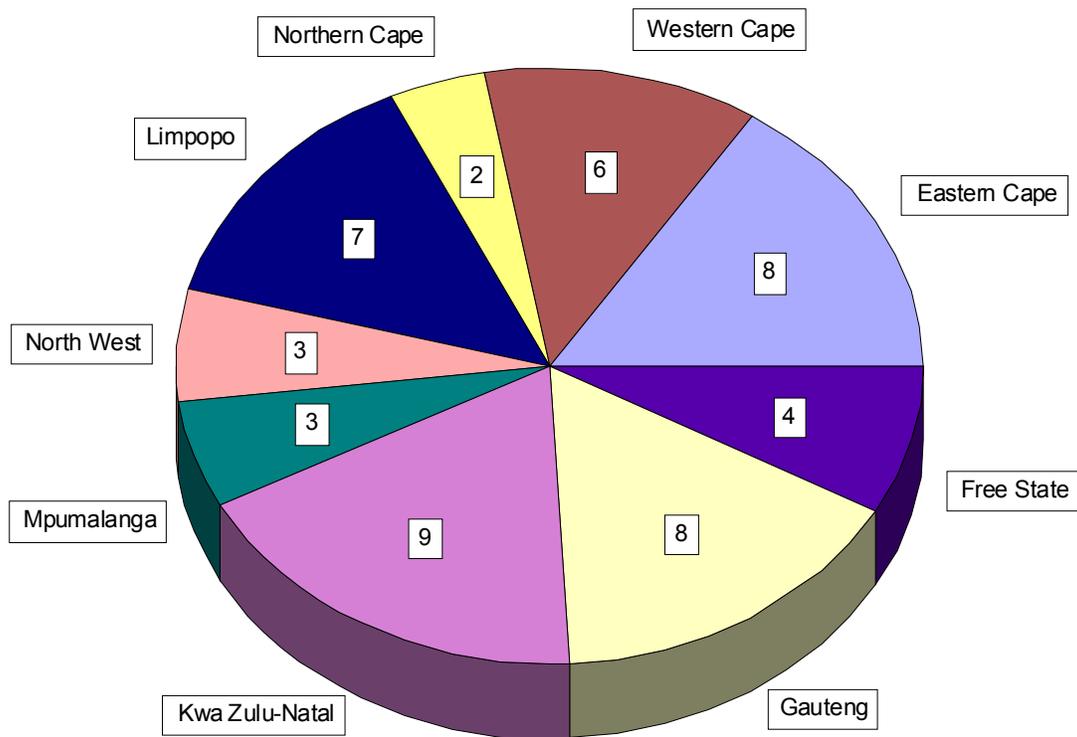
- The declaration of existing educational institutions as FET institutions and the establishment, merger and closure of public FET institutions.
- Governance of public FET institutions.
- Funding of public FET institutions.
- Establishment of private FET institutions.
- Quality assurance and promotion in FET institutions.

- General matters affecting FET.
- Transitional and other arrangements

(DoE, 1998 (b): 10-38)

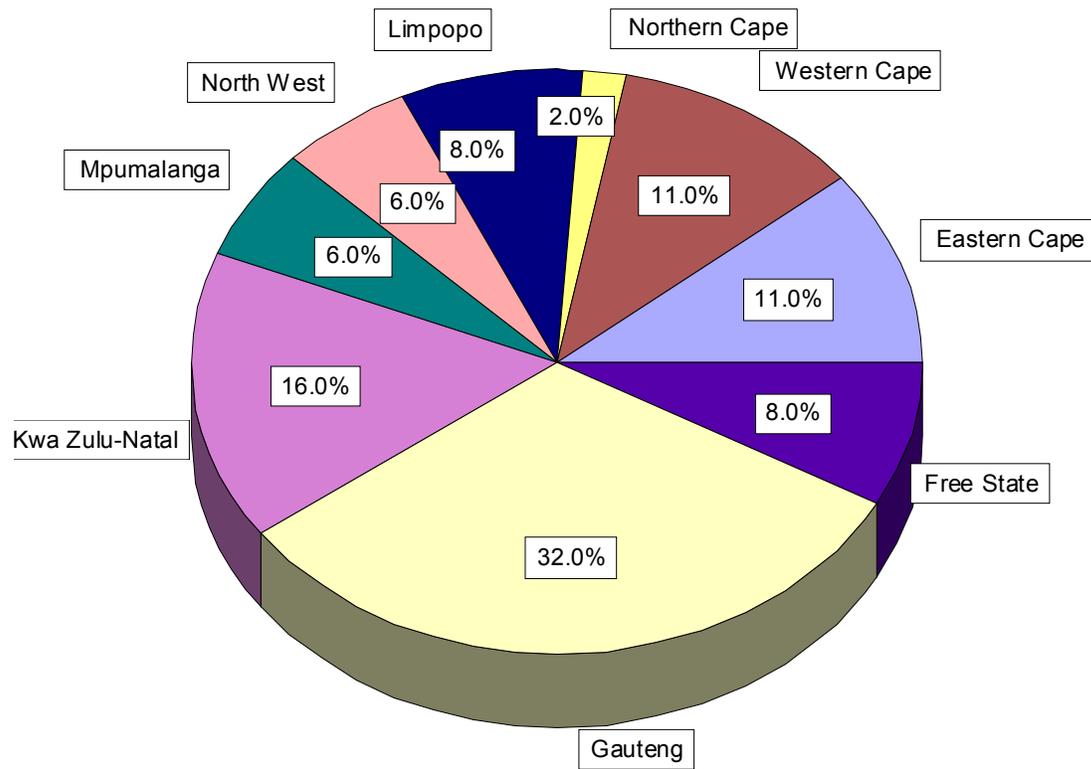
In line with the provision of the FET Act, fifty FET colleges are now in existence in South Africa. They are a product of a merger of 152 institutions into multi-campus colleges. The colleges are spread throughout the nine provinces of the Republic of South Africa as shown in Figure 4.8 below. More than 350 000 students are enrolled in these colleges. Figure 4.9 indicates the number of students enrolled in each province as a percentage of the total FET college enrollment. During the 2002-2003 fiscal year, funding for this sector amounted to R792, 8 million (The Sunday Times Career Junction, 3 November 2002: 1).

Figure 4.8: Number of FET Institutions by Province



Source: Sunday Times Career Junction, 3 November 2002: 1

Figure 4.9: FET Colleges Headcount: 2002



Source: Sunday Times Career Junction, 3 November 2002: 1

The following have been identified as what are to be the most pertinent characteristics and attributes of these FET institutions:

- They are post-secondary education institutions offering education and training at NQF levels 2-4. They may offer programmes below or above the above-mentioned levels on condition that they are accredited to do so by the relevant Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) and at least 60% of the learning programmes offered fall within the FET band.
- They are mega-institutions operating on one or more sites with 2 000 FTEs or more calculated in terms of national norms and standards.
- They guarantee ownership and real participation by the communities they serve.
- They offer the broadest possible assortment of programmes and may have sites with particular specialised niche programmes.
- They must be economically viable and respond to the needs of business and the communities they serve.
- They must have efficient student support services.
- They should be able to provide evidence of sound physical financial and human resources.

(Zuma, 2000: 79)

The two figures displayed above indicate that there are four FET colleges in the Free State with 8% of the total FET student population. One of these colleges is located in the Eastern Free State which is our area of interest. We will now focus our attention on this college.

#### 4.4.2.1 FET in the Eastern Free State

The FET College located in the Eastern Free State is named the Maluti FET College and is a product of the merger of six formerly independent colleges, namely, Bethlehem, Bonamelo, Itemoheleng, Kwetlison, Lere La Tshepe and Sefikeng. The Bethlehem College also operates a satellite campus in Harrismith. The colleges have been merged in line with the provision of the FET Act. Five of the above formerly independent colleges, namely, Bonamelo, Itemoheleng, Kwetlison, Lere La Tshepe and Sefikeng are situated in the Qwaqwa area with the former four being within a 10 kilometre radius and the latter being about 30 kilometres from the others. The merger plan of the six colleges was approved by the college's Interim Governing Council in November 2001. Each of these colleges now forms a delivery site for the Maluti FET College (Pietersen, 2001:4).

The **mission** of the Maluti FET College is: To build a civil society that has the technological competencies to be both self-supportive and globally competitive. According to Pietersen (2001: 5), the college will meet the attributes of the new FET landscape in the following ways:

- It will have greater authority and public responsibility to respond to the challenges of the national human resource development strategy.
- Its new programmes are in alignment with the national and provincial human resources development strategy.
- It will expand its niche areas as its delivery sites will specialise in specific programmes and learnerships.

- A strategy will be developed to establish close links with industry and the community in order to meet the economic, social and regional development needs as articulated in the provincial skills and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA) plans.
- It will have the capacity to respond to the diverse needs of the community, provide and conduct market research.
- A single council will oversee effective and accountable management across the various campuses.

As stated above, **governance** of the college rests upon a single Governing Council constituted as follows:

- Member of Executive Council (MEC) representatives.
- Community stakeholders.
- Rector.
- Vice-Rector/s.
- Lecturing staff representatives.
- Non-lecturing staff representatives.
- Student Representative Council (SRC) representatives.
- Academic Board representatives.

The Governing Council performs a variety of functions as stipulated in the FET Act.

The **management** structure of the college as depicted in the college organisational chart attached as Appendix 10, takes into account the multi-campus nature of the college. In line with the provisions of the FET Act No. 98 (DoE, 1998(b): 18) an Academic Board is to be established for the college. The composition of the Academic Board is as depicted in Appendix 11.

The college offers a variety of **programmes** at its different delivery sites. As can be seen from the table in Appendix 12, Bonamelo and Sefikeng delivery sites, which were formerly Colleges of Education are presently mainly engaged in Grade 12 Finishing Programmes. There are plans in progress to offer other programmes in these delivery sites. The college has identified three areas of programme expansion. They are Hospitality and Catering, Agriculture and Small, Micro and Medium Enterprise (SMME) (Pietersen, 2001: 111)

Pietersen (2001: 58) makes the following observations in as far as the present college **human resources** are concerned:

- Administrative personnel members are not sufficiently skilled and need to be re-skilled for placement in the new college.
- There seems to be an oversupply of administrative staff leading to under utilisation of person power.
- In some delivery sites there appears to be an oversupply of academics with most of them not matching the current and envisaged college programmes.

It follows from these observations that for the college to succeed, there is an urgent need for a personnel skilling and re-skilling programme.

**Learner support services** currently in place at the college are not yet coordinated and differ from site to site. They include the following: HIV/AIDS awareness programmes, study facilities, boarding and lodging facilities in some delivery sites, internet access, financial aid, job placement, extramural activities, life skills, entertainment and student government.

#### **4.4.3 National Skills Development**

In addition to the Department of Education, other government departments also participate in the provision of vocational education and training in South Africa. One such department is the Department of Labour (DoL) which plays a major role in workforce training through its Skills Development Act (SDA) No. 97 of 1998 and the Skills Development Levies Act No. 9 of 1999. These two Acts introduce new institutions, programmes and funding policies designed to increase investment in skills development (DoL, 2001:5).

The Skills Development Act heralds a policy change from supply-side approaches to education and training to a demand-led strategy, capable of achieving and maintaining relevance in a rapidly changing world of work. The DoL gives the following as the purposes of the Skills Development Act:

- To develop the skills of the South African workforce.

- To increase the levels of investment in education and training in labour market and to improve the return on that investment.
- To encourage employers to:
  - ☞ Use the workplace as an active learning environment.
  - ☞ Provide employees with an opportunity to acquire new skills.
  - ☞ Provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience.
  - ☞ Employ persons who find it difficult to be employed.
- To encourage workers to participate in learnerships and other training programmes.
- To improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education.
- To ensure the quality of education and training in and for the workplace.
- To assist:
  - ☞ Work-seekers to find work.
  - ☞ Retrenched workers to re-enter the labour market.
  - ☞ Employers to find qualified employees.

- To provide and regulate employment services.

(DoL, 1998: 4; see also, Mercurio, 2001: 125)

The above-mentioned purposes, if achieved, can go a long way in addressing many of the effects of previous governments' education policies affecting workers. These include issues such as lack of skills, illiteracy, unemployability, unavailability of training and learning opportunities and others. The question to consider at this stage is the measures that the DoL is putting in place to ensure the achievement of the stated purposes.

The DoL intends ensuring the achievement of the purposes of the SDA in three ways. Firstly, by establishing an institutional and financial framework comprising:

- The National Skills Authority whose functions include advising the Minister of the DoL on a National Skills Development Policy, National Skills Development Strategy and guidelines for its implementation, allocation of subsidies from the National Skills Fund and any regulations to be made. Membership of the National Skills Authority includes various stakeholders and interest groups.
- The National Skills Fund deriving its income from sources such as the national government, interest on investments, donations and others.
- A Skills Development Levy-grant scheme.

- SETAs that perform a variety of functions to satisfy education and training needs of employers and employees that use the same material, make similar products and render similar services.
- Labour centres.
- The Skills Development Planning Unit whose functions are to research and analyse the labour market in order to determine skills development needs, to assist in the formulation of the national skills development strategy and sector skills development plans and to provide information on skills to relevant bodies.

Secondly, the achievement of the purposes is ensured by encouraging partnerships between the public and private sectors of the economy to provide education and training in and for the workplace. Thirdly and lastly, by cooperating with the South African Qualifications Authority.

The implementation of the Skills Development Act has already started. The National Skills Authority mentioned above came into existence in April 1999, the SETAs came into being on 20 March 2000 and in April 2000 a payroll levy was introduced to fund the new skills development implementation framework and to provide grants intended to encourage employers to invest in the training and development of their employees (DoL, 2001: 5).

The title of the Skills Development Strategy formulated by the Skills Development Authority is "Skills for Productive Citizenship for all". This title summarises the DoL's vision for the future as follows:

**Skills:** Financial and other resources are to be directed towards the acquisition of skills that are needed by employers and communities. These skills are to reflect qualifications and standards that are part of the NQF.

**Productive Citizenship:** A productive citizen is not only one who has the right to vote and to be consulted, but one who also has the right to actively contribute to and participate in making decisions that affect investment and work. Skills development is about building the capacity of people to engage in these decisions and to execute the roles and functions that will flow from them.

**For All:** The vision of the DoL is an inclusive one. Opportunities are to be created for those in work, the unemployed, new entrants to the world of work, older people, women, men and people with disabilities (DoL, 2001: 8)

The vision elaborated upon above, is underpinned by six guiding principles, namely,

- Life-long Learning

Because of continuous changes in communities and workplaces, it will be necessary for skills to be frequently improved and upgraded.

- Promotion of Equity

Legacies of apartheid are to be erased while at the same time positive interventions will be necessary if an inclusive society is to be brought into existence and opportunities are to be broadened.

- Demand-Led

The emphasis of the Skills Development Strategy is to be on the skills and competences that are required to support productivity, international competitiveness, mobility of workers, self-employment and community needs.

- Flexibility and Decentralisation

Public and private employers are to make decisions about priorities and the most effective providers to meet their needs. The role of the Government and the Skills Development Authority is to provide the framework and to monitor the implementation of the Skills Development Strategy.

- Partnership and Cooperation

At national, sector, provincial, community and workplace levels the implementation of the Skills Development Strategy should be based on partnerships between and amongst the social constituencies.

- Efficiency and Effectiveness

Cost-efficiency should characterise the delivery of skills development programmes. These programmes should lead to positive outcomes for those who invest in training and skills development.

(DoL, 2001:9)

The Skills Development Levies Act No. 9 of 1999 is concerned with the funds needed for skills development. It provides for the imposition of a skills development levy and for matters connected thereof. In terms of this act, from 1 April 2000 every employer has to pay a skills development levy calculated as a stipulated percentage of the leviable amount. The leviable amount referred to above is defined as the total amount of remuneration paid or payable by an employer to its employees during any month. Certain categories of employers such as the national government, the provincial government, religious and charitable institutions are exempted from payment of the levy.

The levy is payable to the Commissioner for the South African Revenue Service (SARS) at a time and manner stipulated in the Act. The Minister of the DoL may, in consultation with the Minister of Finance direct that all employers that fall within the jurisdiction of any SETA pay the levy to that SETA or a body nominated by the SETA. The levies collected by the Commissioner of the SARS are ultimately paid to the SETA's fund or to the National Skills Fund. The exact amounts paid to each of the above mentioned funds are in accordance with the stipulations of the Skills Development Levies Act (DoL, 1999: 4-12).

The DoL, through its Minister, is quite aware of the mammoth task facing it in its endeavour of equipping the citizens of the country with the badly needed skills for employment and economic growth as well as social development. This awareness is captured in the Minister's

concluding remarks in his introduction of the National Skills Development Strategy:

**" The targets that I am setting are ambitious, but no revolution has succeeded without vision, ambition and determination. Our national skills revolution is no exception. The challenge now is to make a working reality of the vision. Let's get to work."**

**(DoL, 2001: 2)**

Emanating from the foregoing discussion, it will now be of interest to once more direct our attention to community colleges. The idea of introducing community colleges in South Africa has been mooted by various organisations and individuals. We will consider their propositions and, thereafter, hopefully be in a position to identify a role they may play in South Africa taking into account the country's current situation and the interventions already in process.

#### **4.5 Community College Initiatives in South Africa**

Since 1990 several organisations and individuals have made proposals with regard to the establishment of community colleges in South Africa. Community colleges were seen as one option in redressing educational imbalances of the past and providing educational opportunities to all South Africans without discrimination based on gender, race, socio-

economic background, past educational attainment, physical disabilities, etc. Some of these organisations and individuals are:

- The National Institute for Community Education (NICE)
- Tertiary Education Sector Assessment (TESA)
- Educational Renewal Strategy (ERS)
- National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI)
- South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED)
- The Association of Regional Training Centres
- Community Agency for Social Enquiry (CASE)
- ANC/Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)
- G. Fisher and I. Scott
- C. Davey
- G. Boggs
- S. Badat and H. Wolpe
- D.R. Bagwandeem
- G. Singh

Some significant and interesting issues pertaining to the establishment of community colleges in South Africa are raised in the above-mentioned proposals. Some of them are summarised below (Strydom, 1995: 53; see also, Zuma, 1996: 310, Bagwandeem *et al.*, 1995: 14 and Singh, 1996: 542).

- It is widely agreed that community colleges should form an integral part of the South African education system and that they should be

based on sound education values such as equity, democracy, effectiveness and development.

- Initially, particularly in the short-term, attention should be focused on adult education and to satisfying vocational training requirements. Existing facilities and resources will need to be modified to enable them to take on new roles such as transfer education, developmental education and community/ continuing / adult education. In addition, adequate support services should be made available to students.
- The community colleges should be used to afford students with potential an opportunity to access Higher Education. This will require that the curriculum be articulated in order to bridge the gap between secondary and tertiary education.
- An unnecessary duplication of courses and programmes among community colleges at regional level should be avoided. The community college sector should be made cost-effective and efficient through rationalisation and specialisation.
- Community colleges should offer high quality education. Standards should be maintained through internal and external quality assurance measures and sound management.
- Community college education should be made affordable through sufficient funding from the state and the private sector.
- Community colleges should enjoy the support of the communities they serve. They must render real service to the communities and be oriented towards and focused upon the unique circumstances

and needs of South Africans. No overseas community college models should simply be imported and implemented in the country. Legitimate and participative governance should be ensured.

- A unique type of South African community college could perform a number of functions including providing students with post-secondary education and vocational qualifications, undertaking remedial work in Mathematics and Sciences, Functioning as an adult education institution and preparing students for university study.
- Community colleges could be added to the education system in two ways: either as a new kind of college existing alongside present Educational, Nursing, Technical and Agricultural colleges, or as a single college being created out of the existing colleges and offering some vocational programmes as well as some basic education programmes.
- The success of community colleges in South Africa will depend on the extent to which the schooling system in South Africa changes from a low to a high attainment one.
- Attention should be given to the potential of distance education based on active collaboration among institutions. Through this mode of delivery student access can be tremendously increased, duplication of effort be avoided, opportunities for continuing professional education be expanded and opportunities for teaching and learning be extended.

- Community colleges should not be developed into second class institutions designed to serve the needs of only a certain segment of the South African population.

- Community colleges should reflect the following features:

*Open-access:* They should open their doors to all learners who are beyond the school-going age of  $\geq 16$  years. Youth younger than 16 years who cannot be admitted to formal schools because of age restrictions may also be admitted into special programmes at community colleges. No one should be discriminated against on the grounds of educational background. However, learners should be tested at entry level to determine competences necessary for admission into programmes of their choice. Developmental programmes should be offered to students who lack competences needed for admission into programmes of their choice. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) and experience should also be accepted for entry into community college programmes.

*Democratic governance:* They should be governed by councils consisting of elected representatives of the community, main stakeholders, interest groups and role-players.

*Partnership and cooperation:* Community colleges should deliver programmes in collaboration with other stakeholders and interest groups. Their teaching staff should therefore consist of full-time and part-time employees drawn from NGOs and the private sector.

*Flexible scheduling and delivery:* They should operate until late in the evenings, on weekends and during holidays. They should also

offer their programmes at a number of venues through a network of community learning centres (CLCs). CLCs should be of two types, namely, single-purpose CLCs which are sites where a single programme is provided by a provider institution or an NGO and multi-purpose CLCs which are sites where a number of separate programmes or activities are provided by one or more provider institutions or NGOs.

*Curriculum comprehensiveness:* Community colleges should be characterised by the comprehensiveness of their curricula. A mix of programmes should be offered to a mix of students with different abilities, past achievements and diverse educational goals. The following are examples of some major curriculum areas:

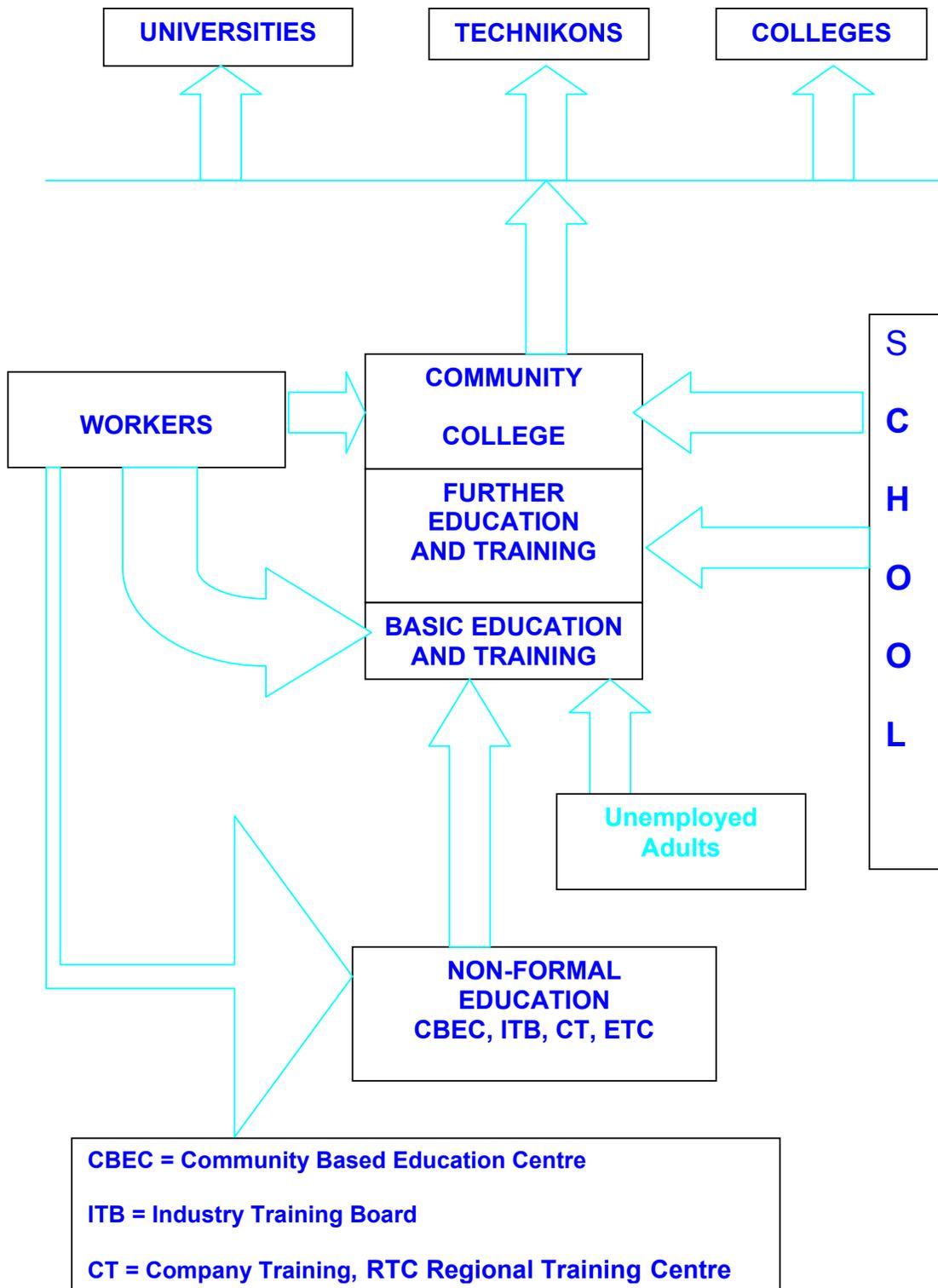
Engineering: Including Civil, Electrical Mechanical and Chemical Engineering. Humanities: Encompassing Business Studies, Health Services, Administration and Education and Training.

Special Programmes: Comprising youth programmes, workers programmes, civic education, etc.

*Community Development:* Subsuming entrepreneurial skills development, life skills, self-help skills, cultural enrichment programmes and organisational development and management.

Concerning the positioning and role of the South African community college in relation to other types of educational institutions in the country, the model depicted in Figure 4.10 below has been proposed (Figaji, 1995:75):

**Figure 4.10: The Community College in Relation to Other Educational Institutions**



**Source: Figaji, 1995: 75**

According to this model, the community college is to have multiple entry and exit points. Learners may enter the community college via the school, non-formal education, unemployment, or workplace route and leave via the technikon, university or college route. The model also shows that although the Adult Basic Education and Training and the Further Education and Training levels are separate, they may exist in the same facility. Students who have not yet acquired the general education qualification, may enter the community college through the ABET door, while those in possession of the general education qualification may enter through the FET door. The exact placement of learners coming via the non-formal education and the workplace entry points could be determined by the assessment of prior learning. Over time, the curricula used at the non-formal sector and in the community college could be aligned to ensure maximum credit for courses completed in the non-formal sector (Figagi, 1995: 76).

According to Figagi (1995: 76), the biggest challenge facing this model is to devise the curricula in such a way that learners acquire vocational skills while at the same time they become literate and numerate at the basic education level. In the FET level learners would acquire higher vocational skills and with minimal additional modules in fields such as English, Mathematics and Science, they may be able to enter tertiary education institutions. Proponents of the model are opposed to the idea of the existence of two distinct paths within the same community college, namely, the vocational training path and the transfer path.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

Chapter Four was concerned with the determination of the need for the establishment of community colleges as providers of vocational-technical education in South Africa especially in the Eastern Free State. This determination comprised a historical overview of the provision of education in South Africa, the problems, which resulted from it, as well as the efforts that have been taken towards the solution of the problems. Lastly, the chapter also focused on community college initiatives that have been taken in South Africa. This was done with the purpose of comparing the proposed role of the community colleges with the vocational education initiatives that are already in process in South Africa. It is hoped that this comparison will assist in the identification of the best way in which community colleges can supplement the above mentioned vocational education initiatives and thereby make a contribution towards the solution of the problems associated with the provision of vocational education in South Africa.

It emerged from this chapter that in the past, the provision of education in South Africa was skewed in favour of the White population. The Education for this population group was the best funded and it received the best resources in comparison with that of the other population groups. The population group that was least favoured in terms of the provision of education was the Black population group, which happens to be in the majority in South Africa. This skewed provision of education

had negative effects on the majority of people in South Africa in terms of workforce training, employment opportunities and poverty.

Several attempts have been made to deal with the problem. Initially, there was no proper coordination of these attempts, with numerous providers designing programmes aimed at providing vocational education to the majority who were denied educational opportunities in the past. Because of this lack of coordination, these attempts had very little success. The provision of coordinated vocational education began with the passing of the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998, the Further Education and Training Act No. 98 of 1998, the Skills Levies Act No. 9 of 1999 and the Adult Basic Education and Training Act No. 52 of 2000. These Acts are making significant progress in streamlining and maximising the provision of vocational education and training to the majority of South Africans.

Since 1990 the idea of introducing community colleges in South Africa has been put forward by numerous organisations and individuals. Although community colleges are not specifically enacted in any of the education Acts, it is acknowledged that they do have a significant role to play in the provision of vocational education to adults and out-of-school youth as well as in resolving other inherited legacies of apartheid. The following are some of their features which make them especially suitable for these purposes, in that they:

- Are democratic in tone and substance.

- Are humanistic, inclusive and flexible.
- Allow for relatively easy acquisition of a range of skills and competencies.
- Embrace the notion of community service and development.
- Facilitate life-long and distance learning.
- Ensure horizontal and vertical mobility.

(Hoppers, 2000: 15)

Most of the features of community colleges mentioned above are also applicable to South African FET institutions. This means that community colleges are not in conflict with FET institutions. Furthermore, a careful analysis of the mission and objectives of community colleges as explicated in Chapters 2 and 3, also shows that the principles upon which community colleges are based are also not in conflict with the vision, mission and objectives of ABET and the Skills Development Programme as explicated earlier in this chapter. It has also been noted that the best functioning community colleges are those with comprehensive programmes. For these reasons, it can be assumed that South African community colleges established on principles similar to those of American community colleges can play supplementary roles to those of FET institutions, ABET institutions and the Skills Development Programme.

Now that the situation prevailing in South Africa has been analysed and the community college has been identified as one way through which

the South African situation may be improved, it would be of interest to find out from the residents of South Africa, especially in the Eastern Free State, whether they would like to have community colleges introduced in their region. This would be the subject of the next chapter, which is concerned with an empirical investigation on the need for the establishment of community colleges in the Eastern Free State.