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FOCUS ON ADULT BASIC EDUCATION & TRAINING

JET currently funds 148 (54%) out of an estimated 273 NGOs and CBOs involved in the provision of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET). NGOs and CBOs contribute some 19% of all ABET provision in the country. By and large, the learners served by these programmes are drawn from the poorest and most marginalised communities. Nineteen of the 148 JET-funded projects are training and developmental agencies and material developers. Most of these 19 agencies also have lesson providing units. The other 129 projects are lesson providers, offering courses in Mother Tongue, Communication in English and Numeracy. The more than 40 000 learners that these projects claim to serve represent over 10% of the total estimated number of ABET learners in the country.

Provision per province

More than a third of JET ABET grantees are situated in Gauteng. Other provinces well-served by NGOs are the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu/Natal. Free State has the fewest projects funded by JET.

Of the total number of JET-funded ABET projects, the spread over rural and urban areas is even, but Table 1 shows that this is not consistent for all provinces. For example, in Gauteng 88% of projects are urban based while in the Eastern Cape 84% are rural based.

As shown in Table 2, Gauteng

JET FUNDED ABET PROJECTS

by Zo Mbelle,
Project Officer ABET - JET



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accounts for 49.5% of the JET funds disbursed to the current projects whereas Free State, which has only three projects, has so far received 0.4%. The

higher distribution of funds in other provinces may be attributed to the fact that projects in these provinces provide services other than lesson classes for adults, such as teacher training and materials development. They also participate in policy development fora at all levels.

Other reasons for the uneven distribution of funds relate to the number of the projects in the province, the number of adult learners reached directly or through the tutor trainees, the type of work done by the projects, the catchment area, the demand for the service and the level at which the projects operate.

IEB Examinations, November 1995

Table 3 shows that just over one-third of JET's 148 projects entered learners for the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) exams in November 1995. This is 12% of the total of 450 centres that registered with the IEB.

Of the JET-funded projects that entered, 50% are based in urban Gauteng. This could be attributed to a number of factors such as: projects in Gauteng have access to facilities that enable them to acquire skills with ease and more quickly; availability of information from funders, consultants, training and development agencies, especially the IEB.

The Eastern Cape seems to be an exception to the urban bias of registration because, in this

Table 1: JET-funded ABET projects in each province

Province	Rural	Urban	Number of current JET grantees in ABET	Learners/Trainees ¹
Gauteng	6	48	54	12 000
Eastern Cape	21	5	26	9 000
KwaZulu/Natal	16	8	24	5 000
North West	8	2	10	2 950
Northern Province	5	1	6	1 000
Mpumalanga	7	4	11	1 200
Free State	1	2	3	2 800
Northern Cape	4	1	5	3 500
Western Cape	4	5	9	3 500
TOTAL	72	76	148	40 950

province, a larger number of rural grantees registered their learners. One of the reasons for this could be that the Eastern Cape has had huge support from development agencies for some time. Agencies such as World University Services, Interfund, Kagiso Trust and the National Literacy Cooperation particularly, have played a significant role in the province. In addition, the Joint Education Trust's commissioned study of ABET provision, which led to the production of a chart mapping all ABET providers and their locations, has ensured that projects are not isolated from other providers and developmental information is constantly passed on from one project to another.

An interesting point in KwaZulu/Natal is that even though it is such a violence-ridden area an acceptable number of projects from this area registered for the exams. This could be a pointer to three very strong training and support agencies operating in the province.

Table 3 also provides the number of IEB exam papers written by learners in JET-funded projects in each

province. The number of learners who wrote exams is not available because the IEB only captures overall registrations for exams, not individual learners. It is possible, however, to estimate learner numbers. For example, at Level 1 most learners register for only one subject, whereas at Levels 2 and 3

Table 2: Amounts disbursed by JET to projects over 3 years - 1993/94/95/96

Province	Disbursed
Gauteng	R44 903 302
Eastern Cape	R10 280 224
KwaZulu/Natal	R17 723 340
Northern Province	R1 747 137
Free State	R395 234
Northern Cape	R1 443 643
Western Cape	R7 339 812
North West	R2 983 663
Mpumalanga	R3 776 309
TOTAL	R90 592 664

Table 3: JET grantees that entered for IEB exams in November 1995²

Province	Rural	Urban	Number of centres	No. papers
Gauteng	3	23	26	4475
Eastern Cape	8	3	11	1141
KwaZulu/Natal	6	4	10	374
Northern Province	1	3	4	372
Free State	1		1	35
Mpumalanga	4		4	602
TOTAL	23	33	56	6999

² A number of JET grantees are former DET night-schools and have been participating in examinations provided by the Department of Education. Most projects continue to register their learners for these exams. These are not accounted for in this report.



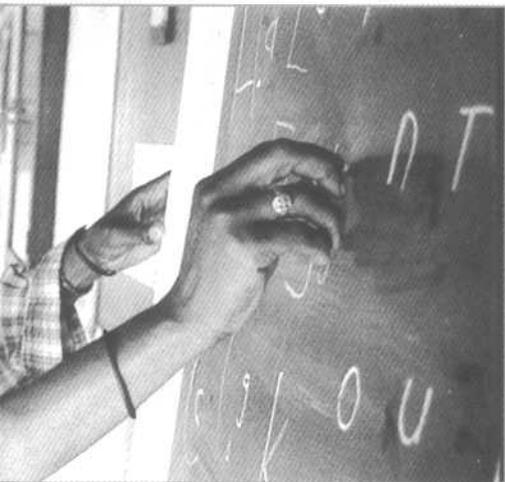
some learners may register for two or three subjects.

If one assumes that 5000 learners wrote exams, this represents only 12% of +- 40 950 learners that JET grantees claim to reach nationally (6 999 papers were written in November 1995).

If only 12% of JET ABET beneficiaries wrote the November exams, this raises some uncertainty as to whether JET does actually reach +-40 950 learners. This question emphasises the need for an audit that will either confirm or refute the claimed number of learners and provide clarity on the impact that JET has through its interventions in the sector.

Gauteng registered the largest number of centres for exams, followed by the Eastern Cape

¹ This information is not conclusive. It is collected from reports which are submitted by grantees.



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and KwaZulu/Natal. The reasons cited by projects for their learners not sitting the IEB exams relate mainly to: learners' lack of funds; late training of teachers by the IEB and therefore inadequate preparation for learners; lack of interest in certification among learners; employers not releasing their workers during the exam period and lack of clarity on IEB requirements.

Grantees in the North West, Northern Cape and Western Cape did not participate in the November exams. 68% of projects in their first year of funding with JET and based in these provinces report that they previously had provided internal examinations for their learners; it was only when JET encouraged them to register for the external IEB exams that they began to prepare their learners for this purpose. They envisage that their learners will be writing the IEB exams in July and November this year.

Table 4 shows that learners at JET grantees sat for 4 levels in the November 1995 exams. Of the 6 999 papers written, 40% were written at Level 1, 38% at Level 2, 21% at Level 3 and only 1% at Level 4.

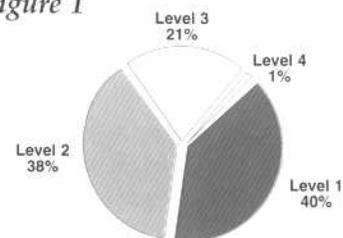
A large number of projects offer only Level 1 when they begin provision. Level 2 is generally introduced after 12

Table 4: Number of papers written by learners at JET grantees ³

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	TOTAL
Total papers written	2795	2704	1435	65	6999

³ The IEB offers its services to Levels 1, 2 and 3 only. Level 4 and 5 exams are offered by ASECA. However, Level 4 results are also presented in the IEB report because ASECA had requested the IEB to run Level 4 exams for them.

Figure 1



to 18 months. Only 59 JET-funded projects offer classes at Levels 3, 4 and 5, probably because most JET grantees started to operate as lesson providers between 1993 and 1994, when they began to receive funds from JET. This could explain why most grantees have not, as yet, developed to offer classes above Level 3.

Table 5 shows that 71% of the papers written by learners at JET-funded projects were passed. In most of the provinces the pass rate was above 60%. However, in KwaZulu/Natal and Northern Province the pass rate was below 50%. One of the reasons contributing to this is that some of these learners were not adequately familiarised with the nature and format of the exams. Consequently learners misinterpreted questions and supplied incorrect information. Even though projects reported that most learners were ready to sit the

exams, lack of clarity about IEB expectations led to errors.

Literacy

In terms of demand for subjects, English takes the lead, followed by Xhosa and Zulu. Seswati is the subject for which the lowest number of learners registered. Ndebele and Tsonga were not written at all.

It is evident that English is still the most prestigious, valuable and practical language, preferred for communication in social interaction, the corporate world, education and everyday activities.

Educational debates that focus on the role of this language in South Africa in the future, are beginning to doubt the argument that the use of English will eventually diminish, even though other official languages are being developed in order to serve the same purposes as English.

Table 5: Performance per province

Province	No. of papers passed	No. papers failed	Total
Gauteng	3465 (77%)	1010 (23%)	4475
Eastern Cape	719 (63%)	422 (37%)	1141
KwaZulu/Natal	186 (49%)	188 (51%)	374
Northern Province	180 (48%)	192 (52%)	372
Free State	22 (62%)	13 (38%)	35
Mpumalanga	417 (69%)	185 (31%)	602
TOTAL	4989 (71%)	2010 (29%)	6999

Table 6: Language papers written per Level

Language	English	Xhosa	Zulu	Sesotho	Sepedi	Tswana	Venda	Seswati	Afrikaans	TOTAL
Level 1	611	540	625	12	32	45	10	1	153	2029
Level 2	1204	120	207	21	55	40	21	0	183	1851
Level 3	724	88	64	9	40	4	6		63	998
Level 4	12	12	10						11	45
TOTAL	2551	760	906	42	127	89	37	1	410	4923

Public attitudes are also indicative of the high status English holds in most communities, rural or urban, literate or not, and within the formal or informal schooling system.

Training agencies encourage learning mother tongue first because skills and the rules of language that are learnt from the first language are transferred more quickly and easily when learning a second or third language. Adult learners tend to ignore this. Monetary value and access to jobs seem to be the most motivating factors to learn English. Hence most adult educationists recommend that providers be sensitive to the 'wants' of the learners by introducing English after 140 hours of mother tongue learning.

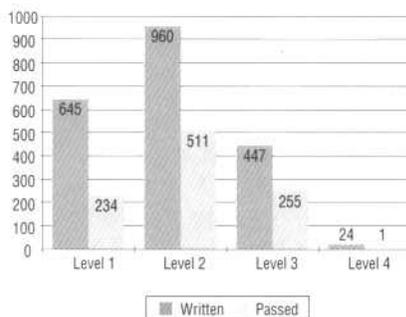
Numeracy

In JET funded projects, the total number of papers written in this subject was 2076 and only 1001 were passed. The overall performance is very low at 48% compared to that of other subjects. Table 7 shows that Level 3 was passed by a higher percentage of learners than the other Levels. At Level 4, just one paper was successfully written. The high

Table 7: Pass rate in maths papers per Level

Level	Passed	%
Level 1	234	36.3
Level 2	511	53.2
Level 3	255	57.0
Level 4	1	4.2
TOTAL	1001	48.2

Figure 2: Performance in maths papers per level



failure rate could be the result of a number of factors, one of which is the obvious lack of teachers in this subject. In some areas, it is not only scarcity that is a problem but Maths teachers may not have received proper training and therefore may lack skills to teach learners to reach the required level. Amongst the 19 training and development agencies that JET funds, only 6 train numeracy tutors. The others concentrate on Communication in English and Mother Tongue.

The largest number of learners wrote Maths in English followed by Xhosa and Zulu. From this it seems some adults have begun to realise that it is to their benefit that they utilise the already acquired language. It would be helpful to know more about their motivations for choosing these languages rather than English. It would also be interesting to know

Table 8: Maths papers written in different languages

Language	Number of papers written
English	1507
Xhosa	311
Zulu	167
Sepedi	48
Tsonga	34
Sotho	8
Venda	1
TOTAL	2076

in which situations and for what purposes numeracy skills are used.

Problems related to the running of the IEB examinations

The IEB examinations have not run without some teething problems. These were experienced mainly in the following areas:

- * Centres registering late and requesting extensions



- * Registration forms misunderstood and therefore filled in incorrectly
- * Centres requesting induction training from the IEB too close to the exams
- * Markers being identified and trained too late for results to be provided on time
- * The turn-around time was much longer than expected due to incompetent data capturing systems which also led to incorrect results presentation in some cases.

The IEB management has attempted to solve these problems by firstly asking fundamental questions:

- * Is an NGO, such as the IEB, an appropriate body to examine at a national scale?
- * What transformation is needed in order to shorten the turn-around time?
- * Does the IEB have the capacity to do all that is involved for the number of participants they handle at a given period?

The IEB has begun to answer these questions by reformulating and simplifying some parts of their registration forms, shortening the registration dates and keeping to cut off times, employing a

technical expert to assist in improving their data capturing systems and contracting reputable training agencies and consultants for induction training and marking. Contracts of this nature will be limited to four provinces to ensure proper quality control and assurance. Results will continue to be recorded centrally. Markers will be identified and trained well in advance and reporting will be provided mainly for funders, centres and those who request it.

Up to 1995 the ABET sector remained fragmented even though there had been some activity in trying to systematise this sector. Realising that some adult learners had been at Level 1 for more than 3 years, players in the field of ABET began to see the need for systemic mechanisms for measuring ABET activities in terms of provision of quality and learner progress; for understanding the needs of adult learners without formal schooling; and for a clear framework of study and training within which learners can progress.

Systematising the sector can only benefit all involved in terms of quality delivery, assessment and certification. The IEB examinations are designed for outcomes-based assessment and aim at reducing emphasis on assessment-led and qualifications-shaped education. Some argue that if there is only one player in the field of ABET assessment, the principles of the NQF thrust are not fully followed. The NQF promotes the notion of diversified approaches

to entrance and exit points in education. Therefore, identifying the IEB as the only gate to use for certification and progress contradicts the aims of the NQF.

Although the IEB agrees with this notion, they believe that in order for quality assurance to be maintained, expertise, capacity and adequate resources need to be in place before a body can run the exams. They have begun to decentralise the function and the resources to the provinces, but they caution that while this is being done, training to build capacity and quality assurance remain of paramount importance.

There is a strong drive among role players in the ABET sector to systematise the field. This is evident from the significant increase in the number of centres registering learners for the July and November IEB exams this year: for July 320 centres registered - a 230% increase on last year's 97 centres; for November more than 850 centres have registered - an increase to date of 89% on last year's 450 registrations.

For its own purposes and also to contribute to the development of ABET nationally, JET aims to establish a clear picture of the impact it has made by funding projects in this sector. One way of doing this is to assess learners through a recognised body whose standards are proven. JET is also currently auditing all its ABET grantees. The questionnaires used in this audit are designed to yield accurate data about the project itself, the staff, the beneficiaries, the finances of the project, the training of tutors and other staff members, the materials used, and the organisations with which they associate. The results of this audit will be published by JET later this year. 



CHRIS LEDOWSKI - ABPL

SOME KEY INITIATIVES IN THE ABET SECTOR

Mashwahle Diphofa
General Manager - Projects - JET

The Department of Education (DoE) issued *Interim Guidelines For A National ABET Framework* in September 1995. The document outlines the overall vision for provision, assessment, certification, the use of language, and outcomes in ABET and serves as the DoE's interim policy in the sector. It is a product of a collaborative process involving a wide variety of stakeholders and provides a basis for the establishment of a national system of ABET in the country.

In February this year, two major initiatives were launched jointly by the Department of Education and the National Literacy Co-operation (NLC) to significantly increase ABET provision nationally. Both programmes seek to test and implement the Interim Guidelines with a view to promoting coherence in the ABET sector.

The Ithuteng ABET Campaign

As a step towards implementation, the Department set aside an amount of R50 million to kickstart a national ABET campaign which sought to enrol 10 000 learners per province on the basis of the Interim Guidelines. This initiative, called the Ithuteng Ready to Learn Campaign, was launched earlier this year with learners at ABET Levels 1 and 2 as the target. Each province is expected to develop its own business plan for the campaign and, although it is still early to start reflecting on the gains, thus

far indications are that the campaign is at significantly different stages of conceptualisation and implementation in the different provinces.

In Gauteng, for instance, the campaign has already taken off using the existing state adult education centres as vehicles and sites for delivery. The project also uses other partners such as NGOs for the training of educators and the provision of material. It is reported that since inception, the Gauteng project has already trained over 200 educators.

Furthermore, the province has already appointed a Provincial Co-ordinator and two Provincial ABET Officers to oversee the administration and implementation of the project and to co-ordinate the work of its District ABET Officers and Educators.

A very interesting feature of the Ithuteng project is the partnership model it has adopted in implementation. First, the project contracts NGOs for the training of its educators. It also plans to consider using existing materials developed by NGOs. This approach minimises the chances of duplication of efforts, a major weakness which was in the past fairly common in the ABET sector. Secondly, the learners will subscribe to Independent Examinations Board (IEB) examinations, thus subjecting government provision to private assessment and certification.

The NLC's Thousand Learner Unit

The NLC's Thousand Learner Unit (TLU) ABET pilot project was also formally launched in February 1996. The main objectives of the project are to expand delivery through collaborative models so as to reach more learners and to test and implement the DoE's Interim Guidelines. The project aims to reach 18 000 learners nationally (this has been reduced from the initial target of 27 000) over a period of two years.

The initial plan was to employ and train full-time educators each of whom would be in charge of a total of 150 learners. However, this has since been revised and the project is now reported to have trained 424 educators who are responsible for a total of 8 000 learners, a ratio of approximately 1 educator to 19 learners.

Again, progress with regard to implementation is uneven across provinces. Provinces with lower training capacity (in terms of NGOs as well as other providers such as universities and technikons) required more support which in a number of instances involved the subcontracting of agencies based outside of the respective provinces. On the other hand, better resourced provinces have educators who by and large have already been trained and require a different level of support. In the Western Cape, for instance, about half (12) of the province's TLU educators are already in their second year of the JET-funded PENTECH/USWE Diploma course.

A major challenge for the TLU project remains proper monitoring and evaluation. A framework for this is currently being developed, to inform the monitoring of progress in terms of stated objectives and the evaluation of impact. It is reported that since this is being done collaboratively with the DoE, the framework will also be applicable to the monitoring and evaluation of the Ithuteng Campaign. This represents another interesting form of collaboration between an NGO and a government department.

Conclusion

The two initiatives described above indicate a strong move towards large scale delivery in

ABET. They are implementing two programmes which follow parallel routes, the one following the formal provincial DoE route of provision and the other placing delivery within the non-governmental, community-based non-formal sector. The pilots will, if rigorously monitored, provide important lessons regarding the future of workable large scale provision of ABET in the country.

Of course a worrying feature common to both is that, at the moment, each is reliant on funding from a single short-term source, which raises the risks associated with having all one's eggs in one basket.

With regard to the DoE's project in particular, there will have to be strenuous efforts made towards integrating it into the mainstream budget, lest the country ends up with a huge delivery infrastructure external to the government budget which cannot be sustained. An additional potential problem with sustaining these two parallel systems is that one cannot, at this stage, rule out the possibilities of their vying for resources. In this regard, the outcome of the monitoring and evaluation processes should provide a sound basis for making informed decisions about possible future directions for the projects. 🌻



ABET studies open a new perspective on adult literacy

The national ABET research studies commissioned by JET and published by Sached Books were launched on 18 July. The two new titles - *A Survey of Adult Basic Education in South Africa in the 90s*, by the University of Natal and *The Social Uses of Literacy*, by the University of the Western Cape and the University of Cape Town - are welcomed for the information they provide on this previously uncharted sector.

Speaking at the launch, Chief Director of ABET in the national Department of Education, Mr Khetsi Lehoko, said: "These reports will help us to correct the inaccuracies in our information systems, thus making planning and the allocation of resources more efficient; they will

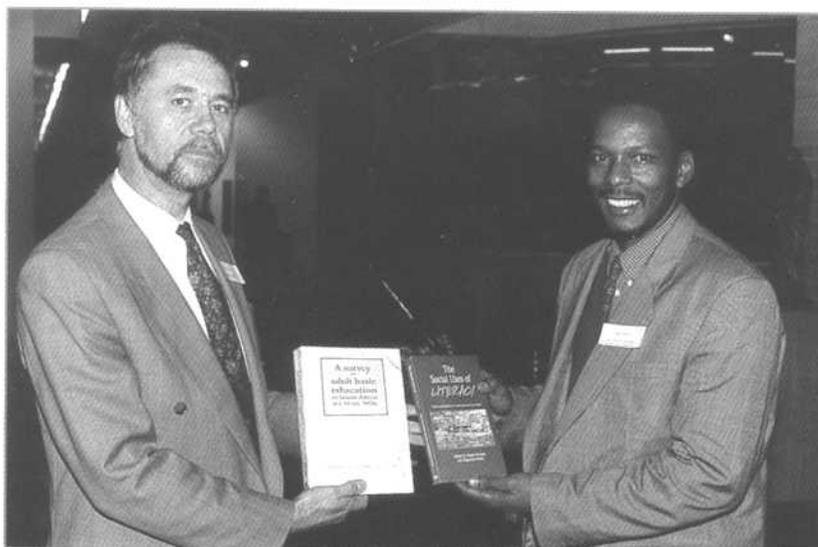
assist us in our continuous debates on how best to integrate ABET into our growth and development strategy; and they will enable us to measure accurately the current scale of provision and capacity."

Lehoko welcomed the debate raised in both reports regarding an outcomes-based qualifications

framework and the provision of ABET outside of 'the social context of application'. He stressed the need for job creation which at the same time should provide meaningful skills training, applicable to both the mainstream of the economy and the informal sector. "The content of skills training is critical," he said, "it is not about knitting and craft."

Lehoko concluded by thanking JET for the support it has given not only to these research projects but to the whole field of ABET. "We hope that this resource will continue until we have made a significant impact in the field."

The books can be ordered from Sached Books. Tel: (021) 531 7750 or (011) 496 1730. 🌻



At the launch of the two ABET books, Dr Nick Taylor presented copies to the keynote speaker Mr Khetsi Lehoko - Chief Director of ABET in the national Department of Education.

Rahmat Omar appointed to SAQA

Rahmat Omar has been appointed to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). This body of 25 people, representative of different stakeholders in education and training, is mandated to oversee the development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Formerly COSATU's representative on the JET Board of Trustees, Rahmat is currently working in JET managing the Workers Higher Education Project. She is one of five discretionary appointees to SAQA, each of whom was appointed by the Minister of Education for their individual expertise in education and training.

Rahmat's experience spans both the formal and informal education sectors. After working for 10 years as a high school teacher in Cape Town she spent a further 8 years in adult education, during which time she was involved with COSATU in education policy development. She represented COSATU on various national education development forums, including the ABE Forum, the National Training Board and the National Commission on Higher Education. From this experience Rahmat has attained a broad understanding of the various issues pertaining to policy development and the ways in which they affect teachers and learners in both formal and informal sectors.

Rahmat's current work at JET also relates directly to the NQF. The Workers Higher Education Project is setting up pilot projects to test the viability of different mechanisms for articulation and accreditation of prior learning amongst working adults. Specifically, WHEP will research how knowledge gained by

NEWS



workers - either through previously unaccredited courses or on the job - can be assessed in order to afford entry to higher education.

According to Rahmat, WHEP is about building bridges, creating the accreditation structures that will link formal and nonformal adult learning to the integrating framework of the NQF.

About SAQA, Rahmat says: "Like JET, which is itself a partnership involving representatives of diverse interests in education and training, the SAQA Board is constituted to accommodate all stakeholders.

"It includes representatives of the Departments of Education and Labour and the provincial education departments, education management organisations such as the Committee of Technikon Principals and the Committee of University Principals, organised

business and organised labour, various professions and a range of education providers including NGOs and the teachers' unions. This deliberately inclusive structure provides a forum for cooperation in the development of the NQF and it enables us to harness the resources from all sectors to build the new education and training system in South Africa. This sort of partnership is the model on which our new country will be built."

SURVEYS per SECTOR

JET is compiling a series of surveys of NGOs working in the different sectors of the education and training system. The following surveys will be published this year:

Early Childhood Development
by Trevor Schoole August

Youth Development
by Vijay Valla August

Adult Basic Education & Training
by Zo Mbelle November

Each survey presents a comprehensive report on different providers, their provincial distribution, the programmes offered, staffing, costs and financing. The surveys are available from JET at a nominal cost. Contact Kathy Tracey. Tel: 011 403 6401

JET Conference

Establishing key indicators for measuring the impact of INSET interventions

Date: November
Venue: Johannesburg

Contact Kathy Tracey.
Tel: 011 403 6401.

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