

# CENTRE FOR EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT

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To: Cheryl Carolus via John Samuel

From: Trevor Coombe

## Education and Training in the National Government

1. The NEC will be asked tomorrow (Thursday) to approve a proposal for national government organisation (prepared by the Civil Service Project) which assigns Training aspects of HRD to the Ministry of Labour, not the Ministry of Education. Although you assured the RDP meeting today that 'details' would still be workshopped with departments, it will represent a major setback for the RDP if the NEC approves the current proposal.

2. At the time of writing we still have not seen the version of the document which will be submitted to the NEC, except for a glance over Olive's shoulder. It was disappointing that the meeting you arranged for the Basic Needs sector with the Civil Service Project staff did not take place. After the RDP meeting this afternoon, Ahmed and I were able to speak to Sibusiso and Olive for only two minutes, as Valli had called Olive to another urgent meeting. We registered our extreme concern at the separation of Education and Training. They informed us that this reflected a submission by the HRD Department, and that no submission had been received from the Education Department. We disputed the latter point, and pointed out that a single Ministry for Education and Training was a key element in the RDP human resources development strategy.

3. I want to stress that this issue is fundamental, not a detail. If Training functions are not linked with Education in a single Ministry we kick out one of the foundation stones of our entire strategy for reconstructing Education and Training and contradict explicit sectoral and RDP policy positions which command wide support.

The published *RDP Programme* states:

Success in rebuilding and expanding education and training depends on having an effective and responsive organisation to manage change. The education and training bureaucracy must be reorganised at national, sectoral and provincial levels through the establishment of a **single national ministry for education and training**, to set national policies, norms and standards throughout the system, to undertake planning and provide budgetary resources for all aspects of education and training, and to manage higher education and training developments. (pp. 60-61)



This is precisely the position the ANC and COSATU have argued for years. It is reflected in *Ready to Govern* and in the ANC Education Department's *Policy Framework for Education and Training*. It is identical to the position argued in the report of the NTB Task Team National Training Strategy Initiative.

The continued split responsibility for Education and Training would perpetuate the artificial distinction between academic and applied learning and would continue to interfere with rational planning for a national learning system embracing youth and adults alike. It would severely hamper the work of the South African Qualifications Authority, a high priority statutory agency which must be responsible to one Minister in charge of a single integrated Ministry. SAQA is required to drive the national qualifications system and is on our urgent legislative list.

Bringing responsibility for Training together with Education in one Ministry would win widespread international praise and envy. The recent National Commission on Education in Britain has argued that

a well-designed system...should accept that education and training are parts of a continuum and have to be planned and managed as such....Our starting point is provided by the **essential need now to bring the Department of Education and those parts of the Employment Department which have responsibility for training into a single department** which we entitle here a Department of Education and Training (1993, 341-44)

This is our position precisely. In our case, the two functions will need to be run by sister departments in the same Ministry, at least until the Ministry has settled down and the situation can be reviewed. This will take time and will give plenty of opportunity for further consultation and research.

The Civil Service Project's organogram appears to include responsibility for 'vocational education' among the functions of the Ministry of Education. This is not the same thing as we have been arguing for and is not a substitute for it.

I urge that the NEC be asked to amend the proposed arrangements so that the current Training functions of the Department of Manpower be included as a department in the Ministry of Education, which could be renamed Ministry of Education and Training, or Ministry of Human Resources. (It is fully accepted that there will need to be close connections, through consultative structures and inter-ministerial arrangements, between the Ministry of Education and Training and the Ministry of Labour, on matters of common interest, especially labour market issues.)

As a fallback position, the NEC could be asked to defer the issue to permit consultation between the relevant ANC departments and the Civil Service Project.

*T. M.*