

# Adult matric opens up employment opportunities

 By Jackie Carroll

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Tomorrow, 8 September 2015, is International Literacy Day and it is a good time to reflect on the value the adult matric will bring to a society, where only 28 out of a 100 school entrants achieve matric and only four of these enter higher education, with one graduating.

According to data released by the World Literacy Foundation, approximately 775 million people - 64% of whom are women - are functionally illiterate. In other words, "they lack the basic reading and writing skills to manage daily living and employment tasks."

We must remember that the literacy rate is not a measurement of high-level training and education. It measures the percentage of people with the ability to read for knowledge, write coherently and think critically about the written word. To be literate, one must be able not only to decipher the symbols that make up words, but also interpret text or read for meaning. When individuals learn to read and write, they have the power to transform their lives. For instance, being able to read the newspaper enables people to arrive at their own conclusions and not blindly follow what has been told to them, as they know no different.

## Adult matric offers second chance

This year, the theme developed by UNESCO is 'Literacy and Sustainable Societies'. How do we create sustainable societies through improving literacy? I believe that the new Adult Matric curriculum is going to change the lives of hundreds of thousands of adults in this country. It will give people who fell out of the system for whatever reason, a second chance.

Adult Matric or NASCA (National Senior Certificate for Adults) is different to the Matric curriculum in that learners only need to complete four subjects and most importantly, the pass rate is 50% - higher than the current 30%. Adult Matric has a number of benefits:

- A person can complete it in a longer period (so they can work at the same time)
- It can be completed via face-to-face classes, distance learning and e-learning platforms so it can accommodate anyone's circumstances
- There are no minimum entry requirements - anyone can get a NASCA if he or she passes the exam
- Once they have passed, they will have access to higher education, depending on the entry requirements of the institution.

There is a growing tendency for companies, when downsizing or rightsizing, to shed employees who do not have a Matric

certificate. Almost all companies insist on their employees having a minimum of a Matric certificate. Herein lies the problem, existing employees now have to obtain their Matric to keep their jobs. In order to work around these policies, companies are eager to assist their valued employees in obtaining their Adult Matric as it creates security for both the business and its employees.

*"All men who have turned out worth anything have had the chief hand in their own education."* Sir Walter Scott wrote these inspiring words in a letter to JG Lockhart in 1830 and these words are still applicable today - people have the power to change their lives by enrolling and completing their NASCA. I look forward to the day when Adult Matric is implemented and we begin to see more adults become productive members of society.

## ABOUT JACKIE CARROLL

Jackie Carroll is the CEO and co-founder of Media Works, South Africa's leading provider of adult education and training for over 21 years.

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