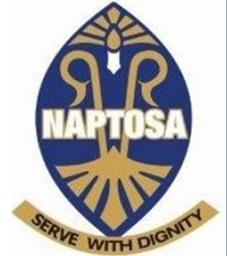


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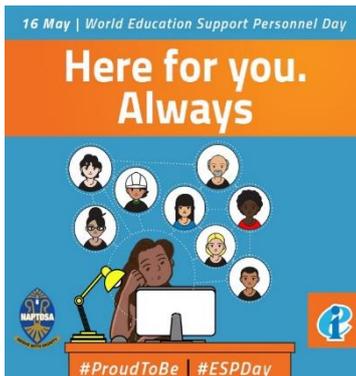
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NNF 21 of 2021

13 May 2021

WORLD EDUCATION SUPPORT PERSONNEL DAY 2021 -16 MAY 2021



On 16 May 2021, Education International (EI) and its affiliate organisations, of which NAPTOSA is one, will be celebrating World Education Support Personnel Day.

The day is celebrated in recognition of the core role that **Education Support Personnel (ESP)** play in supporting the quest for quality education for the children of the world. Without ESPs, teachers would not be able to put all their energy and focus into education matters. An efficient school administration, clean school grounds and classrooms, and in this pandemic period, proper sanitised school building, are crucial support elements for quality education.

It is also a day when the importance of ESPs to the trade union movement is recognised. In changing our motto from “Teach with Dignity” to “Serve with Dignity”, some years back, NAPTOSA acknowledged the value of ESP members to our union.

Issues highlighted by EI for attention on World Education Support Personnel Day are *inter alia* the following:

- Increased privatisation of ESP functions, especially during the pandemic;
- Violation of ESPs’ fundamental human and labour rights, such as the right to organise and bargain collectively;
- Safe working environments for ESPs,
- ESPs to be put in the priority list for vaccination with other frontline workers; and
- ESPs should enjoy the same status, rights, and conditions as other education personnel with similar academic and technical qualifications and experience.

These issues are an indication of the difficulties workers in many countries still experience. In South Africa, ESPs enjoy the same labour rights as other workers and the conditions of service in the public service (e.g. pensions, medical assistance, housing, leave, etc.) are universally applied to all employees. Together with the other trade unions in the PSCBC we oppose any attempts at privatizing public service functions.

As for safe working environments, nobody can doubt how important this is to NAPTOSA. Throughout the COVID-19 period, NAPTOSA fought to ensure that its members would work in the safest possible environments. We even demanded for schools to remain closed when there was clear evidence that all required protective and sanitizing equipment and materials were not in place.

Even in terms of vaccinations we seem to be ahead of the crowd, having already called on the Department of Basic Education, during the latest round of consultations, to include ESPs in the designated group to receive vaccines, after the health workers.

The leadership of NAPTOSA wishes to thank our ESP members for their contribution to the education system of our country and to our union. Be assured that your membership of the union is greatly valued.

BASIL MANUEL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR