**Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training**

1. **Introduction**

The Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET) was successfully launched in March 2012 and the full staff compliment as proposed in the founding document for CIPSET was appointed in July 2012. CIPSET contributes to deepening and expanding NMMUs role in the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) sector. Its work is informed by a theory and practice of civic agency that positions higher education as instrumental in the development of substantive democracy, citizenship and social justice through research and social action aimed at inculcating a culture of deepened civic empowerment. Institutional engagement through action-oriented pedagogical programmes and socially-engaged research inform the Centre’s role. In doing this, CIPSET works incrementally in different parts that constitute the PSET landscape including FET Colleges, Community Education and Training Centres (CETCs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), trade union and workers’ education. Its work concentrates on socially-engaged research and action in both urban and rural settings.

**CIPSET – A Centre for Research and Social Action**

In order to advance and implement NMMU’s mission, CIPSET will:

* Promote an intellectual project that focuses on democracy, citizenship and social justice as central to PSET in South Africa;
* Define, develop and implement a research agenda that supports PSET in South Africa;
* Establish programmes and projects that support PSET in South Africa;
* Collaborate with educational groups, institutions and agencies in order to develop and strengthen PSET;
* Build research capacity that advances the PSET system in South Africa;
* Build synergies between research, teaching and community engagement; and
* Produce academic and scholarly work in PSET.

1. **CIPSETs Areas of Work**

To give expression to the mission of NMMU, CIPSET has developed a research agenda for the next five years with a primary focus on building a progressive network of research and public engagement in the PSET sector. CIPSET’s role in this research programme will be expressed through a series of research and programmatic activities. These include:

* Deepening university civic agency and engagement;
* Programme development to support FET Educators and Adult and Community Educators;
* Detailed socio-economic mapping;
* Curriculum development, innovation and articulation;
* Building research capacity in the PSET sector; and
* Implementing and researching community education programmes.

The specific outcomes of CIPSETs work include the following:

* ***Deepening Civic Engagement:*** This area of work will acquaint staff and students at NMMU with the theory and practice of civic agency in higher education through working seminars, study circles, visiting lecturers and other means. One goal is to create a strategy team that builds relationships with PSET institutions to develop civic agency approaches in the Eastern Cape. Drawing on civic approaches used in other parts of the world would be explored to create promising openings for civic agency at NMMU with specific focus on the PSET sector. As part of this work, CIPSET will build networks of relationships with PSET institutions, civil society organisations and a range of important progressive research organisations.
* ***Programme Development: FET & Adult Education:*** PRESET programmes for FET College lecturers and educators in Adult & Community Education and Training Centres have been identified as an important contribution to the development of these two sub-sectors of post-school adult education. Based on policy proposals, CIPSET will initiate the development of academic programmes informed by a progressive philosophical orientation. These programmes would serve as capacity building programmes with a focus on adult educators working in various sectors of the PSET sector (FET Colleges, civil society including trade unions, CBOs and NGOs). Whilst these programmes would serve as formal programmes of NMMU, their modules would serve as short courses that could be used as INSET programmes responding to the educational needs of adult educators in a variety of different settings.
* ***Socio-economic Mapping:*** The Centre will expand the current GIS mapping through further data collection in order to develop a deeper understanding of the socio-economic contexts of the Eastern Cape. This exercise would assist in developing education and training responses to local economies, socially useful work and livelihood production. The data from this research could be translated into education and training programmes – formal and non-formal – offered by FET Colleges and Community Education and Training Centres and the work of CSOs. It would further assist in the introduction of useful and differentiated curricula that is more responsive to the contextual realities in urban and rural settings. The case-study approach will also inform the development of a model that seeks to illuminate the socio-economic context within which government interventions in the PSET can have their best uses.
* ***Curriculum Development and Innovation:*** A number of NMMU staff members are involved in curriculum work at FET Colleges, fifteen university centres are involved in community engagement and many students are involved in community outreach programmes. This research activity mobilises university staff and students to engage in curriculum development work that enhances the quality of programmes offered by FET Colleges, Community Education and Training Centres, CBOs and trade unions. In the case of FET Colleges the involvement of academic staff would support curriculum development and innovation in four subject/learning field areas. Similarly curriculum development in community education programmes will be supported. The development of the curricula will be accompanied by NMMUs humanising pedagogical approach to learning and teaching. Emphasis will be placed on curriculum development that also supports rural development, sustainable livelihoods, socially useful work and the development of local economies. The curriculum development and innovation work will be linked to a NMMU-FET College curriculum articulation project which serves as a mechanism to aid the transition of FET College students into academic programmes offered at NMMU.
* ***Community Education Programme:*** This project envisages a more appropriate response to the education and training needs of both urban and rural communities as presently addressed by PALCs. This project focuses on broadening community participation in establishing more responsive community education programmes including programmes linked to socially useful work, livelihoods, cooperatives and other socially useful economic activities. We believe the proposed project offers opportunities for the development of various permutations of CETCs that could reflect the education and training needs within particular contexts, be they rural or urban.
* ***Building Networks of Relationships:*** The multi-disciplinary, institution-wide character of the Centre needs to be fostered and sustained by strengthening and expanding collaborative partnerships with relevant internal and external stakeholders who are (or have the potential to be) involved in interventions to facilitate a more seamless interface between the NMMU, FET Colleges, Adult and Community Education Centres, Civil Society Organisations and local economies.
* ***Master’s Programme on “Society, Education, Training and Work”:*** This NMMU MA – Social Justice Project takes up the challenge that the Globalization and Higher Education Research Center (GHERC) poses by using the university’s facilities to educate scholars to understand and apply socially-engaged research about education, globalisation, and social justice. The post-graduate degree programme brings together different constituencies whose work in post-school education overlaps but rarely have an opportunity to learn from or with each other: college staff, especially classroom teachers, involved in social justice teaching; activists in advocacy organisations that focus on global justice and educational reform; workers in informal education settings; and trade union activists and officers.
* ***Resource Centre*:** The Centre is establishing, expanding and maintaining a growing database of scholarly literature and policy documents pertinent to the PSET sector and will strive to serve as a resource centre regionally and nationally. The Centre has started hosting workshops and seminars and will continuously network with key internal and external stakeholders in the province and nationally to stimulate the search for innovative solutions to the challenges facing the PSET sector.