



MKI - SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT KWAZULU-NATAL

Background

Many African nations today continue to grapple with finding the right solution to the challenges in the path of sustainable development, which is not only inclusive, socially cohesive and builds national character but also alleviates poverty, promotes economic prosperity and brings the nation on the world platform. Distilling the ‘right’ solution for a nation calls for a sound policy and political environment, capacity building of its people and institutions, alliance with a strong development advisor and partner, and of course, a well thought out vision.

South Africa has been taking huge strides towards sustainable development and nation building in the last two decades. The fact that the nation is highly focused on achieving its development targets is substantiated by **South Africa’s National Development Plan - Vision for 2030**, released in November 2011. The Plan, charts the way forward for the feisty nation through elimination of poverty and reduction of inequality. At its core, lies building capabilities of and creating opportunities for the South African people and institutions. A capabilities approach to development is critical to broaden opportunities, which in turn is an essential element of the nation-building process. An ‘inclusive capabilities’ approach has been adopted as its implementation strategy; the Plan is poised to achieve the targets for *Education, Training and Innovation* within the set timeframe of year 2030. Some of the more critical targets include enabling about 80% of schools and learners to achieve 50% and above in literacy, mathematics and science in grades 3, 6, 9, ensure at least 80% of children complete 12 years of schooling, increasing higher education participation from 17% to 30%, increasing total employment to 24 million, and setting up an efficient and stronger Information Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure.

Key Challenges Today

The Plan recognizes multiple challenges to be overcome in the Vision fulfillment, of which the *two most critical, high priority and interrelated areas of concern* have been identified as

- unemployment and
- the quality of education.

Since creating jobs and livelihood opportunities, improving the quality of education and training are not only imperative for achieving social cohesion and well-being but also economic growth, the nation’s dedicated focus on its youth and children becomes imperative too. The South African children and youth of today are the “real” participants riding at the helm of the nation’s tomorrow.

- To address the challenge of *unemployment*, the Plan intends to *create 11 million jobs* through strategies such as realizing an environment for sustainable employment, inclusive economic growth and promoting employment in labor-absorbing industries.
- To address the challenge of *poor education quality*, the Plan aims for
 - early childhood education access rates exceeding 90% percent;
 - quality school education, with globally competitive literacy and numeracy standards;

- expanding higher education and training sector that fulfills the inherent potential which contributes towards rising incomes;
- higher productivity and the shift to a more knowledge-intensive economy;
- and a wider system of innovation that links key public institutions (universities and science councils) with South Africa's economic priorities.

The sections of society that would be touched by the above include

- children - in and out of school,
- school teachers,
- youth - school dropouts/low scorers,
- existing youth in colleges, universities and tertiary institutes,
- out of work youth and older graduates

Given the current environment, replete with challenges on the one hand and the changes envisioned through the Plan on the other, the government of South Africa required a development partner who has the requisite ability and experience to not just advise and guide but also to innovate, implement and deliver.

With this preamble in mind, the Department of Economic Development of Kwa-Zulu Natal together with the Confederation of India Industry, NIIT and the Moses Kotane Institute joined alliance to create Global Talent Pool in Information Technology and Business Process Outsourcing in the province. To execute the project of such importance, NIIT under the aegis of the MEC of KZN's Department of Economic Development set up an ICT institute for Software Engineering & Business Process Outsourcing in 8 identified FET colleges across the province.

Together in cooperation with MKI and the government of Kwa Zulu Natal, NIIT has been able to develop IT, communication, professional, behavioral and soft skills within the province to bridge the gap between candidate's knowledge and the precise skills required for the BPO and ICT industry.

The government of Kwa Zulu Natal aimed at developing IT, communication, professional, behavioral and soft skills within the province to bridge the gap between candidate's knowledge and the precise skills required for the BPO industry. Within South Africa, the neighboring Gauteng province has flourishing Call centre business with KZN accounting for less than 10 percent of the total call center business in the country. (Source: Keryn House, Gauteng 2008).

Adoption of Information technology has become a necessity for the overall development of a country. This acts as an enabler to accelerate economic and social modernization and thereby enables the economy to attract capital, investments, technology know-how and highly skilled labor. South Africa is closely looking at India to help and build an economic model based on ICT and Innovation. Being historically connected to India, there lies an element of trust within the political structure for getting adequate support required to achieve transformation. This is evidently proven in multiple joint initiatives by the two countries for poverty alleviation, unemployment and technology transfer.

Programs formulated to conduct training of 10000 learners, 5000 each in Software Engineering and Business Process Outsourcing over period of five years starting 2009 ending 2014, across 8 locations in Kwa Zulu Natal province with the following objectives:

- Provide Strategic leadership on economic development
- Create conducive conditions for sustainable growth and development of the Province
- Creation of Sustainable quality jobs and employee empowerment
- Stimulate local and International Competitiveness of the KZN economy through improving skills and service standards

Key Milestones:

- ★ The project went live in 98 days of signing the Agreement where established 8 labs, 4 each of ICT and BPO with a capacity to train 250 learners per year.
- ★ The project was formally launched by **Dr. Z.L Mkhize, Premier , Kwa Zulu Natal.**
- ★ More than 500 learners appeared in each centre in the Recruitment drive conducted by NIIT and MKI.
- ★ The project attained achievements on accreditation with successful registration to Department of Higher Education, RSA, full Accreditation by MICT Seta for ICT qualifications, Approval from Service SETA for BPO programs.
- ★ Batch of successful interns went to India in 2009 for a one- year internship and subsequently more batches went to India for internship.
- ★ NIIT & MKI conducted ICT Tech Forum twice in every year to share and gain knowledge on latest technology.
- ★ NIIT & MKI also conducted various awards and Recognition events to encourage learners.

Photo Annexure

New Castle Majuba College



Esikhawini College



Umfolozu Mandeni College



Umgundlovu FET College



Premier – Dr. Zweli Mkhize giving motivational speech during the Launch



FET Colleges got officials for their association with NIIT



Successful Interns to India



Glimpses:



