

## **Media: Press Release**

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**Attention:** Editors/ Reporters

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### **EDUCATION IN RURAL SCHOOLS GET ATTENTION**

South Africa has become known for its shortage of qualified and competent professional primary school teachers. This is especially evident in the predominately rural areas of our SA. Of all the provinces, KwaZulu- Natal was the worst affected when it came to unqualified teachers.

A qualified teacher is a person who is in possession of an approved and recognised professional teaching qualification for employment in public education on a National Qualification Framework (NQF) level 7. This province has hired more than 85% of all the unqualified teachers (6050) in South Africa (eNCA: 2013; Midrand Forum: 2013; Ispas M: 2014).

This is mainly due to the fact that KwaZulu- Natal is largely rural and this makes it extremely difficult recruiting qualified teachers specifically in subjects such as mathematics, science and home language. These are subjects in which learners are performing poorly, and subjects for which rural schools, in particular, are struggling to attract teachers. Teachers prefer to teach in urban areas while rural post remain unfilled or when filled, the teachers who take on these post tend to be unqualified and inexperienced (SACE; June 2011). In addition, teaching education became more centralized and located mostly in urban areas and as such, became less accessible to students from rural areas. Therefore, young rural people who could have become rural teachers, became unable to enroll at Higher Education Institutions in urban areas mostly for financial reasons, thus, a potential group of teachers who could be more willing to teach and remain in rural areas was lost (Gordon, 2009).

Research argues that local teachers are less likely to choose to migrate to urban areas if they have some ties to the local community. This means that if training were presented with rural areas, those who attend them would be more likely to remain in their local areas and provide much needed teaching to these areas, willingly (SACE: 2011; Bennell: 2004).

The Department of Education in KwaZulu- Natal (KZN DoE) recruited and provided unemployed matriculants in 2012 from the Umkhanyakude, Sisonke, Umzinyathi, Uthungule and Zululand district bursaries to register for either a Bachelor of Education (B Ed) Foundation Phase Teaching or B Ed Intermediate Phase Teaching programmes offered by SANTS Private Higher Education Institution. By doing this the KZN DoE is directly addressing the shortage of qualified and skilled foundation and intermediate phase teachers in areas where the greatest need exist.

SANTS B Ed programmes directly address the shortage of qualified foundation and intermediate phase teachers by providing access to recognised quality Higher Education qualifications, especially in rural communities. More than 800 B Ed student teachers are enrolled and registered at SANTS at 9 Student Support Centres in these five districts of KwaZulu- Natal.

These B Ed student teachers are currently completing their third Workplace Integrated Learning (WIL) session of this year at primary schools in this province. WIL is a school practical component of the B Ed programme that takes place at functional schools. The WIL started on the 20 July and will end Friday the 31 July. The purpose of this the WIL is to provide student teachers the opportunity to become acquainted with formal teaching in a practical school situation and to apply theoretical knowledge gained to the learning child. This is in line with The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (Government Gazette: 15 July 2015).

These student teachers are from the communities of KwaZulu- Natal. These student teachers are receiving recognised quality Higher Education in their community and they are giving their knowledge and skills back to their communities where the greatest need exist.

### ***Reference***

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