

Community Colleges Establishment for Post-School Education and Improving Training in the Vicinity of South African Communities

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Abstract—According to the findings of 2011 South African Census Survey, it was revealed that over 30million people between the ages of 18-24 years are not in employment or in education nor training. Of the 30million, about 15,918,454 people are aged from 20 years and above and never had they completed the standard Grade 12 required at the entrance of the tertiary educational level; this cohort represents 60% of the population of the 30million. The current education and training system does not offer sufficient avenues for the youth and adults seeking education and skills acquisition opportunities; deep-seated inequalities still exist. The country is faced with shortages of skills for the economy, low levels of access and equity, poor quality, high repetition and dropout rates, low graduation rates, weak links between the education and the work environment, and insufficient employer involvement in training. A global reflection in establishing Community College movement in community vicinities to advance and improve the post-school education aiming to the equal education opportunities to all, were discussed. Global arguments to sustain the intervention to establish Community Colleges models as built in the U.S. and India were evoked and characteristics outlined. This paper outlines the legislation, structure and mechanisms, opportunities, challenges and limitations of the actual South African education system, and the opportunity and the need of a community College movement in the South African society. Potential route to community colleges establishment as project with purpose and contribution delivery, are suggested.

Index Terms— Community Colleges, Post-School Education, Inequality and Poverty Alleviation, Employability, Skills Shortage, Empowerment of Underprivileged, South Africa

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I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

THE South African current contextual education facts derive its origin from the prior democratic educational system that established both Western Standard Education and the Bantu Education. The Bantu Education was entrenched through the “Native Education Act” whose aim was to segregate the already segregated educational system in South Africa upheld with archetypical societal discrimination. It is stated that one of the aims of this Act, was to prevent African natives from receiving an education that would lead them to aspire to positions that they would not be allowed to hold in society. Instead, African natives were to receive an education designed to provide them with skills to serve their own people in the Bantustan (homelands) or to work in manual labor jobs under white control. During apartheid in South Africa, no other social institution displayed the then government's racial attitude more clearly than the education system. On the whole, the impact of apartheid thus remained alive in this sector for a longer period than any other social apartheid institutions. Thus although apartheid is no longer the national policy in South Africa but the system's ramifications indisputably endure the negative apartheid effect which is still felt in the country.

In order to drive a new cause, there may be an imperative need, though unfortunate, to drawback to a time when resulting from the immense suppression with race differentiation as the determinant. Without a doubt education and learning institutions reflect the political philosophy and goals of the societies they operate in. The education system of our country thus operates in a society that still experiences the repercussions of apartheid Bantu Education.

According to the findings of 2011 South African Census Survey, it was revealed that over 30million people between the ages of 18-24 years are not in employment or in education nor training. Of the 30million, about 15,918,454 people are aged from 20 years and above and never had they completed the standard Grade 12 required at the entrance of the tertiary educational level; this cohort represents 60% of the population of the 30million. The 2011 South African Census survey further shed some light on the numbers of adult learners nationally as following figures (Government Gazette of South Africa, 2015):

TABLE I

2011 South African census survey on no of adult learners

i.	3,530,330	or 11.8%	: have no schooling;
ii.	4,654,590	or 15.5%	: have some primary schooling;
iii.	2,413,895	or 8.0%	: have completed primary schooling;
iv.	10,481,577	or 34.9%	: have some secondary but did not complete grade 12; and
v.	8,919,608	or 29.7%	: have achieved grade 12

The pattern survey as shown in Table 1 has not greatly improved as far as 2016 in relation to the current position of the South African education system in the address of this imbalance due to apartheid despite elaboration and promulgation of numerous policies with explicit equity objectives for the inequalities redress. It is in this background that this paper relates its research activity which is the establishment or creation of learning organizations moved in the vicinities of communities or community colleges which will offer an ample learning opportunity, especially to the previously disadvantaged. Thinking of these learning organizations, they would be the driving force behind educating, training and skilling people, irrespective of the color of their skin, the affordability or the levels of education one has gotten.

Education is an essential constituent on the re/construction, development and transformation of any society. It has become accepted worldwide that individuals require a sound education in order to participate effectively in increasingly complex social and economic environments. The skills in the 21st century are becoming increasingly complex, given the pervasive use of information technology and the fast pace of scientific and technological advancement. Education and training must address the enormous developmental challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. The call for a developmental state in South Africa requires the development of the necessary skills and capabilities for this to be possible.

Inequalities based on gender, class, race, disability, geographic location, age and health status persist with regard to access to educational opportunities in the adult education and training system. Access to education and training must therefore be made available through viable institutions to the employed and unemployed, young and old, to encourage an economically active population and community participation.

II. PROBLEMATIC

The current education and training system does not offer sufficient avenues for the youth and adults seeking education and skills acquisition opportunities; deep-seated inequalities still exist. The country is faced with shortages of skills for the economy, low levels of access and equity, poor quality, high repetition and dropout rates, low graduation rates, weak links between the education and the work environment, and

insufficient employer involvement in training. It is a fact that many South Africans still suffer from the bruises and still have repercussions of the Bantu Education.

III. RESEARCH DRIVE

The paper aims for stakeholders, Government and institutions of high learning to rationalize on the upshots of apartheid which still need stronger than ever actions to have them addressed. There is a strong need to establish Community Colleges in community vicinities to advance and improve the Post-School education programs to offer equal education opportunities to all.

With the establishment of such Colleges as new institutional type, it is envisaged that they are capable of playing a pivotal role in contributing and improving levels of educational attainment among youth and adults and above all, expand the current provision of the Post-School Education and Training opportunities. Such Colleges would cater mainly for those who have left school – whether they have completed secondary school or not – and wishes to do vocational training or complete their schooling. Community Colleges should be rooted in their communities, serving community as well as regional and national needs. They should primarily – although not exclusively – provide education and training to members of their own and nearby communities and develop skills for local industry, commerce and public - sector institutions. They should constantly strive to be seen by their communities as providers of skills that offer a route out of poverty and promote personal or collective advancement. They should also be seen as institutions that can assist communities to meet some of their cultural and social needs.

IV. OBJECTIVES IN ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY COLLEGES

The following could be of great benefits to the support of communities through establishment of Community Colleges development:

- 1) To open provisions to millions of South Africans who leave school with no hope of being absorbed in the working world.
- 2) For people to lift themselves out of the mind-set that is based on the perpetual servitude.
- 3) To widen up benefits and opportunities available.
- 4) For people to be equipped in order to create their own employment.
- 5) Actualize the Freedom Charter clause that says, “The doors of learning shall be open to all”.

Community Colleges are envisaged to offer a second - chance learning opportunities for out-of-school youth and adults, by building on the current offerings of the existing Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs), which offer general education programs. These Colleges should also add to the general education programs by offering vocationally oriented skills and knowledge programs leading to sustainable livelihoods outside of the formal sector. They

should be a diverse set of institutions, offering programs that are appropriate to their particular communities.

V. COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND REVIEW DISCUSSIONS

As stated by Raby (2009), community college model is one of the most widely adapted forms of education worldwide and portends to be one system of choice for reforming education. Concurrently, it is the product of years of borrowing and shifting focus that is time and geographically bound and designed to meet the needs of the identified learners wherever they are and no matter what their social and economic position might be.

Community Colleges and the like are institutions that are used to serving different purposes for different countries and yet the similar objectives is to broaden access and expand opportunities for many people whom otherwise may not have had an opportunity to access further training or education. Further with Raby (2009), in the United States the community college has served to separate the first two years of college from the four years required for a university degree. This is firstly because of many of the students graduating from high school are under-prepared for the rigor of university studies and in need of remedial education as well as to serve to expand educational opportunities for the traditionally disenfranchised. Community Colleges and other institutions of such are helping to make higher education accessibility available to a much larger percentage of the population and train an educated workforce to compete nationally and internationally.

Spangler and Tyler (2011) validated that Community College global counterparts, as a phenomenon, should respond to the social, political and economic needs of the communities they serve. Worldwide, such Colleges have traditionally offered five basic kinds of programs that form a fundamental educational base for the learner; these are known as:

- 6) Transfer;
- 7) Technical and occupational;
- 8) Continuing education or lifelong learning;
- 9) Remedial education; and
- 10) Workforce development.

Community Colleges bridge the gap between academia and technical training by making teaching and learning open and accessible as well technical training accessible. Community Colleges can be seen as a major game changer in the lives of students internationally because these colleges are localized and influence the development of an educated citizenry (Raby and Valeau, 2012).

A. Community Colleges: A global perspective

Today, community colleges, as with other higher education institutions around the globe, are instituting strategic objectives involving internationalization and are finding new paths to achieve these objectives. One such path is engaging in international development work. In the context of higher education, development work often

involves capacity building at partner institutions in a developing country, which in turn helps countries to address various development challenges. These include issues such as youth unemployment, poverty, agricultural production, public health and sustainable natural resources management. In the case of community colleges, much of the work has centred on providing training, consultation, curriculum and program development, resources and professional development opportunities in relevant disciplines and technologies.

Community Colleges are suited to engage in development work, their design weigh up higher education institutions role and extent to reach out communities given, their flexibility, adaptability and inclusive vision. Community Colleges focus on practical skills and training for workplace, combined with theoretical knowledge to suit development projects. The practical approach of Community Colleges is typically what is needed and required by institutions that are trying to implement the new systems and strategies. This is high-level local engagement and dedication combined with flexible governance systems that emphasize local autonomy and management flexibility enabling a community college to identifying and quickly responding to local community needs adequately.

B. Transfer and Training

It is of the opinion of many university advisors that students should attend community college "college transfer" programs first, and then be transferred to universities for the final two years. Students transfer or use their credits from community colleges to earn a four-year degree. Many community colleges and four-year institutions also have articulation agreements to make transferring even easier (Institute of International Education, 2015).

In addition, community colleges often host "transfer fairs" and invite four-year institutions to come and recruit their students to complete the bachelor's degree. Additional to college transfer programs, U.S. community colleges offer a wide range of workforce (job-training) programs. These programs train students in hundreds of careers: business administration, nursing, hotel and restaurant management, computer programming, fashion design, nanotechnology, commercial photography, engineering or advertising art. Students who complete these courses earn degrees or certificates. International students who complete a workforce program that is a minimum of nine months are then eligible to apply for Optional Practical Training and gain some paid working experience in their field.

C. Approach to assist local communities

Community Colleges meet the educational and vocational needs of local communities. Almost all Community Colleges in the USA are government-supported. By maintaining an "open door policy" with low tuition costs and few entrance requirements, community colleges have offered many U.S. citizens a chance to get a college education.

D. *Difference between the four-year universities and the Community Colleges in the U.S*

Community Colleges and four-year universities are different. Here's how (Study in the USA, 2015):

- 1) **Admission is easier.** With the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) scores and related academic entry requirements are lower for admission in most cases for Community Colleges than with four-year institutions. Moreover students whose scores are too low in English as a Second Language (ESL) program or Mathematics are straightaway admitted to start their studies.
- 2) **Covered costs are lower.** Tuition at community colleges may also vary from 20% to 80% less than traditional universities. From the perspective of developing countries such as South Africa that could carry enormous weight to change the current situation in local communities lacking financial support.
- 3) **Student enrolment in classes or at the institution overall often smaller than at four-year schools.** It is affirmed that educators and advisors are able to provide more one-on-one attention to students. Students in general uphold that attending smaller schools for the first two years was helpful to drive them through a good transition into larger four-year schools for the final two years.
- 4) **Classroom environment is more supportive.** In the U.S. educational system especially, students often go all-out for good grades. Of utmost importance, the U.S. Community Colleges exceptionally offer free tutoring to support the success of students.
- 5) **Adjusting is easier.** Two years at a Community College likely assists international students to develop their English language skills and grow them accustomed to the U.S. educational system and culture. Community Colleges are likely of great support to international students to develop their English language skills and have them accustomed to integrate the U.S. education system and adapt to the culture.

E. *The Indian Community College System*

The Community College movement in India started in 1995 and was modelled after the United States system, although there was an adjustment to meet India's unique needs and aspirations. Community college system in India aimed at empowering the disadvantaged population to develop skills leading to a rewarding employment and betterment of quality lives of the urban, rural and tribal poor and women. The college system also works in partnership with local industrial enterprises and potential employers, as well as community leaders, to create opportunities for employment and self-employment in local area. The community college movement in India has grown to a national phenomenon over the past two decades. Although the concept of the community college has not really been accepted by the Indian educational community as such, it has created its own history over the past two decades. At present, there are more than 500 community colleges in about 22 states and union territories that provide education

to empower the disadvantaged and the underprivileged, including the urban, rural and tribal poor and women. In India, community colleges have a major role to play because in collaboration with local industries and the community, they help students attain skills that lead to gainful employment (US Institute of International Education, 2013).

Indian community colleges are a set of exciting institutions of higher education, offering educational programs at the level of post-secondary school. They were inspired by the U.S. system, a successful model of vertical and horizontal movement of students into the university system. One more major step that contributed to the establishment of the community college system in India is that colleges affiliated to the National Knowledge Commission were inadequately responding to improvement standard of colleges for the undergraduate education. (US Institute of International Education, 2013).

VI. SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES SYSTEM

Community Colleges System is a new phenomenon in the case of South Africa and its educational system. The South African educational system, which is a normal secondary-to-tertiary system is a well-integrated system that classifies learners to categories of tertiary entrance, based on their percentage of success and subjects followed, to either have access to the university or colleges. However the affordability is the heaviest challenge in this system given that the majority of newly upgraded students have a strong dependency on government financing systems for scholarship that is very selective given the mass of new students to finance. Moreover the major barrier is the lack of proximity universities and colleges in the countries' remote areas has the consequences of having students studying far from their community and often abandoned to their fate. This brings a likelihood of 50% of succeeding or losing to achieve the purpose of their education in tertiary.

The provision of education and training alone is insufficient to alleviate inequalities sensibly in South Africa. The attainment of the National Development Plan's (NDP) 2030 vision requires more efforts and strategies to put in place than current commitment in establishing pro-poor institutional structural frameworks and funding modalities in order to redress the past and envisage an egalitarian and prosperous society. According to the South African Department High Education and Training in its 2013 report (DHET, 2013), the ministerial task team report on Community Education and Training Centres (CETCs) was established for two identified disadvantaged groups, adults and young people, who were outside of the formal economy and formal workplaces, who were not in educational institutions, who had few opportunities for access to first or second-chance learning and lifelong learning.

As South Africa looks globally for ideas about solving its own higher education and training gaps related to its capacity to educate large numbers of youth, as well as availability of relevant and flexible technical training programs, it will certainly pick and choose the elements

from global models that will work best within its own context. There is no one-size-fits-all model as it has been argued above by looking at the experiences and systems of the United State of America and India where there is great variation in how community colleges are structured and governed, what types of programs they offer and their approaches to education.

The Education Policy Consortium for Post-School Education and Training (PSET) (Education Policy Consortium, 2014) states that the education and training system are compelled to find ways to provide what is desired for the needs of the millions of adults and youth who are unemployed, poorly educated and not studying. It further says the expansion of the university and college systems will make an important difference, but will not be sufficient to meet all the needs. In any case, they are not designed for post-school education and training purpose. Moreover there are many young people who would not qualify to enter a university or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. It follows and may be inferred that a new type of institution should be called to existence and supported, one that would offer a diverse range of possibilities to people for whom vocational and technical colleges and universities might have not allowed education opportunities. In January 2014, the Minister of Higher Education and Training launched the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training system in which key challenges facing South African higher education and training were identified. The White Paper articulates many weaknesses with regard to the current provisioning of Adult Education Training (AET) due to, among other things, insufficient resources, inadequate staffing, weak infrastructure and poor articulation. Nevertheless, the White Paper notes that despite their weaknesses, the Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) are currently the only public institutions with a wide distribution around the country and which provide for adults and post-school youth who are not catered for by the Technical Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) Colleges and Universities. The PALCs have been merged into Community Education and Training Centres (CETCs), which is a new type of post-school institution, as envisaged in the Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006. These colleges are expected to be sensitive to the needs of their communities. They will primarily target youth and adults who for various reasons did not complete their schooling or who never attended school.

The primary idea of CETCs is to be a multi-campus institution, which cluster the PALCs, and be expanded by adding some campuses where necessitated by their enrolments and programmes, although there will be public colleges involved, there may enter into partnerships with community-owned or private institutions such as faith-based organizations or other education and training centres in order to enhance their capacity to meet the education and training needs of youth and adults. Responding to its mandate to ensure that there are options available for the youth and adults who are not in any formal training, DHET, through its Task Team for a workable institutional model for community education and training, was to consider policy

and legal implications, make recommendations on relevant programs, investigate and propose appropriate funding modalities and suitable governance mechanisms, develop broad implementation steps to institutionalize the provisioning of community education and training, and to review relevant local and international literature.

VII. COMMUNITY COLLEGES ESTABLISHMENT FOR EXTENSIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING GOALS ACHIEVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the South African context and as dictated by the Act called Community Education and Training College Act (CETC Act), the establishment or declaration of a Community Colleges vests with the Minister of Higher Education and Training. The Minister reserves the right to establish Community Colleges that transcend geographical boundaries based on the communities of interest or practice. In other words the term community is not limited to a geographical community. For such an institution to take off and be implemented, the following would be imperative for government to follow the policies to the latter Education and Training Act of 2006. This policy provides a framework for:

- 1) Establishment of Community Colleges,
- 2) Governance and management of these institutional types,
- 3) Employment of staff,
- 4) Funding framework,
- 5) Programmes and qualification offerings,
- 6) Quality assurance, examination and assessment,
- 7) Regulation of private provision, and
- 8) Monitoring and evaluation.

There may be suggested the establishment of Community Colleges as a new hub besides the 3276 Community Learning Centres that are existing at present. Community Colleges will definitely have their own mandates a mixed model adapted to a South African context based with models developed by the U.S. and India. The Minister should also appoint Council Members responsible for governance. The establishment intervention of Community Colleges can strategically be at different jurisdiction orders, provincial and municipality levels.

VIII. POTENTIAL ROUTE/MARCH OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES ESTABLISHMENT

DHET in terms of the section 3(1) (b) of the Continuing Education and Training Act of 2006 is to establish the new Community Colleges. These will then be published in the gazette in the Government Gazette for public to make comments and contributions on the establishment, highlighting the purpose they will be serving.

Community Colleges should then be established in each Province and they will have delivery sites and further be expanded to the District levels as well, if they are to make a significant improvement. These delivery sites will aim to play an administrative role for the management and

governance of the renamed Community Colleges.

Like with any other big project, in order to succeed, it is advisable to start modest and then expand, having learned on all the challenges and obstacles during the first phase of the implementation. Such an approach will then be applicable in the establishment of these Colleges by piloting few as this process would be a gradual process and should take place on phase-in basis, starting with one Community College as a pilot project in each Province.

The purpose of the pilot college is to provide an opportunity for the DHET to begin the process of establishing district based Community Education and Training Colleges and to gain experience that will be useful in rolling out Community Colleges in every district in the country. Such a process should be outlined in a further policy instrument.

Community Colleges may also be established on the basis of partnerships between the DHET and the community-owned or private institutions such as Faith-Based Organisations or other education and training centres. Such partnerships should be entered into in line with the appropriate Ministerial authority. The adequacy of post school education and training facilities in communities shall be taken into account in order to determine community needs for the additional educational facilities, subject to available funding.

As the compliance to the Act, the Minister shall then determine the name and seat of a Community College, which shall be published in the Government Gazette, together with all its Community Learning Centres (CLCs). The DHET should develop a strategy for the branding of Community Colleges and their Community Learning Centres.

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