

**SUBMISSION TO THE
PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION**



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INTRODUCTION

In this submission to the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education, we address the following subjects:

1. Curriculum content
2. Values in education.
3. Equity in education

Our contention in summary is the following:

1. The shift introduced by Curriculum 2005 and then carried further by the New Revised Curriculum should not be discouraged but conceptualised and communicated in thorough detail. It is not possible to judge or condemn an approach that the major proportion of the teaching population were not adequately trained to carry out, nor fully understood. The shift in education philosophy is so radical that it takes time and needs to be done with strategic forethought, planning and sensitive communication. The shift is a “sea change” – not only a change in culture – the culture of our nation in its diversity, and also the culture of learning in the schools – but also in politics. At its heart it is a shift in the way we understand ourselves – from a people living under a controlling and oppressive dictatorship to a people living in democracy and freedom. Mandela may have completed his long walk to freedom, but South Africa has not yet.
2. At the same time, the world is changing rapidly. The new curriculum was conceived with the future in mind but limited to how we can overcome our past and how we as a nation can be economically competitive on a global scale. We recommend regularly revisiting the curriculum in terms of the rapidly transforming world. In the sixteen years since transformation much has transpired. In the last five years alone the changes have shifted the goalposts and introduced a need for new skills. It has put greater emphasis on the importance of innovation, and shifted our focus in what needs to be learned within each subject discipline. The digital age, the shift in the balance of powers economically, the shift towards a need for governments to coordinate globally with international laws, peacekeeping and policing given the global scale of legal and illegal trade, requires education to change. We need to be strategic in planning what our curriculum equips our

- learners for because their future will be radically different even from the present we live in today. How do we plan for the future? We have a few solutions and ideas to contribute in this area.
3. One such solution is to revisit ancient truths, ancient values – that have proven to be eternally relevant. It takes a village to raise a child – this is a quintessentially African value. We need to not only endorse this, but search out its full implications for our schools. Local community, business, government and civil society need to be involved in actively supporting local schools, engaging learners in the problem solving activities of their local and provincial sphere as they bear relevance to the learning areas.
 4. It is important to emphasise the teaching of morals and values in the way we problem solve. This will not compromise on profit (as the western world fears) but will actually lead to greater profit because values based problem solving leads to solutions that are sustainable because they promote life.
 5. We would like to see civil society play a greater role in education.

The aim of this submission is to provoke further discussion, debate and problem solving. It poses certain questions and only begins to tease our possible answers. Fully fleshed out answers to what is contained here requires the combined expertise of many South Africans.

Who is ESST?

Founded in 1986, the Educational Support Services Trust (ESST) has established itself as a recognised leader in the field of community-based education in South Africa. ESST emerged at the bidding of teachers and community leaders and in 1989, we were formally established as a non-profit organisation.

Our aim from the beginnings of our work in 1986 was to support education for the disadvantaged. During the turbulent years of the 80's this meant working with disadvantaged schools, supporting learners' education with the Learning Adventure programme. Children from early childhood all the way up to Grade 10 were given critical and creative thinking skills and educational support across the curriculum. This programme was implemented in all nine provinces of our country.

This initial focus has since broadened to include a family education programme and a range of civic education campaigns, ranging in subject from voter education,

census awareness, financial literacy, and women's rights to health issues (HIV and Aids in particular), to youth development and moral renewal.

The mission of ESST is to apply its expertise and experience to create optimal educational opportunities for communities, families and children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. ESST sees its intervention in communities as holistic, responding to needs and driven by community leadership.

CURRICULUM CONTENT

The dissatisfactory matric results of last year – a continuum of what has been happening over the past few years – point towards a total rethink of what is going on in and beyond our classrooms. Much has been offered since as to what is wrong with our educational system but very little has been offered in terms of how the situation can practically be turned around. This contribution is based on what has been achieved in some of the most disadvantaged schools in our country. If somebody sees the submission as a way of promoting ESST's work, the person does not understand the treatise, which goes far beyond the specifics to arriving at a well-founded methodology.

The following points are raised for consideration:

1. The classroom is meant to be a place of learning and to create a space for learning. Very little of it can take place if the teacher is the sole disseminator of (mostly boring, poorly constructed) information. Learners cannot be dependant on a teacher to learn. What if the teacher, however under- or over qualified, is simply not a good communicator/motivator? Do we, as adults, not all suffer from negative connotations regarding (some of) the individuals who taught us at school and feel that we made it despite their offerings? Good, effective teachers are the exception. For the rest it is "business as usual".
2. It is noteworthy that literature on the characteristics of a good teacher prioritises the teacher's personal qualities; being interesting, dynamic, and having a sense of vocation or calling to teach, i.e. qualities which elicit enthusiasm and curiosity in learners. Nowhere does one read that a perfect mastery of content or even ability to disseminate content accurately is what makes a good teacher.

2. If this is so, the premise that if only teachers will teach better, learners will perform better, is a shaky one, if not false. Teachers' in-service training should therefore be refined, to include not only content but an awareness of the importance of the personal qualities which foster an enthusiastic and curious response in learners.

Teachers are change-weary, insecure and dispirited from an overburdened workload and the challenges of overcrowding, absenteeism and crime – yet they are implementers of the new curriculum. The vision behind the curriculum and the intentions need to be clearly articulated so that the teachers buy into it. Moreover their income needs to reflect the value and substance of what they are doing. We strongly advise a salary increase for teachers.

2. If the classroom is supposed to be a place of learning, provision should be made for active learning to take place. In other words, learners should be exposed to resources and activities which excite them and invite them to participate. In this scenario, the material used, rather than the teacher alone, becomes central to the flavour of the lesson. Innovative, challenging and appealing learning material can make all the difference. It does not exclude the teacher, but it is capable of speaking to the learner despite the teacher.

Material that is innovative, exciting and rooted in the real world takes children on a journey that does not see life as compartmentalized into subjects, but interrelated, as it actually is. The fullness of life should not be broken up into unrelated compartments and simply observed by learners.

4. Learning-centred material challenges and invites learners to actively respond through creative writing, the giving of related examples, the drawing of mind maps, the thinking of analogies, the application of ideas to a variety of fields of knowledge, the finding of ingenious ways of understanding and problem-solving.

5. Some of the difficulties of this transition towards learner-centeredness has been because of the gap the transition left culturally for learners from non-middle class, non-Western cultures. The culture of school presupposes a Western middle-class literate culture in which the learner is exposed to a print rich environment from a very early age. The majority of South African learners do not come from such a

background and there is a big gap between their home culture and the culture they are expected to adapt to at school. The concept of a learner-centered classroom rests on the assumption of just such a school culture. It rests on the assumption of *learning centeredness*.

Therefore in order for a classroom to become *learner centered* it needs first to become learning centered. Otherwise the set of assumptions that require the success of learner centeredness will fail the attempt to implement learner centeredness in the classroom. A learning-centred classroom is characterised by learners learning in a variety of contexts – and developing a language for learning and a value for it – as well as for those cognitive skills learning requires. Learning alone is essential. So is learning in pairs or groups. The teacher is an active participant, coordinating the process through rendering assistance, responding to questions, providing additional information, and thereby creating a positive learning environment.

6. Shared learning and discussion imply that learners learn from one another. Within this context all learners perform well. It might take longer for some, but they do get there in a non-threatening environment.
7. Because learners, in a learning-centred classroom enjoy learning, they will spontaneously share “their work” and the learning material with their family. And so home becomes an extension of school. (Amongst the reasons for learners’ poor performance last year, parents’ aloofness/ignorance about what goes on at school and with their children, was singled out as a critical factor.) If learners do not have something to share (but frustration, even misery) with their parents and the parents insist on knowing more, the situation can easily develop into a disciplinary one, something to be avoided at all costs.
8. To arrive at a learning-centered classroom, teachers will have to unlearn what they see as their primary function, viz. teaching. Their primary function needs to be clear – it is to make learning happen, not to teach. It happens, once children have material that speaks to them, and a teacher who is willing to guide and help them. But, and this is a prerequisite, whatever is given to the learners must interest and challenge them. It must lead them out of the classroom and into the real world, where problems are solved.

9. Learning-centredness implies a communicative element in the material to which learners (and teachers) are exposed. This brings the process of the deconstruction of content into effect. The most intricate concepts in any field can be deconstructed and made understandable by the use of analogies, examples, presuppositions, etc. Maths and Science, in particular, suffer from a formal inaccessibility, removed from real-life experience, of which it is supposed to be part.

10. To fail is hardly possible within the context of a learning-centred classroom because learners are driven by themselves within a conducive learning environment. Today, if we can believe what teachers tell us, learners are also not failing, except that they do not adhere to even the most minimal performance criteria.

What does the above imply?

The above suggestions need not replace an existing curriculum, but can be introduced alongside the existing (or some variation of the existing) curriculum. Instead of dividing the whole day into 40 minutes slots, we suggest a two hour period where there is more flexibility than the formal curriculum allows for. These two hours can be used to develop and deepen any aspect of the week's learning.

In this period, learners and teachers develop the habit (for it is a habit) of thinking further, deeper, more. Projects that take place outside of the classroom are set, formulated, discussed. Reports on experiences are written.

For instance, learners may have been intrigued by some aspect of construction. They have been exposed to plans, evaluated different materials, learned a basic costing method – but have they built anything? Here in groups challenges are set. The size and scope of a project such as the building of a structure are limitless. Good learning materials will suggest various ways the projects can be approached. Will the group raise funds for the project themselves? Will the school help them locate a mentor from the community, or will the learners find one themselves? Will they, in fact, build for the school or can the idea be made part of a community service project? Theirs is the challenge to organize themselves into roles for the project, and to decide on a stock taking and costing method. The variations on such a project are endless, and will vary from grade to grade. The point is that

things that were theory must be made practice, and must in addition, be reflected on in the classroom setting before, during and after the active part of the project.

With a little imagination and excellent resource books/text books, projects of this sort can be devised that are as wide and varied as life itself. It is by doing and reflecting, that we truly learn – in no other way. Schools must make room for both, in some depth, to be of any relevance in the lives of learners.

Recommendations

1. The classroom needs to be defined as a place of learning, not of teaching. Moreover, it is only one of several contexts where learning occurs, but it is an important one, for it is here that the learning we are constantly engaged in is dissected, formulated, deepened, made coherent. There needs to be a close relationship between classroom and the rest of the world.
3. Since the focus in a learning-centred classroom is on learning, class size becomes of secondary importance. The material and methodology ensure that all learners are engaged in learning. The assumption that class size matters, is the strongest proof that we over-emphasise teaching at the cost of learning.
4. Once learners excel, they start very early to pursue their own interests, eagerly wanting to know more about a specific field of study.
5. If learners enjoy what they experience at school, surely this will eliminate many of the ill effects which infest the ethos of our schools.
6. Life skills, including values, are an integral part of a learning-centred classroom because the individual has every opportunity to excel and gain self-confidence and self-worth.
7. Something about language learning. The mother tongue tuition premise is still with us. What is apparently forgotten, is that a child up to puberty can acquire more than one language (many languages) as long as it happens within a natural learning environment. It is therefore possible that the learner can acquire fluency in English, while at the same time learning through it. Again, this can only happen in a learning-centred classroom, where cooperative learning through English leads to spontaneous discourse in English.

8. And something about teachers. As a society we need to lift teachers out of the rut they are in and begin to fashion a different picture of who the teacher is. He or she has a calling and should be made aware that this is the case. Salaries should be commensurate with the high trust we place in them. Their training needs to shift its emphasis from (not replace) content and techniques to a sense of what their calling entails, namely, compassion, enthusiasm, a love of learning and resourcefulness. Teachers need to see the whole of life as a resource for the classroom. These values can be inculcated from the first day of teacher training.

9. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, they say. What is posed above, is borne out by two programmes ESST conducted in disadvantaged (rural) schools for many years.

10. The English Proficiency Programme/Learning Adventure, a language and thinking skills programme aimed at learners from Grades R to 7, was implemented in primary schools across the country from 1986 to 2001.

The ESST Matriculation Support Programme was implemented from 1990 to 2008 and focused particularly on Maths and Science. The programme yielded end-of-year results which showed on average a 40% improvement in candidates' performance.

Both of the above programmes have been internally and externally strenuously evaluated. At the same time, more than one hundred students did advanced research in the field of language and cognition (under the supervision of Prof AJL Sinclair), which provided the theoretical basis. On the concept of learning-centredness alone, three doctoral studies were done (Ridge 1996, Abel 1997 and Bowie 1999). This research, in turn, draws on a plethora of research internationally.

What is suggested above, therefore is practical, doable and can be implemented almost immediately.

VALUES IN EDUCATION: IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD

In order for one to truly understand the crisis in education in South Africa at the moment, we first have to understand what is meant by education, and especially what our nation requires in order for it to attain to the long term goals we have set for ourselves. This is therefore an appeal to the education policy as the arrow head that drives education in this country. Goals and a vision for education are crucial because they speak to the goals we as a nation possess for ourselves. Where do we want to be in twenty, fifty and one hundred years from now? Rather than merely where have we come from and how can we overcome our past? Education answers the question as to how we will get to our goal as a nation. If we are not deliberate in our intention then we will not arrive anywhere nor will we be able to assess how successful we have been. It is a question of posterity. How can we bring out the best in our children, enabling and equipping them to be everything they were created to be, nurturing and developing their abilities, while doing the same for our vision for our future.

In a very clear way education speaks not merely to our need to overcome our past; nor our material aims for our future – the goals of overcoming HIV and poverty, finding sustainable solutions to energy, becoming economically competitive on a global scale; nor only to the well articulated socio-cultural need of moral regeneration and overcoming the problem of crime; it speaks to matters of existential concerns about what it means to be human and what our purpose is.

We advocate a more strategic approach to curriculum development reviewed every five years in terms of our progress not only in learner achievement but also in terms of the challenges besetting our nation and the world. The world and this country are changing rapidly and a five yearly review is not inappropriate considering how the needs of our society have begun to require new skills and new knowledge of us in the last five years. There are complex problems requiring solutions that did not have the urgency ten years ago that they do today. There are new developments – particularly in the digital world and on the internet that are revolutionizing the way media and reporting works, the way we communicate, our culture and our identity. It changes the way we lead, and the influence we possess, it opens up new possibilities and possible solutions. Living in the world of today changes the way we study maths, making the study of statistics more important for

example than the study of calculus – simply because statistics is more needed and more relevant in this digital age.

What can we say about the years ahead? It is important that with regard to preparing children today for the future (a child starting Grade R today will be 30 in the year 2036!) we have to anticipate today what they will require for the times ahead by observing trends and being sufficiently flexible and strategic in our problem solving to adapt to it. We call this learning from history.

And our aim? For our learners to become history makers.

In equipping learners for a future that is distant if one considers the rapidity with which change is besetting us, it is important to consider that the best way to equip someone to cope with change and to respond to crises is to equip them with something unchanging: values. It is psychological and moral strength required, so that with every problem they face in every arena of life they have sufficient courage to take it on and then sufficient wisdom to find solutions that are determined by values that will promote life in a sustainable way. The problems we have encountered as a young nation have led to a certain paralysis in the face of its immensity, and have also shown solutions that lack a strong attachment to values that will promote life in a sustainable way. Solutions that do not exhibit these values and forethought are not feasible and will cause more damage than not.

The “***Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement***” recommends that Life Orientation be dropped as a learning area and only 1 hour a week given to religious and moral instruction. We strongly disagree with that. We appreciate that values are included in the instruction of all learning areas but to reduce to 1 hour a week the dedicated discussion and learning of values and moral concerns is to minimize a subject of singular significance. It is because values and morality have been devalued that apartheid together with all the other ills of society was allowed by South Africans and by the global community.

If we want our country to succeed economically we cannot afford to have a materialistic mindset and overemphasise those skills that will most like lead to being economically competitive (like maths and science). The path towards economic success is not directly linked in that way to learning fields. Perhaps in the

past a western, materialistic mindset has taught us this. The current global economic crisis is fundamentally a crisis that exposes business operated in a way motivated by greed for profit. We are starting to see the dire consequences of a society driven beyond moral concern in its pursuit of material gain. To simply seek economic success is **counter-productive to the goal of economic success**. Take global warming; take a world with an ever increasing appetite for globalised business that exploits the human and natural resources of developing and unstable countries. The price to pay for free market capitalism is life itself. And the first victims of that price are the poor of Africa.

As leaders in Africa we must not pursue this path but rather be very mindful in the way in which we educate our children. A new way of life is needed – a culture and a politic that do not accept “profit as a supreme goal” as a premise for our curriculum nor simply limit our understanding of teaching values to a need to nation build and overcome our past. There is a greater and more urgent need than that – and it is the present we live in and the future that quickly approaches. A future in which the balance of powers is being shifted if not overturned by nations like China and India – the full implications of which for Africa and South Africa have yet to be searched out. What is certain is that ahead of us are radical rapid changes that require much forethought and planning, a rootedness in values as well as flexibility in education that allows for strategic input regularly so that our learners are taught to respond constructively and sustainably as leaders of this country, this continent and the globe.

South Africa has much to contribute in this regard. We believe we can lead the way in an innovative, modern education system that goes beyond what the best international curricula are currently achieving if it follows the recommendations of this submission, and continues to finetune the very important “sea change” of our education system towards outcomes based education. The shift to outcomes based education requires a cultural transformation – involving tens of thousands of schools, teachers and principals. It is a transformation out of the past of a dictatorship into the future of democracy, and a new citizen, **a freed human**. This is no small undertaking and the Education Department should not be discouraged but in fact should continue to pursue this change with more administrative wisdom and forethought and greater planning.

The shift in the way we think about ourselves must lead to a shift in the way we do education

Africa has important values to contribute – a view of life that is holistic and community based. If we agree that it takes a village to raise a child then our education needs to reflect that. Our society needs to be restored in this dimension– our communities need to start to share in the adult individual’s sense of belonging and responsibility towards all children and not merely their own. The children struggling in the rural school with no resources and absent teachers are our children, and it is our concern. Children who are Aids orphans and not able to attend school are our children, and this is our concern. It is not the concern of a local government worker, or of a poor grandmother or of the Minister of Education. It is everybody’s concern. And it is the failure to think this way that makes our high crime rate possible. One may ask if the saying “it takes a village to raise a child” can be applied to a complex modern, dense and culturally diverse society as our own. Yes. And there can be no other answer. Not only are we keepers of one another we are also keepers of the earth and the natural world. A mature response to this responsibility is to say, “Then let us teach our children how to keep people, animals and the earth well and in a way that sustains all life”.

How does this manifest?

Education needs to be holistic – supported by parents, guardians and the community. Where such do not exist, alternatives need to be found. This is the African way. Children need to be educated from start to finish to be leaders. They will “inherit the earth” and so they need to be taught to be stewards of this significant responsibility: stewards of the earth and the natural domain, stewards of their own lives, and stewards of society. In everything leadership and responsibility – mutual accountability one to another for life in all its dimensions needs to be cultivated. They need to be involved even at their age in helping to solve the problems that beset our local sphere, province, nation, continent and globe today.

Education for children needs to be decontextualised from the classroom – which while it may be seen as a launching pad from which children can discover the world around them, as a learning lab where they can experiment and learn new things – it needs also to be recognized as a decontextualising chamber that distances the learner from real life discovery of the world in which we live.

Education is an opportunity for learners to interact with the real world in a safe mediated way that will enable them to learn it and take pride in such. There are a great number of examples globally of the remarkable transformation and significant learning value controlled exposure to real life in real time can make for learners. As they go forth to make an impact in any given learning field (indeed, in all), finding application in the local environment where they can not only learn but influence and transform a situation for the better through values-driven problem solving, learners themselves are enthused and transformed. They begin to recognize their personal value and the difference their efforts can make in a world beset with challenges that need to be overcome.

The argument therefore is to increasingly and in a manner mediated by the teacher and text primarily and then secondarily mediated by other social actors relevant to the subject of study, open the door that disconnects the learner from the world. This means increasingly assign projects and assignments to learners as groups and individuals that will allow them to interact with local business, local civil society, and local government. In studying Economic Management Sciences let them receive assignments that look at local issues and engage with local businesses; in studying Technology ask learners to innovate designs of local relevance. For example, ask them to design a wheelchair that can be used in Africa; ask them to design solutions that South African scientists are trying to solve and include the learners efforts in the efforts of the scientists by bringing them together – letting scientists share information and knowledge with them and have discussions on the subject. The same can be said for political, social, administrative and other issues. The more involved learners can be in the adult communities working in the fields they are learning about (and this may only mean exposure and discussion) – the more meaningful application will be, the more involved they will feel and the greater the significance the learning adventure will be to them.

The very challenges that beset South Africa, our continent and our globe must be assigned to our learners – not just the big ones, but those apparently minor ones too – from the coping mechanisms of the person dying of Aids to bringing justice where multinational corporations have exploited natural and human resources in underdeveloped countries. It is important to give them a range of choices within a specific field that they may be exposed to a diversity of subjects and find those which most suit their aptitudes and interests. It is important that on a district and provincial level they are exposed to the particular challenges besetting them and

that they are allowed to interact and communicate constructively with the people in their district and province who are working to overcome them.

Recommendation:

We recommend that in each province and district a team of local leaders from business, civil society and the academic world form think-tank committees that agree on how learners in particular grades can interact with the challenges that beset it according to their learning areas and grades. Curriculum development teams and specialists including teachers will then adapt these to the grade and unit standards. Flexibility in the curriculum will allow for these to be added in without compromising on the child's education. More importantly those people who are working in their daily jobs to solve the said problems need to share with learners the challenges and parameters of the problems so that learners can engage in solving real issues and having a voice and a role to play in the development of their own local region.

Think-tank committees

- Identify local and regional problems that learners can be challenged to solve.
- link these problems to the curriculum, grade and unit standard
- identify linkages in the local community in business, government and the civil society where learners can contribute in some way.
- oversee the administration and coordination of the relationship between schools and their local community and province.

The benefits of this are numerous ... namely that society is required to partner more concretely with its young in their education – the village raises the child. The burden of education does not nor cannot solely rest on the shoulders of overburdened teachers. It must rest with the family and with the community, and by community we include the local businesses, the local non profits and the local government as well as the province.

School and the classroom, with the culture of education that has developed over the last century has isolated the child's education from society in a way and has lead to a disconnect between what is learned and what the learner needs to know in order to become a functioning, successful adult. Another consequence with our

school culture is the distance it creates between adults and children – gone is the practice of apprenticeship with its holistic value of teaching the apprentice every aspect that is required of a trade over time, while allowing the apprentice to engage with the trade in real life. There is inter-relational benefit that connects one generation to another. What we have in learnerships captures the vision of what we are communicating here. Our suggestion is to start even earlier and not limit the learners' encounters with the real world to a single trade but to a range of problems that need solving in all the learning fields. Include them to work with teams in business and local government and local civil society that are working in the relevant areas. Allow them to make contributions, to hear and be heard. To learn as they do, and perhaps make a difference. Expose them not only to the world or the country, but the needs of their local area. At the same time as they learn history and geography, as they learn economic management sciences and physical science, allow them to engage with the challenges in other countries, in critical scientific challenges facing our globe and in other parts of the world so that our learners are not shackled in their vision of who and what they can influence for the better.

Problem solving should be taught in a values based way so that in considering the solution of any problem the values of justice, peace and compassion or ubuntu are considered as a baseline determinant of whether a solution is tenable. We have seen the impact of children when they are allowed to interact with structures in their society to influence it for good – it improves their well-being, and competence. It gives them a sense of hope and confidence in their ability to make a contribution and in their sense of belonging.

EQUITY IN EDUCATION – INVOLVING NGOS

Education has often been touted as the “great equalizer”. However, in South Africa – as in much of the world, equity in education is often only available for those who can afford it. In other words, equity in education is, in actual fact, a very rare phenomenon. This presents a situation which very often condemns certain social groups to remaining in their particular financial and social station of life without much opportunity to advance.

Therefore, a way needs to be found in which those who cannot afford to pay for education are able to access the same quality of education as those who fall within higher economic brackets and, in this way, ensure that they are given the same

chances in life. Outcomes based education has not improved equity but actually improved the status quo – children from disadvantaged backgrounds are further disadvantaged and children from advantaged backgrounds are given further advantage. This is because outcomes-based education with its learner-centered approach presupposes a western middle-class culture of learning (print rich) in order to succeed.

Those who have, up until now, through inferior educational circumstances, been lagging behind, also somehow need to be brought up to a more standardised level. Otherwise, they will continue to be at an educational disadvantage, even if their standards of education are raised, as they will be faced with a huge educational “backlog”. This gap needs to be filled.

Before 1994, it was often non-profits which stepped in to build the bridges required to span the gaps in education which the above-mentioned inequalities present. We recommend bringing together a variety of educational NGO’s in co-operation with one another, to find ways in which these gaps can be addressed.

CONCLUSION

We would like to express our gratitude to the Portfolio Committee on Basic Education for allowing ESST to share our passion and vision for education in this country. We sincerely hope this contribution makes a difference to the way we do education, and that we will be allowed to continue to partner with the leaders in Education in the South African Government in improving its service to the greater benefit of our learners and our nation.