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National Teachers' Union

NEWSLETTER



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Cultural Festival

Celebrating NATU's Roots Through Traditional Music, Dance and Poetry

108th Year Anniversary

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World Teachers' Day 05 October

Speech by NATU President Sibusiso Malinga on World Teachers' Day

Comrades, colleagues, fellow educators, and valued members of the National Teachers' Union,

On this World Teachers' Day, the 5th of October, NATU salutes every teacher in the Republic of South Africa. We extend our deepest appreciation and solidarity to you — the men and women who stand at the chalkface every day, shaping young minds and building the foundation of our nation's future. We wish you strength, courage, and the recognition you so richly deserve for the vital, often invisible, work you perform without fail.

We know the conditions under which you labour are frequently unbearable. Many of you teach classes of seventy or eighty learners. Teaching and learning support materials remain critically short. Countless schools, particularly in deep rural areas, still operate without libraries, laboratories, or even the most basic resources. The removal of rural incentives has further compounded these challenges, making it harder to attract and retain educators where they are needed most. These are not abstract statistics; they are the daily lived realities of thousands of our members and of teachers across the country.

Yet despite these hardships, our teachers continue to push forward with remarkable dedication. You rise before dawn, remain long after the final bell, and work through evenings and weekends. You prepare our children for examinations, mentor them through personal and academic difficulties, and quietly carry the hopes of families and communities on your shoulders. In doing so, you shape not only individual futures but the destiny of South Africa itself.

Teachers remain the pillars of our country. No nation can achieve lasting stability, social cohesion, or meaningful progress without a strong, motivated, and respected teaching profession. It is therefore deeply unfortunate that teachers are no longer appreciated as they once were. The dignity of the profession has been eroded by inadequate support, delayed resolutions to legitimate concerns, and a broader societal undervaluing of the educator's role. NATU therefore issues a clear call: government, communities, parents, and society at large must act deliberately to restore the dignity, status, and value of the teaching profession. Our children deserve no less, and our teachers have earned no less.



We congratulate those educators who received National Teachers' Awards this year. Your excellence is an inspiration. We encourage more teachers to participate in such platforms so that outstanding practice can be recognised, shared, and celebrated across the system.

We also acknowledge the recent challenges around funding and other departmental matters that have caused anxiety in many schools. We trust that these issues will be resolved speedily and in good faith so that the 2027 academic year can begin smoothly, with teachers and learners able to focus fully on teaching and learning.

To the Matric Class of 2026: we wish you every success in your forthcoming examinations. Approach this period with discipline, determination, and confidence. Let other provinces learn from the example set by KwaZulu-Natal sothat healthy competition drives continuously improving results across the entire country. Your success is our collective success.

To every NATU member and to every teacher, irrespective of union affiliation: continue the struggle for better working conditions, adequate resources, and the professional respect you deserve. Your labour is not in vain. The future of South Africa rests, in a very real sense, in your hands.

Happy World Teachers' Day.



Cultural FESTIVAL

Celebrating NATU's Roots Through Traditional Music, Dance and Poetry

The National Teachers' Union is proud to announce the outstanding success of its 2026 Cultural Festival, held on 4 September 2026 at the Alan Thompson Hall and Conference Centre in Madadeni. Under the inspiring theme "Celebrating NATU's Roots Through Traditional Music, Dance and Poetry," the event brought together members from every region of the country in a vibrant, colourful and deeply moving display of South Africa's rich cultural tapestry.

From the moment the first drums sounded, the atmosphere was electric. The hall was filled with the vibrant energy of traditional attire, the powerful rhythms of cultural music, the graceful and dynamic movements of cultural dance, and the stirring words of praise poetry. Members, guests and spectators were treated to a feast of talent that showcased the beauty, strength and diversity of our shared heritage. The performances not only entertained but also deeply connected everyone present to their roots, while powerfully affirming the unity that binds us as one nation.

The festival stood as a shining example of what NATU can achieve when members come together with purpose and pride. It was a day of joy, reflection and celebration that left a lasting impression on all who attended.

On behalf of the Central Executive Board, NATU President Sibusiso Malinga expressed the Union's deep appreciation:

"I extend our sincere appreciation to all who contributed to the success of this significant occasion. Special recognition goes to the Music and Culture Co-ordinating Committee, under the supervision of the Deputy President, Mr. G.M. Mabuza, for the thorough preparations undertaken. We further thank the Office of the General Secretary for the efficient logistical arrangements, the NATU Staff for their commitment, our Social Partners, Leaders of Regions and Branches, Participants, Guests and Spectators. Your collective efforts ensured a highly successful event. We particularly value the performances which effectively demonstrated the unity that exists within the diverse cultures of our country through cultural dance, cultural music and praise poetry. This gathering has reaffirmed our shared heritage and the rich cultural diversity that defines South Africa. The rhythms, movements and words presented connected us to our roots and reminded us of the importance of honouring tradition while embracing our diversity as a united people.

We thank all who brought their culture, shared their stories and celebrated together under the banner of NATU."

The 2026 Cultural Festival will be remembered as one of the most successful and uplifting gatherings. It reaffirmed NATU's commitment to nurturing the cultural identity of its members while strengthening the bonds of solidarity that make our Union strong.
Through music, dance and poetry, members once again showed that when we celebrate who we are, we build an even stronger foundation for the future.





Strengthening NATU's Northern Cape Footprint Through the Official Launch of the Kuruman Branch

The National Teachers' Union has marked another significant milestone in its nationwide expansion with the successful official launch of its Kuruman Branch in the Northern Cape Province on 20 August 2026.

This development builds on the historic foundations laid in 2023, when NATU's Central Executive Board (CEB) launched the union's first Northern Cape branches in Kimberley and Upington. At those pioneering events, members elected their Branch Executive Committees, establishing a formal presence in the province for the first time. Reflecting the leadership's commitment to growth, President S.V. Malinga affirmed at the time: "We will do everything in our power to grow NATU in Northern Cape. We are still to visit towns such as Springbok, Kuruman and others."

The Kuruman launch realises that vision. Conducted fully in accordance with the NATU Constitution, the establishment of the branch equips it to function effectively and deliver quality service to its members. The CEB formally endorsed the election of the Branch Executive Committee (BEC), which will work in close collaboration with School Building Representatives (SBRs) to strengthen membership services and ensure responsive support for educators on the ground.

Further consolidating this progress, the newly elected BEC underwent a comprehensive induction of its various portfolios on 15 September 2026. This capacity-building step underscores NATU's commitment to equipping local leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to serve members professionally and uphold the union's principles of self-reliance, professional excellence, and the defence of educators' rights.

The expansion into Kuruman is a clear demonstration of NATU's sustained growth and its determination to bring its century-old legacy of advocacy closer to teachers in every corner of South Africa. This latest achievement reflects the union's ongoing investment in building strong, functional structures that translate national resolve into local impact.

As NATU continues to grow, the Kuruman Branch stands as a testament to the power of collective organisation and the unwavering commitment to "Teach the children of the Nation like never before and bring joy to the classroom."
Educators in the area and across the Northern Cape are encouraged to engage with their newly established branch structures as NATU deepens its presence and service in the province.



51st Annual IAEA Conference Toronto, Canada

The International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) successfully hosted its 51st Annual Conference in Toronto, Canada, from 27 September to 2 October 2026, under the theme “Trust, Transparency and Technology in Educational Assessment.”

Organised by the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) in partnership with the IAEA and Vretta, the gathering brought together international experts, researchers, practitioners and policy-makers. Participants examined how assessment systems can be designed and delivered to become more equitable, innovative and trustworthy in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

NATU Deputy President Mandla Mabuza and General Secretary Mathemba Mabija joined the discussions, contributing the voice of South African educators to global conversations on fair and effective assessment practices. They engaged alongside leading specialists from around the world on critical issues shaping the future of educational measurement.



South Africa maintained a strong and visible presence. Pictured with the NATU Deputy President and General Secretary were Dr Mafu Rakometsi, President of the IAEA and CEO of Umalusi, together with senior officials and leaders from the South African delegation. The delegation represented the Department of Basic Education (DBE), Independent Examinations Board (IEB), South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), and Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC).



The conference programme covered a broad range of topics central to modern assessment systems. These included culturally responsive and fair practices; transparency in scoring and measurement; the meaningful inclusion of student and educator voice in assessment design; responsible data sharing; the opportunities and challenges presented by artificial intelligence and machine learning; privacy and security considerations; and the careful balance between accountability and support within education systems.

Dr Rakometsi’s leadership of the IAEA underscored South Africa’s growing influence in international educational assessment and quality assurance. The country’s participation reflected a continued commitment to strengthening examination standards, advancing equity, and learning from global best practice.

The 51st Annual IAEA Conference provided a valuable platform for sharing experiences, advancing research, and building professional networks. Insights gained by the South African delegates are expected to support ongoing efforts to enhance the quality, integrity and fairness of assessment systems at home

AI Assessment Dialogue Advanced at 42nd AEAA Conference in Arusha



The National Teachers' Union played an active role at the 42nd Annual Conference of the Association for Educational Assessments in Africa (AEAA), held in Arusha, Tanzania, from 17 to 21 August 2026. Under the theme "Rethinking Educational Assessment in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)", the gathering brought together education leaders, assessment experts, and practitioners from across the continent to examine how AI is transforming teaching, learning, and evaluation systems.

NATU was represented by President Sibusiso Malinga, Vice President (Professional Matters) Brenda Mbatha, and Teacher Development Institute Director Professor Sitwala Imenda. The union's participation underscored its commitment to contributing to continental conversations that shape the future of education.

Throughout the conference, experts explored the practical implications of artificial intelligence for educational assessment in Africa. Key areas of discussion included personalised and inclusive learning pathways, secure e-assessment platforms, the transformation of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), data-driven policy formulation, innovative simulation tools, stronger links between academia and industry, and smarter digital feedback mechanisms. NATU expressed pride in being part of these deliberations, which hold direct relevance for classroom practice and the professional development of teachers.

NATU's involvement in the 42nd AEAA Conference reaffirmed the union's dedication to advancing quality education and to ensuring that teachers' voices remain central as assessment practices evolve in the era of artificial intelligence. The discussions and relationships forged in Arusha are expected to inform ongoing efforts to build more responsive, equitable, and future-ready education systems.



NATU Women Lead the Charge for Gender Justice from Brazil to South Africa's Classrooms

Global representation took centre stage when the National Teachers' Union proudly participated in the 5th Education International World Women's Conference held in Camaçari, Bahia, Brazil, from 15 to 17 September 2026. Under the theme "Rising united for gender justice: Educating the world, leading change, fighting for democracy," NATU Vice President Mrs Phindile Mnabe and Gauteng Deputy Secretary Ms Nolwazi Ngwenya raised the union's flag on the international platform. Joining sisters from education unions around the world, the South African delegation contributed to critical discussions on advancing gender justice, protecting democratic spaces in education and strengthening the voices of female labour leaders across global education systems.

This international engagement reflected NATU's broader commitment to honouring the dedication, leadership and unwavering strength of women educators at every level. Women remain the backbone of South Africa's public education system and the beating heart of the trade union movement. Through both global and local action, NATU has reaffirmed that unity, gender equality and professional excellence stand at the centre of its collective vision.

Across the country, branches marked Women's Month with gatherings that fostered sisterhood, empowerment and recognition. The Ethekwini Branch held a Women's Day breakfast focused on comrade solidarity. The Mtubatuba Branch met at Goodison Bushlands to celebrate the irreplaceable role of women in society. The Mthunzini Branch staged a distinguished event at Crystal Events under the theme "Educating, Empowering and Elevating Women," attended by NATU Vice President Mrs Brenda Mbatha, Her Majesty Dr Nozizwe Mulela Zulu (Ndlukulu LaMakhubu), First Lady of uMhlathuze Municipality Mrs S. Ngwezi, Dr N.B.A. Madlala and Dr R.X. Masonto. The Nongoma Branch celebrated women through its year-end event, while NATU women leadership in the Nkangala District in Mpumalanga Province received well-deserved praise for their outstanding leadership.

From the conference halls of Brazil to branch gatherings across South Africa, NATU women continue to lead with courage, care and conviction. Their work underscores a simple truth: the struggle for quality public education and gender equality is one and the same.















Virtual Case Management Training Programme Officially Launched

The National Teachers' Union successfully hosted a virtual Case Management Training Launch via live webinar on Monday, 14 September 2026.

The initiative aims to train, develop and empower case managers, with a particular emphasis on strengthening the capacity and leadership of female case managers. It also seeks to equip participants with the skills needed to handle organisational matters effectively.

Organised under NATU's Legal Section, the session reinforced the union's commitment to supporting members who may face difficulties in the workplace. The event formed part of NATU's ongoing efforts to build stronger internal capacity and provide practical support to its members.

Welcoming a New Cohort of Interns

In partnership with the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP-SETA), the Central Executive Board (CEB) has officially welcomed its new cohort of interns. This initiative forms part of NATU's ongoing commitment to mitigating workplace skills shortages and empowering unemployed graduates by bridging the gap between academic qualification and active labour market participation.

The 24-month structured programme runs from 15 September 2026 to 31 August 2028 and will provide these young professionals with invaluable hands-on experience across NATU's Legal and Administrative sections. The newly appointed interns have been placed in Case Management, Financial Administration, and Public Administration, where they will contribute to the Union's daily operations while developing essential professional skills.

Bringing fresh perspectives, dedication, and professional rigor, the interns are set to play a meaningful role within the NATU community. The Union wishes them every success as they embark on this journey of professional growth and contribute to South Africa's educational landscape.
















NATU Walk-in Centres

Head Office
47-57 Biyela Street
Empangeni
Tel: +27 35 772 1608
info@natu.org.za

NATU Legal Section
14th Floor, Embassy Building
Durban
Tel: +27 31 332 0692
thuli.legal@natu.org.za

Teacher Development Institute
Madadeni,
Newcastle
Tel: +27 35 772 2401
natutd@natu.org.za

Mpumalanga
No. U5 Nel City Center
Mbombela
+27 13 752 2827
mpumalangaprovince@natu.co.za

Free State
94 Kellner Street
Bloemfontein
+27 51 492 3415
freestateprovince@natu.co.za

Gauteng
30 Melle Street,
Braamfontein
+27 10 206 9417
gautengprovince@natu.co.za