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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 535

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(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 05/2014)

Mr W M Madisha (Cope) to ask the Minister of Basic Education:

Whether her department undertook any study for the period 1 January 2009 to 31 December 2014 to ascertain if historically disadvantaged school leavers on the one hand and college or university graduates on the other were regarded with equal interest and favour by employers in relation to their counterparts from Zimbabwe and elsewhere on the continent; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details? NW617E

DBE Response

The Department has not formally undertaken or commissioned a study on school leavers. This is a cross cutting issue that need to be dealt with in collaboration with other government departments such as the Department of Higher Education and Training and the Department of Labour.

The Department of Higher Education and Training Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training in South Africa offers a vision for growth in Higher and Further Education provision in order to meet one of the country's most serious challenges: the 3 million young people who are falling into the gaps, facing long-term unemployment. It is further education that faces the largest deficit and requires the greatest intervention. Growth targets are set to remedy this situation: for a 1.5 million enrolment in higher education by 2030 and a 4 million enrolment in further education. These are participation rates of 23% and 60% respectively.

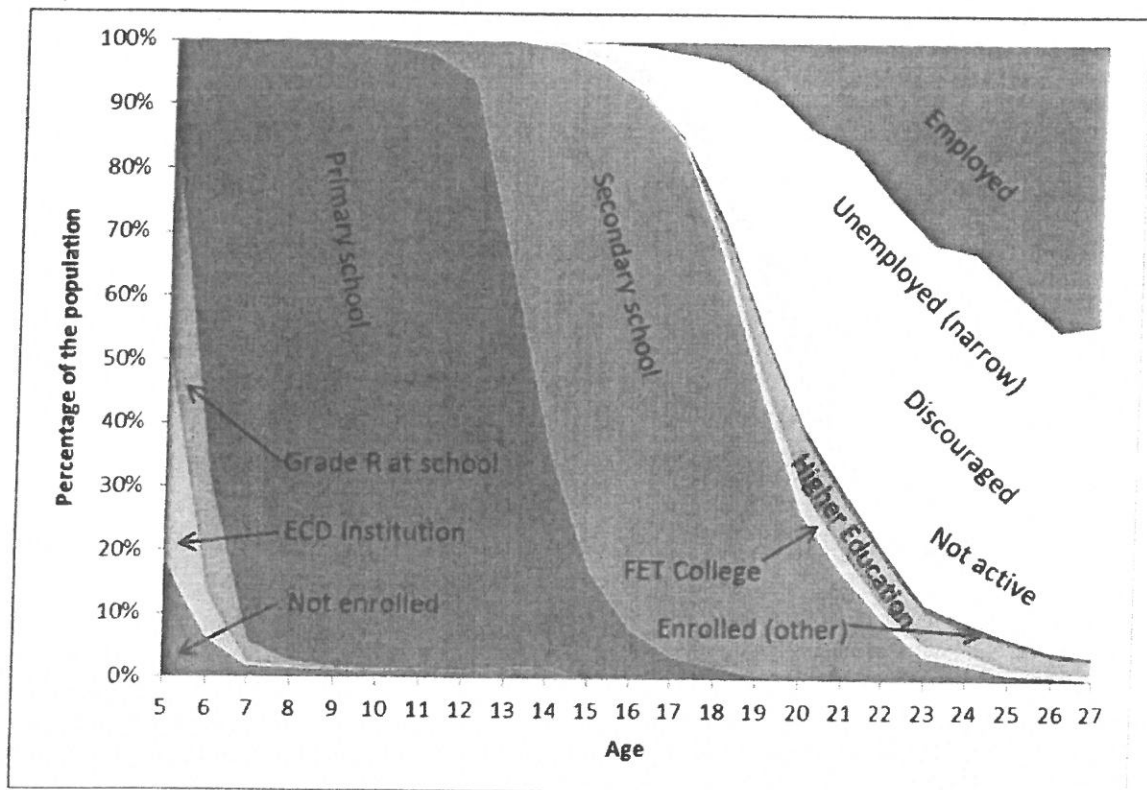
The Department of Basic Education also monitors closely the employment rates, age, gender and education levels of the workforce using the General Household Survey

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(GHS), Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) data from Statistics South Africa (Stats SA).

In 2013, the Department published a report titled, *The Internal Efficiency of the School System, a report on selected aspects of access to education, grade repetition and learner performance*. **Figure 1** extracted from this report provides an overall picture by showing for every age cohort the proportions of children engaged in specific activities. The figure is derived using Statistics South Africa's General Household Survey of 2011.

Figure 1: The educational and employment activities of various age groups



Source: DBE Own calculations based on GHS, 2011.

Figure 1 is used to highlight several stylised facts about the activities of South African children and youths. Firstly, non-enrolment is a negligible problem in South Africa. At most, 2% of any age cohort between the ages of 7 and 15 is not enrolled in school. Secondly, even among five-year olds, the strong majority of children are attending some form of educational institution. For five-year olds, the majority are attending either Grade R at a primary school or are attending an ECD facility. Thirdly, although over-aged enrolment in secondary school used to be more prevalent than it is nowadays (previous years not shown in this graph), there are still a considerable number of old learners attending school. For example, just less than one in five 21 year-olds are attending secondary school. Fourthly, very small proportions of youths are attending FET Colleges or other forms of non-school education (apart from Higher Education Institutions).

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Fifthly, the proportion enrolled in higher education has increased in recent years but remains below a desirable level. Sixth, the scourge of youth unemployment in its various forms (not active in the labour market, discouraged work seeker and unemployed according to the narrow definition) is evident. The left side of the graph contains a happy story (most children attend school) but the right side of the graph indicates that their destiny is less satisfying (not many participate in higher education and far too many will not be employed).