



**Siyaphumelela**  
we succeed

## 2026 CONFERENCE

Reimagining Student Success and Expanding Opportunity for All

23-26  
June  
2026



### GUEST SPEAKERS

**Mr Buti Manamela**  
Minister of Higher Education  
and Training

**Dr Karen Stout**  
President & CEO: Achieving  
the DREAM

**Birchwood Hotel & OR Tambo Conference Centre, Boksburg, Johannesburg**

# CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

The Siyaphumelela Conference is Saide's flagship national convening focused on data-informed, equity-driven student success in South African higher education. Held annually, it brings together a dynamic community of practitioners, institutional leaders, researchers, analysts, funders, partners and students committed to improving student outcomes at scale.

The **2026 Siyaphumelela Conference** will take place from **23-26 June 2026 at the [Birchwood Hotel & OR Tambo Conference Centre, Boksburg, Johannesburg](#)**. We continue to explore the conference theme, "*Reimagining student success and expanding opportunity for all*", which aims to inspire delegates to reimagine traditional approaches and embrace new and innovative strategies that empower students to transition into and beyond university, complete their studies successfully, thrive in their careers, contribute meaningfully to society and achieve lasting economic mobility. The theme further encapsulates our vision of scaling out, scaling up and scaling deep, fostering innovation and collaboration and driving systemic change.

## Important Information

### Dates

- **30 March – 6 June:** [Conference registration open](#)
- **30 March - 20 April:** [Call for Presentations](#)
- **20 April:** Deadline for Presentations to be submitted via EasyChair
- **6 May:** Deadline for Siyaphumelela Network Partner Sharing (for institutional leads ONLY) to be submitted via EasyChair
- **8 May:** Notification of Acceptance to all Presenters
- **6 June:** Conference registration closes
- **23-26 June:** 2026 Siyaphumelela Conference

### Registration costs

Category	Registration Fee (R) (incl VAT)
Network Delegate	R6,325
Non-Network Delegate	R7,900
Presenter	R4,250
Full-time Student paid for by their university	R4,250

Presenters whose proposals are accepted for 15-minute, 30-minute and 90-minute sessions will have their registration fee discounted. This applies to one presenter per 15-minute and 30-minute presentation or up to three presenters per 90-minute session. Poster presentations are not eligible for the Presenter discount.

### Accommodation

Accommodation is available at the [Birchwood Hotel](#), with 3-star at [Birchwood](#) and 4-star at [Silverbirch](#), both on the conference premises. Birchwood arranges complimentary shuttles to/from OR Tambo International Airport.

#### Accommodation booking code: Saide/Siyaphumelela Conference

#### Accommodation rate p/p p/n

<b>Silverbirch Premium King</b>	<b>R1 790</b>
<b>Birchwood Double Room</b>	<b>R1 540</b>

## About the 2026 Siyaphumelela Conference

### Siyaphumelela Conference Aims

The Siyaphumelela Conference aims to:

1. **Share Evidence-Based and Scalable Interventions** – Share with delegates proven strategies that can be implemented for transformative post-secondary student success.
2. **Encourage Collaboration** – Create spaces for inter- and intra-institutional sharing of insights, learn from each other’s experiences and work together to drive change.
3. **Advance Scholarship in Student Success** – Explore what student success looks like from a Siyaphumelela practitioner’s perspective, how it is integrated within the institution, and deepen the academic discourse.
4. **Embed the Student Voice** – Ensure students actively participate in presentations and discussions to keep their perspectives central.
5. **Foster Innovation and Advocacy** - Advocate for Siyaphumelela as a transformative, sustainable and scalable model for Student Success, encouraging innovative practices and solutions.

## 2025 Siyaphumelela Conference Highlights

The 2025 Siyaphumelela Conference drew 450 in-person delegates, including 45 students and several senior sector leaders, reflecting strong national engagement across the post schooling landscape. Online participation increased reach, with plenary sessions attracting over 50 virtual attendees across the four days. The conference centred the student voice through the Siyaphumelela Scholars Programme and the “I Am” poems.



Delegates were primarily from the 20 partner public universities with additional participation from non-network public and private higher education institutions, TVET colleges, international universities, philanthropic organisations, government bodies and civil-society partners. This diverse attendance profile underscores the conference's growing reputation as a leading national platform for collaboration, innovation and evidence-based approaches to advancing student success.

## About Siyaphumelela

Launched in 2014, the Siyaphumelela ("We Succeed") Initiative is a catalyst for student success and systemic change in higher education led by Saide in partnership with The Kresge Foundation.

The Siyaphumelela Initiative aims to broaden evidence-based strategies for equitable post-school student success by improving throughput rates and reducing barriers to completion.

Siyaphumelela draws insights from global student success innovators like the University Innovation Alliance and Achieving the Dream.

From five institutions at inception, the initiative now partners with 20 of the 26 public universities in South Africa, reaching 80% of South Africa's public university students.

## What Siyaphumelela Does

**Siyaphumelela collaboratively promotes equity and eliminates performance gaps based on race, gender and socio-economic status through**

### **DATA**

Improving institutional capacity to collect and use student data

### **EVIDENCE**

Building scalable evidence-based student success initiatives

### **STUDENT VOICE**

Embedding the student voice in student success initiatives

### **STUDENT CENTREDNESS**

Establishing a more student-centred culture

**resulting in**

### **EQUITABLE STUDENT SUCCESS**

Improving throughput rates and reducing barriers to completion for all students

## About Saide

Established in 1992, Saide is an education support organisation founded on social justice and open learning principles. We believe that:

- Education is a public good, a human right, and the foundation for lifelong success.
- Open learning principles are key to achieving inclusive access and success.
- Systemic change requires enabling policy environments and institutional capacity to be learner-centred.
- Collaboration and partnership are critical levers for sustainable transformation.

We are on a mission to help reimagine education and expand opportunity for all children, youth and adults across Africa.