Reviews of National Policies for Education

SOUTH AFRICA

OECD

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Foreword

Education reform has been a priority in South Africa since the establishment of the Government of National Unity in 1994 and has played a key role in redressing the injustices of Apartheid. Impressive progress has been made in education legislation, policy development, curriculum reform and the implementation of new ways of delivering education, but many challenges remain in many areas, such as student outcomes and labour market relevance. The OECD report provides an overview of the impressive forward thinking and application of education reform in the country and offers advice on issues of governance and financing; curriculum, learning materials and assessment; early childhood education, adult and basic education and training; vocational education and human resource development; inclusive education and equity; teachers and teaching; and, higher education.

Against the background report prepared by the South African authorities and information supplied in meetings in the course of site visits, the examiners' report gives an analysis of the education sector within the economic, social and political context of South Africa. The final chapter brings together, in the form of a synthesis, specific recommendations and sets out how policies could be addressed system-wide, linked to priority issues of access and equity, governance, school leadership, student evaluation and efficient use of resources.

This review of education policy was undertaken within the framework of the programme of work of the OECD Directorate for Education's Global Relations Strategy. The financing for the review was provided by the Government of South Africa, with an additional grant from the Flemish Community of Belgium. In-kind support was also provided by the European Training Foundation.

The Background Report was prepared by the Wits Education Policy Unit (EPU), with the assistance of the Department of Education.

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Barbara Ischinger
Director for Education

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABET	Adult basic education and training
ADE	Advanced Diploma in Education
AIMS	African Institute for Mathematical Sciences
AsgiSA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative – South Africa
BBBEE or BEE	Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment
BCMS	Business, commerce and management science
BEPs	Built environment professionals
C2005	Curriculum 2005
CATE	Colleges of Advanced Technical Education
CBOs	Community based organisations
CBR	Country Background Report: South African Education
CDG	Care Dependency Grant
CEM	Council of Education Ministers
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CPTD	Continuing professional teacher development
CSG	Child Support Grant
DET	Former (Apartheid-era) Department of Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education (national)
DoL	Department of Labour
DoF	Department of Finance
ECD	Early childhood development
ECEC	Early childhood education and care
EFA	Education for all
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
ELRC	Education Labour Council
ESF	Equitable Share Formula
GEAR	Growth, Equity and Redistribution
GERs	Grade-specific gross enrolment rates
GET	General education and training
GMR	Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO)
GPI	Gender Parity Index
FET	Further education and training
HAIs	Historically advantaged institutions
HBTs	Historically black technikons
HBUs	Historically black universities
HE	Higher education

HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HEIs	Higher education institutions
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HWUs	Historically white universities
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
IPET	Initial professional education of teachers
ISATS	Integrated Summative Assessment Tasks
JIPSA	Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition
LOLT	Language of learning and teaching
LSMs	Learner Support Materials
LTSMs	Learning and teaching support materials
MCTE	Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MLA	Monitoring Learning Achievement (UNESCO)
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NC(V)	National Certificate (Vocational)
NEEDU	National Education Evaluation and Development Unit
NEIMS	National Education Infrastructure Management
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NFF	New Funding Framework
NMF	Nelson Mandela Foundation
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NNSSF	National Norms and Standards for School Funding
NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSC	National Senior Certificate examination
NSDP	National Skills Development Policy
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NSE	Norms and Standards for Educators
NSF	National Skills Fund
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OBE	Outcome-based education
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OSD	Occupation-Specific Dispensation
OTL	Opportunities to learn
PDEs	Provincial Departments of Education
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
POS	Public Ordinary Schooling
QIDS UP	Quality Improvement, Development, Support and Upliftment Programme

QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SACMEQ	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SANLI	South African Literacy Institute
SAPSE	South African Post-Secondary Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARS	South African Revenue Services
SASA	South African Schools Act, 1996
SEN	Special educational needs
SET	Science, engineering and technology
SETAs	Sector Education and Training Authorities
SGBs	School Governing Bodies
SIAS	Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SNE	Special needs education
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TIMSS-R	Third International Mathematics and Science Study-Repeat
TOT	Time on task
TBVC	Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei
UNISA	University of South Africa
UYF	Umsobomvu Youth Fund
VAT	Value-added tax
VET	Vocational educational and training
YAC	Youth Advisory Centre
ZAR	South African rands

Provinces

EC	Eastern Cape
FS	Free State
GP	Gauteng
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LP	Limpopo
MP	Mpumalanga
NC	Northern Cape
NW	North-West
WC	Western Cape

PART ONE:
Country Background Report – South African Education

Preface

The review of South Africa's education policies by the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) will undoubtedly make an important contribution to policy debates and reviews of education both within and outside government in South Africa.

The timing of the OECD Review could not be more appropriate. The Review will assist in informing discussions on education policy in preparation for the forthcoming South African elections in 2009 and for the next administration.

The *Country Background Report* prepared by the Wits Education Policy Unit (EPU) with support from the Department of Education, provided the base information that the OECD utilised to understand and examine South Africa's education system. The report describes education policy initiatives and shifts since 1994 and identifies key challenges faced in the transformation of the education system in a democratic South Africa.

The imperative of education policy making in preparation for and after 1994, the year of our first democratic elections in South Africa, was to transform educational provision and to substantially improve access, quality, equity and redress for learners.

The Background Country Report and the Review by the OECD provide further information and reflection on the state of the education system. They provide a basis for the ongoing evaluation and monitoring of the degree to which policies have been successful in achieving the intentions of government in a democratic South Africa. Debates on the validity of the analysis provided will, no doubt, continue for years to come. Nonetheless, this is a valuable contribution to our ongoing commitment to achieving the goals of quality education for all.

I would like to thank Wits Education Policy Unit for preparing the first draft of the *Country Background Report*, and the officials of the Department of Education for their work on both the *Country Background Report* and the OECD Review. I would also like to express my appreciation to the team of specialists of the OECD who participated in this valuable review.

Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor
MP Minister of Education

Executive Summary

This Country Background Report (CBR) on the South African education system is intended to assist the Education Policy Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with its understanding of the South African education system and with identifying key issues and themes for the forthcoming peer review.

The report is divided into five sections, as follows: first, background socio-economic data; second, a historical and structural overview of South African education; third, a sector-by-sector analysis of the system; fourth, obstacles on the path to quality education and key policy levers, including the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), curriculum reform, educators and teacher education, school governance, education quality initiatives and education financing; and fifth a conclusion with key strategic issues for review.

In 2007, of a total South African population of 47.9 million, some 4.5 million were officially unemployed, and 15 million were children.

Historically, education was central to successive Apartheid governments' efforts to segregate racial groups and maintain white minority rule and featured prominently in the struggle that eventually brought about a negotiated settlement in 1994. The new democratic government was faced with the task of both rebuilding the system and redressing past inequalities. It has concentrated on creating a single unified national system, increasing access (especially to previously marginalised groups and the poor), decentralising school governance, revamping the curriculum, rationalising and reforming further and higher education and adopting pro-poor funding policies.

In line with the Constitution, and through the National Education Policy Act, national and provincial governments share responsibility for all education except tertiary education, which is the preserve of national government. Education in South Africa can be broken down into the following sectors/bands:

- early childhood development (ECD);

- general education and training (GET), consisting of:

  – grade R to grades 1 to 3 (the Foundation Phase)

  – grades 4 to 6 (the Intermediate Phase)

  – grades 7 to 9 (the Senior Phase)

- further education and training (FET), including grades 10 to 12;

- adult basic education and training (ABET);

- special needs education (SNE);

- higher education (HE).

Schooling is compulsory for all children from the year in which they turn 7 to the end of the year in which they turn 15 (or the end of grade 9, whichever comes first). A National Qualifications Framework (NQF) integrates education and training at all levels.

In 2005, 96% (25 570) of ordinary schools in South Africa were public schools and 4% (1 022) were independent schools, containing a total of 12 215 765 learners and 382 133 educators. The national average learner:educator ratio at ordinary schools was 32:1.

Almost all children of school-going age enter school and the majority complete grade 9. Overall there is little gender disparity.

However, net enrolment rates drop significantly after grade 3, suggesting that many learners are falling behind age-grade norms, and school enrolment figures decline markedly after grade 9 or age 15. The drop in NER could be attributed to changes in the age admission policy, as well as dual age admission policies.

Though repetition rates are declining, significant numbers of children take more than 9 years to complete grade 9.

Some three-quarters of South African adults have completed at least grade 6, half have completed grade 9, and just under one-third have completed grade 12.

In 2007, the overall national pass rate in the Senior Certificate (grade 12) examination for full-time candidates with six or more subjects was 65.2%.

Learners' levels of achievement are very poor. In 2002, grade 3 students scored 68% for listening comprehension, but only 39% for reading comprehension, 30% for numeracy, and 54% for life skills. In 2004, grade 6 students obtained averages of 38% for language, 27% for mathematics and

41% for natural science. Of the 12 African countries participating in the 1999 MLA project, South Africa scored the lowest average in numeracy, the fifth lowest in literacy and the third lowest in life skills.

Schooling and, within that, public ordinary schooling, absorbs well over 80% of all education expenditure. Expenditure on personnel has declined from over 90% of total education expenditure in the mid-1990s to the late-1990s to below 80% in 2006/07.

In 2006 there were 1 562 000 children in pre-school (not including grade R).

As of 2005, approximately 400 000 students were enrolled in public further education and training colleges, and another 700 000 enrolled in private FET institutions.

The adult literacy rate (comprising those 15 years of age and older) has risen from 14.6% in 1991 through 67% in 1996 to 89% in 2004. By 2005, there were 269 140 adult learners being serviced by 17 181 educators in 2 278 ABET institutions.

In 2005 there were 87 865 learners with special education needs, which is only 22% of a 2001 government estimate of the number of disabled or impaired learners in the country.

The higher education sector contains 23 institutions (reduced from 36 a few years ago), with 741 383 higher education students being serviced by 16 077 lecturers (2006 figures). Sixty-one percent of all students are black African, 25.0% are white, 7.4% are Indian and 6.6% are coloured. Fifty-four point five percent of all students are female.

In 2003, 32.8% of households were receiving social grants (old age pensions, disability grants and child support grants).

In 2003, children in 7% of households were always or often hungry, while in a further 17% of households, children sometimes went hungry. However, 92.2% (or about 3.4 million) of children aged 7-18 who regularly experience hunger continue to attend school, in part due to the national school nutrition programme, which aims to ensure that the poorest learners have at least one meal per school day.

HIV-prevalence amongst children aged 2 to 18 is around 5.6%. Twelve point seven percent of educators are HIV-positive, with the highest HIV incidence found among younger, African, non-degree-holding, female educators in rural areas, especially in KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. The national estimated HIV-prevalence rate is about 11% and the total HIV-positive population is estimated at approximately 5.3 million.

In 2003, 3% of children (371 000) had no parents.

Six percent of children live an hour or more away from the closest school and as many as four-fifths get to school on foot.

School infrastructural backlogs are huge: the 2006 National Education Infrastructure Management (NEIMS) study (Department of Education, 2007c) showed that 6% of schools had no toilets, 17% were without electricity, 12.6% had no water supply and 68% had no computers.

Despite almost full enrolment rates for the compulsory education phase (grades 1-9), there are still over 200 000 in the 7-15 year age group, who do not attend education institutions (see General Household Survey 2006, Statistics South Africa, 2007b). The majority in the 7-15 year group cite school-fees as the main reason for not attending an education institution. Education being "useless and uninteresting" is a similar percentage for "illness" as a reason (see Statistics South Africa, 2007b). Fees are also the main reason provided by 16-18 year-olds (consistently in all General Household Surveys), but "education is useless or uninteresting" is an important factor in the case of 16-18 year-olds.

Over the last few years, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has undergone major reviews. A new NQF bill is currently being tabled in parliament for consideration.

The new National Curriculum Statement (NCS) is grounded on a learner-centred, outcomes-based education approach. In the GET band (grades 1-9), "subjects" have been replaced with "learning areas" integrated across traditional disciplinary boundaries. After its introduction in 1998, the GET curriculum was criticised as being over-elaborate, unrealistic and too resource-dependent for a context of poor schools and poorly trained educators. The GET curriculum was subsequently rewritten in plainer language, with more emphasis given to basic skills, content knowledge and logical grade progression.

In 2006 there were 386 595 educators employed in ordinary schools in South Africa (including 19 407 in independent schools, and 24 118 employed by school governing bodies).

Most current educators were trained under Apartheid. A late-1990s rationalisation process caused many of the best qualified and most experienced educators to leave the profession. However, learner-educator ratios in former disadvantaged schools improved, while more privileged schools were able to use their fee-charging capability to employ additional educators.

There are major imbalances of educator supply and demand within and between provinces, and the number of educator graduates has dropped to less than one-third of estimated annual replacement needs. Over one-third of newly qualified educators intend to teach outside South Africa, if they teach at all. As a result of low job satisfaction, some 54% of educators, two-thirds of whom teach in the technology, natural sciences, economics and management fields, have recently considered leaving the profession.

The "returns to investment" in teacher education, or the quality of performance one might expect from learners in return for money spent on educators, is very low. Despite improvements in their qualifications, many educators are ill-prepared to teach the grades they are assigned to teach. Many come late to school, leave early, do not explain or provide feedback on homework and spend too much of their time on administrative tasks.

In response to several studies and recommendations, the Department of Education has begun to readopt the words "educator" and "teaching", relocating them at the heart of thinking about, planning and organising education, and instituting a system of "re-licensing" educators through a continuous process of professional development.

School governing bodies (SGBs), composed of the principal and elected representatives of parents, educators, non-teaching staff and (in secondary schools) learners, have powers to determine school admissions policy, recommend the appointment of staff and charge schools fees, subject to majority parental approval. Orphans, foster children and those receiving a poverty-linked social grant are exempted from paying fees and poorer parents might receive discounts.

SGBs in former disadvantaged schools often function poorly due to poverty and a lack of expertise and experience, finding it difficult to sustain active parental participation due to low literacy levels, lack of time and indirect costs. However, the reverse is true in the case of SGBs in more advantaged schools. Middle-class parents tend to dominate SGBs, women are under-represented and the racial profile of many ex-white SGBs is still largely white.

While there have been several instances where SGBs have attempted to restrict access by means of the school language policy or by illegally refusing learners admission on the grounds that they are unable to pay fees or provide proper documentation, on the positive side, they have been instrumental in socialising several hundred thousand parents and other citizens in procedures of debate, argument, compromise, decision-making and accountability.

Apart from a more integrated qualifications framework, a more relevant curriculum, better qualified educators, improved school governance and increased financing, the quality of education is being improved by a range of initiatives such as:

- the Dinaledi "centres of excellence" in mathematics, science and technology;

- QIDS UP (Quality Improvement, Development, Support and Upliftment Programme), providing educator and district development support to 5 000 low performing primary schools;

- the Education Management Information System;

- the Integrated Quality Management System;

- a planned National Education Evaluation Development Unit, to oversee the measurement and improvement of educator performance;

- the National Education Infrastructure Management System, to document, track and upgrade school infrastructure;

- better remuneration of and training for principals and more trained district support and school support personnel;

- dedicated bursaries for initial educator training and the ongoing professional development of educators.

Education expenditure increased from ZAR 31.1 billion in 1995, to ZAR 59.6 billion in 2002 and to ZAR 105.5 billion in 2007. Education spending was just over 5% of GDP.

Educational transformation and policy implementation have been constrained by:

- the scale of the existing backlogs;

- a limited fiscus, compounded by a slow national economic growth rate during the first six years after 1994;

- competition from other social sectors for scarce government funds;

- inefficiencies in education management and delivery and a lack of capacity at provincial and district levels;

- difficulties in containing expenditure on educational personnel and in redirecting funds towards non-personnel expenses;

- the desire to equalise per capita learner expenditure despite large disparities between provinces and schools.

From the Reconstruction and Development Programme of 1994 to GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution), government has consistently emphasised that sustained economic growth is a necessary precondition for South Africa's continued transformation.

However, not only the relative paucity of available revenue, but also provincial Departments' inability to spend and the constraints on planning large-scale change at all levels, remain causes for concern.

Since 2002, improved economic growth and contained inflation has made more funds available for redistribution. However, education perennially competes for funds against other areas in need of redress – such as health, housing and welfare – and real expenditure on education has declined slightly as a share of both total government expenditure and Gross Domestic Product.

Effective this year, the poorest two quintiles of schools have been declared "no fee schools", *i.e.* 40% of schools nationally, ranging from 56% in the poor Eastern Cape to 14% in the richer Western Cape. During the 2007 academic year, over 5 million learners will be attending 13 856 no fee schools.

Provincial governments are constitutionally entitled to an "equitable share" of national revenue, based on a formula reflecting provincial variables such as the school-age population, public school enrolments, the distribution of capital needs, the size of the rural population and the target population for social security grants weighted by a poverty index. The equitable share calculations are currently based on a 51% share for education.

In addition, the National Norms and Standards for School Funding require that each provincial education department rank all its schools from "poorest" to "least poor", in terms of the income, unemployment rate and literacy rate of the school's geographical catchment area.

Funding for non-personnel recurrent expenses (including books, stationery, equipment, furniture, telephones, copiers, school maintenance and essential services) is allocated progressively: 35% of available funds are earmarked for the poorest 20% of schools, 25% of funds for the next poorest quintile, 20% for the middle quintile and 15% and 5% respectively for the two "least poor" quintiles.

Personnel costs, particularly the cost of educators' salaries, dominate all education budgets. Government's policy targets are an 80:20 personnel:non-

personnel spending ratio and no more than 85% of provincial personnel allocations to be spent on actual teaching personnel costs. Only one province, Mpumalanga, has so far succeeded in reaching this target. Nationally, however, personnel expenditure is slowly being contained: between 2002/03 and 2007/08 it declined 2.8% to 83.9% of total education expenditure.

In 2007, the national average per capita learner expenditure in public schools was ZAR 5 787, ranging from ZAR 5 029 per Limpopo learner to ZAR 7 381 per Free State learner.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This Country Background Report on the South African education system is intended to assist the Education Policy Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with its understanding of the South African education system and with identifying key issues and themes for the forthcoming peer review.

In conformity with the brief provided by the national Department of Education, this Country Background Report includes:

- an overview of the historical, political and social context of education in South Africa;

- an outline of the educational landscape, including structure, governance, financing, curriculum, educator training, assessment of learning achievements and systemic monitoring and evaluation;

- a review of the policy trajectory since 1994, including education policy goals, drivers, shifts and trends, challenges, relevance and appropriateness;

- an overview of the state of education with respect to resourcing, inputs, outputs and outcomes, taking into account the education goals of access, equity, quality, efficiency and democracy;

- reference to education realities or how education is experienced and manifested "on the ground";

- an examination of all education subsystems, including early childhood education, general education and training, further education and training, higher education, adult basic education and training and inclusive or special needs education and the interrelationships between education and the system of skills training;

- an identification of key strategic issues for review, the nature of the challenge in these areas and progress to date.

The report is divided into five sections. The first section provides a brief socio-economic background on the country and identifies some societal factors impacting on the education system, including poverty and related health issues such as HIV and AIDS. The second section offers a high-level view of education in South Africa through a historical perspective, an overview of the policy and legal framework and a high-level discussion of the financing of education.

A detailed examination of the various education sub-sectors is undertaken in the third section. This covers: early childhood development (ECD), school education (both general education and further education at schools), further education and training colleges (FET), adult basic education and training (ABET), special needs education (SNE), higher education (HE) and open and distance learning (ODL).

In the fourth section, the six key policy reforms aimed at leveraging the system into a more equitable, useful and valuable direction are examined in turn:

- the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and skills development;

- curriculum reform;

- educators and educator education;

- school governance;

- improving the quality of education;

- education financing.

This last policy lever, education financing, is broken down into analyses of school fees, the Equitable Share Formula (ESF), the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF), personnel versus non-personnel expenditure, per capita learner expenditure as well as the school infrastructure situation.

The fifth section provides a brief conclusion.

South Africa: demographic and socio-economic background

Population

In 2007, the population of South Africa was 47.9 million, of which approximately 24.3 million (51%) were female. In terms of the race groups

still used for accounting and equity purposes, the population was 79.6% African, 9.1% white, 8.9% coloured and 2.5% Indian/Asian. A little over half of the population is urbanised, living in one of the three main centres of Johannesburg-Pretoria (Gauteng province), Cape Town (Western Cape) and Durban (KwaZulu-Natal). The population growth rate is 1%, and life expectancy at birth is estimated at 48.4 years for males and 51.6 years for females (Statistics South Africa, 2007a).

Figure 1.1 **The population pyramid of South Africa**
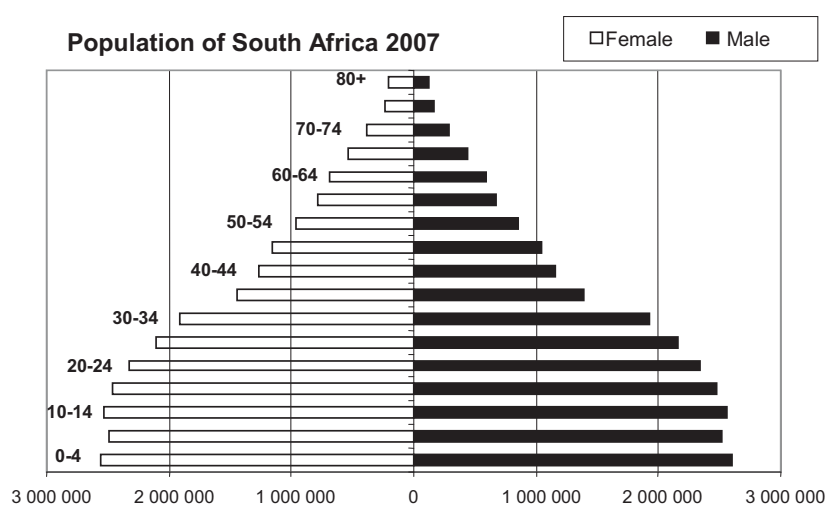
Population of South Africa 2007

The population pyramids for the country's nine provinces are similar to that for the country as a whole, with the exception of the Western Cape and Gauteng, whose population pyramids are more like developed nations, with the 20-49 age levels swelled by in-migration. The pyramids of poorer provinces such as the Eastern Cape and Limpopo indicate a corresponding out-migration of their working-age populations, particularly males (Department of Education, 2006f, p. 7-8).

Of the total population, 42.2% are 19 years of age or younger. Just over 15 million children are between the ages of 5 and 19, of whom 49.8% are girls (Statistics South Africa, 2007a).

Economy and employment

South Africa's Gross Domestic Product has been growing at almost 5% per annum for the past few years as reflected in Figure 1.2. Previously, during the 1990s, growth was only half that, after having stagnated during the 1980s in the closing years of Apartheid. National budget revenue for 2006/07 was ZAR 475.8 billion. Education is the largest category of government spending, at ZAR 105.5 billion for 2007/08 (National Treasury, 2007, pp. 3, 19). Each province spends on average a third of its annual budget on education (Wildeman, 2005, p. 14). Despite the growth in real spending on education by government, Kraak (2007) argues that there continues to be disconnection and misalignment between the economy and employment opportunities. He notes that a process termed "expansion saturation" has set in with a flattening-off of key educational indicators including: education's declining share of the national budget since 2000; low levels of provisioning for early childhood development (ECD) and adult basic education and training (ABET); declining Matric pass rates; the possible capping of HE enrolments; declines in the enrolment of FET college students and poor throughput rates in schools, colleges and universities (Kraak, 2007, p. 1). Kraak writes: "All of these developments have had the effect of dampening educational supply at the very moment when the economy has shown growth and renewal. South African society has shifted from an era characterised by economic stagnation in the 1990s to one in which the rate of economic growth is far outstripping the ability of supply-side institutions to provide the necessary quantity and quality of skills" (Kraak, 2007, p. 2).

In 2006, there were 17.2 million economically active people in South Africa, of whom 12.8 million were employed. The official unemployment rate is high at approximately 25.5% (down from 26.7% in 2005), but it is much higher in the poorer provinces of the Eastern Cape and Limpopo (32 %), among Africans (30.5%) and especially African women (36.4 %), and nationally amongst 15-24 year-olds (50.2%) and 25-34 year-olds (28.5%) (Statistics South Africa, 2006b; Department of Education, 2006f, pp. 68-70).

Figure 1.2 **GDP growth and inflation, 1998-2006**
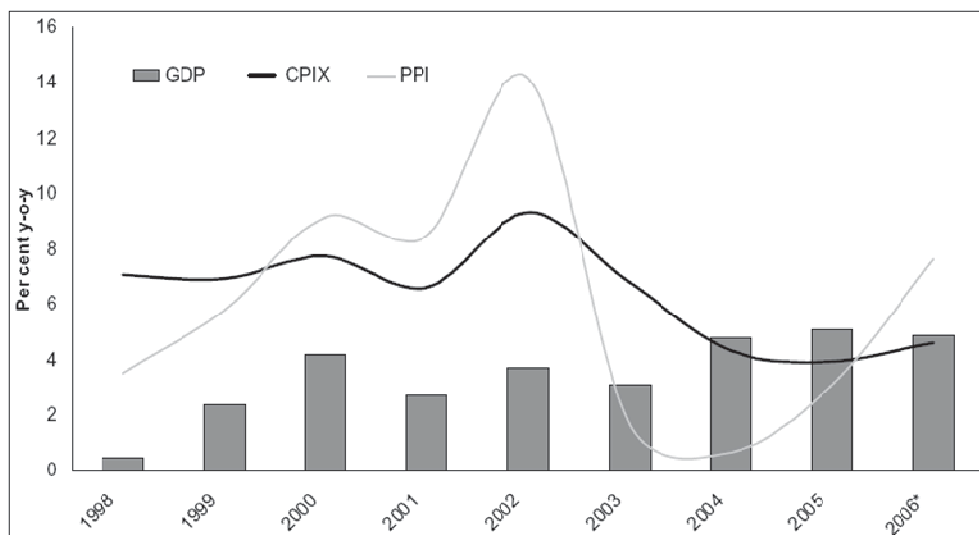
Note: 2006 – first nine months

Source: National Treasury (2007a), "Chapter 1: Overview of the 2007 Budget", *Budget Review 2007*, Communication Directorate, National Treasury, Pretoria, p. 5.

Poverty

Poverty is endemic in South Africa. According to 2003 figures summarised in Table 1.1, 13.9% of the country's population lack access to piped water, 21.3% have no electricity and 43.3% do not have modern sanitation (*i.e.* flush toilets on site) (Department of Education, 2006f, pp. 9-12, 25). Poverty is particularly acute on the urban fringes and in the rural areas. The population profile of the latter, which accommodate about 45% of the population, consist increasingly of households headed by elderly women and containing young children and older relatives. They are very poor, surviving on pensions and child grants and, for the most part, lack formal schooling.

Table 1.1 **Summary of poverty and vulnerability related statistics, 2003**

	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZ	NW	GA	MP	LP	Total
Households lacking access to piped water (%)	0.9	40.1	3.4	3.2	23.0	9.1	0.9	9.4	22.2	13.9
	9	*1*	*6*	*7*	*2*	*5*	*8*	*4*	*3*	
Households lacking access to electricity (%)	6.0	42.8	17.6	15.3	30.7	15.0	11.2	18.9	25.7	21.3
	9	*1*	*5*	*6*	*2*	*7*	*8*	*4*	*3*	
Households lacking access to sanitation (%)	8.5	69.3	27.3	40.8	53.8	56.5	13.1	54.7	83.2	43.3
	9	*2*	*7*	*6*	*5*	*3*	*8*	*4*	*1*	
Share of population in poorest 40% nationally	16.9	54.9	38.6	35.4	45.3	45.8	24.9	41.5	55.4	40.0
	9	*2*	*6*	*7*	*4*	*3*	*8*	*5*	*1*	
Orphanhood rate (single + double)	13.2	23.9	16.2	23.0	23.5	21.4	16.3	19.7	19.0	20.3
	9	*1*	*8*	*3*	*2*	*4*	*7*	*5*	*6*	
Rate of access to social grants	24.7	46.1	37.9	32.7	33.7	34.9	20.2	36.1	47.6	32.8
	8	*2*	*3*	*7*	*6*	*5*	*9*	*4*	*1*	
Disability rate	3.5	2.5	4.1	2.9	1.9	2.9	2.1	2.7	2.7	2.5
	2	*7*	*1*	*4*	*9*	*3*	*8*	*6*	*5*	
Share of households with child hunger	4.9	8.8	6.8	7.4	7.6	10.9	5.4	8.8	4.8	7.0
	8	*2*	*6*	*5*	*4*	*1*	*7*	*3*	*9*	
Average HH ratio of non-workers to workers	1.7	2.2	2.0	1.8	1.9	2.0	1.5	2.1	2.6	1.9
	8	*2*	*5*	*7*	*6*	*4*	*9*	*3*	*1*	
Share of population in rural areas	12.1	66.7	32.5	32.0	55.4	64.4	4.3	60.2	88.1	45.2
	8	*2*	*6*	*7*	*5*	*3*	*9*	*4*	*1*	
Unemployment rate	26.2	49.4	39.2	41.0	45.0	47.1	37.0	41.5	55.8	41.7
	9	*2*	*7*	*6*	*4*	*3*	*8*	*5*	*1*	
Share of 25-64 without grade 9	36.9	56.5	54.6	49.4	45.5	53.3	29.3	50.7	52.5	43.8
	8	*1*	*2*	*6*	*7*	*3*	*9*	*5*	*4*	
Share of 25-64 without grade 12	64.0	78.4	74.9	70.6	69.8	74.5	56.2	72.4	74.3	67.9
	8	*1*	*2*	*6*	*7*	*3*	*9*	*5*	*4*	
Average institution fees (ZAR)	938	244	388	426	444	304	1196	268	144	494
	2	*8*	*5*	*4*	*3*	*6*	*1*	*7*	*9*	
Average poverty ranking	*8*	*1*	*6*	*7*	*5*	*3*	*9*	*4*	*2*	
Human Development Index (UNDP) 2003	*9*	*3*	*7*	*6*	*4*	*2*	*8*	*5*	*1*	

Note: Provincial rankings for each indicator are provided in italics below the relevant indicator, with 1 indicating the worst-off province and 9 the best-off province. Average poverty rankings are the provincial rankings of the average of the rankings for the fourteen indicators.

Source: Department of Education (2006f), *Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the Impact and Outcomes of the Education System on South Africa's Population: Evidence from Household Surveys*, September, Department of Education, Pretoria.

Poverty directly affects the affordability of, access to, and potential benefits from, education. On the one hand, poverty affects a learner's performance at school; but, on the other hand, a good school education can, to some extent, compensate for and break the cycle of poverty (Department of Education, 2006d, p. 76).

The high levels of poverty in South Africa are being addressed, in part, by social grants, primarily in the form of old age pensions, disability grants and child support grants. Nationally, household access to social grants almost trebled between 1995 and 2003, from 11.6% of households to 32.8% (Department of Education, 2006f, p. 19) – see Figure 1.3.

Figure 1.3 **Household access to social grants, by province, 1995-2003**
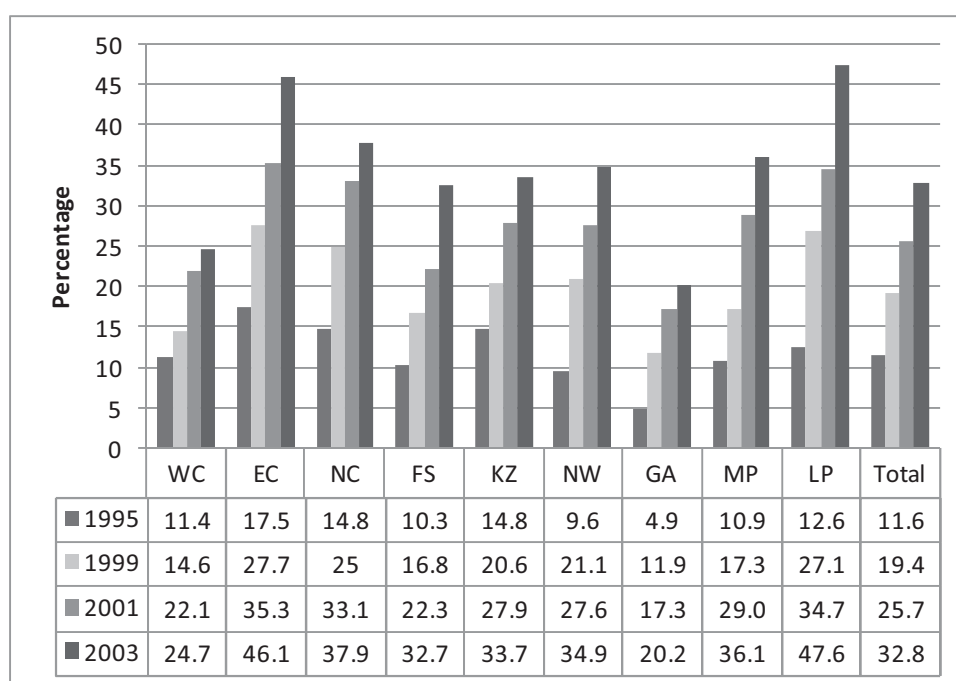
	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZ	NW	GA	MP	LP	Total
■ 1995	11.4	17.5	14.8	10.3	14.8	9.6	4.9	10.9	12.6	11.6
■ 1999	14.6	27.7	25	16.8	20.6	21.1	11.9	17.3	27.1	19.4
■ 2001	22.1	35.3	33.1	22.3	27.9	27.6	17.3	29.0	34.7	25.7
■ 2003	24.7	46.1	37.9	32.7	33.7	34.9	20.2	36.1	47.6	32.8

Source: Department of Education (2006f), *Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the Impact and Outcomes of the Education System on South Africa's Population: Evidence from Household Surveys*, September, Department of Education, Pretoria, p. 19, Figure 9.

However, studies suggest that approximately 22% of children aged 0 to 14 who are eligible to receive the Child Support Grant are not receiving it (Monson, *et al.*, 2006).

A poor child is also often a hungry child, and hunger impacts immediately on school attendance and academic performance. As Figure 1.4 shows, nationally, in 2003, children in 7% of households were always or often hungry, while in a further 17% of households, children sometimes

went hungry. The problem is worse in the Eastern Cape, where children in about 38% of households always, often or sometimes went hungry.

Figure 1.4 **Incidence of hunger amongst children (age 17 and younger) in households, by province, 2003**
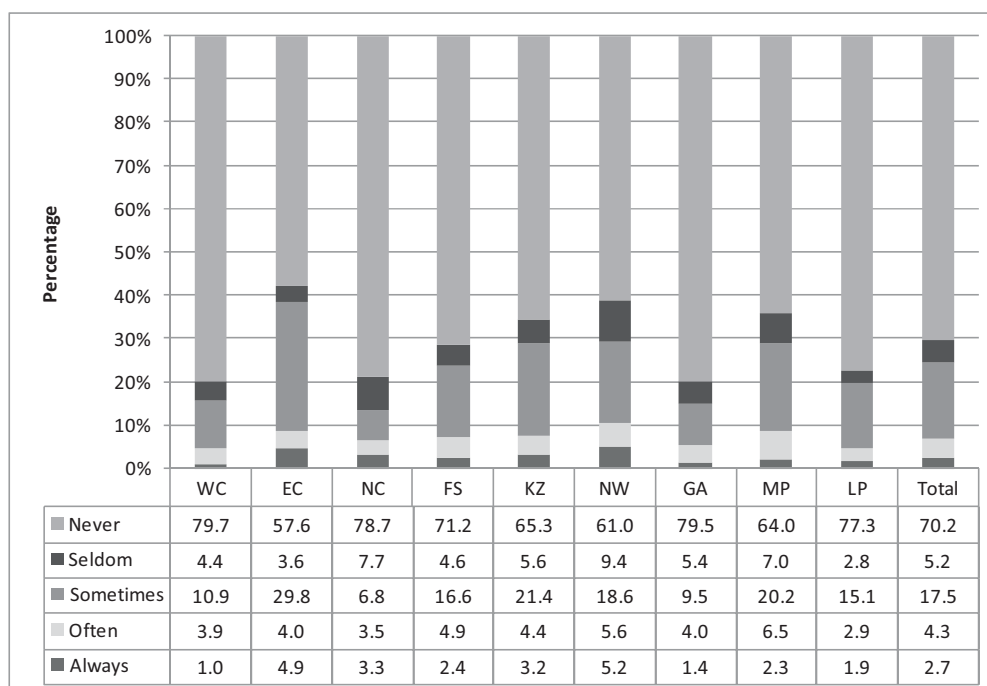
	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZ	NW	GA	MP	LP	Total
■ Never	79.7	57.6	78.7	71.2	65.3	61.0	79.5	64.0	77.3	70.2
■ Seldom	4.4	3.6	7.7	4.6	5.6	9.4	5.4	7.0	2.8	5.2
■ Sometimes	10.9	29.8	6.8	16.6	21.4	18.6	9.5	20.2	15.1	17.5
■ Often	3.9	4.0	3.5	4.9	4.4	5.6	4.0	6.5	2.9	4.3
■ Always	1.0	4.9	3.3	2.4	3.2	5.2	1.4	2.3	1.9	2.7

Source: Department of Education (2006f), *Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the Impact and Outcomes of the Education System on South Africa's Population: Evidence from Household Surveys*, September, Department of Education, Pretoria, p. 21, Figure 10.

Of those children aged 7 to 18 who regularly experience hunger (*i.e.* those who say they always, often or sometimes go hungry), 92.2% (or about 3.4 million children) continue to attend school, a figure only slightly less than the overall attendance figure of 93.5% (Department of Education, 2006f, p. 44). The national school nutrition programme, on which over ZAR 1 billion was spent in 2006/07 and which aims to ensure that the poorest learners have at least one meal per school day (6 million meals served at 18 000 schools in 2006), is no doubt one important reason for this high rate of attendance (Department of Education, 2003d, p. 56; Department of Education, 2007e).

Figure 1.5 **School attendance of 7 to 17-year-olds who regularly experience hunger, by province, 2003**

	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GA	MP	LP	Total
■ Number Attending	164	794	27	181	883	314	375	285	386	3408
Attendance Rate	91.3	91.1	86.7	92.3	91.6	92.1	94.2	94.6	93.4	92.2
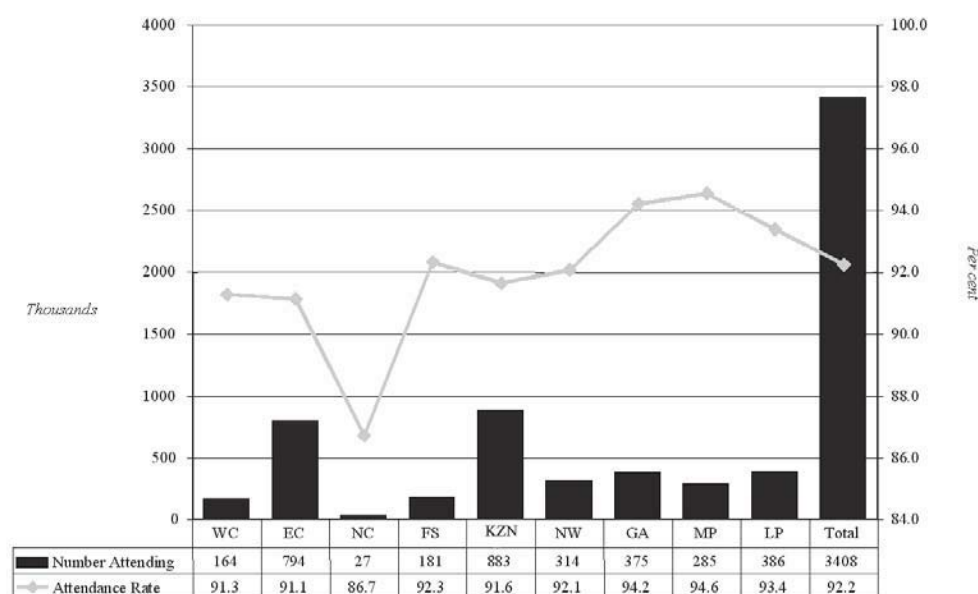
Note: Learners are deemed to regularly experience hunger if they are members of households who indicated that children always, often or sometimes go hungry.

Source: Department of Education (2006f), *Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the Impact and Outcomes of the Education System on South Africa's Population: Evidence from Household Surveys*, September, Department of Education, Pretoria, p. 44, Figure 28.

HIV/AIDS

School age children form a relatively small proportion of the total population infected with HIV: amongst children aged 2 to 18, HIV prevalence is around 5.4% (Motala, *et al*. 2007). However, school attendance might be disrupted by illness, both among children themselves and among their care-givers. In the latter instance, children might miss school because they need to remain at home to look after sick relatives. The impact of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases like tuberculosis (TB) and cholera can be partially judged in terms of the increasing number of orphans. In 2003, 17.4% of children (over 2 million children, predominantly African) had lost one parent, while 3% (371 000 children) had lost both parents.

Figure 1.6 **Single orphans by province, 1995-2003**
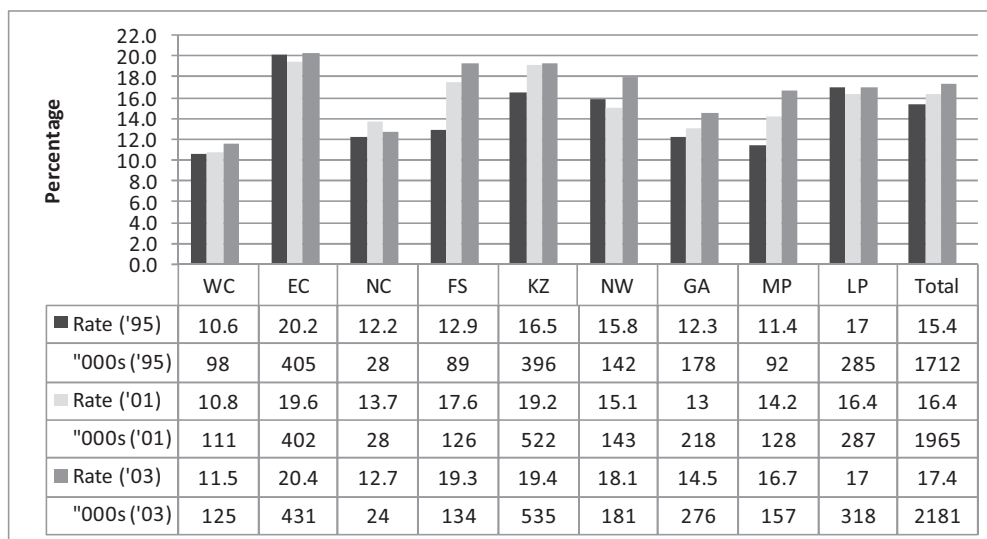
	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZ	NW	GA	MP	LP	Total
■ Rate ('95)	10.6	20.2	12.2	12.9	16.5	15.8	12.3	11.4	17	15.4
"000s ('95)	98	405	28	89	396	142	178	92	285	1712
□ Rate ('01)	10.8	19.6	13.7	17.6	19.2	15.1	13	14.2	16.4	16.4
"000s ('01)	111	402	28	126	522	143	218	128	287	1965
■ Rate ('03)	11.5	20.4	12.7	19.3	19.4	18.1	14.5	16.7	17	17.4
"000s ('03)	125	431	24	134	535	181	276	157	318	2181

Source: Department of Education (2006f), *Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the Impact and Outcomes of the Education System on South Africa's Population: Evidence from Household Surveys*, September, Department of Education, Pretoria, p. 18, Figure 8.

Moreover, the HIV/AIDS pandemic additionally affects the supply of education, in that educators themselves are affected or infected. A 2004 study found that some 12.7% of South African educators are HIV-positive (Shisana, *et al.*, 2005, Ch.4). The national estimated HIV-prevalence rate is about 11% and the HIV positive population is estimated at approximately 5.3 million (Statistics South Africa, 2007a).

Chapter 2: Education in South Africa – An Overview

Historical context

In 1953, the National Party government brought education for black South Africans under central government control and systematically reinforced decades of racially and geographically segregated and financially neglected schooling, despite increasing enrolments and growing skills shortages. The struggle against Apartheid was reignited during the 1970s by secondary school students, forcing the government into a series of political and economic reforms that, however, were too little and too late. In an educational context of inadequate infrastructure, unqualified educators, huge pupil:educator ratios and a biased curriculum, and in the heart of the 1986 State of Emergency, the government was still spending "nine times more on each white learner than it spent on learners in the worst off Bantustans" (Department of Education, 2005a, p. 1).

In the period of negotiations between the African National Congress and the National Party government from 1990 to 1994, the economy stagnated and education continued to deteriorate. The newly elected Government of National Unity was faced, in 1994, with the mammoth task of completely restructuring and rebuilding the education system and redressing the inequities of the past.

There were in 1994 nearly twelve million students, at 27 500 educational institutions, including 330 000 students at the 21 universities and 137 000 students at the 15 technikons. These learners were served by a staff complement of about 470 000 of whom 370 000 are educators. The budget for this service for 1994/95 amounted to just under ZAR 30 billion, which represented 22.5% of the government's budget and nearly 7% of the estimated GDP (Department of Education, 1995, Ch.11, Sections 10 and 11).

Since 1994, the government has worked to transform all facets of the education system. The fragmented and racially duplicated institutions of the Apartheid era have been replaced by a single national system including nine

provincial sub-systems. Consistent and persistent efforts are being made to make education structurally accessible to all who were previously denied, or had limited access to it, and thus to realise the ideal of nine years of compulsory schooling. Marginalised or vulnerable groups have received particular attention in the form of inclusive education programmes and pro-poor funding policies. Government policy on learners with special needs emphasises the mainstreaming of learners with mild learning disabilities into ordinary schools; and school fee exemptions and, most recently, "no fee" schools have assisted indigent learners into schools.

Moreover, education financing has been redirected specifically towards considerations of equity, redress, accessibility and affordability. School governance has been decentralised, with greater autonomy devolved onto school governing bodies (including the right to charge fees). Educators' qualifications have been improved. A new curriculum high on knowledge and skills and based on the values of the Constitution has been introduced and streamlined and procedures set in place to monitor educational quality. The higher education system has been reformed and rationalised, and a new further education and training system is being established. In the space of 14 years, a far more equitable, efficient and better quality system of education has been created; nevertheless, Apartheid's many inequalities have not yet been eradicated, as will be noted in subsequent sections.

Policy and legislative framework

The 1996 Constitution requires education to be transformed and democratised in accordance with the values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racism and non-sexism, and guarantees the right to basic education for all, including adult basic education. The Constitution determines that the three (national, provincial and local) spheres of government, "distinctive, interdependent and interrelated", should function together co-operatively; and, since South Africa has no tradition of municipal responsibility for education, it provides that the national sphere has exclusive legislative responsibility for tertiary education and shares concurrent responsibility with the provincial spheres for all other levels of education.

The Preamble to the South African Schools Act, which became law in November 1996, explains its rationale as follows:

> *…this country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for the development of all our*

people's talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society, protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages, uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators, and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State; ... (Republic of South Africa, 1996c).

Through the National Education Policy Act of 1996, the Minister of Education, working with the provinces, sets the political agenda and determines the national norms and standards for education planning, provision, governance, monitoring and evaluation. The nine provincial departments of education are responsible for implementing education policy and programmes aligned with the national goals. They make funding decisions and exercise executive responsibility for all general education and training (GET) – from grade R (or grade 0, the reception year) to grades 1-3 (the Foundation Phase of GET), grades 4-6 (the Intermediate Phase) and grades 7-9 (the Senior Phase) –, as well as for further education and training (FET) from grades 10-12 and for formal adult basic education and training (ABET).

The South African Schools Act 1996 aims to provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools. It seeks to ensure that all learners have right of access to quality education without discrimination, and it makes schooling compulsory for all children from the year they turn 7 to the year in which they turn 15 (or the end of grade 9, whichever comes first). It regulates the provision of public schools and education places by provinces, the governance of schools (in particular the establishment and operation of school governing bodies), the funding of schools (including state responsibilities, school budgets, fees and the framework for funding rules or norms) and the establishment and funding of independent (private) schools.

The Further Education and Training Colleges Act of 2006 supersedes the Further Education and Training Act of 1998 and its aim is to regulate further education and training, which is defined as "all learning and training programmes leading to qualifications at levels 2 to 4 of the National Qualifications Framework or such [other] levels determined by SAQA …, which levels are above general education but below higher education" (Republic of South Africa, 2006c, Section 1). Further education and training, therefore, comprises the senior secondary component of schooling (grades 10-12) as well as further education and training colleges. The final three years of secondary school are not compulsory, but government is

constitutionally obliged to make further education and training progressively available. Learners can acquire a FET qualification by completing grade 12 in the schooling system, by attaining equivalent certification from one of 50 public FET colleges (rationalised down from 152 in 2002) or through opportunities offered by the private college sector.

The Adult Basic Education and Training Act, no.52 of 2000, provides for the establishment of public and private adult learning centres, funding, governance and quality assurance mechanisms.

Early childhood development falls under the White Paper of 2001, which aims to achieve the full participation of five-year-olds in grade R education by 2010, as well as improve quality, curricula and educator development.

Education White Paper 6 on inclusive education (2001) describes the government's intent to implement inclusive education at all levels in the system by 2020, facilitating the inclusion of vulnerable learners and reducing barriers to learning.

Higher Education is the exclusive responsibility of the national Department of Education. The Higher Education Act of 1997 provides for a single, nationally co-ordinated system of higher education, overseen and quality assured by the statutory Council on Higher Education (CHE). The National Student Financial Aid Scheme Act of 1999 provides for the granting of loans and bursaries to eligible students at public higher education institutions, as well as the administration of such loans and bursaries.

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act of 1995 provides for the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which forms the scaffolding for a national learning system, integrating education and training at all levels. Accountable to the minister of education in association with the minister of labour, SAQA oversees the setting of standards and quality assurance, records learner achievements and registers qualifications on the NQF.

Quality assurance and certification for all non-higher education, that is, for the general and further education and training bands of the National Qualifications Framework, is undertaken by the statutory body, Umalusi, in terms of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act of 2001.

Public school educators, accounting for 95% of all South African educators, are employed by provincial education departments but their terms and conditions of employment are governed under the national Employment of Educators Act of 1998. National collective bargaining is undertaken in

the Education Labour Relations Council between departments of education and educators' unions in terms of the Labour Relations Act, 1995. The registration and professional development of educators and the setting, maintenance and protection of ethical and professional standards is the responsibility of the South African Council for Educators (SACE) under its own act of 2000.

The revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (Department of Education, 2002a) was adopted in 2002. It aims to develop the full potential of all learners as citizens of a democratic South Africa. It seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent, literate, numerate and multi-skilled. The NCS has been phased in gradually throughout the grades and culminates in the phase-in of the new curriculum in grade 12 in 2008. The National Protocol on Assessment, which regulates the recording and reporting of learner achievement of learning outcomes for grades R to 12 has been finalised and gazetted.

Skills development is addressed in terms of the Skills Development Act of 1998, and is the responsibility of the national Ministry of Labour, which administers a statutory National Skills Authority and 24 statutory Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) covering all sectors of the economy, private and public. The ministers of education and labour have joint responsibility for an overarching Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa. This was first published in 2001 and is currently under review (Department of Education and Department of Labour, 2001).

Financing of education

In the 2006/07 financial year, South African education departments spent nearly ZAR 93 billion on education. This excludes private spending on schooling and education (in the form of fees and other private inputs), as well as spending on education by other government departments (for example the spending by health departments on nursing colleges and agriculture departments on agricultural colleges).

Education departments' spending in 2006/07 comprised 5.3% of gross domestic product and about 18% of consolidated government expenditure. Both these proportions have been declining over the last decade (from as high as 7% in 1996 in the case of % GDP). As rapid escalation of education expenditure (mostly resulting from escalating personnel costs) in the mid-1990s was brought under control, the economy showed relatively healthy growth and certain other expenditure areas (especially social grants) escalated rapidly. Although education expenditure as a proportion of total government expenditure has diminished, the South African economic "pie"

has grown fast enough to result in an education "slice" that is some 49% larger in real monetary terms in 2005 than it was in 1994 (Department of Education, 2006d, p. 16).

In the context of other comparable countries, education spending in South Africa as a proportion of the GDP seems high at face value, although below an oft-quoted UNESCO benchmark of 6%. It has also been argued that this high proportion is due mostly to the relatively high level of educator salaries and that spending on other inputs seem to be below some international norms (Department of Education, 2006d, p. 28) – a further reduction in the ratio might therefore have negative consequences.

While the relative trend in education spending is therefore a concern, education spending has been growing in real terms compared to the early 1990s. Both provincial (mostly school level education) and national education (mostly higher education institutions) will be growing at more than 5% per year in real terms over the next three years, according to Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) budgets, continuing the trend of strong real growth in recent years. Figure 2.2, relating to provincial education expenditure, illustrates the recent trajectory: education expenditure peaking around 1996 and thereafter declining, but recovering to pre-1996 real levels fairly quickly and maintaining real growth in the late 1990s and after 2000.

Figure 2.1 **Education expenditure in South Africa (constant 2004 ZAR)**
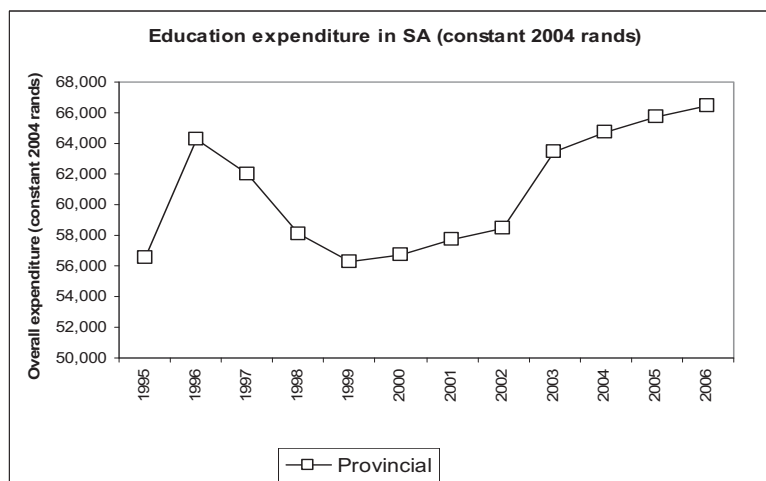
Source: Department of Education (2007b), *Education/Treasury Sector Overview*, 18 April, Department of Education, Pretoria.

Education expenditure takes place at the provincial level and the national level. Provinces fund education from their equitable share allocations from the national fiscus, conditional grants from the national department and (minimal) own revenue. In 2006/07, provincial spending including conditional grant spending, all of which goes primarily to public school education, comprised 86.5% of education expenditure. The remaining expenditure (13.5%) came from the national department, the bulk of which comprises subsidies to higher education.

While provincial education spending will remain dominated by spending on primary and secondary public ordinary schools, a number of further trends can be identified:

- Real spending has escalated quite rapidly in recent years (above 5% per year) and will continue to do so over the medium term in spite of education spending becoming smaller as a proportion of GDP and consolidated government expenditure.

- Personnel expenditure has declined from over 90% of total education expenditure in the mid- to late 1990s to below 80% in 2006/07. This permitted expenditure on non-personnel items (such as learner support materials, stationery, maintenance and utilities) and on physical infrastructure (such as new school buildings) to increase very rapidly in recent years (see also Wildeman, 2005, p. 33; Motala, et al., 2007, Section 7.2.3.3). This has been a major achievement in getting a better balance between the different educational inputs required.

- Given modest growth and even some declines in learner number, these trends in real expenditure have allowed for real increases in per learner expenditure in the school system.

- There has been a significant improvement in funding equity, both between provinces and schools as increased real funding interacted with pro-poor funding norms in terms of the South African Schools Act. Concentration ratios (Gustafsson and Patel, 2006) have equalised very rapidly and, according to one measure, public spending per African learner had increased by 75% between 1991 and 2005 (Gustafsson, 2007). Some have questioned the impact of this funding shift, arguing that the impact has been less marked (or absent) in terms of real educational opportunities and educational adequacy.

In 2006/07, the average expenditure per learner in public schools was estimated at about ZAR 5 500 (see also National Treasury, 2007 reflecting a

higher number as a result of including all provincial education expenditure and not only spending on public ordinary schools).

Provincial education expenditure is classified into eight budget programmes, namely: administration; public ordinary school education; independent school subsidies; public special school education; further education and training; adult basic education and training; early childhood development; and auxiliary and associated services.

A breakdown of total provincial education expenditure across programmes and provinces is provided in Figure 2.2. This indicates levels and potential trade-offs. For purposes of improving equity, quality or efficiency, a relatively small transfer of funds out of public ordinary schools could massively increase expenditure in any one of the other programmes; and efficiency gains in administration (the 2nd largest programme, accounting for about 7% of overall provincial education expenditure) could also translate into substantial monetary gains for other programmes (Department of Education, 2006d, p. 57).

Figure 2.2 **Total provincial education expenditure across programmes and provinces in 2005**
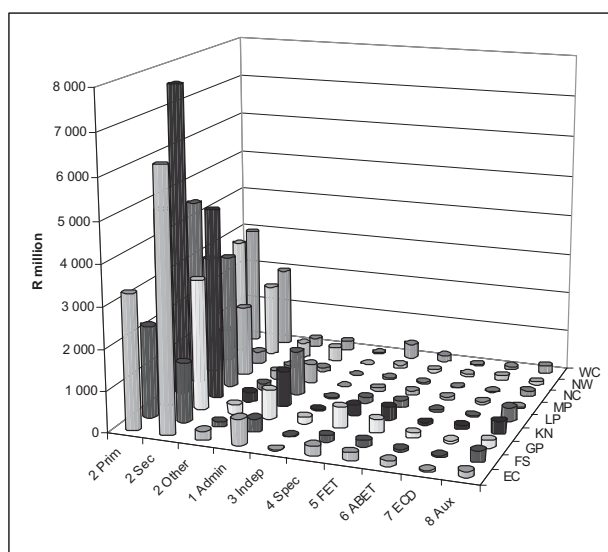
Note: The largest programme category – Public Ordinary Schools – is broken down into "public primary schools", "public secondary schools", and "other" (or sub-programmes that do not clearly fall under either primary or secondary schools); R = ZAR.

Source: Provincial Budget Statements 2005, in Department of Education (2006d), *2005 Education Investment Review: Key trends and Policy Implications*, 10 October, Department of Education, Pretoria, p. 58.

Table 2.1 provides a summary of the components of the education system in South Africa in 2005. In 2005, the education system (excluding private higher education and private further education and training, as well as ECD at independent centres) accommodated nearly 14 million learners of which the bulk (12.2 million or 88%) were in the school system. While the independent school sector has grown in recent years, it is fairly concentrated in a couple of urban centres and accommodates only 2.6% of the number of school learners and 3.8% of the number of schools. With 362 670 educators in the public school system, the system is a very large employer.

The second largest component is public higher education, with about 737 000 learners. This is about double the number of learners at FET Colleges (376 000). The relative number of FET students reduces further if there is a focus on full-time equivalent learners, which is also the case for ABET. The absence of a typical institutional pyramid in terms of learning institutions (with schools at the base, a much smaller FET college or vocational system and then a higher education system that is smaller than the FET sector) has been identified as inappropriate in South Africa.

Table 2.1 **Learner and educator numbers in schools and other educational institutions in South Africa, 2005**

		Learners	Teachers	Institutions	Learner: teacher ratio
Public schools	Primary	7 588 987	224 439	18 857	33.8
	Secondary	3 769 255	120 377	5 668	31.3
	Combined	385 018	12 857	674	29.9
	Intermediate	159 056	4 997	371	31.8
	Total	**11 902 316**	**362 670**	**25 570**	**32.8**
Independant schools	Primary	92 337	4 518	403	20.4
	Secondary	59 450	3 570	183	16.7
	Combined	163 662	11 375	436	14.4
	Total	**315 449**	**19 463**	**1 022**	**16.2**
Total public and independent schools		**12 217 765**	**382 133**	**26 592**	**32.0**
Other	Adult education	269 140	17 181	2 278	15.7
	Special education	87 865	7 394	404	11.9
	Further education colleges	377 584	6 407	50	58.9
	Early childhood education	246 911	9 000	4 815	27.4
	Public higher education	737 472	15 315	23	48.2
	Total other	**1 718 972**	**55 297**	**7 570**	**31.1**
Grand total		**13 936 737**	**437 430**	**34 162**	**31.9**

Source: Department of Education (2006e), *Education Statistics in South Africa at a Glance in 2005*, November, Department of Education, Pretoria.

The following section examines the different sectors in more detail.

Chapter 3: The Components (Sectors) of the Education System

Early childhood development (ECD)

Policy and key targets

One of the Department of Education's strategic objectives is to extend quality integrated early childhood development services, including pre-school and the reception school year (grade R), to the most marginalised communities. With regard to pre-school or early childhood development, education authorities play a supportive role to the Department of Social Development, the lead department in terms of the Children's Act 2005. With regard to the reception year, the national education department determines policy and monitors, while provincial departments provide the services, with independent provision also playing a role.

Cabinet has approved the National Integrated Plan on Early Childhood Development (focusing on learners before they enter the school system). The Department of Education works in collaboration with the ECD Interdepartmental Committee, which comprises officials from the departments of education, social development and health. Education is primarily responsible for curriculum matters, educator education and monitoring.

The reception year, grade R (for children aged 4 turning 5) is being implemented through programmes at public primary schools, at community-based sites and through independent provision. The target set out in Education White Paper 5 is to reach full coverage of grade R by 2010, with 85 % of provision located in public primary schools and 15 % through community sites.

The key strategic focus for the South African education system, flowing from the evidence of low quality coming from standardised assessments, is to improve quality of education outcomes and reduce wastage in the system.

Potentially the most powerful way of effecting this is to start improvements at the foundation level and at the pre-school phase in particular.

Current status

Coverage of the appropriate cohort has recently increased significantly. The 2005 *General Household Survey* (Statistics South Africa, 2006) reported an increase in the enrolment of five-year-olds from 40% of the age group in 2002 to almost 62% in 2005. However, much work needs to be done, since a high proportion of grade R provision depends on fee payments, ECD practitioners are poorly paid, many have no professional training and the quality of provision has not yet reached the desired standard.

The target population for grade R places is about 990 000. Currently there are approximately 424 000 grade R learners in public ordinary schools of which 380 000 are publicly funded. There are 17 000 grade R learners in independent schools and perhaps as many as 290 000 learners in community centres. This would provide an upper estimate of "coverage" of about 70% in 2006. Coverage is, however, disproportionate in community centres and less than 70% of the covered are publicly funded. An indication of low cost and low quality implementation is given by the average ECD budget per five-year-old, which was ZAR 686 per learner in 2006.

There is therefore strong evidence for a need to expand places (only 8 497 out of 18 857 primary schools offered grade R in 2006), as well as for the need to improve quality through increased resourcing for personnel, facilities and complementary inputs.

A multi-media ECD strategy has been developed together with the South African Broadcasting Corporation. Draft early stimulation programmes have been prepared for children from birth to four years, which will be introduced as part of the national integrated ECD plan in 2007.

Unit standards at levels 1-4 of the National Qualifications Framework have been developed for the training of ECD practitioners for grade R and the early years. Training materials for the new qualifications and provision of learnerships for ECD practitioners will follow.

Financing and obstacles

National norms and standards for grade R funding have been prepared based on the approach in White Paper 5. These norms focus on progressively providing more place at public schools through governing board (not government) appointment of educators. This is to provide more flexibility in expansion and to contain costs.

The current model relies on a low average educator cost based on SGB appointments. There are doubts whether, in the long term, such a strategy is compatible with improving quality. Over time, remuneration will have to reflect what is needed to attract and incentivise good quality educators. Generally, the bid assumes that good quality grade R can be provided at a lower cost than other grades, which might be optimistic. Assumed class sizes (30) might also be on the big side for effective teaching at this level. The current model on which the funding bid is based therefore holds significant quality risks.

There are also quality risks in that currently there is insufficient monitoring approaches and capacity in place. The risk is therefore that fiscal expansion takes place without commensurate improvement in access and quality.

In addition, there are implementation risks – there are substantial challenges, assuming funding is provided, in putting the necessary human resources in place (training, recruitment), as well as facilities.

Budgets for grade R (a separate budget programme in provincial budgets) have been growing rapidly and across all provinces. From an estimated ZAR 377 million in 2003/04 it is projected to reach ZAR 1.3 billion in 2009/10. This has underpinned expanding access. However, current budgets do not allow for universal enrolment in quality services by 2010. This relates both to a need for additional places and for improving quality. Currently, places are provided at very low costs – implying inappropriate facilities and inadequately trained educators.

Schools (grades 1 to 12)

Enrolment

South Africa can be said to be close to achieving universal basic education (96.6% enrolment for 7-15 year-olds in 2003 (Department of Education, 2006f, p. 37) with almost all children of school-going age entering school and the majority reaching the end of grade 9. However, the Ministerial Committee on Learner Retention, established by the minister of education in April 2007, found that there was a high failure rate, repetition and drop-out in grades 10-12.

Figure 3.1 indicates attendance of young people aged 5 to 24 in an educational institution (*i.e.* not only in schools) from 2002 to 2006. Over 90% of children aged 7 to 16 and about 80% of children aged 17 and 18 were attending an educational institution in 2006. The figure also shows

improvements in attendance of children aged five, from 40% in 2002 to 62 % in 2006. Similarly, there are improvements in attendance of children aged six, from 70 % in 2002 to 84% in 2006, which is in part a result of the phasing-in of grade R provision, intended to be fully operational by 2010.

Figure 3.1 **Attendance rates at educational institutions by age, 2002 to 2006**

	5yr	6yr	7yr	8yr	9yr	10yr	11yr	12yr	13yr	14yr	15yr	16yr	17yr	18yr	19yr	20-24yr
2002	40.2	70.0	91.0	96.6	97.5	98.0	98.4	98.4	97.1	96.7	93.2	91.3	85.4	73.7	59.6	28.3
2003	49.4	76.0	92.5	97.3	98.3	98.2	98.8	98.5	98.4	96.6	95.9	92.2	84.1	75.4	63.2	28.2
2004	53.7	83.3	96.8	98.4	98.7	99.0	97.9	98.9	97.9	97.7	94.8	91.0	87.2	75.5	63.8	29.3
2005	59.6	85.9	96.0	97.7	98.4	98.8	99.3	99.0	98.1	98.2	95.2	91.1	85.5	71.7	59.9	25.6
2006	62.1	84.4	96.5	98.3	98.6	98.6	98.4	98.4	98.1	97.2	94.6	90.9	86.1	74.4	62.9	27.2

Source: Statistics South Africa (2007b) *General Household Survey 2006*, Statistics South Africa, Pretoria.

Figure 3.2 **School attendance of 7-15 year-olds and 16-18 year-olds, 1995 and 2003**
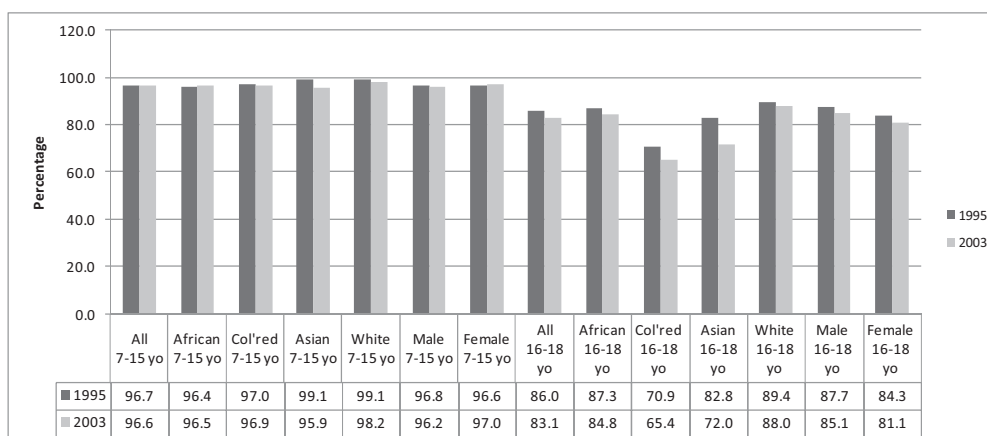
	All 7-15 yo	African 7-15 yo	Col'red 7-15 yo	Asian 7-15 yo	White 7-15 yo	Male 7-15 yo	Female 7-15 yo	All 16-18 yo	African 16-18 yo	Col'red 16-18 yo	Asian 16-18 yo	White 16-18 yo	Male 16-18 yo	Female 16-18 yo
1995	96.7	96.4	97.0	99.1	99.1	96.8	96.6	86.0	87.3	70.9	82.8	89.4	87.7	84.3
2003	96.6	96.5	96.9	95.9	98.2	96.2	97.0	83.1	84.8	65.4	72.0	88.0	85.1	81.1

Source: Department of Education (2006f), *Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the Impact and Outcomes of the Education System on South Africa's Population: Evidence from Household Surveys*, September, Department of Education, Pretoria, p. 32, Figure 17.

Figure 3.2 reveals a significant drop in attendance rates for 16-18 year-olds in comparison with 7-15 year-olds. Moreover, coloured and Asian 16-18 year-olds, with attendance rates below the national average of 72%, were much more likely to drop out than Africans and whites, suggesting that dropout is not only influenced by necessity or poverty (or else dropout rates among Africans should be highest), but perhaps also by different perceptions of the value of education amongst certain groups (Department of Education, 2006f, p. 33). The figure for Asians is contrary to what we know. The low figures for this group can be accounted for by data error – namely, the sample for Asians in the study is too low.

The national average learner:educator ratio at ordinary schools was 32:1, ranging from 29:1 in Gauteng to 33:1 in Limpopo. The national average for public schools was 32:1 and for independent schools, 16:1 (Department of Education, 2006e, p. 6).

Repetition

The grade repetition rate measures the number of learners who repeat a given grade in a given year, expressed as a percentage of the previous year's enrolment in the same grade. In 1998, in order to improve the internal efficiency of the education system, an admissions policy (Republic of South Africa, 1998a) was issued that set norms for learners to proceed through school with their age cohort. The policy makes provision for a learner to repeat only once per phase, but automatic promotion is not allowed. In order to assist learners to keep up with their peers, the policy provides that "a learner's needs must be attended to through the efforts of the learner, and his or her educators, with support from the learner's family and peers".

Grade 11 records the highest repetition rate of all the grades, most likely learners who were considered at risk of failing their senior certificate examination (SCE) in grade 12 or were discouraged from entering grade 12. This practice of "gatekeeping" became fairly common as schools tried to improve their SCE results, particularly after 1997.

Gender parity

Contrary to the situation in many developing countries, the data for South Africa show that about the same number of girls attend schools as do boys (Department of Education, 2005b, p. 7) and that gender parity has been reached. However, in primary schools there are more boys than girls, with Figure 3.3 showing the tipping point at grade 6, where the number of girl learners starts to exceed that of boys. This could be related to higher drop-out or higher repetition rates (or both) for boys.

Figure 3.3 **Percentage of girls by grade in South Africa**
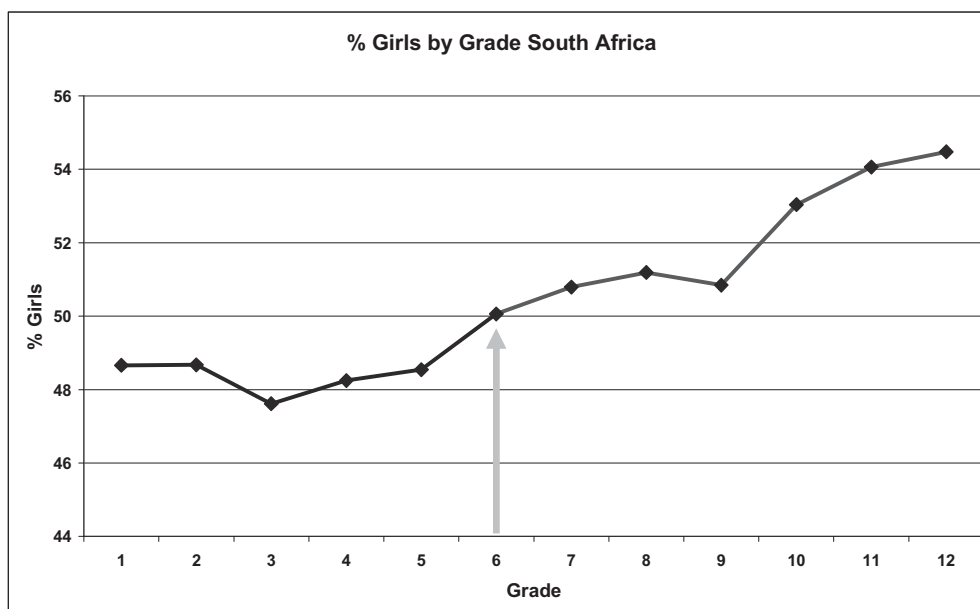
Source: Department of Education (2005b), *Education Statistics in South Africa at a Glance in 2004*, November, Department of Education, Pretoria.

Levels of education attainment

In 1995, 88% of the population aged 9 to 23 had attained grade 7. By 2003, this had risen to 93%. Grade 9 marks the completion of the compulsory schooling phase and 82% had completed grade 9 in 2003, up from 75% in 1995. There has been a small increase in the grade 11 and grade 12 attainment rate.

Learner achievement

From an absolute and comparative perspective, and in the assessment of most commentators, learners' levels of achievement in South Africa are not commensurate with the financial investment being made. This is the conclusion reached on the basis of both local and international measures and studies of learning achievement that are available.

In 1995, the first Education White Paper had referred to the fact that "only one in five black students choose physical science and mathematics in

Standard 8, and the trend of performance in the senior certificate examinations has been low overall" (Department of Education, 1995, Ch. 5, Section 48). Ten years later, the Department of Education's grade 3 and grade 6 systemic evaluation reports (Department of Education, 2003b; Department of Education, 2005c) continued to indicate generally poor performance. Literacy scores for the grade 3 systemic evaluation averaged at 68% for listening comprehension, but learners achieved only 39% for reading comprehension, 30% for numeracy, and 54% for life skills (Department of Education, 2003b).

The achievement rates of learners in the grade 6 evaluation were even poorer than those in grade 3, with learners obtaining an average of 38% for language (the language of learning and teaching, or LOLT), 27 % for mathematics and 41% for natural sciences (Department of Education, 2005c). Table 3.1 presents the average scores for language, mathematics and natural sciences, by province.

Table 3.1 **Grade 6 systemic evaluation: provincial averages for all three learning areas**

Province	Language	Mathematics	Natural Sciences
EC	30.16	23.40	36.01
FS	38.64	30.80	44.14
GP	51.58	33.76	50.00
KZN	36.92	26.38	39.65
LP	25.54	19.38	32.57
MP	35.64	25.28	41.01
NW	34.70	24.26	38.43
NC	53.02	32.97	46.89
WC	58.79	40.22	51.93
National	38.03	27.08	40.77

Source: Department of Education (2005c), *Grade 6 Systemic Evaluation Report*, Department of Education, Pretoria.

There are great variations by province, as shown in Table 3.1, with provinces such as Limpopo having the lowest averages across the three learning areas. The Western Cape performed best of all provinces across the three learning areas. Learners in rural schools performed worse than their counterparts in the urban areas.

Three international learning achievement assessments, namely, the Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) project, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Southern and Eastern

African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SAQMEC), indicate that South African children perform exceptionally poorly as compared to the other countries that participated.

The MLA project was conducted in several African countries in 1999 and measured the competencies of grade 4 learners in numeracy, literacy and life skills. Of the 12 participating countries, South Africa scored the lowest average in numeracy, the fifth lowest in literacy and the third lowest in life skills.

Table 3.2 **MLA percentage average scores for numeracy, literacy and life skills, 1999**

	Numeracy average	**Literacy average**	**Life skills average**
Botswana	51.0	48.0	56.0
Madagascar	43.7	54.7	72.1
Malawi	43.0	35.0	77.0
Mali	43.6	51.8	56.9
Mauritius	58.5	61.0	58.0
Morocco	56.4	67.6	62.3
Niger	37.3	41.1	44.7
Senegal	39.7	48.9	45.7
South Africa	30.2	48.1	47.1
Tunisia	60.4	77.9	74.7
Uganda	49.3	58.7	66.8
Zambia	36.0	43.0	51.0

Source: Chinapah, V. (2000), *With Africa for Africa: Towards Quality Education for All*, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria; Strauss, J. and M. Burger (2000), *Monitoring Learning Achievement Project*, Department of Education, Pretoria.

The TIMSS studies measured grade 8 learning achievement in mathematics and science in several countries in 1995, 1999 and 2003. South Africa's performance was disappointing in both the 1999 and 2003 TIMSS studies. Learners attained lower average test scores in both mathematics and science than all other participating countries (including other African countries, such as Morocco, Tunisia and Botswana). Out of an imputed maximum score of 800, the average South African mathematics score was 275 in TIMSS 1999 and 264 in TIMSS 2003. The average science score was even lower: 243 in TIMSS 1999 and 244 in TIMSS 2003. Table 3.3 shows the 1999 and 2003 average scores for mathematics and science.

Table 3.3 **Average score in the TIMSS 1999 and TIMSS 2003 grade 8 mathematics and science achievement tests**

	Mathematics	Science
TIMSS 1999		
SA average score	275	243
International average	487	488
TIMSS 2003		
SA average score	264	244
International average	467	474

Source: Human Science Research Council (2004) "Performance Scores in International Maths and Science Study Reflective of South African Inequalities", media brief, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria.

The low levels of learner achievement nationally can be further differentiated in terms of school quintiles. There is a great difference between the performance of quintile 5 schools (the least poor schools) and of the rest of the schooling system. While performance scores (in mathematics) are between 15% and 30% higher in quintile 4 schools than quintile 1 schools, scores in quintile 5 schools are 50% to 75% higher than in quintile 4 schools. The Department of Education adds that learners from historically advantaged white communities constitute only slightly more than a quarter of quintile 5 learners, which implies that access to educational quality at the GET band by race groups discriminated against under Apartheid is now fairly substantial (Department of Education, 2006d, p. 75).

These learner achievements, or rather, the lack thereof, indicate that, while a very large number of children have access to basic education in South Africa, a significant proportion of these learners do not achieve at a level sufficient to acquire basic skills necessary for the next phase of schooling. Meaningful access to education, then, as opposed to mere physical access, remains elusive for the majority (Crouch, 2005).

As the Department of Education has acknowledged, and leaving aside the other problems reported by learners such as a lack of books, poor facilities, large classes and corporal punishment, the 2003 TIMSS study showed that while South African educators have "extensive development opportunities", "the evidence of poor learner performance shows that these have limited impact" (Department of Education, 2006i, p. 17).

Table 3.4 shows the Matric (National Senior Certificate or grade 12) pass rate from 1995 to 2007. The 2007 pass rate is 65.2% and is higher than the pass rate of 1997, which was 47.1%.

Table 3.4 **Total number of learners who wrote and passed Matric from 1995-2007**

Years	No. of candidates who passed	No. of candidates who wrote	% pass
1995	283 742	531 453	53.4
1996	279 487	513 868	54.4
1997	264 795	558 970	47.4
1998	272 488	552 384	49.3
1999	249 831	511 159	48.9
2000	283 294	489 298	57.9
2001	277 206	449 332	61.7
2002	305 774	443 765	68.9
2003	322 492	440 096	73.3
2004	330 717	467 890	70.7
2005	347 184	508 180	68.3
2006	351 503	527 950	66.6
2007	368 217	564 381	65.2

Source: EMIS, *Report on the Senior Certificate Examination*, Department of Education, Pretoria.

Figure 3.4 is the graph revealing a downward drift from 1994 to 2007. This is probably a consequence of a larger number of learners being enrolled in the matric examinations or changes to the standards and quality of examination papers. The number of candidates who wrote matric examination in 2007 has increased by 124 285 compared to the number of candidates who wrote matric examination in 2003 (see Table 3.4).

Figure 3.4 **Matric (National Senior Certificate or grade 12) pass rates, 1994-2007**
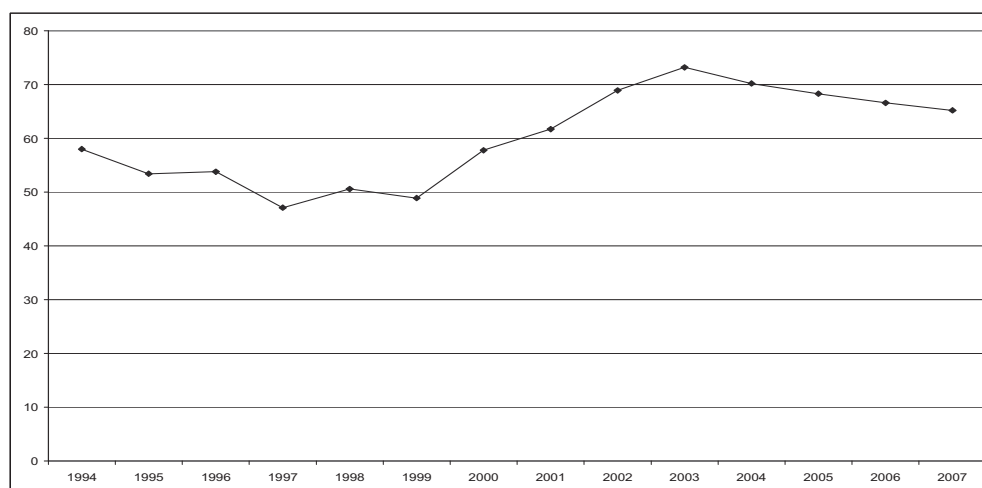
Source: Department of Education (2007a), *Education/Treasury Sector Overview*, 18 April, Department of Education, Pretoria.

Table 3.5 shows the percentage of candidates who obtained university endorsement per province. The proportion of learners obtaining university endorsement dropped from 18.6% in 2003 to 15.6% in 2007. Western Cape continues to have the highest percentage of endorsements from 2003 to 2007. The fact that the university endorsement continues to be low or even declining presents a challenge for the education system.

Table 3.5 **Percentage of candidates who obtained university endorsement per province**

Provinces	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Eastern Cape	8.1	9.5	8.8	8.8	10.1	9.4
Limpopo	17.5	18.9	20.9	17.7	13.3	11.7
Mpumalanga	10.8	12.4	12.5	12.7	14.0	12.7
North West	14.5	15.3	12.4	12.1	14.6	15.9
Kwazulu Natal	18.1	20.5	18.9	17.4	15.2	14.5
Free State	18.8	22.8	22.2	21.9	19.7	18.9
Northern Cape	18.3	19.6	18.7	15.3	15.5	11.9
Gauteng	21.7	23.3	22.1	21.1	23.2	20.4
Western Cape	26.5	26.6	27.1	26.9	26.6	24.7
National average	**16.9**	**18.6**	**18.2**	**17.0**	**16.3**	**15.6**

Source: EMIS, *Report on the Senior Certificate Examination*, Department of Education, Pretoria.

Foundation for learning

In response to poor learning outcomes achieved by South African learners in national and international learner assessment tasks, the minister of education launched a three year "foundation for learning" strategy on 18 March 2008.

The strategy aims to ensure quality education in the first years that a child spends at school. The strategy is therefore focused on grades R to 3 and is consolidated in the intermediate phase in grades 4 to 6. The strategy calls for a commitment by learners, parents and educators to the challenges of learning. It aims to lay a solid foundation in languages and mathematics in the foundation and intermediate phases. The projected measure of the campaign is to increase average learner performance in languages and mathematics to no less than 50% in the three years of the campaign. A national evaluation is planned for 2011, when learners' abilities in languages and mathematics will be assessed.

As per the strategy, notional time in primary schools will have to accommodate 30 minutes of reading and 10 minutes of mental mathematics,

as well as 20 minutes of written mathematics every day. Learner assessment will occur on a regular basis with standardised assessment tasks provided by the Department of Education. Schools are expected to forward their results to the districts, which will submit the results of each school to the provincial education department, who, in turn will submit these to the Minister.

Teacher development forms one of the cornerstones of the campaign, since principals as well as teachers will have to know exactly what must be done to provide and track quality education. Principals are challenged to develop strategic plans to motivate and inspire teachers and learners to attain these targets. The campaign calls for collaboration between schools and districts for peer support and learning so as to enhance teaching strategies.

Problems perceived by learners

The main problems experienced by learners at school (see Figure 3.5), are (in order of priority): a lack of books, high fees, poor facilities, large class sizes, a lack of educators and poor teaching (Department of Education, 2006f, p. 40).

Figure 3.5 **Problems experienced at school by 7-18 year-olds, 2003**
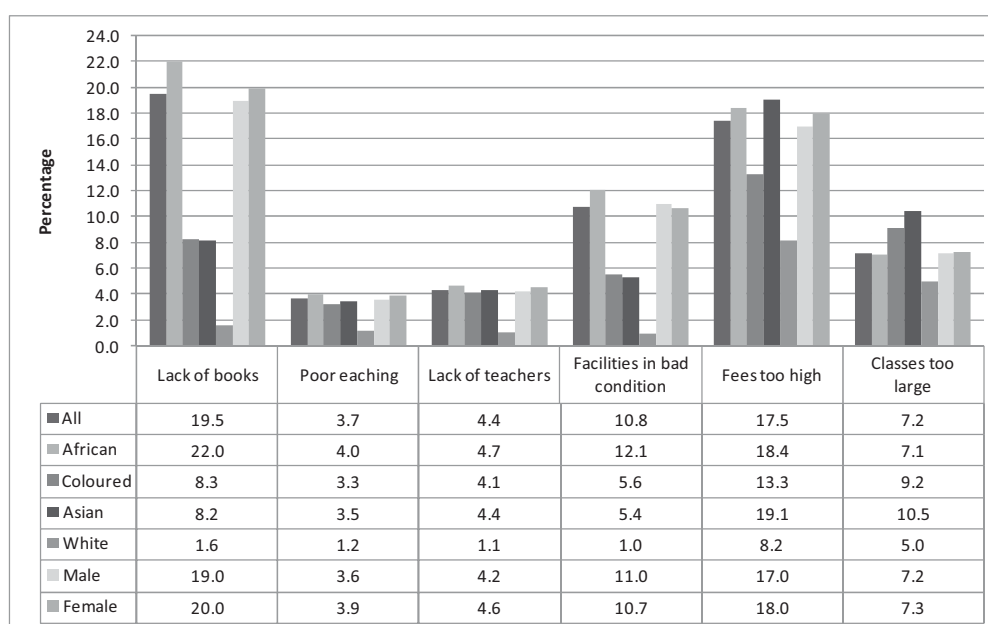
	Lack of books	Poor eaching	Lack of teachers	Facilities in bad condition	Fees too high	Classes too large
■All	19.5	3.7	4.4	10.8	17.5	7.2
■African	22.0	4.0	4.7	12.1	18.4	7.1
■Coloured	8.3	3.3	4.1	5.6	13.3	9.2
■Asian	8.2	3.5	4.4	5.4	19.1	10.5
■White	1.6	1.2	1.1	1.0	8.2	5.0
■Male	19.0	3.6	4.2	11.0	17.0	7.2
■Female	20.0	3.9	4.6	10.7	18.0	7.3

Source: Department of Education (2006f), *Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the Impact and Outcomes of the Education System on South Africa's Population: Evidence from Household Surveys*, September, Department of Education, Pretoria, p. 41 Figure 25.

The lack of textbooks and other educational books is compounded by the dearth of school libraries: in 2004, 46% of grade 6 learners involved in the Systemic Evaluation Study indicated that they did not have a library at school and generally had better access to information at home (and even more so at public libraries) than at school (Department of Education, 2005c, pp. 29-30).

Other studies suggest that another enduring problem is the continued use of corporal punishment, perhaps more prevalent in the rural areas: in 2003 about 20% of educators surveyed in mostly poor rural provinces admitted that they still administer corporal punishment, a means of discipline legally prohibited seven years previously (NMF, 2005, pp. 92-94).

Problems perceived by educators

Among the most important of the many problems reported by educators at schools (Department of Education, 2005f, p. 58; Human Science Research Council, 2005, pp. ix-x; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005, p. 84) are:

- poor conditions of service, including:
    - perceived low salaries
    - poor benefits
    - inadequate incentives
    - arbitrary redeployments
    - unprofessional treatment
    - lack of development opportunities
    - insufficient support
- policy overload and consequent work overload
- disintegration of discipline
- lack of facilities
- large class sizes
- poor parental participation
- role conflicts
- favouritism and nepotism.

New salary scales for educators introduced in 2008, as well as the recently adopted Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), may well deflect some of the problems listed above. An "Occupation Specific Dispensation" for educators has being negotiated with trade unions. This salary package deal increases average educator remuneration, but also puts in place a system where substantial wage progression is possible in the education system, depending on performance.

The National School Nutrition Programme

The Primary School Feeding Programme was introduced in 1994 as one of the presidential lead projects for the country. The Primary School Feeding Programme (PSFP) was part of the Integrated Nutrition Programme (INP), managed at the national level by the departments of both health and education.

In its first 10 years, the PSFP was managed jointly at the national level by the Department of Health (DoH) and the Department of Education (DoE). In April 2004, however, responsibility for the Programme was transferred from the DoH to the DoE. The change in responsibility was accompanied by a change in the name of the programme to the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP).

The National School Nutrition Programme aims to foster better quality education by:

- enhancing children's active learning capacity;
- alleviating short-term hunger;
- providing an incentive for children to attend school regularly and punctually;
- addressing certain micro-nutrient deficiencies in children.

The NSNP is funded from a conditional grant allocated to provinces according to the Division of Revenue Act (DORA) 2003, as well as other directives from the Department of Education and National Treasury (Circular 29/2004). The targeting strategy for school feeding is to:

- identify geographic areas where poverty levels are high;
- prioritise selected geographic areas according to severity of poverty;
- identify needy schools for school feeding within the selected geographic areas focusing on schools from rural and informal settlements.

Within selected schools, learners are selected by age or grade or some other criteria for feeding. The minimum policy however, is to feed children from grade R up to 7 for 156 out of approximately 196 schools days per year (Monson, *et. al.*, 2006).

Progress on services rendered on the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)

In 2006/07, the National School Nutrition Programme provided meals to a total of 6 054 000 learners in 18 039 schools nationally, with total budgets of ZAR 1 098 billion and ZAR 6 million allocated to the provinces and national offices for administrative purposes respectively. The number of learners benefiting from the project is well above the Department's target of 60% of the poorest learners (Department of Education, 2006/2007a, p. 25).

All schools participating in the National School Nutrition Programme are encouraged to keep a vegetable garden, no matter how small it is. About 6 226 vegetable gardens are currently operational. The harvest is also used to supplement the school meals provided in the programme. Two hundred and thirty-seven workshops on gardening skills were conducted from January to March 2007, whereby 3 685 educators, 1 125 parents, and 1 811 learners were trained on how to set up gardens (Department of Education, 2006/2007a). Some schools are beginning to plant fruit trees especially in Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Northern Cape and Western Cape.

The challenge facing some of the schools involved in the programme is theft and poor quality equipment. Additional challenges include the targeting and provision of meals to all deserving learners, staff turnover resulting from contract positions, lack of cooking and eating equipment, utensils and remuneration of food handlers.

Promoting social cohesion

The Department of Education has been focusing on strengthening social cohesion and promoting racial integration in schools by organising events to commemorate significant days and by producing informative materials. A National Campaign to promote national symbols based on a popular booklet, called *My Country, South Africa*, was conducted (Department of Education, 2006g). This booklet popularises the national symbols within the context of promoting greater social cohesion (Department of Education, 2006/07a, p. 24). The Department of Education, in partnership with the Department of Arts and Culture, has also facilitated the installation of national flags in 2000 schools across the country.

The Department of Education developed and distributed to all schools *Opening our Eyes*, a training manual for addressing gender-based violence in schools (Department of Education, 2001c). Many workshops have been conducted throughout the country based on gender-based violence, HIV and AIDS.

Health in education

The Department of Education has recognised the importance of promoting good health among learners and has therefore undertaken a range of activities as part of its health promotion programme.

A national framework on health and wellness has been developed and aims to improve the understanding of health-related issues among educators and learners. The Department of Education, in partnership with the Department of Health, organised a Health Wise Day on 5 October 2006 as part of the celebration of World Teachers' Day. Peer education programmes have been used to educate youth about HIV and AIDS prevention, care, treatment and abstinence. Guidelines for the management and prevention of drug use/abuse by learners in public schools and further education and training institutions were launched and distributed to schools.

42 000 health and hygiene playing cards have been printed and distributed to provinces for distributions to schools. 18 403 training files on food safety have also been distributed to provinces

Safety in schools

Promoting and ensuring the safety of learners and educators in schools has been one of the biggest challenges facing the education system. Government has introduced numerous programmes to stem the tide of violence besetting schools. For example, in 2007, the minister of education identified nine schools (one per province) facing huge challenges of safety and security. With the support of the Royal Netherlands Embassy and the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP), safety infrastructure and support programmes were provided to these schools. All nine schools were equipped with perimeter fences, security lights and gates and were provided with security guards, some with hand-held metal detectors. In addition, school management teams and learners participated in training programmes aimed at assisting them in dealing with crime and violence.

Further education and training (FET) colleges

Further education and training encompasses post-compulsory education (prior to higher education), including both the last three years of formal schooling and FET colleges.

As of 2005, there were approximately 400 000 students undertaking public further education and training at FET Colleges. In addition, it is estimated that there are another 700 000 learners enrolled in private technical FET institutions (Department of Education, 2006d, p. 100). The government plans to double the number of FET places by 2010, prioritising areas where skills will meet specific labour market needs.

Policy and key targets

Since 2007, the college system has been governed by a new act, which repeals the FET Act of 1998. Under the new act, the 50 public FET colleges will complete their transformation from departmental colleges to senior multi-campus institutions with substantive autonomy and a mandate to provide intermediate and high-level skills training to post-compulsory school leavers and adults. The new act empowers FET colleges to offer higher education programmes under the authority of a university with the approval of the minister. The act provides for the regulation and quality assurance of private FET provision.

FET policy initiatives are closely tied in with the AsgiSA (Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative – South Africa) economic strategy. AsgiSA identifies the current skills shortage as the single greatest impediment to economic growth, attributing this not only to the Apartheid legacy, but also to "the slowness of our education and skills development institutions to catch up with the current acceleration of economic growth" (AsgiSA 2007, p. 9).

The Draft National Sector Plan for FET Colleges identifies 6 broad objectives:

- creating a nationally co-ordinated FET system with a unique identity;

- broadening student access and participation and improving achievement;

- entrenching quality and excellence;

- promoting institutional autonomy, responsiveness and relevance;

- encouraging diversity and differentiation;

- monitoring systemic and institutional performance and fostering public accountability.

In terms of access, the key target is to expand the sector substantially to around 1 million with 800 000 enrolled in courses funded by the Department of Education. Key arguments for rapid expansion are the high youth unemployment rate, low education participation rates of those in the age group 16 to 24 and the need to rebalance the relative enrolments in vocational further education versus higher education enrolments.

Current status

In spite of the need for further expansion, there has been rapid growth in FET enrolments over the last 20 years, with enrolments increasing from an estimated 54 000 in 1987 to an estimated 370 000 in 2007 plus another 100 000 learners in private FET institutions. A large proportion of this expansion has, however, been on non-DoE courses and shorter courses with a very specific, non-core focus. FET enrolment also appears to be slipping slightly since 2005 when it was at 377 584 learners (Department of Education, 2006e).

Key quality initiatives of recent years are:

- The rationalisation of the number of (multi-campus) colleges to 50.

- Recapitalisation of the FET colleges across all provinces through a conditional grant of ZAR 2 billion (over the period 2005/06 to 2008/09) to the provinces. This involves the upgrading of workshops and classrooms and the retraining of staff (Department of Education, 2007e).

- Introduction of national curricula for general vocational programmes. In July 2006, a number of priority programmes were finalised and introduced into the college sector in 2007. Currently there are programmes covering: agriculture and nature conservation, culture and arts, business, commerce and management studies, communication studies and language, education, training and development, manufacturing, engineering and technology, human and social studies, law, military science and security, health sciences and social science services, physical, mathematical, computer and life sciences, services and physical planning and construction.

- A start has been made with centralised assessments, examinations and quality assurance systems – with standardised examinations being written in core programmes in 2007.

Financing and obstacles

Expenditure on further education and training grew substantially in recent years, mostly as a result of the introduction of a conditional grant for funding recapitalisation. Although some savings will be available in the sector owing to the phasing out of certain courses and the possibility of greater cost recovery in non-core course, the intended large quantitative expansion in the sector, as well as quality improvements, have not been funded as yet.

Funding norms for FET Colleges have been developed and are currently awaiting final government approvals. The norms envisage quality changes through programme and fee funding of core courses, with fees being offset for poor students through a bursary scheme being administered by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (in place since 2007).

Adult basic education and training (ABET)

Adult basic education and training (ABET) offers an alternative route to both GET and FET qualifications, especially for young people and adults older than 15 years (the end of compulsory education). ABET provision was negligible under Apartheid and has still not received the full attention it deserves. The result is that large numbers of South Africans are precluded from participating meaningfully in the social, cultural and economic affairs of the nation. Nevertheless, there has been some improvement.

Recent estimates indicate that in 2006 there were 2.8 million South Africans who had never been to school (are illiterate) and 3.9 million South Africans who had left school without completing grade 7 (are functionally illiterate) (Statistics South Africa, 2007b). Against this there were approximately 270 000 learners in 2 339 Public Adult Learning Centres (PALC) offering ABET levels 1-4. In some instances, provinces also offer separate basic literacy classes at sites outside the PALCs for learners who are deemed to be totally illiterate. Other ABET programmes are also offered through SETAs, NGOs, CBOs (community based organisations) and private ABET providers, over which programmes the education system has oversight. It has been estimated that a further 300 000 learners have been reached through these other programmes (Department of Education, 2007e).

In addition to public ABET provision at Public Adult Learning Centres, the corporate sector is still a major provider of ABET. The Skills Development Act of 1998 requires companies to contribute 0.5% of their payroll to the National Skills Authority, which may be used to support ABET provision. The NGO sector, on the other hand, was severely affected by the collapse of the co-ordinating National Literacy Co-operative in the mid-1990s, with the number of learners served by NGOs dipping sharply and many NGOs closing down as foreign donor funding began to be redirected through official government channels.

The National Skills Development Strategy, 2005-2010, envisages the expenditure of over ZAR 20 billion to identify scarce or critical skills and train at least 60 000 workers in these areas, as well as 700 000 workers to ABET level 4, 450 000 unemployed people and 10 000 young entrepreneurs through special programmes, internships, learnerships and apprenticeships (Department of Labour, 2005). While these plans overlap substantially with the FET and HE sectors, within the education sector *per se*, ABET expenditure does not rank highly on either the government's list of priorities or its capacity: provincial governments were able to spend only 47.4% of overall funds granted over a recent three-year period (Wildeman, 2005, pp. 47-49).

However, the AsgiSA economic policy initiative and the Expanded Public Works programmes are expected to breathe new life into ABET (AsgiSA, 2007, p. 10).

Transforming adult basic education and training

In response to the Ministerial Committee on Literacy, which reported in 2006, the plan for a mass literacy campaign for South Africa, the Kha ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign was released in May 2007. The plan will target the 4.7 million illiterates over the period 2007 to 2012 with the peak of the initiative in 2008, 2009 and 2010. An initial amount of ZAR 850 million over the period 2007/08 to 2009/10 was allocated for funding the mass literacy campaign. The campaign will include the training of master trainers who will provide basic literacy classes to 300 000 adults and youth in 2008. This estimate, however, contrasts with the estimated cost of the campaign of ZAR 5.47 billion (Department of Education, 2007d).

Funding norms for Public Adult Learning Centres have also been approved and are ready to be published. These norms also provide for programme funding and much greater oversight of the system.

Since the introduction of level 4 ABET examinations in 2001, a total of 8 152 adult learners have obtained the ABET qualification at NQF level 1.

Of these, 5 507 learners obtained the qualification at one sitting, while 2 645 learners acquired the qualification by acquiring credits from 2001 to November 2006 (Department of Education, 2007, p.19).

Advocacy initiatives, such as National Adult Learners Week and International Literacy Day, in September, continue to be celebrated, recognising and honouring the achievements of learners and their educators (South African Government information in 2008).

Special needs education (SNE)

Policy and targets

White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (Department of Education, 2001b) defined learners with special education needs as not only those with physical, mental or neurological impairments, but also those experiencing learning difficulties as a result of socio-economic deprivation. The policy envisaged an inclusive education and training system, providing support within public ordinary schools for learners with mild to moderate disabilities. Alongside this system are "full service schools" – some 500 converted primary schools –, which are being phased in over time, serving a dual purpose of catering for those with severe disability while also acting as a resource for educators and schools in the area. Professional support personnel are appointed to the district and deployed from there, rather than being appointed to a specific school.

The recent bid for additional funding for the sector stated the rationale as follows: "There is an urgent need to put funding of support for learners with disabilities and those experiencing barriers to learning, on a more sound and adequate footing. Currently there is too little support available for disabled learners and too few appropriate school places, whether in special schools or mainstream schools. Learners are also inappropriately accommodated in special schools because of the absence of alternative support and models of provision. As a result of funding pressures, a number of anomalies have also been developing: special schools are reluctant to accept the most severely disabled and increasingly there are inappropriate mixes of learners with different types of disabilities in the same schools. In many special schools, resourcing (in terms of facilities, equipment, educators and specialist and support staff and transport and hostel facilities) is also totally inadequate."

It is therefore envisaged that, depending on the level of intensity of educational support needed to minimise the impact of their disability, disabled children will be accommodated in the education system as follows:

- Learners with the most intense level of support needs (level 5) will continue to be accommodated in special schools or specialised sites if it is their choice. This will require an increase in the number of sites in almost all provinces where such specialised support will be available on a full time basis and an increase in funding to some of the existing special schools, as well as to the wider range of such sites for specialised support. Recognising the fact that special schools will also serve the double function of being a resource centre to full service and mainstream schools, additional funding will have to be made available to fulfil this new role.

- Learners with less intense levels of support needs (level 4) can be accommodated in full service schools. These are public ordinary schools that are provided with extra personnel, infrastructure and non-personnel, non-capital resources to accommodate a certain number of learners from the local neighbourhood who require specialised support (especially those who experience impaired mobility or need specialised devices), as well as provide indirect support to all the surrounding schools that will also accommodate learners with disabilities. This will require a significant increase in the funding of schools that are designated as full service schools.

- Other disabled learners (levels 1-3 as well as level 4) who require less specialised support can elect to go to mainstream schools – these children will benefit from the general increasing trend in the resourcing of public ordinary schools and from enhanced support district-based support teams that will be responsible for planning and monitoring support services within each district at ordinary, full-service schools, as well as at special schools. The model will be strongly based on two key principles of Education White Paper 6, namely:

  - a move away from the category of disability to a level of support needed as an organiser;

  - favouring availability of support programmes rather than placement or movement of learners.

Current status

There are currently about 88 000 learners in approximately 400 special schools. This amounts to about 0.64% of the learner population, ranging from 0.28% in Limpopo and Mpumalanga to 1.65% in Gauteng. There are various estimates of the number of learners with special support needs, ranging from a minimum of 2% to as high as 4%. The post provisioning model recognises that schools with greater numbers of learners with disabilities require more educator posts.

Financing and obstacles

While the policy on inclusive education is ambitious, funding of special needs education has, since 1994, taken a back seat to education reforms such as those for higher education, the national nutrition grant, the further education and training sector consolidation, as well as early childhood development (Wildeman, 2005, p. 45-6). The Department of Education notes, in addition, how costly it is to deliver special school education, with the service costing four times as much as public ordinary schooling (Department of Education, 2006d, p. 64). There is an absence of national funding norms for the sector (allowing wide disparities and inequalities). Certain basic tools for identifying appropriate support (such as tools for screening learners) are under development. However, funding for inclusive education has improved considerably over the recent years, from ZAR 1.8 billion in 2004/05 to ZAR 2.2 billion in 2007/08.

Higher education (HE)

The geographic and racial fragmentation, structural inefficiencies and duplication of services in South Africa's higher education system have been systematically addressed since 1997, with the appearance of the White Paper on Higher Education in 2004, when many of these institutions were reorganised and merged. The number of institutions was reduced from 36 to 23 to establish universities of technology, comprehensive universities and two Institutes of Higher Education (one of which is in Mpumalanga and the other in the Northern Cape). HEIs are guaranteed academic freedom under the Constitution and institutional autonomy under the Higher Education Act of 1997, subject to their public accountability.

A National Working Group on Higher Education was established by the minister and presented its report in early 2002. It prefaced its recommendations for rationalisation by emphasising that: "A restructured higher education system should be socially just and equitable in its

distribution of resources and opportunities, it should meet the requirements of long-term sustainability and it should enhance the productivity of the system through effectively and efficiently meeting the teaching, skills development and research needs of the country" (Department of Education, 2002b, p. 3).

Constitutionally, Higher Education is solely the responsibility of the national Department of Education, which spent over ZAR 14 billion on it in 2006/07. Government expenditure on higher education has increased at an average annual rate of 10% per annum since 2004 and is expected to continue to do so until at least 2010.

In 2006, there were 741 383 Higher Education students being serviced by 16 077 lecturers (Department of Education, 2008). The average student:educator ratio in public higher education institutions in 2005 was 46:1.

In 2001, the National Policy for Higher Education, which provided the implementation framework for transforming the higher education system, set a target participation rate in higher education of 20% over a 10 to 15 year period (Ministry of Education, 2001). In 2000, the gross enrolment ratio in higher education (*i.e.* enrolment in higher education, regardless of age, as a proportion of 20-24 year-olds in the population) was 12.9% (see Figure 3.6). With the large increase in higher education enrolment between 2000 and 2006, the participation rate increased steadily. By 2006 it was 14.5%, although it had dropped from a high of 16.1% in 2004.

The Department of Education credits the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) with accounting for a third of the increase in enrolments at higher education institutions since the mid-1990s (Department of Education, 2004a, p. 30). According to 2005 projections, government's contributions to the NSFAS were expected to grow from ZAR 578.2 million in 2004/05 to ZAR 1.1 billion in 2007/08, of which about ZAR 120 million is earmarked for initial educator training bursaries and ZAR 100 million for FET college bursaries (Wildeman, 2005, p. 16; Department of Education, 2007e). In comparison, in 1994 only ZAR 10 million was available for student financial aid (Department of Education, 2004a, p. 30).

The student populations of most higher education institutions are far more equitable than their staff or gender numbers. In 2006, 61.0% of all students (451 108) in the public higher education system were black African, 25.0% (184 668) were white, 7.4% (54 859) were Indian, and 6.6% (48 538) were coloured. Females constituted 55.1% of all students (408 718) (Department of Education, 2008, p. 33).

Figure 3.6 **Higher education, GER (as a portion of the population) 20-24 years, 2006**

Higher Education GER (as a proportion of the population 20 to 24 years, 2000 to 2006)

	GER Female	GER Male	GER Total
2000	13.6	12.3	12.9
2001	15.0	12.9	13.9
2002	15.8	13.5	14.7
2003	16.6	14.1	15.3
2004	17.6	14.6	16.1
2005	17.6	14.3	15.9
2006	17.6	14.3	15.9
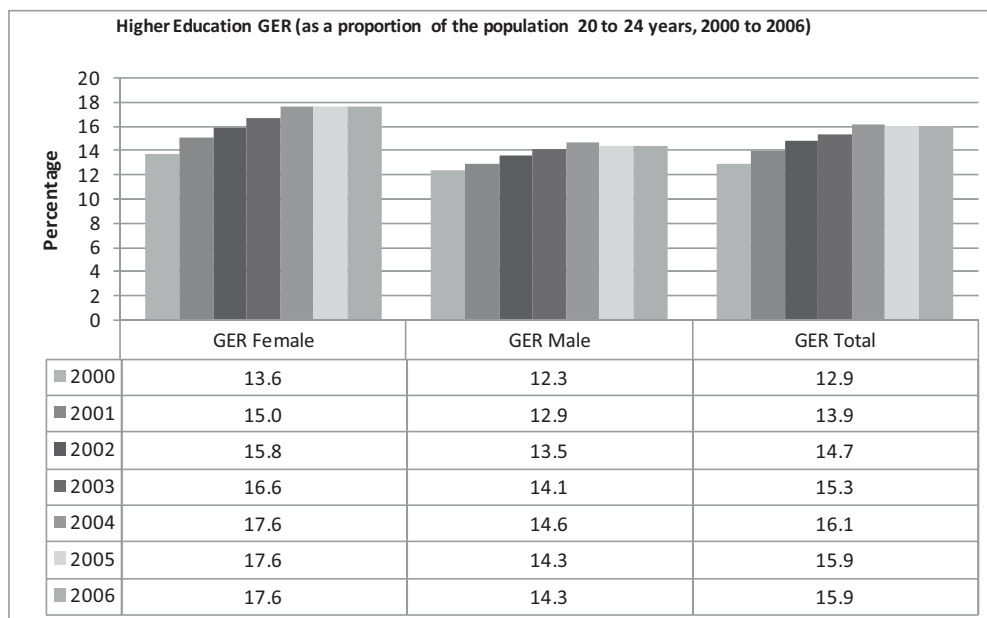
Note: GER = Grade-specific gross enrolment rates.

Source: Department of Education (2007a), *Data on Students at Higher Education Institutions 2000 to 2005*, *HEMIS Database*, Department of Education, Pretoria; and mid-year population estimates in single ages supplied by Statistics South Africa.

Since 2000, more females than males have enrolled in higher education (see Figure 3.6). Furthermore, female enrolment has increased at a faster rate than male enrolment. Between 2000 and 2006 (Department of Education, 2007a) female enrolment increased by 34.5%, from 303 794 to 408 718, while male enrolment increase by only 21.3%, from 274 159 to 332 665. Despite the numeric advantage of females in higher education, the spread of female students across different programme areas is uneven, with female students clustered in the humanities and under-represented in science, engineering and technology, business and commerce, and in postgraduate programmes (Ministry of Education, 2001, p. 34).

In total, 41.3% of students (306 243) at public higher education institutions were studying either teacher education or the broad humanities and social sciences, 30.1% (222 985) were enrolled in business and management, and 28.5% (211 618) were in the sciences, engineering and technology in 2006 (Department of Education, 2008, p. 31).

Figure 3.7 indicates the number of people aged 25 years or more who have completed tertiary education, as well as the share of the population that have a degree or diploma, in 1995 and 2003 for men and women.

Figure 3.7 **Higher education completion and numbers, 1995 and 2003**
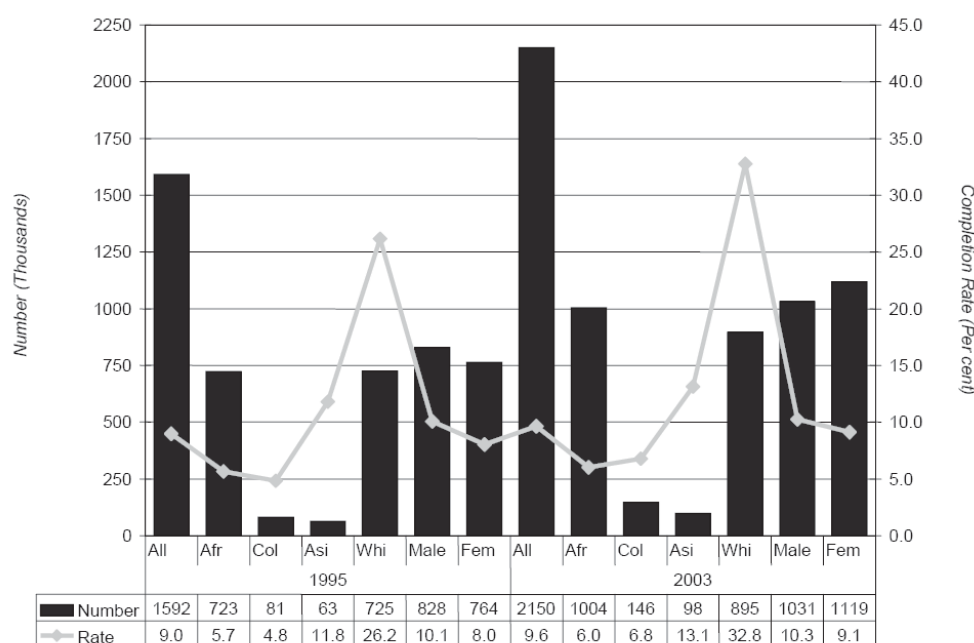
	All	Afr	Col	Asi	Whi	Male	Fem	All	Afr	Col	Asi	Whi	Male	Fem
				1995							2003			
■ Number	1592	723	81	63	725	828	764	2150	1004	146	98	895	1031	1119
Rate	9.0	5.7	4.8	11.8	26.2	10.1	8.0	9.6	6.0	6.8	13.1	32.8	10.3	9.1

Source: Department of Education (2006f), *Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the Impact and Outcomes of the Education System on South Africa's Population: Evidence from Household Surveys*, September, Department of Education, Pretoria, p. 56.

While 120 063 graduates were produced nationwide in 2005 (Department of Education, 2006e, p. 36), the average success rate of black African students in contact undergraduate programmes was only 69.8%, compared to an average of 84.7% for white students (Department of Education, 2006e, p. 39).

Subotzky (2003) indicates that "the main patterns of Higher Education enrolment and graduation reveal that the system is not fulfilling its crucial human resources development function effectively". Six main areas of concern were identified: increasing the size of and participation rates in the sector; efficiency of inflows into and within the sector; the relevance of

outputs in terms of fields of study and qualification levels; equity; quality of outputs; and capacity to implement change and meet transformational challenges. These challenges were addressed by the rationalisation of the sector and changing the funding formula to allow for greater steering of the system.

Chapter 4: Restructuring the System

Government's aim has been to restructure the entire education system and overcome its racial, gender and anti-poor bias. But while constitutional imperatives directed the trajectory of change, the chosen policy mechanisms were often the result of intense political contestation between various educational and other interest groups, especially big business and organised labour. Policy was also influenced by international educational perspectives and by global economic trends.

Three broad phases in the policy cycle can be identified since the first democratic elections: first, there was an intensive focus on policy formulation (though accompanied by some immediate practical changes, such as curriculum revision), followed by a concentrated effort at implementation (during which time there appears to have been a brief hiatus in policy formulation) and, in the third and current phase, policy is being reformulated or revised to address problems arising during its implementation (and to this extent, policy formulation and policy implementation are occurring concurrently, in the context of a much more stable and settled system).

Debates on the effectiveness of education policy since 1994 have revolved around whether policy is insufficiently ambitious, given what is seen as an inconsequential emphasis on redress, or insufficiently practical, given historical and economic limitations and incapacities. On the one hand, it might be argued that, in the context of post-Apartheid reconciliation, policy formulation was constrained by the political compromises made between the two main political players on the late-Apartheid scene, the African National Congress and the National Party, the effect of which were to protect both existing white and emerging black middle class interests. On the other hand, it can be said that policy implementation has simply been checked and delayed by the depth and extent of Apartheid under-education, coupled with a current lack of managerial capacity and a limited budget. A third position could be that the rapid, visible and collective formulation of what have often been highly advanced and idealistic, even revolutionary, education policies has had important political and symbolic effects in itself, despite the sluggishness of actual policy implementation, and especially

amidst popular expectations of substantial – and not only educational – social transformation.

This section of the report describes what are arguably the six most important policy levers that have been used to transform the education system:

- the overarching National Qualifications Framework;

- the overhaul of the curriculum;

- better educator utilisation, supply and training;

- the institution of school governance procedures;

- diverse measures aimed at improving the quality of education;

- equitable education financing mechanisms.

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

The NQF, established in terms of the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) Act of 1995, provided the scaffolding of the education and training system. On it, eight levels of qualifications were defined. Level 1 encompassed the general education and training (GET) band (which ends at grade 9) as well as the first three adult basic education and training levels. Levels 2, 3 and 4 encompassed the further education and training (FET) band, with learners attaining either an academic or a vocational qualification, depending on whether they remain within the schooling system (*i.e.* grades 10-12) or choose to attend a public or private FET college. higher education follows, from levels 5 to 8.

The NQF was determinedly equity driven. Qualifications awarded at the end of each phase had to be equivalent. The SAQA Act provided for an outcomes-based system, where skills and knowledge could be measured at the end of a learning or training period against "socially agreed standards".

"Qualifications and standards registered on the NQF were described in terms of the learning outcomes that the qualifying learner was expected to have demonstrated" (SAQA, 2000, p. 10). There were 12 National Standards Bodies made up of employers, trade unionists, government officials, professional bodies and education and training providers which recommended the standards to be registered. Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) were then responsible for ensuring the quality of the standards and qualifications.

Table 4.1 **The structure of the National Qualifications Framework**

NQF Level	Band	Qualification type
8 7 6 5	Higher Education and Training	Post-doctoral research degrees Doctorates Masters degrees Professional qualifications Honours degrees National first degrees Higher diplomas National diplomas National certificates
Further Education and Training Certificate (FETC)		
4 3 2	Further Education and Training	National certificates
General Education and Training Certificate (GETC)		
1	General Education and Training	Grade 9 | ABET Level 4 National certificates

Source: South African Qualification Authority (2007), *The National Qualifications Framework: An Overview*, South African Qualifications Authority, Pretoria.

What SAQA defined as "critical outcomes", or qualities intended to be developed in all students across the entire education and training system, regardless of area or content, were as follows:

- Identify and solve problems in which responses display that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made.

- Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation, community.

- Organise and manage oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively.

- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.

- Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation.

- Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others.

- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

In addition, in order to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the society at large, it must be the intention underlying any programme of learning to make an individual aware of the importance of:

- reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;

- participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities;

- being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts;

- exploring education and career opportunities;

- developing entrepreneurial opportunities (SAQA, 2000, pp. 18-19).

The NQF was thus an overarching structure, bringing together schooling, industrial training and higher education in a single qualifications framework, while attempting to boost the number of learners (both old and young) acquiring certification. It also introduced a process through which people could be accredited with certain learning achievements, or gauge their potential for entry to a specific learning programme, through the recognition of prior learning (SAQA, 2000, p. 23).

But the NQF has come in for criticism. It has been described as "a major educational experiment that ultimately had more impact on discourse than on practice of education and training" (Chisholm, 2007, p. 298). It has also been pointed out that, while standards setting has become ever more elaborate, the actual number of people trained and acquiring certification is extremely low; "and that "the NQFs standards and outcomes were no less restrictive, bureaucratic and positivist about knowledge in general – seen as

a fixed thing possessed by experts who transmit it to learners – as their Apartheid predecessors" (Allais, 2003, pp. 10-12).

The report of a study team (Department of Education/Department of Labour, 2002) specifically appointed by the Department of Education to assess the implementation of the NQF referred to its slow pace, its undue complexity and the proliferation of standards setting and quality assurance bodies.

A review of the NQF has resulted in proposed changes to the status quo. One of the major changes proposed in the NQF bill that is currently before parliament, is that the eight levels of the NQF should be extended to ten.

The NQF bill (Republic of South Africa, 2008, p. 7) also defines more clearly the roles of quality assurance councils for general and further education and training, higher education and trades and occupations. The role of South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) has been changed and defined as a juristic person.

Curriculum reform

Curriculum reform in South Africa has been "of a scale arguably unparalleled in the history of curriculum change" (Harley and Wedekind, 2004, p. 195). Overturning the curriculum of the Apartheid government and replacing it with one that supported a human rights-based education was an immediate systemic challenge for the post-Apartheid government.

The first reform, following the 1994 elections, was to rationalise and consolidate the syllabi of the hitherto existing 19 racially segregated education departments and to remove overtly racist, sexist and offensive language. These cosmetic changes were an interim measure, while a new national curriculum, which came to be known as Curriculum 2005 (C2005 – Department of Education, 1997), was being constructed.

C2005 was launched in March 1997 and implemented in phases from the beginning of 1998. Both the content and the teaching of the existing curriculum were overhauled and brought into line with the values of the Constitution. Drawing from international curriculum developments (particularly in New Zealand and Australia), C2005 was grounded in outcomes-based education (OBE) principles. "Subjects" were replaced with "learning areas", each of which had "range statements" that, in turn, aimed at "outcomes". The learning areas reframed traditional subject disciplines into an integrated knowledge system.

The curriculum will begin to integrate education and training – incorporating a view of learning which rejects rigid divisions

between academic and applied knowledge, theory and practice, and knowledge and skills. It will foster learning which encompasses a culture of human rights, multilingualism and multi-culturalism and a sensitivity to the values of reconciliation and nation building (Department of Education, 1997).

The content of lessons was not prescribed and the new teaching strategies that accompanied the curriculum were "learner-centred". The new curriculum was a novel system for all educators, black or white and no matter where they had been trained.

But almost immediately after its introduction, Curriculum 2005 raised controversy. It was criticised for being too elaborate, in that it involved new and unnecessarily complex terminology and depended for its implementation on poorly trained and already overworked educators. The curriculum was also heavily reliant on resources, textbooks and even classroom space, whereas many poor schools were already struggling with few and outdated textbooks and minimal resources. Educator training under Apartheid had emphasised rote learning, authoritarian teaching practices (enforced through corporal punishment) and behaviourist pedagogy, leaving most of the profession unprepared for the constructivist teaching approaches of the new curriculum.

Educators were inducted into the new system using a cascade model of training, which proved problematic as the complexity of the curriculum was watered down with each level of training. Simplistic identifiers of the new curriculum, such as undertaking "group work", were taken as evidence that educators were implementing C2005 (Chisholm, *et al.*, 2000, p. 32; Harley and Wedekind, 2004). While historically advantaged schools had greater success at implementing the curriculum, disadvantaged schools floundered, potentially widening the gaps between schools (Christie, 1999).

A ministerial committee appointed to review Curriculum 2005 found that its implementation had been:

...confounded by a skewed curriculum structure and design; lack of alignment between curriculum and assessment policy; inadequate orientation, training and development of educators; learning support materials that are variable in quality, often unavailable and not sufficiently used in classrooms; policy overload and limited transfer of learning into classrooms; shortages of personnel and resources to implement and support C2005; and inadequate recognition of curriculum as the core business of education departments (Chisholm, et al., 2000a, pp. vi-vii).

The report recommended a number of practical adaptations (Department of Education, 2006c). The resulting change has since spawned a Revised National Curriculum Statement (Department of Education, 2002a), which, written in plain language, gives more emphasis to basic skills, content knowledge and a logical progression from one grade to the next. Along with the values enshrined in the Constitution, it emphasises communication, participation, human rights, multilingualism, history, cultural diversity, the need for educators to act as role models and that every South African is able to read, write, count and think (Department of Education, 2002a, p. 7). Thus it combines a learner-centred curriculum requiring critical thought and democratic practice with an appreciation of the importance of content and support for educators. It has been introduced in a more gradual and informed manner over a period of years, and has culminated in the phase-in of grade 12 in 2008. Since 2004, an orientation programme has been conducted for approximately 2 100 provincial officials and 200 000 Foundation and Intermediate Phase educators, as well as 75 000 grade 10-12 educators, across all provinces (Department of Education, 2007e).

While the ministerial committee's recommendations have helped ease the implementation of the curriculum, there is ongoing concern that disparities in resources and educator preparedness make this modern, high knowledge, resource intense curriculum an inappropriate model in the South African context.

Textbook publication, budget allocation and distribution

The implementation of the National Curriculum Statement meant that the publication of textbooks had to be aligned to the NCS. Currently, all publishers publish school textbooks and a variety of educator support material in compliance with the National Curriculum (NCS) for the Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase, Senior Phase and Further Education and Training (FET), in all 11 official languages.

In 2006, the DoE, with the support of provinces, established teams to develop criteria for the screening of textbooks. This was followed by the recruitment of provincial subject advisors and also subject experts from higher education institutions and non-governmental organisations to assist with the process. To date, textbooks for grade 10, 11 and 12 have been completed, screened and approved; and a catalogue of grade 10, 11 and 12 national textbooks was published.

Funds for school textbooks are allocated by provinces in accordance with the Norms and Standards for School Funding. All schools must adhere to the Preferential Procurement Policy of the province in the spending of allocated funds for textbooks and other books. The procurement of

textbooks occurs as follows: in the case of Section 21 schools, funds are transferred to the bank accounts of these schools and they buy their own textbooks and stationery. In the case of non-Section 21 schools, the Department tells the schools how much they will receive for the following year and they should start planning and preparing around this indicative budget. Only after receiving their final budgets do they place their orders with the department, which then buys and distributes textbooks to the non-Section 21 schools.

There have been problems around accessibility of textbooks in schools. A survey of 20 schools conducted by the Financial and Fiscal Commission on the Provision of Learner Support Material (LSM) showed that differences exist in the resource allocation per learner (Department of Education, 2006/2007b). In allocating the required LSMs, schools give preference to secondary grades, especially to grade 12, because of the pressure on schools to produce high pass rates for matriculants. From grades 8 to 11, schools sometimes require parents to buy the necessary stationery. The survey concluded that the minimum number of textbooks required for these latter grades is almost always not met. The survey also shows that migration of learners is a factor contributing to the shortages of textbooks in schools, as learners often do not return textbooks to schools.

Educators and teacher education

Of all aspects of education besides school infrastructure, and despite repeated interventions, the major area in which Apartheid education remains inadequately reconstructed is the teaching force: "Most currently serving educators received their professional education and entered teaching when education was an integral part of the Apartheid project and organised in racially and ethnically divided sub-systems" (Department of Education, 2006i, p. 6).

After 1994, the lopsided, racially hierarchical provision of educators in the former Apartheid education departments had to be corrected. The employment of educators was brought under a single Act of Parliament, with collective bargaining procedures overseen by the Education Labour Relations Council. A new post-provisioning system was negotiated, based on standard learner-educator ratios related to curriculum requirements, and an acrimonious process of rationalisation, retrenchment and "redeployment" of personnel was undertaken throughout the late 1990s, albeit with union support.

Unfortunately, many of the best qualified and most experienced educators left the profession during this process and the schools most in

need of assistance did not benefit greatly from the redeployment, since most educators were reluctant to teach in the poorest, often remote areas. Privileged schools had to adjust to a substantially smaller staff complement and learner:educator ratios in former disadvantaged schools improved.

The redeployment and re-allocation of educators nevertheless inadvertently favoured schools with more diverse curricula, or with established mathematics, science and technology programmes, in both cases usually former white schools. The governing bodies in these schools, which often catered for more affluent communities, were also able to use their fee-charging capability to employ additional educators and thereby maintain low learner:educator ratios.

In 2006, there were 386 595 educators employed in ordinary schools in South Africa (including 19 407 in independent schools, and 24 118 employed by school governing bodies) (Department of Education, 2006i, p. 8). Two thirds of educators are women but men still dominate promotion posts and school managements (Department of Education, 2006i, p. 9). A recent study of over 17 000 educators revealed that they earn, on average, a higher income than most other employed persons, largely due to their highly educated status (Shisana *et al*. 2005, p. 46). Fifty percent of educators have first degrees, over 70% have been teaching for ten years or longer and 88% are members of a trade union (Shisana *et al*. 2005, Ch.4).

Under Apartheid, each Bantustan education department had established its own educators' training college and educators were produced without regard to demand requirements of the country as a whole. After 1994, these imbalances of educator supply and demand within and between provinces were unsuccessfully addressed by the rationalisation exercise. Incorporation of colleges of education into the higher education system was a critical initiative aimed at improving the efficiency of the system. Whereas in 1994 there were 150 public institutions providing educator education to 200 000 students, by 2000 there were 82 institutions with only 100 000 students.

Since then, the number of educator graduates, around 6 000 per annum, has dropped well below replacement needs of approximately 20 000 per annum, and educator shortages are expected to reach 38 000 by 2008 (HSRC, 2005). A 2005 sample study of newly qualified educators in KwaZulu-Natal suggested that less than two-thirds intend to teach in South Africa, if they teach at all – see Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 **Future plans of newly qualified teachers in South Africa**
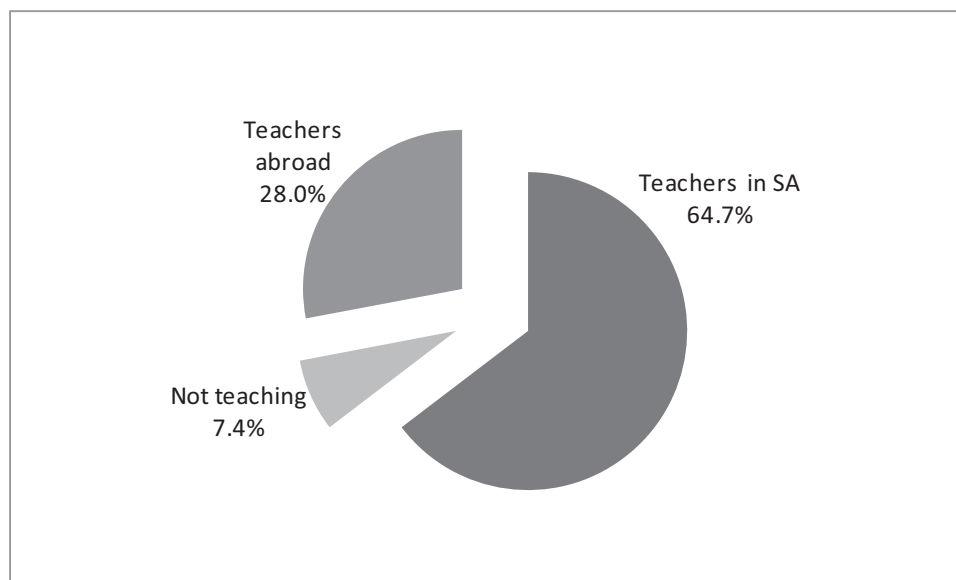
In addition, with many more non-education-related economic opportunities now available to black potential student teachers and many white student teachers intending to teach overseas, the decline in new educator numbers has impacted particularly on the training of grade R, Foundation Phase (grades 1-3) and Intermediate Phase (grades 4-7) educators (Department of Education, 2005d, p. 10; Department of Education, 2005f, p. 67). In 2007, the government approved a national bursary scheme, called *Fundza Lushaka* ("Educating the Nation"), specifically for students studying to be teachers.

In 2005, the Department of Education reported that some 54% of educators, of whom two thirds teach in the technology, natural sciences, economics and management fields, had recently considered leaving the profession. High among their reasons for wishing to leave was low job satisfaction, including lack of career advancement and recognition, poor working conditions, and lack of discipline and respect; other factors fostering attrition include lack of facilities for teaching, overcrowding of schools and classrooms, inadequate incentives, poor parental participation, policy overload, role conflicts, favouritism and nepotism (Department of

Education, 2005f, pp. 11-12). In addition, Curriculum 2005, together with the system of continuous assessment and the Integrated Quality Management System, have made great demands on educators' time, with three quarters of educators feeling that their workload has increased "a lot" since 2000 (HSRC, 2005, p. ix).

Twelve point seven percent of educators are HIV-positive, with the highest HIV incidence found among younger (ages 25-34), African, non-degree-holding, females in rural areas, especially KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga (Shisana *et al*. 2005, Ch.4). The Department of Education estimates a need for 20 000 newly qualified educators per annum and this figure does not reflect the possible effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Department of Education, 2005d, p. 10). The impending shortage of educators is expected to vary considerably by province, but to be more acute in rural areas and provinces, in the Foundation Phase of schooling (which requires mother-tongue competence) and in subject areas like mathematics, science, engineering and technology. It is also likely to be exacerbated by the large-scale migration of families from rural areas into urban and metropolitan centres (which may in fact reduce educator demand in some areas) (Department of Education, 2006i, p. 10).

In recent years, there has been a significant reduction in the number of unqualified and underqualified educators in the system, mainly through in-service upgrading programmes. In 2000, 76 839 (22%) educators were considered unqualified or under qualified, significantly down from 122 459 (36%) in 1994. In 2004, based on the School Educator Survey, the percentage of unqualified or underqualified educators further declined to 8.3% (Department of Education, 2005f, p. 26). The proportion of unqualified or underqualified educators was higher in primary (11%) than secondary schools (2.8%), higher in rural (9%) than in urban schools (7.5%), higher among coloured (13.8%) than white educators (2.2%), and above 10% in four provinces: North-West, Free State, Northern Cape and Western Cape (Department of Education, 2005f, p. 47).

International studies have shown that the "returns to investment" in teacher education, or the quality of performance one might expect from learners in return for money spent on educators, is very low in South Africa, to the extent that "low educator productivity has been cited as the main reason for South Africa's relatively poor performance" (Department of Education, 2003c, p. 10). "Notwithstanding the improved qualification profile of the teaching force", the majority of educators are not yet sufficiently equipped to meet the needs of a 21st century environment and their poor conceptual and content knowledge is a direct contributor to low levels of learner achievement (Department of Education, 2006i, p. 6).

A 1999 study found that learners in Foundation Phase classes (grades 1-3) are unable to read and write adequately, and their educators are unable to adequately teach them how to do so (Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999). Many educators often come late to school and leave too early; and of the little time they spend at school, too much of it is spent on administrative tasks. Education policy expects educators to spend 64% to 79% of their time teaching over a 35 hour week, but, on average, educators only spend 46% of their time teaching; and they "spend progressively less time on teaching and other school related activities as the week progresses, with very little teaching occurring on Fridays in many schools" (HSRC, 2005, p. xi). The grade 6 systemic evaluation conducted in 2004 found that "a large number of educators regularly do not explain assigned homework exercises, nor do they regularly provide feedback after the completion of homework" (Department of Education, 2005c, pp. 29-30).

Thus, a major challenge in South Africa is "to ensure that our relatively well-paid educators are fully and efficiently utilised in the education system. Specifically, educators need to be equipped to deal with classes than are relatively large by international standards, and the system should ensure that educators focus on educational activities, as opposed to other activities which other types of employees in the system can perform" (Department of Education, 2006d, p. 25).

The above offers a mixed picture of a teaching sector in transition and facing immense challenges. Apart from legacy of Apartheid, the impact of HIV/AIDS, the negative consequences of the redeployment exercise and the problems experienced in rationalising educator education institutions, idealistic, "romantic and progressivist" education theory and policy, encapsulated in the replacement of "teaching" with "facilitation", has been blamed by the department for undermining the key role of teaching in schooling and education (Department of Education, 2005d, p. 6). The 2000 review of C2005 had already begun to unsettle the constructivist complacency about learner-centred education, when it pointed out that even outcomes-based education "depends centrally on the quality of the educators – their content knowledge, their facility with different teaching methods, and their access to learning programmes and textbooks" (Chisholm, *et al.*, 2000a, p. 30).

A few years later, a report on the kinds of educator education research being undertaken by educator educators in South Africa pointed to a renewed focus on the critical and central importance of the educator as educator (Parker and Deacon, 2004, p. 37-8). This was taken up by the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education, which recommended that the word "teaching" – as "the practice of organising systematic learning" – be

retrieved and relocated at the heart of thinking about, planning and organising education (Department of Education, 2005d, p. 6).

The Department of Education immediately adopted this recommendation, pointing out that:

...teachers are the largest single occupational group and profession in the country, numbering close to 390 000 in public and private schools. Their role has strategic importance for the intellectual, moral, and cultural preparation of our young people. They work in extremely complex conditions, largely due to the pervasive legacies of Apartheid, but also as a result of the new policies needed to bring about change in education (Department of Education, 2006i, p. 6).

It has also instituted a system of "licensing" or "re-accrediting" educators through a continuous upgrading and monitoring of educator qualifications. Educators will earn "professional development" points over a stipulated period by completing courses and modules approved by the DoE and overseen by the South African Council of Educators (SACE). Given historical union resistance to anything smacking of performance assessment and inspectorates, it remains to be seen how effective (or unpopular) this system will be. At the very least, however, it ought to impact positively on the professional standing of SACE.

In recent years, there has also been increased emphasis on the need to monitor and assess educator performance. To this end, an Integrated Quality Management System was introduced in order to ensure regular assessment. An "Occupation Specific Dispensation" for educators has been negotiated with trade unions. This salary package deal increases average remuneration, but also put in place a system where substantial wage progression is possible in the education system, depending on performance/assessment.

School governance

One of the key approaches to the restructuring of the education system and of promoting social change in South Africa has been school-level decentralisation. While centralised decision-making has the advantage of pushing through major reforms with the backing of the full state apparatus, there was a strong lobby in the post-1994 period from both the liberation movement and the ex-white schools to devolve authority to schools – though they had opposing motives in doing so. For the democratic movement, broad-based participation in schools was essential in democratising schools. For the Apartheid government, the inclusion of parents in governing bodies was premised on keeping schools much the same, mainly through

maintaining the socio-economic status of schools (Karlsson, Macpherson and Pampallis, 2001).

The South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) adopted a model of school governance that devolved significant powers to School Governing Bodies (SGBs). Governing bodies are composed of the school principal and elected representatives of parents, educators, non-teaching staff and (in secondary schools) learners and they may also co-opt non-voting members. Parents have a majority stake in order to ensure that previously marginalised constituencies have a greater voice.

Governing bodies are juristic persons with the power to enter into contracts, to sue and be sued. A basic set of functions is stipulated for SGBs. They are required to:

- develop and adopt a constitution and mission statement for the school;

- determine the admissions policy of the school, subject to certain restrictions;

- administer and control the school's property, buildings and grounds, including the right to rent them out for fundraising purposes;

- recommend to the Department of Education the appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff;

- develop a budget for the school, which could include schools fees, for approval at a meeting of the parents.

Once approved, school fees become compulsory and all parents, unless specifically granted exemption, are obliged to pay them. (Exemption policy regulations automatically exempt orphans, foster children and those receiving a poverty-linked social grant, and give "discounts" to parents with more than one learner in a public school or if the fees are between 3.5% and 9.5% of their annual income (Department of Education, 2006b).

In addition to the basic functions noted above, governing bodies may also apply to their provincial education department, under Section 21 of the Schools Act, to be allocated additional functions consistent with the Act and with provincial law. These could include (but are not restricted to) the right to:

- maintain and improve the school's property, buildings and grounds;

- determine extra-curricular activities;

- choose the subject options offered at the school, within the parameters of provincial curriculum policy;

- purchase textbooks and other materials and equipment.

Initially, these powers were given mainly to former white schools, whose governing bodies usually included skilled professionals and managers; however, it is the aim of government to eventually grant additional powers to all school governing bodies as they become willing and able to exercise them and the number of "Section 21 schools" has spread to include many formerly disadvantaged schools (Department of Education, 2003d, pp. 36-37).

Figure 4.2 **Proportion of Section 21 schools across provinces, 2002**
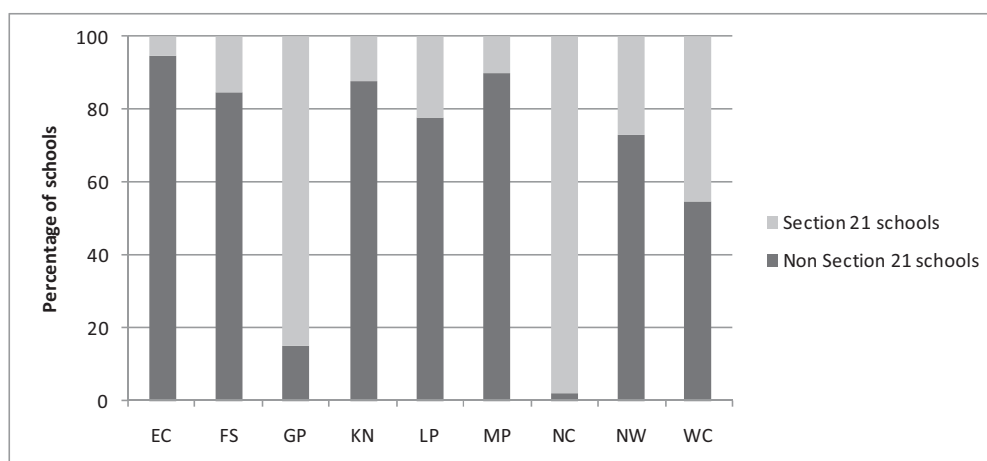
Source: Department of Education (2003d), *Review of the Financing, Resourcing and Costs of Education in Public Schools*, 3 March, Department of Education, Pretoria, p. 38.

While the intention is to establish a uniform system of governance, schools have experienced SGBs differently given the inequalities of capacity and resources available in school communities. Many poorly-equipped SGBs struggle to fulfil their basic functions.

A ministerial review team, appointed by the former Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, in March 2003 to investigate the effectiveness and functioning of SGBs, found that SGBs in working class African, coloured and Indian schools (perhaps the last to a lesser degree) face serious challenges. These challenges relate to huge skills gaps between educators and parents and the serious backlogs that schools in these contexts have to

contend with (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 112). By contrast, SGBs in ex-white schools function considerably better than those in the other ex-departments. These schools are in a position to bring into the SGB people with expertise as opposed to their counter-parts in the other ex-departments. This might be partly due to the technical legalese of the Schools Act, as well as to the requirements for financial literacy (such as drawing up a school budget).

In recognition of the fact that SGBs might have difficulty performing their duties or qualifying for additional functions due to the lack of experience or skills, the Act obliges provincial governments to provide training for governing bodies. Nevertheless, some analysts (Grant-Lewis and Naidoo, 2004) have argued that the Schools Act prescribed a technocratic approach to school governance that seems in tension with the political nature of democratic involvement. Much of the debate on governance has focused on form, and the extent to which SGBs have abided by the functions, rules and structure of the Schools Act. Less is known about whether SGBs have successfully been able to transform schools and inject democratic principles (Grant-Lewis and Motala, 2004).

The ministerial review found that, while the vast majority of schools (98%, based on its survey) have SGBs set up according to the legal requirements, many experienced problems sustaining active participation. This is attributed to a number of factors, including literacy levels, lack of time and the costs (such as transport), lack of understanding of their role and, even, "having to deal with the difficult-to-articulate psychological issues of asserting themselves in relation to others with much more education and knowledge of governance than themselves" (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 50). In rural and farms schools, these difficulties are amplified. As the review put it: "…there appears to be a deep sense of despondency and hopelessness among those faced with the daunting task of governing schools in these circumstances…" (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 52).

Although SGB elections are the third largest public elections in South Africa, with over 5 million parents having a right to cast a vote for their school governors (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 9), it seems that very few do so. Representation on SGBs is also often skewed, with middle-class parents tending to be dominant, women under-represented and the racial profile of many ex-white schools still largely white (and the Review also notes older people leading SGBs in rural areas). The Review also noted an "expertise-drain" (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 57) from township schools, as families with financial means move to better resourced schools. "The economically well-endowed community members are exercising their

democratic choice not to invest in their local schools…" (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 57).

Despite the difficulties experienced, most SGBs appear to be functional, albeit in different ways. Generally, SGBs are more preoccupied with issues of finances and fees at the expense of other functions relating more to teaching and learning:

These differences notwithstanding, it is clear that School Finances and School Fees occupied a large part of the SGBs' time. Interestingly, matters of teaching and learning were considerably lower on the SGBs' scale of priorities. They did not involve themselves in classroom matters or matters of professional concern (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 103).

The Review indicated that most schools have developed learner codes of conduct (94%), mission and vision statements (94%). However, there appears to be less activity with regard to other areas of policy making, with 80% of the schools reporting having school language policies and 67% reporting having religious policies (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 116). Case studies confirmed these findings. Ex-Department of Education and Training (DET) schools were found to be less strong when it came to policy development. All ex-DET schools reported to having established finance committees, but there was nothing similar for language and religion policies and others (Department of Education, 2004b, pp. 116-117).

The Ministerial Review Committee also noted tensions between school management teams and SGBs, especially where there is a blurring of the distinction between school management and school governance. Educators were concerned about SGBs involving themselves in professional matters, such as educator conduct, and in some instances there were reports that the "temptation for governors to dictate and prescribe to educators is great. There is already very strong evidence in the system of the existence of the "control board" SGB – the control board that instructs the professional staff" (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 165).

In relation to access and admission, the review found that there are instances where schools illegally refuse learners admission. Reasons given for turning away learners, amongst others, are inability to pay fees and lack of proper documentation (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 118). The review maintains that poor parents are the victims of this discrimination. With regard to the issue of appointments, promotions and transfers, although the idea was to have community interests, parents in poor schools do not have an understanding of how to deal with such issues. The review hearings pointed to the fact that "parents felt that principals were manipulating the

process to favour the appointments of those educators whom they preferred" (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 125).

The review raised concerns that improvements were needed in certain critical areas, such as parental involvement, fund-raising and development plans for the school. It made fairly strident criticisms of the model of school governance at work in South Africa: "In ceding power to the local site, the model in use in South Africa has failed to take account of the diverse interests, not least of all those of race and class, that continue to circulate and have currency at local level" (Department of Education, 2004a, p. 43). And so there is a general warning for "a process of realignment within the system around the principles of efficiency, good governance and social responsibility" (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 11).

The review is optimistic that, despite the problems, SGBs are a success story in terms of public participation. It boasts that these structures brought together 200 000 volunteer citizens who have added their passion, expertise and commitment to the schools they are serving (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 164). There is an acknowledgement that, although parents' understanding of their role in SGBs is rather formalistic, this is an essential step in their transition from serving tea to and cleaning for decision-makers to making the decisions themselves.

This development around form is critical in and of itself. Critically, from never having done this before, parents are entering a zone of power by taking on the identity of the governor. This identity is an important one to appropriate. Within it are key characteristics that they are being socialised into and having to practice. These characteristics include those of debate, argument, compromise, decision making and, importantly, accountability – all the hallmarks of civic identity and good citizenship (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 164).

SGBs have been most often in the news when there has been conflict between an SGB decision and policy goals. There have been widely publicised cases of SGBs in former-white schools using their powers to regulate access, by means of the school language policy and by escalating fees. This tug-of-war between the state (and provinces) and SGBs over the autonomy of schools is being played out in the courts. As the review argues, "The process of making the SGB a juristic person has the effect of redefining the conflict between the school and the province from being a political one to essentially a legal one." (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 36). Furthermore, "the effect of this decentralisation is that the legislation of these conflicts in turn redefines the nature of political struggle and has the effect of diffusing it and dispersing it between the courtroom and the legislative chamber" (Department of Education, 2004b, p. 36).

Between 1998 and 2002, certain legislative amendments affected the discretion and authority of SGBs (Grant-Lewis and Motala 2004, p. 128): the provision that SGBs appoint educators has become more firmly regulated, and a 1999 amendment to the *Employment of Educators Act* of 1998 placed a two month time limit for SGBs to respond to a request for a recommendation for an appointment. Once this time has elapsed, the provincial education head of department can make a decision without SGB input.

In 2001, in terms of the Education Laws Amendment Act, departments of education were given more power to intervene when a governing body fails to fulfil its duties while at the same time increasing the department's responsibility to build the capacity of the SGB. The same act also places greater financial accountability on SGBs. Governing bodies can no longer take out loans without the approval of the heads of provincial education departments, the establishment of trusts have now been restricted and budget guidelines have been changed to budget prescriptions.

Another Education Laws Amendment Act, in 2002, specifies that the appointment of first-time educators and educators re-entering the system can be made after consulting the SGB, but that no SGB recommendation is required. Previously, the provincial Department of Education had the final say in the appointment of an educator, but the process required interviews and recommendations by SGB members.

Improving the quality of education

Undoubtedly, the quality of education is bound to be favourably affected by a more integrated qualifications framework, a more relevant curriculum, better educators and improved school governance, not to mention increased financing. This section describes those policies and interventions that supplement and enhance the steps already taken to improve and monitor the quality of education in South Africa.

The degree of structural access to and formal equity within schools across the country is improving, yet the quality and meaningfulness of the learning processes and outcomes is poor. Education quality suffers immensely from the pressures of insufficient and inadequate infrastructure, facilities and support materials, large class sizes, too many uncommitted educators and as many unmotivated learners and inexperienced parents, which together generate unjustifiable, albeit declining, levels of repetition and an unacceptably high post-compulsory drop-out rate.

Against this backdrop, a range of quality-related initiatives are underway:

- In 2002, Dinaledi ("star") schools were adopted as a strategy to promote mathematics, science and technology. There are now 500 designated Dinaledi schools, mainly in rural and township areas, which are being groomed as centres of excellence in mathematics and science (Department of Education, 2007e). The three main thrusts of the strategy are intended to: raise the participation and performance by historically disadvantaged learners in Senior Certificate mathematics and science; provide high quality mathematics, science and technology education for all learners taking the GET and FET Certificates; and increase and enhance the human resource capacity to deliver quality mathematics, science and technology education. Associated with the AsgiSA national economic strategy, it is hoped that Dinaledi schools will double the numbers of mathematics and science high school graduates to 50 000 by 2008 (AsgiSA, 2007, p. 10).

- The QIDS UP programme is a new strategy for improving quality. It intends to provide educator and district development support to 5 000 low performing primary schools, and in so doing to improve children's learning, especially their literacy and numeracy skills. It is projected to cost ZAR 12.5 billion over the first five years (Department of Education, 2006a). Under-performing secondary schools are also in line for special attention and support.

- While data-gathering and monitoring systems are not yet up to scratch, large strides have been made in this regard. The recently established National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS) is intended to document and track the state of infrastructure at every school, with accompanying upgrading plans and budgets, so that all schools can be supplied with water, electricity and sanitation, as well as science laboratories, libraries, sports fields and access to ICT. This goes along with a need to insist on greater SGB and principal accountability for school assets and the use of services and resources (Department of Education, 2003d, pp. 42-3).

- Developed in 2004, the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) promises to make a major contribution to improving the quality of education. The IQMS has been used for salary progression assessments, as well as for accelerated grade progression, and will, in the future, also be applied to performance rewards and incentives. Some ZAR 87 million has been budgeted for the IQMS from 2007 to 2009 (Department of Education, 2007e).

- Coupled with the IQMS is the planned establishment of the National Education Evaluation Development Unit (NEEDU), to oversee the measurement and improvement of educator performance.

- More education management capacitation and resourcing initiatives are on the agenda. They include improved remuneration of principals and the provision of more trained district support and school support personnel. In addition, a standard for principalship has been developed and 500 principals from quintiles 1 and 2 schools were to have registered for the resultant advanced certificate in education as of June 2007 (Department of Education, 2007e).

- Educator supply and quality is being targeted through the provision of bursaries for initial educator training, the ongoing professional development of educators and better educator utilisation (and possibly the reutilisation qualified educators who are unemployed or employed elsewhere).

Given the massive amounts of legislative, policy, research and financial inputs into education, and even taking account that the education terrain remains deeply scarred by Apartheid, the performance of the system, along with its hundreds of thousands of administrative and teaching staff and the millions of young people compelled to attend, is disappointing. As the Department of Education itself recognises, education quality clearly does not automatically follow from either improved equality or improved equity (Department of Education, 2007b). Many other developing countries, far poorer than South Africa, achieve better results in terms of learner achievement, retention and completion.

However, it must be noted that quality is a composite product of a range of complex educational inputs and practices. It is a little ironic that a government that has already done so much with rather little in a relatively short period of time should be criticised for not doing enough, or enough well – but it is also apt to hold accountable those who wish to rule. As will be seen in the following section, some (though by no means all) of the barriers to quality education are to be found in the area of education financing.

Education financing and infrastructure

The South African Schools Act requires that "the state must fund public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education and the redress of past

inequalities in educational provision" (Republic of South Africa, 1996c, Section 34.1).

While education expenditure has increased from ZAR 31.1 billion in 1995 to ZAR 59.6 billion in 2002, and to ZAR 105.5 billion in 2007 (National Treasury, 2007, pp. 3, 19), educational transformation and the implementation of new policy have been constrained by, among other things:

- the scale of the existing inequalities;

- a limited fiscus, compounded by a slow national economic growth rate during the first six years after 1994;

- competition from other social sectors for scarce government funds;

- inefficiencies in education management and delivery and a lack of capacity at provincial and local government levels;

- difficulties in containing expenditure on educational personnel and in redirecting funds towards non-personnel expenses; and

- the desire to equalise per capita learner expenditure despite large disparities between provinces and schools.

From the outset, with the appearance of the first White Paper on Education and Training in 1995, it was recognised that "the most secure source of additional public funds for education will accrue from real economic growth and increased revenues" (Department of Education, 1995, Ch.11, Section 25). The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of 1994 had proposed a combination of balanced economic growth and large-scale human resource development and, by 1996, the RDP changed into a firm macro-economic strategy called GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution). GEAR and AsgiSA (the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative – South Africa), emphasise an export-led growth strategy accompanied by fiscal discipline intended to cut government deficit, enhance efficiency, lower inflation and reduce tariff barriers. It is anticipated that the improved exports and greater foreign investment expected to follow from this strategy will increase employment and augment government revenues and thus make possible greater spending on social services, especially education.

Sustained economic growth is a necessary precondition for South Africa's continued transformation. To step up growth beyond the medium-term projections, several interventions have been prioritised that underpin the accelerated and shared growth initiative (AsgiSA, 2007). These include

strengthening exports, improving public sector performance and continuing to invest in people through better education, health and training.

Since the introduction of Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks in 1998, government also began to specifically target inefficiencies in provincial education management and delivery by focusing on access to schooling, classroom backlogs, infrastructural deficiencies, inefficient procurement processes, flow-through rates, pass rates, and over- and under-enrolment (Department of Education, 1998).

In addition to the relative paucity of available revenue and provincial weaknesses in managing allocations, the national DoE's ability to plan for and properly spend available funds has been criticised. As noted earlier, between 2002 and 2004, provinces could not spend more than half and barely four-fifths of funds made available for ABET and ECD, respectively (Wildeman, 2005, pp. 42, 47-9). During the same period, the national Department itself was able to spend only 45% of the available funding for the Thuba Makote Rural School Building Programme (Wildeman, 2005, p. 39).

By 2001, GEAR had exceeded government's deficit and inflation targets, but foreign investment and national economic growth remained slow and public spending on education as a percentage of total state spending and GDP was already higher than that of most other developing countries. Since 2002, however, improved economic growth has meant that more funds have become available for redistribution, with education budget allocations significantly outpacing inflation. And, in the last few years, economic growth has accelerated to such an extent that National Treasury policies have been characterised as deliberately pursuing "the joint combination of an "expansionary" fiscal stance and "prudent" fiscal management" (Wildeman, 2005, p. 49), aimed at ensuring that government policies remain both affordable and sustainable.

Nevertheless, education, which perennially competes for funds against other areas in need of redress, such as health, housing and welfare, must do so more than ever in the current expansionary economic climate. In fact, real expenditure on education from 1995 to 2002 declined as a share of both total government expenditure (from 19.2% in 1996 to 18.8% in 2002) and Gross Domestic Product (from 5.7% in 1996 to 4.9% in 2002) (UNDP 2003, p. 24). Over the entire post-Apartheid period, then, and especially in the last few years, "education does not only show the slowest real growth rates compared to other social service sectors, but its claims on provincial resources have been systematically trimmed" (Wildeman, 2005, p. 14).

Though the government ideal of providing free and compulsory education for all has begun to be realised in the form of the first "no fee"

schools gazetted in 2005, in the early post-Apartheid years there was no possibility of providing free quality education at any level, let alone at the level once presumably enjoyed by former whites-only schools. In a context of limited available resources attempting to make inroads into enormous backlogs, the South African Schools Act thus enshrined the right of school governing bodies to charge school fees. At the same time, however, measures were put in place to begin addressing equity considerations, with the two primary mechanisms of raising additional or redistributing existing financial resources being the Equitable Share Formula (ESF), focused on inter-provincial equity, and the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF), aimed at more equitable intra-provincial expenditure.

School fees

One of the most important powers devolved upon School Governing Bodies by the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996) is the right to charge school fees, subject to majority parental approval. On the other hand, a majority of poor parents could thus insist on paying low fees and still ensure that their children received access to basic education, while on the other hand, richer parents and communities could continue to spend large amounts to guarantee excellent facilities and low learner:educator ratios for their children. Leaving aside the fact that high fees have permitted some schools to restrict access by learners from other races, as well as those from poor backgrounds, even apparently nominal fees of less than ZAR 100 per annum, which are charged by the vast majority of schools, are a burden on poor parents.

The cost of education for most households has dramatically increased since 1994. Education expenditure as a percentage of total household expenditure rose from 2% to 4%, translating into a real expenditure increase of about 60% (Department of Education, 2003d, p. 80). Figure 4.3 indicates the differences between rich and poor in terms of the percentage of household expenditure allocated to education in 2000.

Low fees in absolute terms nevertheless constitute a high proportion of household income. The poorest households spend, on average, twice as much of their income on school fees as do middle- and high-income groups. (At the same time, however, household expenditure on education still constitutes a smaller portion of total household expenditure than cigarettes and alcohol combined.) (Department of Education, 2003d, p. 80)

In general, public school fees increased between 1994 and 2005, though differentials between low and high fee schools are narrowing. In 1995, almost 86% of learners paid no more than ZAR 100 per annum in school fees, but, by 2003, this figure had dropped to only 62%. By contrast,

whereas in 1995 less than 5% of learners paid more than ZAR 3 000 per annum for school fees, by 2003 less than 1% of learners did so (Department of Education, 2006f, p. 39).

Figure 4.3 **Average school fees over household income, 2000**
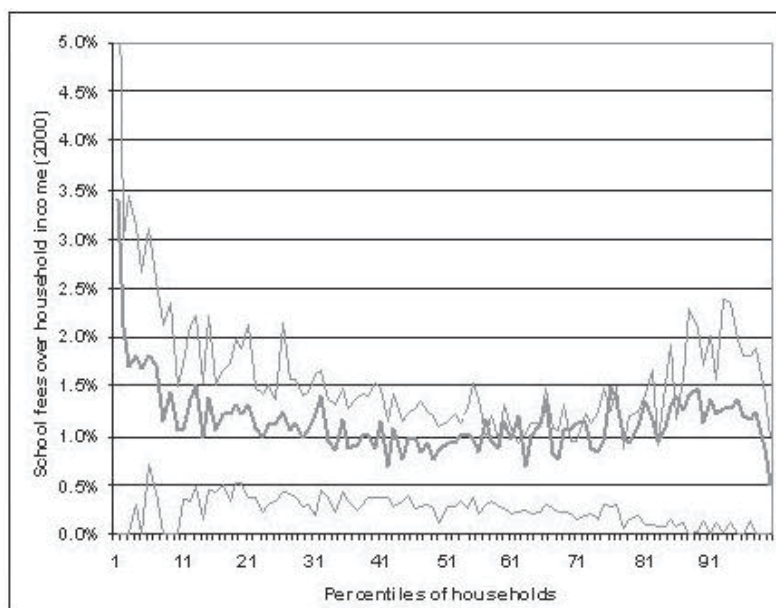
Independent schools are also eligible for government subsidies. Such subsidies, which add to ZAR 375 million in 2006/07, cost the state far less per learner than if the learner was in a public school (Department of Education, 2006b, Section 54). In fact, "if all learners were to transfer to public schools, the cost of public education in certain provinces might increase by as much as five percent" (Department of Education, 2006b, p. 48). Government nevertheless prefers to subsidise those independent schools that are well-managed, not for profit and serve poor communities (Department of Education, 2006b, p. 56), and it also weights these subsidies in favour of independent schools that charge the lowest fees (Department of Education, 2006b, Section 187, Figure 4).

Most recently, in terms of the Education Laws Amendment Act of 2005, "no fee schools" have been specified, encompassing all those in the poorest two quintiles (*i.e.* 40% of learners nationally, ranging from 56% in the poor

Eastern Cape to 14% in the richer Western Cape) (Department of Education, 2006h, p. 3). Apart from its direct financial impact on poorer parents and their children, the introduction of no fee schools, together with the refinement of exemption regulations, is intended to eliminate the victimisation of those who, as a consequence of being unable to pay fees, had their results illegally withheld or were subjected to public humiliation. All no fee schools were to receive a minimum amount of state funding of ZAR 554 per learner per year starting in 2007. During the 2007 academic year, 40% of learners (over 5 million learners) attended 13 856 no fee schools (Department of Education, 2007e).

The Equitable Shares Formula (ESF)

The 1996 Constitution gives the national government and the nine provinces joint responsibility for the provision of education. In the case of school funding, the national government sets the norms and standards that the provinces are required to follow. Provincial governments have limited authority to raise their own revenue, but are constitutionally entitled to an "equitable share" of national revenue, based on a weighted average of demographically-driven formulae that apply to each major functional area.

Calculated by the National Treasury, the Equitable Share Formula (ESF) reflects provincial variables, such as the size of the school-age population, the number of learners enrolled in public ordinary schools, the distribution of capital needs, the size of the rural population in each province and the size of the target population for social security grants weighted by a poverty index. The equitable-share calculations are currently based on a 51% (41% until 2004) share for education, adjusted according to provincial demographics (Department of Education, 2006d, p. 32). The goal is to ensure that each province, regardless of its wealth, is able to spend an equitable amount on each learner.

The ESF was phased in from 1996 to 2000, in order to ensure that provinces projected to receive cuts in their budgetary allocations were given sufficient time to make adjustments either to their expenditure or their own revenues. (Even the small tax revenues that provinces accrue for themselves (about ZAR 188 *per capita* in the Western Cape, and ZAR 48 *per capita* for Limpopo, in 2003 estimates) can allow some richer provinces more space and flexibility with regard to managing their budgets and expenditures, than poorer provinces (Department of Education, 2003d, p. 20.) Nonetheless, the education budget immediately showed a shift in priorities from wealthier to poorer provinces, with KwaZulu-Natal, Eastern Cape and Limpopo allocated sizeable increases at the expense of provinces like Gauteng and Western Cape.

Since provincial legislatures make their own decisions about how to spread their "equitable share" across all provincial social services, actual *per capita* education expenditure differs from province to province. Allocations to education are usually the largest in every province, but are invariably under pressure due to high demand for other services like health, welfare, housing and community development. As shown in Figure 4.4, using consolidated national and provincial expenditure figures, the share of education declined slightly from 19.5% in 2004/05 to 18.7% in 2007/08 (Wildeman, 2005, p. 13).

Figure 4.4 **Consolidated national and provincial expenditure on education, health, welfare and housing as a percentage of total consolidated national and provincial expenditure, 2004/05 to 2007/08**
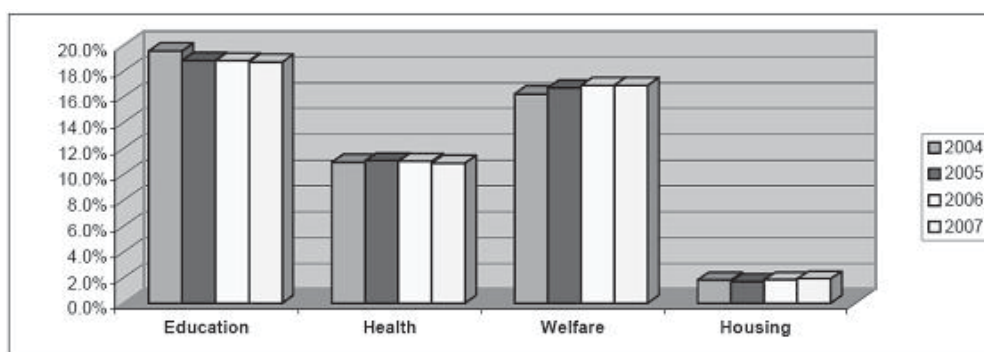
Source: National Treasury's Budget Review 2005, in Wildeman, R. (2005), *A Review of National and Provincial Education Budgets 2005*, IDASA Budget Information Service, Cape Town.

The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF)

The second major mechanism intended to address inequalities in education financing is the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) (Department of Education, 1998). The NNSSF, which came into operation on 1 January 2000 and was recently amended (Department of Education, 2006b), requires that each provincial education department rank all its schools from "poorest" to "least poor", at first equally weighted between the physical condition, facilities and crowding of the school and the relative poverty of the community around the school (Department of Education, 1998, Section 101) but changed in 2003 to take only household income into account (Department of Education, 2003c, p. 18). Since 2007, this ranking has been further specified and

differentiated according to the income, dependency ratio (or unemployment rate) and level of education (or literacy rate) of the school's surrounding community (usually its geographical catchment area). (Department of Education, 2006b, Section 102b)

In line with these norms and standards, funding for non-personnel recurrent expenses is allocated progressively: 35% of available funds are earmarked for the poorest 20% of schools, 25% of funds for the next poorest quintile, 20% for the middle quintile, and 15% and 5% respectively for the two "least poor" quintiles (Department of Education, 1998, Section 101, Figure 2). Non-personnel recurrent expenses include learner support materials (LSMs) (such as library books and textbooks, computers, furniture, stationery and laboratory equipment), non-LSM equipment (like furniture, telephones, copiers, cleaning and sports equipment), school maintenance and building renovation (as opposed to replacement or construction) and provision of essential services (including water, sanitation, electricity and security) (Department of Education, 2006b, Section 96).

By 2007, the allocation has been further differentiated per province (Department of Education, 2006b, Section 111 and Figure 3) in accordance with the recognition that "the poor in South Africa are not all equally poor, and … it might be necessary for the state to deal with the problem of poverty differentially" (Department of Education, 2006b, Section 91(d)). Apart from the fact that the poor are less able to pay for education, it has been found that learners of poorer and less educated parents need "a more intensive, and hence more costly, education than do more advantaged learners". It follows that, "to attain educational equity … some inequality in spending, in favour of the poor, is required" (Department of Education, 2006d, p. 40).

Given that provinces experience different levels of poverty in population, and the desire to fund equally poor learners at the same level across the country, provincial quintiles previously used to calculate school allocations were replaced by national quintiles (Department of Education, 2003c, p. 16). Table 4.2 indicates the national poverty quintile in each province. The School Funding Norms determine that a 35-25-20-15-5 distribution of funds should be followed across quintiles 1 to 5.

The poorest quintile is expected to receive 35% of the school allocation and the least poor 5% (Department of Education, 2006b, Section 109 and Figure 2).

However, it is one thing to rank schools and allocate funds equitably; it is another thing entirely to ensure that the money is spent, and spent properly. Schools and school governing bodies, have an unequal capacity to spend money and, even where additional funds are allocated to poor schools,

many governing bodies and principals are not able to use them effectively (Simkins, 2002; Department of Education, 2003d, pp. 37-8). Moreover, a poverty ranking system might itself exacerbate inequality, as the government has clearly recognised: if 60% of the population of a province is poor, distinctions between grades of poverty in the bottom three quintiles are bound to be unjust (National Treasury, 2003).

Table 4.2 **School allocations per province by national quintiles in percentages**

	National quintiles					
	1 (poorest)	2	3	4	5 (least poor)	Total
Eastern Cape	34%	26%	18%	10%	11%	100%
Free State	33%	20%	16%	14%	18%	100%
Gauteng	7%	11%	18%	28%	35%	100%
KwaZulu-Natal	19%	22%	22%	21%	16%	100%
Limpopo	27%	25%	22%	15%	10%	100%
Mpumalanga	14%	23%	25%	21%	17%	100%
Northern Cape	18%	17%	21%	20%	23%	100%
North West	20%	19%	23%	23%	15%	100%
Western Cape	4%	10%	16%	29%	40%	100%
South Africa	**20%**	**20%**	**20%**	**20%**	**20%**	**100%**

Source: Department of Education (2003c), *Plan of Action: Improving Access to Free and Quality Basic Education for All*, 14 June, Department of Education, Pretoria.

Concerns have also been expressed about the adequacy of funding. It has been suggested that "adequacy of state funding should be measured in terms what level of resourcing is required to attain a particular level of learner performance, on average" (Department of Education, 2003d, p. 62). In other words, funding would be adequate if all learners received a basic basket of educational goods and services, or "costed minimum packages". However, given that some portions of the school allocation (*e.g.* for Learner Support Materials) are ring-fenced, other portions of the allocation (*e.g.* for building maintenance) can be relatively inadequate. Both schools and provincial planners feel that the school allocations are inadequate for the lowest four quintiles, being most pronounced for non-LSM non-personnel recurrent items; but provincial planners tend to attribute this inadequate level of funding to available budgets and resourcing processes, rather than to the policy itself (Department of Education, 2003d, p. 63).

The DoE, in responding to these concerns in 2003, provisionally identified the cost of "the basic minimum package … [as] between ZAR 600 and ZAR 1 000" (Department of Education, 2003c, p. 15). However, it is clear that the "adequacy" of funding is, in itself, neither an adequate nor a

sufficient explanation of poor learner performance: "Currently, there are schools that perform well despite the fact that they suffer deplorable physical conditions, learners come from poor households, and the educators have average qualifications" (Department of Education, 2003d, p. 64) and *vice versa*.

Personnel versus non-personnel expenditure

However, it is personnel rather than non-personnel costs that dominate all education budgets; particularly – but not only – the cost of educators' salaries. In the immediate post-1994 period, in many provinces the non-personnel budget was as low as 10% of the total (Department of Education, 1998, Section 25), prompting the Department of Education to set a policy target of an 80:20 personnel:non-personnel spending ratio in order to reserve a portion of funds for school construction, essential services, books and educator development (Department of Education, 1998, Section 26; Department of Education, 2006b, Sections 20-21).

In addition, within total personnel allocations in provinces, actual teaching personnel costs are targeted at no more than 85% (Department of Education, 1998, Section 29; Department of Education, 2006d, Section 23), but "60% of schools have no administrative assistant, 70% of schools have no support employee, and 42% of schools have neither of the two" (Department of Education, 2006d, p. 45).

Generally, provinces have made good progress in reducing personnel expenditure as a proportion of overall expenditure.

Table 4.3 **Personnel expenditure in public schools as a percentage of overall public school expenditure, 2002/03 to 2007/08**

	2002/03	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Eastern Cape	88.6	89.3	89.3	84.8	81.1
Free State	86.6	86.7	89.6	89.6	89.6
Gauteng	81.8	82.0	83.4	81.7	82.7
KwaZulu-Natal	88.9	85.3	85.2	85.5	85.9
Limpopo	89.7	82.6	84.8	85.5	86.3
Mpumalanga	83.1	81.2	79.2	76.8	73.7
Northern Cape	81.0	90.2	86.9	86.9	87.1
North West	89.6	86.9	84.6	86.1	86.8
Western Cape	83.8	83.8	85.1	84.7	84.7
National	86.7	85.8	85.3	84.4	83.9

Source: Motala, S., *et al.* (2007), *Educational Access in South Africa*, CREATE, Centre for International Education, University of Sussex, Brighton; Wildeman, R. (2005), *A Review of National and Provincial Education Budgets 2005*, IDASA Budget Information Service, Cape Town.

On a national scale, however, it can be said that personnel expenditure is slowly and progressively being contained: between 2002/03 and 2007/08 it declined 2.8% to 83.9% of total education expenditure (Table 4.3).

Per capita learner expenditure

There has been a substantial increase in *per capita* learner expenditure since Apartheid ended. Between the fiscal years 1996 and 2004, *per capita* learner expenditure rose by 140% in the Eastern Cape, the Free State, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West provinces. In the same period, per learner expenditures grew by between 40% and 80% in Gauteng, Northern Cape and Western Cape (Reschovsky, 2005).

Moreover, the gaps in expenditure between the poorest and the least poor provinces have been reduced. Between 1993 and 1997, public school spending per white learner was reduced from ZAR 5 500 to ZAR 3 800 and spending per black learner increased from ZAR 1 700 to ZAR 2 700 (Van der Berg, 2001). *Per capita* learner expenditure by province in 2007 ranged from ZAR 6 124 per KwaZulu-Natal learner to ZAR 7 156 per Northern Cape learner (Wildeman, 2005, p. 26).

Table 4.4 **Public *per capita* expenditure on public ordinary school education in nominal ZAR values, 2000 to 2007**

Province	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
EC	3 019	3 533	3 859	4 258	4 549	4 853	5 484	6 258
FS	3 515	3 828	4 308	4 997	5 369	6 069	6 436	6 762
GP	3 986	3 825	4 441	4 905	5 034	5 296	5 768	6 935
KZN	2 820	3 036	3 492	3 937	4 438	5 030	5 524	6 124
LP	2 980	3 272	1 863	4 022	4 486	4 832	5 513	6 189
MP	3 030	3 267	3 854	4 419	4 645	5 563	5 867	6 505
NW	3 594	3 843	4 234	4 794	5 079	6 244	6 492	6 931
NC	4 403	4 603	4 894	5 162	5 502	6 190	6 481	7 156
WC	3 805	4 044	4 538	4 935	5 208	5 821	6 127	6 859
Total	**3 250**	**3 496**	**3 673**	**4 398**	**4 743**	**5 273**	**5 765**	**6 474**

Source: Department of Education, (various years), *Education Statistics in South Africa at a Glance*, November, Department of Education, Pretoria; provincial budget statements.

Continued disparities in *per capita* learner expenditure figures between provinces are also a reflection of the fact that some provinces are required by circumstance to spend more on transport and hostel accommodation,

while others spend more than the average on salaries because they have larger proportions of better qualified educators.

Though provincial education departments' *per capita* expenditure projections have recently become very similar, it has been argued that this does not in fact reflect deliberate government planning, but only a relatively arbitrary and contingent convergence in expenditure estimates due to reductions in the budgets of richer provinces and increases in the budgets of poorer provinces. It also leaves the infrastructure deficits of poor schools largely unchanged. In short, "…there is no hard evidence to prove that present levels of expenditure have overhauled existing inequalities or contributed to a notion of effective redress…" (Wildeman, 2005, pp. 27-8).

School Infrastructure and learner transport

In spite of education spending continuing to decline as a proportion of gross domestic product, there have been significant, positive developments in the resourcing of education in recent years. In addition to real growth in provincial education budgets, there has been a rebalancing of input budgets with non-personnel expenditure now at around 20% of expenditure. Mechanisms to target spending to the poor have been introduced through the National School Funding Norms and amendments to post-provisioning models. After a period of relative neglect, education capital budgets have grown rapidly. These changes have ensured more equitable access to quality educational services and will over time further reduce inequalities in education outcomes.

Between 2002/03 and 2005/06, education infrastructure spending increased from ZAR 1 billion to ZAR 2.5 billion. By 2008/09, capital expenditure is expected to reach ZAR 4 billion. The positive development of growing real infrastructure budgets and spending has been counterbalanced by remaining inequalities and slow progress in wiping out backlogs. Problems have been exacerbated by natural disasters, the migration of the population to some urban centres and unpredictable movements of learners between schools and residential areas. Although capital expenditure grew rapidly in education departments, under spent infrastructure budgets continued in spite of the huge need.

While there has therefore been significant strides in equalising some education inputs for the poor (specifically in terms of personnel spending and non-personnel non-capital spending), both the 1996 and 2000 Schools Register of Needs identified significant infrastructure backlogs, unevenness in access to quality school infrastructure (including buildings and accommodation and basic services such as sanitation, water, telecommunications and electricity) and unacceptable conditions at some

schools. Extreme infrastructure needs continue to be highlighted in monthly provincial reports to the Department of Education and in almost weekly letters to the minister of education from principals and communities and regularly in the media.

The School Register of Needs surveys of 1996 and 2000 itemised the immense infrastructural backlogs (1996 figures in parentheses): 9.2% (12.2%) of schools had no toilets, 41.8% (57.1%) were without electricity, 27.3% (34.1%) had no water supply and 80.2% (83.2%) had no media centre (which includes libraries) (Department of Education, 2000). An update of these need estimates has recently been completed.

The update of the Schools Register of Needs Survey, the 2006 National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS) study, confirmed significant progress in key infrastructure areas since 2000 and more so from 1996. Yet, provision of school infrastructure remains a serious challenge in terms of inequality in access to quality infrastructure, a significant proportion of learners being subjected to unacceptable conditions (overcrowded classrooms, absence or inadequate basic services, lack of security, dangerous structures) and a majority of schools not having key inputs for a modern education (libraries, laboratories and computers).

Specifically, NEIMS showed the following progress:

- The number of overcrowded schools has fallen from 51% in 1996, to 42% in 2000 to 24% in 2006;

- The number of schools with electricity has increased from 11 174 in 1996 to 20 713 in 2006;

- The number of schools without water has decreased from 8 823 in 1996 to 3 152 in 2006;

- The number of schools without toilets has decreased from 3 265 in 1996 to 1 532 in 2006;

- Yet, it also shows critical areas of need:

- 3 152 schools (12.6%) do not have a source of water on or near the site;

- 1 532 schools (6%) do not have toilets on site;

- 3 824 schools have (15%) more than 50 learners per toilet;

- 8 470 schools have pit latrines and 5 216 have ventilated improved pit latrines;

- 4 297 (17%) schools have no source of electricity on or near the site;

- 10 475 schools (42%) have no fencing or fencing in poor condition;

- Only 1 813 (7.22%) schools have library spaces that are adequately stocked;

- Nearly 63% of secondary schools have no laboratory space and only 10% of secondary schools have laboratory spaces that are adequately stocked;

- 17 065 schools (68%) have no computers;

- Only about 2% of schools have paved access, ramps and appropriate toilet facilities for disabled learners;

- Nearly a quarter of schools have more than 45 learners per classroom with another 35% having 30 to 45 learners per classroom;

- 74% of schools are in a good or excellent condition, 14% are in a poor condition and 12% (3 366 schools) are in a very poor condition. The worst situation is in the Eastern Cape, where 40% of schools are in a poor or very poor condition.

Poor planning, politics, economics and resulting learner migration have contributed to infrastructural unevenness, with each province registering both classroom shortages and classroom surpluses in different areas. Occasionally schools have been built in areas "where population was declining or where there was not really a demand for more schools in the first place" (Department of Education, 2003d, p. 98). Learner migration to qualitatively better schools is also a cause of some classroom shortages. Many small schools in rural areas, particularly those located on farms, have been closed down by provincial education departments due to a drop in learner numbers. The 2005 Report of the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education suggested that, between 1996 and 2000, the number of learners in farm schools decreased by as much as 60%, in part due to agricultural job losses and evictions (Department of Education, 2005e, p. 49).

The inequalities of Apartheid education provision mean that as many as 6% of children still live an hour or more away from the closest school, in terms of travelling time. In 2001 it was found that 81% of learners get to school on foot, and only 7% use public transport (Department of Education, 2003d, p. 86).

Figure 4.5 **Households' mode of transport to primary and secondary schools 2001 and 2003**
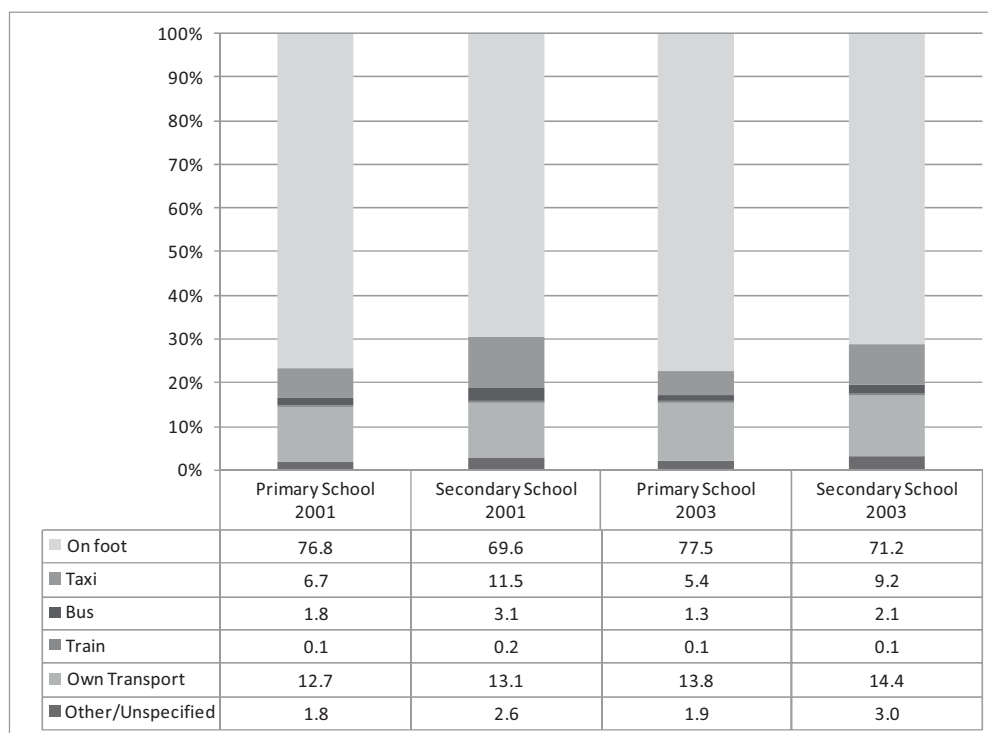
	Primary School 2001	Secondary School 2001	Primary School 2003	Secondary School 2003
On foot	76.8	69.6	77.5	71.2
Taxi	6.7	11.5	5.4	9.2
Bus	1.8	3.1	1.3	2.1
Train	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1
Own Transport	12.7	13.1	13.8	14.4
Other/Unspecified	1.8	2.6	1.9	3.0

Source: Department of Education (2006f), *Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the Impact and Outcomes of the Education System on South Africa's Population: Evidence from Household Surveys*, September, Department of Education, Pretoria, p. 42.

In 2003, 77.5% and 71.2% of households reported that their children walked to primary and secondary school, respectively (Department of Education, 2006f, p. 42). In the same year, 319 000 7-18 year-olds walked more than five kilometres to school (Department of Education, 2006f, p. 43). In 2006/07, the Department of Education undertook a study on learner transport with the aim of assessing the status quo of learner transport in the country and to develop guidelines to assist provincial education departments and other relevant stakeholders in promoting access to education through learner transport assistance schemes. The study found that in 2005, annual provincial budgets for learner transport ranged from less than ZAR 1 million to ZAR 107 million. The study noted that there are currently more than 193 250 learners benefiting from transport assistance provided by government (Department of Education, 2006b).

Information and communication technologies (ICT) are not a magic solution to providing access to education, but they do offer the possibility of bridging distances and bringing expert teaching to remote areas. Knowledge of ICT is also important for functioning in the modern economy. E-learning is an expensive option, and the Draft White Paper on e-Education acknowledges that "the lack of developed infrastructure for information and communication technologies exacerbated the gap between Africa and the developed world" (Department of Education, 2003a, Section 1.8).

Table 4.5 reflects the distribution of ICT in schools across provinces. Provinces have invested in computer education to varying degrees, though this again reflects the disparities in wealth that exist between them: Gauteng and Western Cape have excellent coverage, but most provinces, especially the Eastern Cape, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal, lag far behind.

Table 4.5 **Computers in schools by province, 2002**

	Schools with computers	**Schools with computers for teaching and learning**
Eastern Cape	8.8%	4.5%
Free State	25.6%	12.6%
Gauteng	88.5%	45.4%
KwaZulu-Natal	16.6%	10.4%
Mpumalanga	22.9%	12.4%
Northern Cape	76.3%	43.3%
Limpopo	13.3%	4.9%
North West	30.5%	22.9%
Western Cape	82.4%	56.8%
National	**39.2%**	**26.5%**

Source: Department of Education (2003a), *Draft White Paper on e-Education - Transforming Learning and Teaching through ICT*, August, Department of Education Pretoria, Section 1.25.

Based on the information from the NEIMS study, a strategy will be devised that will have to rely not only on increased funding but also improved mechanisms and institutions to overcome obstacles in the infrastructure planning and delivery process. The Department of Education is currently developing a policy framework for school infrastructure that will include norms and standards. The information on the current system, together with the new policy framework, will allow for a more comprehensive and rational infrastructure investment strategy.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

South African education has undergone fundamental transformation since the end of Apartheid with several important policies prising the system in the direction of equity, quality, non-racism and non-sexism. The educational architecture is in place and indicators show that access and throughput to the end of basic education is an important achievement. Pro-poor policies have shifted public funding to the poorest schools and systematic progress is being made to undo Apartheid's infrastructural backlogs. Bold attempts were made to overhaul the curriculum, while difficulties have been experienced in its implementation.

The report, however, indicates that key access issues remain, especially in certain key sub-sectors such as grade R and inclusive education and that, in the light of inequality in the provision of key inputs such as infrastructure, there are many remaining issues with regard to substantive equity in access and access to quality education facilities. The issue of equity therefore remains a strong concern relating both to equity of inputs and equity of results.

The issue of inadequate quality in terms of learner achievement was highlighted in the school sector, but also underlies initiatives and approaches in other components of the system. In assessing the current situation in the education sector and its prospects, the focus will have to be on the overall process of transformation and policy reform, how key levers were used, as well as on trajectories in individual sectors.

Critical questions remain about the adequacy of the overall investment in the education sector, the composition of investment in the sector and the efficiency of the utilisation of the investment. The country has also seen a prolonged period of policy development, and implementation of new policy and both the focus of the policy development as well as its appropriateness and implementation, require interrogation to ensure that the right choices are made going forward.

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PART TWO:
Examiners' Report

Chapter 1: Introduction

The introduction gives an overview of the key issues of the South African education system and discusses the purpose, scope, objectives and structure of the review. It also names those stakeholder groups interviewed during the review team's field visit in November 2007.

The context[1]

The ending of the struggle against Apartheid and the establishment of a Government of National Unity in South Africa, in 1994, with the iconic and charismatic Nelson Mandela as President, was one of the most significant, historical events of the late twentieth century. Despite the difficulties that had preceded it, the transfer of power was achieved through negotiations and peaceful means. The new political leaders faced daunting challenges. They inherited a state in which inequality and discrimination had been embedded and where great divisions and tensions had existed between different sectors of the population, most notably between the white minority and the black majority. The challenge taken up by the new leaders was to build a new South Africa on the principles of universal human rights that would promote justice, equity and non-discrimination in all aspects, including race, colour, language, gender, disability and age. From the beginning, the education system was regarded as central to the long-term re-shaping of society. It was realised that the education system forms a crucial conduit through which the ideals, values, knowledge, attitudes, skills and relationships cherished by a society are made available to learners of all ages.

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[1] This section is a summary overview of some key features of the South African education and social context and is largely based on the Country Background Report (2007) and on the Draft Country Background Report as part of the OECD Activity on Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (SAQA, 2007).

One of the striking features of the new regime was the range of education legislation that was enacted and the number of white paper education policies issued in the early years following the transition. The Constitution of 1996 clearly set out the human rights principles and democratic values that should underpin educational provision. The South African Schools Act (1996 – SASA) set out the high aspirations held for a unified, national education system in transforming the society. The National Education Policy Act, also 1996, set out the new framework by which the system would be governed, through a concurrent mode of governance.

The latter involved the national Department of Education (DoE) being responsible for higher education and for policy formulation for the whole system, with the nine provincial departments of education (PDEs) largely responsible for the implementation of this policy. The provinces would provide support resources to schools, which would henceforth be governed by democratically elected school governing bodies (SGBs) in terms of legislative framework. A Further Education and Training Act was passed in 1998 and it was recently updated, in 2006. An Adult Basic Education and Training Act (ABET) was passed in 2000, a year which also saw the passing of the South African Council for Educators Act (SACE). The South African Qualifications Authority Act was passed in 1995 and facilitated the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework. Following the publication of a white paper on the issue, the Higher Education Act was passed in 1997. As further evidence of remarkably intensive policy and legislative activity, the year 2001 saw the publication of white papers on early childhood development (ECD) and on inclusive education. Such documentation, permeated by a new value system, bears witness to the priority given by the new regime to the reform of all aspects of the education system in South Africa.

The new administration also undertook some significant restructuring of the system. This included the closure of about 120 colleges of education and the location of teacher education within the universities and tecknikons.[2] These higher education institutions were also subject to mergers and amalgamation, whereby the number of universities and technikons was reduced from 36 to 23. Such institutional re-organisation was not achieved without difficulty or disputation.

Neither was the move to rationalise the teaching force that was aimed at more equal distribution of pupil-teacher ratios, and salary provision. A radical new curriculum policy was introduced. Norms and Standards for

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[2]   A technikon is a non-university post secondary institution, in South Africa, focusing on vocational education.

Educators (NSE), which sought very high levels of understanding, attitudes and skills from the teaching force, were issued in 2000.

It is clear that vision, idealism and high-minded concern for a greatly reformed education system were very much in evidence among legislators and policy makers in the early years. However, it is also clear that there was an underestimation of the time, resources and qualitative teaching force required to make operational the policy aspirations in the schoolrooms throughout the country. Much research has indicated how difficult and complex it is to achieve major educational change, even in countries where the circumstances are much more favourable than they were in South Africa. Legislation and regulation could not ensure the transformation of education that was required. Experience has shown that sustained, multifaceted resourcing and supportive action are also required and the timescale for the transformation is much longer than was initially anticipated.

Educational reform plans also need to be viewed in relation to the type of society for which they are intended. South Africa faces significant socio-economic problems at present. In 2007, the population of South Africa was 47.9 million. In terms of race groups, the population was 79.6% African, 9.1% white, 8.9% coloured (mixed race) and 2.5% Indian/Asian. The life expectancy at birth is estimated at 48.4 years for males and 51.6 years for females. South Africa has a predominantly young population, with 42.2% being 19 years of age or younger. Thus there is a very high dependency youth population. About 40% of the population live in rural areas where the levels of poverty and unemployment are high. Over the last decade, South Africa has been experiencing rapid urbanisation, particularly by male workers in search of employment. However, many of the migrants have low levels of education and are unable to secure employment, even though South Africa has a large number of vacancies in skilled and semi-skilled occupations. In 2006, the South African government launched the Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) to seek to address the skills shortages.

Estimates of unemployment levels vary, but the national average, according to the government definition of unemployment, is at least 25%, with much higher percentages in underdeveloped regions of the country. While living conditions in many rural areas are poor, the situation in many of the urban suburbs is also very unsatisfactory, with "most major urban areas surrounded by a periphery of poor residents, living in shack settlements with little or no access to basic services" (SAQA, 2007, p. 2). The high levels of poverty in South Africa are being addressed in part by social grants, primarily in the form of old age pensions, disability grants and child support grants. Nationally, household access to social grants almost trebled between 1995 and 2003, from 11.6% of households to 32.8%. To

assist hungry children at school, a national school nutrition programme is in operation on which over ZAR 1 billion (South African rand[3]) was expended in 2006/07. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has had a very serious impact on South African society. The national estimated prevalence rate is about 11%, and the HIV positive population is estimated at approximately 5.3 million. The prevalence among the teaching profession is estimated to be higher than the national rate, at about 12.7%.

Education provision for this society has been one of the major concerns of government. When the new South African government assumed office in 1994, a key principle of policy was to try to ensure that a national public education system would be formed that would avoid racial segregation. To a very large degree, this has been achieved in that 96% of the schools are categorised as public schools, with only 4% of schools being "independent". This does not, of course, mean that all public schools are on an equal footing as regards infrastructure and resources, or that all learners have equal access to good schools, but that all schools operate within the framework of national policy, implement the same curriculum and are bound by a common regulatory procedure. Enrolment rates in school are very high, with a 100% gross enrolment rate at primary school and high levels up to grade 9 (about age 15). Significant drop-out occurs after grade 10. Pupil progression through the school system tends to be prolonged, with much repetition in classes.

South Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has been growing at almost 5% for the past few years. This has created confidence and the capacity of the state to direct significant levels of expenditure to improve material and social conditions. Of the recent past, it has been stated, "Over the last five years, South Africa has achieved a high level of macro-economic stability – levels not seen in South Africa for more than forty years" (SAQA, 2007, p. 16). Expenditure on education in 2006/07 comprised 5.3% of the national GDP and about 18% of consolidated government expenditure. Both these proportions have been declining over the last decade.

The current 5.3% of GDP falls below the recommended United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) figure of 6% for developing countries. However, in real monetary terms, the money available to education has greatly increased over the last five years and is expected to grow at more than 5% per annum in real terms over the next three years. Over 90% of the educational expenditure was devoted to personnel expenditure up to the late nineties. This has been reduced to

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[3]   ZAR1 = approximately USD 0.13 and EUR 0.09.

below 80% in 2006/07, allowing for more discretionary funding for other qualitative inputs.

There have also been real increases in per learner expenditure in schools. In 2006/07 the average per learner expenditure in public schools was estimated at about ZAR 5 000. Expenditure for higher education, at about 13.5% of the total national expenditure on education, is distributed by the national Department of Education (DoE), while the expenditure for the school system is conducted through the provincial departments.

Overall, there are almost 14 million learners in the public education system, of which 12.2 million, or 88%, are in the school system. The school system employs almost 363 000 teachers. The public higher education system has 737 000 learners and the public Further Education and Training Colleges (FETs) enrol 376 000 learners. The pupil teacher ratio in the public schools is 33:1. In public higher education the ratio is 48:1. While great improvements have been made in the promotion of literacy over the last decade, it is estimated that about 4.7 million (about 10%) of the population are completely illiterate.

Despite the great efforts at educational reform and improved resourcing of the education system, there is disappointment in South Africa that the outcomes of the system as measured by internal tests, intra-African tests and international tests are poor and unsatisfactory. One of the key questions facing the South African authorities is why this should be so and how the situation could be improved. The OECD team hopes that its review, analysis and recommendations might be of assistance in this, and other areas of policy concern. The quality of its education system is of crucial importance to the future development and well-being of South Africa. The reviewers consider it a privilege to have been invited to assist the South African authorities in this core task of nation building.

The scope and structure of the review

The request of the South African authorities was that this review should be of a general character involving an examination of key aspects of the education system, rather than a detailed review of a particular sector, such as higher education. The findings should be presented in a synoptic way that would assist policy makers in appraising fundamental features of the system and assist them in formulating initiatives. The following is the sequence of themes that have been examined in the review:

- governance and financing;

- curriculum, learning materials and assessment;

- early childhood education, and adult and basic education and training;

- vocational education and training and human resource development;

- inclusive education and equity in South African education;

- the teaching career and teacher education;

- higher education.

The analysis of the various issues involved in these themes in South Africa prompted a good deal of reflection on the nature of educational change – its conceptualisation, process, timing and realisation. A host of issues integral to the dynamics of educational change – communication, consultation, value orientation, re-skilling, resourcing and so on – interpenetrates the various initiatives for change. South Africa has aspired to develop a conceptually and qualitatively different education system from that which existed during the Apartheid era. The fourteen years that have elapsed since the ending of that regime is not a long time in educational development. The system can still be viewed as in a period of transition. One of the strengths of the South African system is its openness to self-questioning and its willingness to adapt in the light of experience. This report by a team of external reviewers is aimed at assisting the South African authorities in carrying forward the major reform of their educational system.

The policy emphasis and the legislative framework have set out the principles and sense of direction for the educational system. As in many countries, the policy spectrum is wide ranging, with a lifelong emphasis: from the cradle to the grave. The great task for the years ahead is to ensure the effective realisation of the policies in the classrooms and lecture halls throughout the country.

The good governance and appropriate financial resourcing of the education system are areas of bedrock importance to the well-being of the system. South Africa has adopted a concurrent mode of governance, with a division of powers between the national Department of Education and the education departments of the nine provinces. The national Department of Education is responsible generally for educational policy, and also has specific responsibility for higher education. The provinces have responsibility for the implementation of other aspects of education policy, from early childhood to adult education. The greater part of the education budget (about 86%) is distributed through the provincial departments. The provinces vary greatly in their circumstances and resources. A Council of Education Ministers (CEM) is a framework whereby the national Minister of

Education meets her provincial counterparts on a regular basis. Chapter 2 is devoted to an analysis of governance and financing issues, although specific treatment of finance as affecting inclusive education and higher education is incorporated in the chapters relating to these topics.

South Africa, early on, adopted a radical change of policy on curriculum, emphasising an outcomes based approach, an integrative curricular format, with the teacher as facilitator of active learning methodologies. This was a contested policy and, in 2000, underwent review after widespread criticism of the curriculum. A revised version of the curriculum has been in place since 2002. The successful implementation of such a policy is, of course, very much affected by the availability of appropriate learning materials, class sizes, classroom conditions and pedagogic capability. Pupil assessment forms an integral part of the policy process and, in this context, there is a great deal of public concern about the levels of learners' achievements as measured by national and international tests. Chapter 3 examines the issues that arise in these areas and gives guidance on remedial action for identified problems.

Since the mid-nineties, lifelong learning has been adopted as the *leitmotif* for education policy by international organisations such as the OECD and the European Union (EU) and by many national governments. Among the emphases of this policy are a greater concern for the promotion of early childhood education and development (ECD) and adult education and training (ABET). South Africa is also committed to giving greater attention to these areas, which traditionally tended to be without the mainstream system. Among key policy documents focussing on these themes were the Adult Basic Education and Training Act of 2000 and a white paper, on early childhood education, issued in 2001. Chapter 4 of the review assesses the progress that has been made regarding early childhood education and adult education, examines existing problems and makes recommendations for on-going policy and implementation in these areas.

Vocational educational and training (VET) has lagged behind in relation to the promotion of human resource development. At present, South Africa is experiencing a serious skill shortage in a variety of areas. There is a mismatch between the training that has generally been available and the needs of the economy. The reviewers in Chapter 5 note recent legislative efforts to achieve reforms in this area, explore the issues involved and make recommendations for more remedial action.

As in many countries, inclusive education has been receiving increased policy attention in South Africa over recent years. Based on the principles of equity and human rights set out in its Constitution, South Africa has given "educational inclusion" a much broader meaning than simply "access to

schooling for persons with disabilities". In 2001, the government published White Paper No. 6, setting out policy on inclusive education. Chapter 6 of this review is devoted to a detailed study of the issues involved in the achievement of an inclusive education policy.

It is axiomatic that in the implementation of major educational reforms great reliance has to be placed on the teaching force, who are in the frontline of the implementation process. The image of the teaching profession, the number and quality of entrants to the profession, the quality of their initial and continuing education and training, their motivation, conditions of work and career prospects are hugely important if the aspirations for curricular, pedagogic and assessment reform in South Africa are to be realised. Chapter 7 focuses on a comprehensive range of issues affecting the teaching career. It identifies and endorses a number of current and emerging initiatives that are planned in support of the teaching career. The recommendations encourage greater cohesion between such initiatives and the reviewers also urge action on a number of other issues requiring greater attention.

In the post-Apartheid years, a major re-organisation took place on the structure of the higher education system. Higher education now operates within a globalised, highly competitive environment and faces many daunting challenges. While some South African universities enjoy a high reputation for teaching, scholarship and research, great differences and imbalances exist between higher education institutions. Higher education comes under the remit of the national Department of Education for funding and policy purposes. While recognising the autonomy of universities, the Department seeks to influence the direction of educational studies in alignment with national priorities. It also uses incentives in relation to successful student progression through the system. The successful prosecution of research is also fostered by competitive funding mechanisms. The Council on Higher Education (CHE) exercises very important functions regarding the quality assurance of academic courses and course validation. In Chapter 8 the reviewers examine the various issues involved including the great pressures on institutions due to the lack of preparedness of many students for higher education studies and the very high student-teacher ratios that generally prevail.

As a concluding section, Chapter 9 draws together the key strategic recommendations from the recommendations listed at the end of each chapter, and indicates priorities for policy.

In interpreting and analysing the various issues of the individual themes, the review team bore in mind the political, economic, social and cultural context of the extensive agenda for educational reform. The authors have

been keen to ground their recommendations in concrete, practical reality and they focus largely on the ways and means of more effectively realising the goals set out for the system. It is hoped that the analysis might assist South African authorities to pinpoint problems, to determine new guidelines for action, and to define pragmatic proposals for resolution of problems.

The review team is conscious that some of its recommendations coincide with South African perspectives on the issues and with on-going initiatives. Where this occurs, such a consolidation of viewpoints can be a strength in the reform process.

There are significant resource implications for the implementation of the recommendations when taken globally and it is accepted that action may not be feasible on all fronts simultaneously and that a phasing process might be required. Nevertheless, the recommendations provide a road-map for future action. The key concern is that correct policy decisions are made based on sound analysis, that the reforms are carefully charted and that the best advice possible is drawn upon to sustain their progress. It is the view of the review team that a consistent and sustained line of action, based on the recommendations in this review, will enable South Africa to accelerate the achievement of the extensive and ambitious educational reform to which it has committed itself.

Process of the review

In response to a request to the OECD from the Minister of Education in South Africa, Naledi Pandor, M.P., for a review of the education system there, preparation for the review was put in place during the first half of 2007. The OECD Secretariat and Rapporteur paid a four-day visit to South Africa in June 2007. During that visit they held discussions with the Minister of Education and a number of senior officials on the terms of reference for the review and on some of the main issues to be examined. They also visited officials in Gauteng province. The nature of the *Country Background Report: South African Education* (CBR) was discussed and arrangements put in place for its preparation. The CBR was circulated to the review team in October 2007.

The review team's site visit took place from 27 October to 10 November, 2007. The review team began its inquiry with a series of meetings with the Minister of Education and with senior officials in charge of various parts of the administration of the education system. The team also met with representatives of such groups as the Education Labour Council (ELRC), the South African Council for Educators (SACE), the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Council on Higher

Education (CHE). They also held meetings with representatives of the teacher unions, groups of educational researchers, employers agencies and parents associations. The review team paid visits to three provinces, Gauteng, Western Cape and the Eastern Cape, where it had meetings with senior officials, in each of these provincial departments of education. Review team members also engaged in fieldwork by visiting a variety of school types, early childhood centres, vocational institutions, universities and tecknikons. During these visits it had discussions with institutional leaders, staff members and students, and observed the educational facilities available in the institutions.

The overall site visit was intense and varied. As a result of the many interviews and observations, the review team learned a great deal about the South African education system to complement its study of much documentation. The review personnel wish to record their sincere thanks to the many people who assisted them. They were very impressed by the officials they met in terms of the their depth of understanding and grasp of the issues, the open, frank and courteous way in which they engaged in discussion, and by their concern for the betterment of the system. Throughout their various meetings and fieldwork visits, the review team benefited greatly from the co-operation, generosity of time, and the frank and informative way in which their interlocutors addressed the issues under discussion. The review team also wishes to record its thanks to the team who prepared the helpful CBR. The team's busy and varied itinerary was greatly facilitated by the extremely efficient organisation provided by the international affairs section of the Department of Education, Pretoria.

From the outset, the review team saw itself working in partnership with the South African authorities in a spirit of constructive assistance, as they grapple with the exciting, but challenging, task of continuing the major reform of the education system. The review is offered in a spirit of collegial support to further strengthen South African education, help its citizens and encourage societal well being into the future.

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Chapter 2: Governance and Financing of the Education System

After a general description of the South African system of "co-operative governance" and the introduction of its main actors at the national, provincial and municipal levels, the chapter discusses the functions and outcomes of the recently established school governing bodies (SGBs). According to current policies, school-level decentralisation is supposed to play a crucial role in the restructuring of the education system and in promoting social change. Problems faced with regard to the functioning of the SGBs are discussed in detail.

In addition, two major instruments for equitable financing of the education are introduced: the inter-governmental system known as Equitable Share and the National Norms and Standards for School Funding. The chapter analyses the funding mechanism for school personnel, infrastructure and the School Nutrition Programme and discusses the current school fee exemption policy.

The chapter concludes with a set of recommendations addressing both governance and financing issues.

Governance

The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is, without doubt, as modern, progressive and generous a foundation document as one could wish to find. It sets out an inspired vision of "the new South Africa" as it emerges from the Apartheid era. Together, the Constitution and the South African Schools Act of 1996 lay down the fundamental principles underlying South Africa's education policy framework and the structure of the education system. In sharp contrast to the destructive policies of Apartheid, the influence of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the Convention on the Rights of the Child – signed by South Africa in 1995 – is clear.

Powers and duties

Even the devolution of powers is very modern. The Constitution enjoins the three levels of government to observe the principle of "co-operative governance" (Republic of South Africa, 1996a, Article 41:1). Under this principle, the national and provincial governments have "concurrent legislative competence"; although each level has specific powers, there is no hierarchy among them, and "co-operative governance" in the education sector is exercised via a ministerial council comprising the national minister as well as all nine provincial ministers on an equal basis.

Exclusive functions of the national level are, for example, defence, justice and security, higher education and the collection of national taxes (*e.g.* for education). School education, health, social welfare, housing and agriculture are concurrent functions of both the national and provincial governments. Thus, the national level is responsible for formulating national policy for "…the planning, provision, staffing, co-ordination, management, governance, programmes, monitoring, evaluation and well-being of the education policy…" (Republic of South Africa, 1996c, Article 3:4). In determining national policy for education, the minister "shall take into account the competence of the provincial legislatures" (Republic of South Africa, 1996c, Article 3:2).

Provincial governments are in charge of the implementation of nationally determined policy, formulating and adopting provincial legislation, regulations, norms, and standards.

Municipalities, which govern on a four year term basis, run local affairs subject to national and provincial legislation, but the latter may not compromise or impede a municipality's right to exercise its powers or perform its functions. In line with the principle of co-operative government, national and provincial government must support and strengthen municipalities' capacity to manage their own affairs. In addition, any legislation passed at national or provincial levels must be gazetted (published) before being introduced, to allow local interests the opportunity to make representations.

South Africa has 284 municipalities, divided into three categories. (1) *Metropolitan* municipalities – also known as "unicities" – have exclusive municipal executive and legislative authority in their areas. There are six of these: Cape Town, Durban, East Rand, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Port Elizabeth. They have a choice of two types of executive systems: the mayoral executive system, or the collective executive committee. (2 and 3) *District and local councils* are interdependent, and involve a division of powers. There are 52 districts in South Africa, with boundaries drawn in such a way that every district is fully contained within a province. A district

council has municipal executive and legislative authority over a large area. Its primary responsibility is district-wide planning and capacity-building. Within a district council's area are individual *local councils*, which share their municipal authority with the district council under which they fall.

South Africa has no tradition of municipal responsibility for education. According to the Constitution, the national level has exclusive legislative responsibility for tertiary education, and shares concurrent responsibility with the provinces for all other levels of education. Generally speaking, therefore, districts and local authorities' main function can be characterised as being one of service delivery.[4] However, there is considerable concern about the ability of many poorer municipalities to deliver the services for which they are responsible, especially in terms of improving and maintaining local infrastructure such as roads, sanitation and water supply. This is largely due to their low revenue base and poor capacity to collect taxes, but also to problems of corruption, financial mismanagement and lack of qualified municipal staff. Many local authorities are seriously in debt, and it has been asserted that, if grants and subsidies were to be subtracted from local (tax) revenues, most would not survive (see, for example, Schoeman, 2005). Moreover, local fiscal objectives are not always aligned with those of the national and provincial governments. Recently, the South African Government began a process of reviewing the system of provincial and local government. Consultations were held with the general public, civil society, universities and public institutions, and a white paper relating to provinces was expected at the end of 2007. However, this has not yet been published.

The National Treasury, in one of its recent reports, states that "Policy making, budgeting, implementation and accountability for concurrent functions test the robustness of South Africa's intergovernmental system from time to time. Despite the strong evidence confirming the soundness of the concurrent legislative competence system, concurrent functions do occasionally present particular challenges" (National Treasury, 2007b). For example, sometimes there can be a misalignment between policy objectives and resource allocation. Another challenge relates to accountability for non-delivery. The national level, for example, has only very limited powers to hold provincial or municipal authorities accountable for poor or non-implementation of national policies. The most suitable mechanism for resolving these challenges is the Council of Education Ministers, where the national minister and all provincial ministers of education and their senior staff meet on a six-weekly basis to discuss policy matters and receive reports

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4 District offices do have responsibility for managing the financial and material resources of Section 20 schools, *i.e.* those schools that are not self-managed under Section 21.

of ministerial committees on specific policy issues. In addition, the director-general of the DoE chairs regular meetings of the Heads of education departments Committee, and organises bilateral meetings with each of the heads of the provincial departments. Here, too, co-operation and co-ordination can help resolve issues of responsibility.

It is not appropriate for the OECD to express a view on the respective "territories" of national and provincial governance. Important for the review team is the question of how the constitutional sharing of power can best contribute to sound educational policy making and effective implementation, and to the development of high-quality education for all. Concurrent powers in education mean that formulating and implementing policy are the responsibility of different parliaments, governments, ministers and departments. International experience shows that separating policy and implementation, without ensuring a regular and focused feedback "loop" from those who implement policy to those who formulate it, almost inevitably leads to a divergence between what was intended by policy and what is delivered in practice. Sound policy making and policy implementation is a circular – not a linear – exercise, and at present the OECD team is concerned that the "accountability" part of the circle is not strong and further hampered by the principle of concurrent legislative competence.

The "new public management" approach, currently dominant in the scientific literature about public services and management, recommends the devolution of certain powers, especially implementation, to local or provincial authorities and/or to "agencies". Agencies are specialised in certain matters and tasks, are closer to the field, have greater autonomy and flexibility than traditional public services, and are essentially accountable for outputs/outcomes. In the view of the OECD team, it is important to move from controlling input and process to controlling performance, with constructive monitoring and constant co-operation between the ministers and the departments (who are in charge of formulating policy), and the authorities or agencies (in charge of implementation). This approach is currently followed by almost all OECD countries, especially in those with an Anglo-Saxon tradition or connection: Australia, Canada, the Flemish Community in Belgium, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Japan, Korea, The Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries, and others (see, for example, OECD, 2005[5]).

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[5]   Especially Chapter 4, pp. 105-128. This report underlines that separation and implementation can only be successful with considerable investment in strengthening co-ordination mechanisms and core government steering capacities. Capacity building takes time: "The process of getting things right cannot be

Figure 2.1 The policy cycle
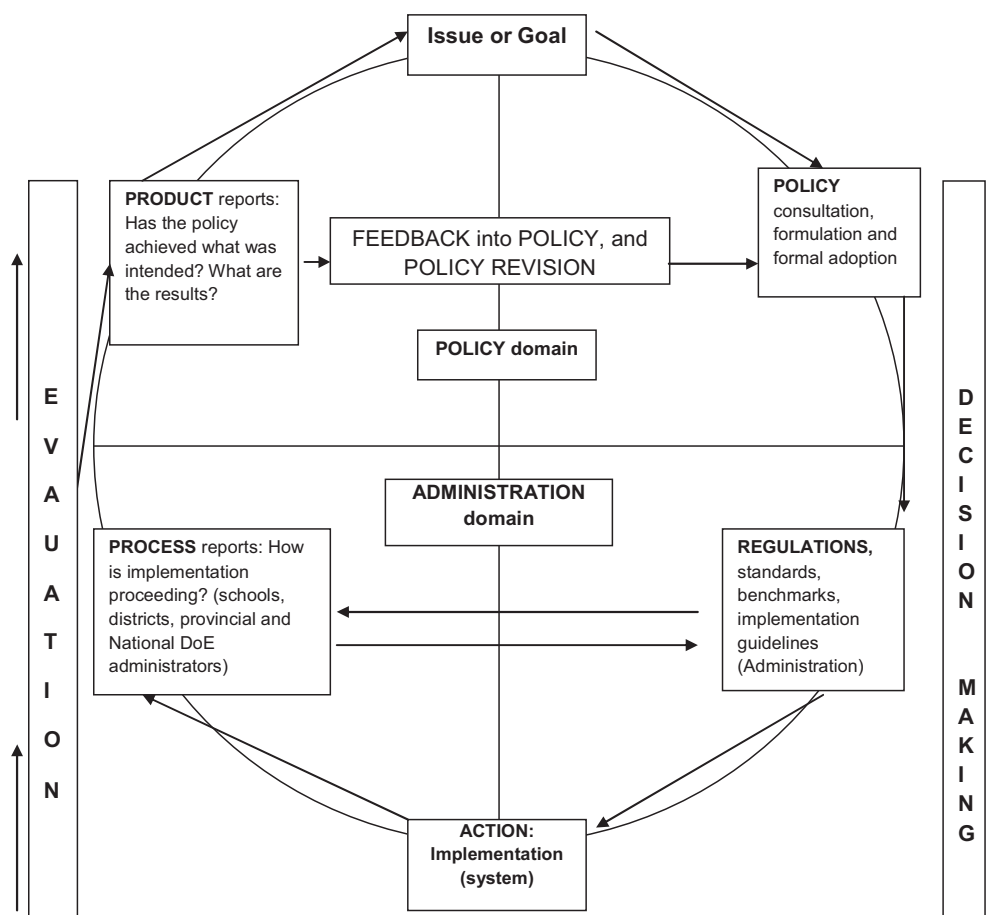
Source: OECD Review Team, 2008.

School governing bodies (SGBs)

The *Country Background Report* (pp. 85 and following) states that one of the key approaches to the restructuring of the education system and of promoting social change in South Africa was school-level decentralisation. For the democratic movement, broad-based participation in schools was

entirely driven by the top, but depends on co-operating and learning from both parties."

essential. The 1996 South African Schools Act devolved significant powers to school governing bodies (SGBs). Governing bodies are composed of the school principal and elected representatives of parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and (in secondary schools) learners, and they may also co-opt non-voting members. Parents have a majority stake, in order to ensure that previously marginalised constituencies have a greater voice.

School governing bodies are required to develop and adopt a constitution and mission statement for the school; to determine the admissions policy of the school, subject to certain restrictions; to administer and control the school's property, buildings and grounds, including the right to rent them out for fundraising purposes; to recommend to the Department of Education the appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff; and to develop a budget for the school (which could include school fees), for approval at a meeting of the parents. Once approved, school fees become compulsory and all parents, unless specifically granted exemption, are obliged to pay them. (As described under *School fees* [below]*,* exemption regulations automatically exempt orphans, foster children and those receiving a poverty-linked social grant, and give "discounts" to parents with more than one learner in a public school or if the fees are between 3.5% and 9.5% of their annual income.)

In addition, SGBs may apply to their provincial department of education, under Section 21 of the 1996 Schools Act, to be given additional functions, such as the right to maintain and improve the school's property, buildings and grounds; to determine extra-curricular activities; to choose the subject options offered at the school (within the parameters of provincial curriculum policy); and to purchase textbooks and other materials and equipment. Initially, these powers were given mainly to former white schools whose governing bodies usually included skilled professionals and managers; however, it is the aim of government to eventually grant additional powers to all SGBs, and the number of "Section 21 schools" has grown to include many formerly disadvantaged schools (CBR, p. 89).

Although it is right in principle to increase the autonomy of schools, especially in South Africa where local municipalities have no direct responsibility for education, it is also clear that many poorly-equipped SGBs struggle to fulfil their basic functions. Mostly this is due to lack of skills and to enormous infrastructure backlogs that many schools still have to contend with. By contrast, SGBs in ex-white schools function much better; they are in a position to recruit governors with good communication and financial skills in, for example, preparing and managing school budgets. Provincial governments are obliged by law to provide training for SGBs, but it was not clear to the review team to what extent this is actually happening.

While nearly all schools now have SGBs set up in accordance with legal requirements, many have difficulty in sustaining active participation by SGB members. According to a review undertaken by the DoE in 2004, a variety of factors come into play, including poor levels of literacy, lack of time, lack of transport, lack of understanding of their role, and "…having to deal with the difficult-to-articulate psychological issues of asserting themselves in relation to others with much more education and knowledge of governance than themselves." In rural and farm schools, these difficulties are amplified. As the review put it, "…there appears to be a deep sense of despondency and hopelessness among those faced with the daunting task of governing schools in these circumstances…" (Department of Education, 2004, pp. 50-52).

Inevitably, issues of finance and budgeting take up a large proportion of an SGB's time, in particular because SGBs have the authority to set and collect school fees. Much less attention is given to matters of learning and teaching, although codes of discipline and language policies have been adopted in many schools. There have been instances where a School Governing Board has misused its power to set and enforce (high) school fees in order to restrict admissions, or to exclude learners whose parents are unable to pay fees on time. The OECD review team also heard that SGBs do not always publicise the parents' right to apply for a discount or an exemption in paying school fees, or fail to provide assistance to parents who find it difficult to engage in complex application and appeal procedures. Moreover, many parents are unaware of the automatic school fee exemptions that exist for certain learners, such as orphans or those receiving a Child Support Grant. School governing bodies could certainly do more to publicise and actively promote parents' and learners' rights, under the law and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Does it work?

The authors of the Constitution and the National Education Policy Act were well aware of the risks of concurrent powers. Several times, they stress the absolute necessity of a culture of co-operation and common responsibility. Under the section "Principles of co-operative government and intergovernmental relations", the Constitution states: "All spheres of government and all organs of state within each sphere must…co-operate with one another in mutual trust and good faith." Similarly, the National Education Policy Act, 1996, art 4 (0), stipulates that one of the goals of national policy is "…achieving close co-operation between the national and the provincial governments on matters relating to education, including the development of capacity in the departments of education, and the effective management of the national education system."

It was clear in all meetings of the OECD team with national and provincial authorities that everyone genuinely seeks to establish good co-operation, but also that there are still some serious problems. The national minister and deputy minister are exceptionally competent and motivated politicians, with an exciting vision of, and a warm heart for, education in South Africa. The team met many excellent experts on educational sectors or problems. The ministers, director-general and other experts are familiar with the most modern concepts of an education policy in the other countries. They developed a progressive and ambitious vision of education policy. They have good co-operation with the National Treasury, where the team met high-level experts with an excellent understanding of matters of education finance, as well as of the overall policy directions of the Republic. Likewise, in the provincial departments we met dedicated and open civil servants who are close to the schools and know well what their problems and needs are.

At the same time, the team was told on several occasions that, although co-operation does not present too many problems, the lack of an effective accountability model means that there is no mechanism to ensure quality provision at district and school level. This is felt particularly in matters of resource allocation and financial management; for example, provincial authorities are not obliged to observe national priority areas, nor does the national level have financial audit authority over provinces. (The provinces do, however, carry out their own audits and send reports to the auditor general, but only in extreme circumstances can national government intervene in the financial affairs of provinces).

Obviously, this is a logical consequence of the concept of concurrent legislative competence, and provinces are rightly protective of their autonomy. However, for the system to work in the interest of all citizens, it should be possible to devise a model based on "constructive oversight". Effective, constructive oversight is not primarily concerned with exposing failings, but with ensuring better government; in the South African context, this means government that realises tangible progress towards a just and democratic society within a co-operative constitutional framework. Constructive oversight supports a clean, efficient and open administration (good government); it facilitates effective policy and legislation (development); and it does this in ways that are not necessarily adversarial (co-operative governance), although it may, at times, have to be adversarial in the interests of good government.

In education, such a model should include a revitalised, professional form of inspectorate to ensure that every learner across the country receives the quality of education to which he/she is entitled.

Outcomes

Despite the best efforts of South Africa's educational leadership and the large investments in resources, the results and outcomes are disappointing. In its very informative background report, the DoE itself is critical of the system's achievements so far:

- "Learners' levels of achievement are very poor…Of the 12 African countries participating in the 1999 MLA project, South Africa scored the lowest average in numeracy, the fifth lowest in literacy, and the third lowest in life skills."

- "School infrastructural backlogs are huge…"

- The new National Curriculum "…was criticised as over-elaborate, unrealistic and too resource-dependent for a context of poor schools and poorly trained teachers."

- The shortage of teachers is growing and "…many educators are ill-prepared to teach the grades they are assigned to teach. Many come late to school, leave early, do not explain or provide feedback on homework, and spend too much time on administrative tasks."

- "SGBs in former disadvantaged schools often function poorly…However, the reverse is true in the case of SGBs in more advantaged schools."

- "The cost of education for most households has dramatically increased since 1994." (CBR, Executive Summary, pp. 20-23; p. 98)

As the Department of Education itself recognises:

Given the massive amounts of legislative, policy, research and financial inputs to education, and even taking into account that the education sector remains deeply scarred by Apartheid, the performance of the system, along with its hundreds of thousands of administrative and teaching staff and the millions of young people compelled to attend, is disappointing. Education quality clearly does not automatically follow from either improved equality or improved equity. Many other developing countries, far poorer than South Africa, achieve better results in terms of learner achievement, retention and completion." (CBR, p.95)

The National Treasury's report states it in more neutral terms: "There is not always a correlation between spending and outputs." (National Treasury, 2007b, p. 7)

The *Country Background Report* also acknowledges – rightly – the many improvements of the quality of education, for example through a range of (national) initiatives, such as the "Dinaledi" schools, the Education Management Information System, the Integrated Quality Information System, the National Education Evaluation Development Unit, better remuneration and training of principals, bursaries for initial teacher training, and many others. Moreover, the education expenditure increased from ZAR 31.1 billion in 1995, to ZAR 59.6 billion in 2002 and to ZAR 105.5 billion in 2007.

In South Africa, educational transformation and policy implementation have been constrained by the sheer scale of the existing problems, the competition from other social sectors, the difficulties in redirecting funds from personnel to non-personnel expenditure (only one province has reached the goal so far), the inefficiencies in education management and delivery, and – in particular – a lack of capacity at provincial and local government level: "Not only the relative paucity of available revenue, but also provincial departments' inability to spend and the constraints on planning large-scale change at all levels, remain causes for concern." (CBR, p. 25).

In the view of the OECD review team, it is clear that the reform concepts were of high conceptual quality, but that **"**change management" (or "transformational leadership") failed. Successful change requires more than new structures and processes, technology or policy; in particular, it requires the engagement and participation of the people affected by the change, and a new set of behaviours and values. In the course of its field visits, the team could see and hear that some reforms did not reach (or really influence) schools and classrooms. It is also clear that the capacity of some provincial departments and of school leaders, to manage change and introduce reforms should be improved. This means:

- developing a better understanding of educational concepts and reforms;

- frequent contact between colleagues of the national and provincial departments, and with the districts and schools;

- clear objectives;

- effective monitoring of all objectives and projects against agreed indicators;

- regular evaluation of the progress achieved.

A global approach is needed, including recruitment of new expertise (which does not necessarily mean more civil servants); specific training

programmes for provincial civil servants, especially in the educational, financial and organisational fields; coaching of key managers and experts; indicators for measuring performance; incentives for better performance; and, if necessary, temporary support by external experts or consultants.

When the implementation of a new policy fails, it is all too easy to blame (only) the implementer. The review team is convinced that there is more than one element that determines the success or failure of change. Looking at Figure 2.1, there are several "players" and stages in the formulation, consultation, amendment, promulgation, financing, implementation, evaluation and reporting of policy and its consequences. The essential feature of the policy cycle is that the feedback from the implementation and evaluation phases becomes the basis for adjusting policy and practice to make a better fit, or for re-thinking the initial idea.

The feedback loop is easier to close if policy development and policy implementation are the responsibility of the same organisation. The major risk of separating them is that the circle would be interrupted: implementers could lose contact with the intentions, objectives and spirit of the policy and regulation; and policy makers might not receive continuous feedback from those who are most closely involved in making the reform work "on the ground". If even the provinces are not closely enough involved in policy development, it will be even more remote for school governors, principals, educators, parents, and learners. In any country, it requires a great deal of imagination, flexibility, and creativity to create real involvement of all those who are affected by a proposed reform.

Of course the education ministers and department organise regular negotiations with the teacher unions. The union leadership, in meetings with the review team, expressed interesting and constructive views on education in South Africa, and on teachers' interests. But the focus of their work is on national and provincial bargaining, rather than on supporting decision-making in schools, although the autonomy of schools has grown strongly, especially with regard to Section 21 schools.

The issues of "implementability" and "sustainability" of proposed reforms are, in any country, an essential test of whether a proposed reform is viable, given the existing conditions in which it has to take root. Many of the reform documents provided to the review team are, viewed in the abstract, most impressive. Seen in relation to the context in which they are expected to operate, they come across as rather removed from reality. The design of policy, while difficult, is easier than its implementation and it is the implementation that counts. Thorough preparation and "road testing" will quickly reveal whether the weakest links in the system can cope with the

change. The promulgation of norms and standards will not, in itself, change behaviour, or create a poor school's capacity to make things work.

Financing of the system

National expenditure on education

By law, "The State must fund public schools from public revenue on an equitable basis in order to ensure the proper exercise of the rights of learners to education, and the redress of past inequalities in educational provision." (Republic of South Africa, 1996d, Section 34.1) Education finance is, therefore, firmly rights and equity based and this is reflected in the explicitly pro-poor revenue distribution policies of the National Treasury and the DoE.

South Africa's education expenditure grew at a moderate rate between 1995 and 2002 (from ZAR 31.1 billion in 1995 to ZAR 59.6 billion in 2002) and then accelerated rapidly to reach ZAR 105.5 billion by 2007. This reflects a similar growth pattern in GDP: slow during the 1990s, but significant after 2002 (by approximately 5% per year). In real monetary terms (CBR; National Treasury, 2007b) expenditure on education grew by 49% between 1994 and 2005, showing the post-Apartheid government's commitment to funding education change. However, education had to compete for funding with other social services such as health, housing, and social welfare. These sectors are, of course, essential for national development; and they are interrelated with good education.

But it is still surprising that "Education does not only show the slowest real growth rates compared to other social service sectors, but its claims on provincial resources have been systematically trimmed." (Wildeman, 2005). Indeed, real expenditure on education declined as a share of total government expenditure, from 19.2% in 1996 to 18% in 2007, and as a share of GDP from 5.7 % in 1996 to 5.4 % in 2007.[6]

Nevertheless, compared to other middle income countries, a rate of 5.4% of GDP is quite respectable. But considering the strategic importance of education for South Africa's national development, as well as the historic backlogs and inequalities, the OECD review team would advise that South Africa aim for a future target of 6% of GDP, in line with UNESCO's recommendations.

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[6]   5.4% is the figure cited in National Treasury (2007b), *Provincial Budgets and Expenditure Review 2003/04 to 2009/10*, National Treasury, Pretoria. According to the *Country Background Report*, it is "just over 5%" (p. 24).

In this, the South African Government should not be discouraged by the fact that, thus far, there seems to be a poor correlation between education spending and learning outcomes. Major education investments and reforms need time to settle down and bear fruit. In addition, the capacity of provincial departments to absorb the additional resources is still limited; as noted in the *Country Background Report* (p. 97), only part of new funding for ABET and ECD rural school building was spent between 2002 and 2004/05.

As set out in other sections of this chapter (particularly under "Governance"), the OECD team considers that the focus must be, first, on bridging the gap between national laws and policy and their implementation at provincial and local level; second, on renewed efforts to improve the planning, management and spending capacity of the provincial governments; and third, on progressively re-directing personnel funds to non-personnel expenses (especially learning support materials, libraries, equipment, infrastructure, and transport.)

Towards equitable financing

Because of the wide disparities in fiscal capacity among South Africa's nine provinces, there is an unequal gap between the amount of tax revenue each province can raise and the amount of money it needs to fulfil its responsibilities for basic services, including education. The Constitution implicitly recognises the fiscal gap, by establishing an inter-governmental system known as the Equitable Share, whereby a portion of nationally raised revenues is distributed to provinces and local governments. Each year, on the basis of proposals from the National Treasury, parliament enacts a "Division of Revenues" Bill that specifies both the vertical split of the Equitable Share among national, provincial and local governments, and the horizontal split among the nine provinces. The Equitable Share formula reflects demographical and social criteria: "The goal is to ensure that each province, regardless of its wealth, is able to spend an equitable amount on each learner." (CBR, p. 61)

The formula used by the National Treasury still retains the structure formulated in 1997/98. Each year, a percentage of the total Provincial Equitable Share (in 2003/04: 45.7%; in 2006/7: 42.5%) is allocated to education (one of seven components included in the formula), based on primary and secondary school enrolments as a percentage of the population between the ages of 5 and 17 in the province.

Table 2.1 **Provincial education expenditure 2003/04 to 2009/10**

ZAR million	2003/04 outcome	2004/05 outcome	2005/06 outcome	2006/07 prelim.	2007/08 estimated	2008/09 est.	2009/10 est.
Eastern Cape	10 308	10 654	11 523	12 873	14 726	16 616	17 681
Free State	4 087	4 400	4 916	5 346	5 692	6 331	7 013
Gauteng	9 539	9 835	10 406	11 623	14 543	15 967	17 131
KwaZulu Natal	12 022	13 033	15 030	16 234	18 577	20 3385	22 533
Limpopo	8 264	9 610	10 362	11 367	11 948	13 638	15 022
Mpumalanga	4 529	4 871	5 780	6 273	7 956	8 601	9 373
Northern Cape	1 305	1 397	1 563	1 643	2 267	2 535	2 771
North West	4 896	5 179	5 951	6 686	5 324	5 936	6 462
Western Cape	5 305	5 691	6 449	6 920	7 685	8 497	9 341
Total	**60 255**	**64 670**	**71 981**	**78 963**	**88 719**	**98 505**	**107 327**

Percentage growth (average annual)	2003/04 to 2006/07	2007/08 to 2009/10
Eastern Cape	7.7%	9.6%
Free State	9.4%	11.0%
Gauteng	6.8%	8.5%
KwaZulu-Natal	10.5%	10.1%
Limpopo	11.2%	12.1%
Mpumalanga	11.5%	8.5%
Northern Cape	8.0%	10.6%
North West	10.9%	10.2%
Western Cape	9.3%	10.2%
Average	**9.4%**	**10.0%**

Note: Includes the National School Nutrition Programme.

Source: National Treasury Provincial Database, cited in National Treasury (2007b), *Provincial Budgets and Expenditure Review 2003/04 to 2009/10*, National Treasury, Pretoria.

These figures show a robust growth in overall education spending, but its share of (total) provincial spending declines from 45.7% in 2003/04 to an estimated 41.8% over the period up to 2009/10. While this might appear moderate, two provinces (North West and KwaZulu-Natal) show declines of 12.5% and 6% respectively in terms of education share (National Treasury, 2007b, p. 14-15). While small shifts may reflect better prioritisation of spending, these more significant shifts need to be watched carefully because they could have a negative effect on inter-provincial equity.

The Equitable Share reaches provincial governments in the form of an unconditional (block) grant. Because of the principle of co-operative governance, provinces are then entitled to make their own decisions about how to spread their "Equitable Share" across all provincial social services (education, health, welfare, housing, community development). However, in practice provincial fiscal autonomy is restricted in a number of ways. First, public employees in South Africa – including teachers and other school personnel – belong to a single national civil service, and their salaries are set nationally. Personnel expenditure accounts for about 85% of provincial current expenditure on education; thus their discretionary funds are limited. In addition, the National Norms and Standards for School Funding require that provincial departments allocate non-personnel, non-capital expenditure (*e.g.* for learning and teaching materials) in ways that explicitly favour the neediest schools.

National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF)

Along with the Equitable Share formula, these National Norms and Standards are the second mechanism aimed at improving equity in education financing. They require that the provincial departments rank all their schools into five quintiles, from the "poorest" (quintile 1) to the "least poor" (quintile 5), based on the rates of income, unemployment and illiteracy of the school's catchment area.

The 2006 Education Law Amendment Act replaces the provincial quintiles by national ones, so that the two poorest quintiles no longer represent 40% in every province, but take into account the differences in social conditions among provinces. As a result, the two poorest quintiles in, for example, the Eastern Cape encompass 56%, while in the more affluent Western Cape they cover only 14%. The OECD review team considers this to be an excellent amendment, as it not only creates more intra-provincial equity, but also reduces inter-provincial differences in provision.

The National Norms and Standards have two important consequences. First, funding for non-personnel recurrent expenditure is allocated progressively and ear-marked: 35% of the funds for the first, 25% for the second, 20% for the third, 15% for the fourth and 5% for the fifth quintile. Non-personnel funding covers learning and teaching support materials (LTSM, textbooks and other books, computers, didactical equipment); school support material (furniture, telephone, copiers, cleaning) and other essential services (water, electricity, sanitation, security, maintenance).

Secondly, schools in quintiles 1 and 2 are "no fee schools": *i.e.* school governing bodies in these schools are not allowed to charge fees. For this, they are compensated by a higher allocation for non-personnel, non-capital

expenditure; the allocations for the different quintiles vary among provinces, but for no fee schools a minimum amount of state funding (ZAR 581 per learner in 2008) is guaranteed. This issue is further examined under *School fees*, below.

Reducing Inequities

The inequality of education funding during the Apartheid era was shocking: certain whites-only schools received 20 times more per learner than the poorest black schools, for personnel as well as for non-personnel and capital needs. In the new South Africa, ensuring equal funding of all learners across the country was – and is – the first priority of education law and policy. The OECD review team is impressed by what has been achieved, in terms of funding equity, over the 14 years following 1994. Especially during the period 1994-2002, it was very hard to reach the equity objectives: given South Africa's modest economic growth, it was not possible without a dramatic reduction of the funding of many formerly privileged schools and wealthier provinces. The shift required inventing – and regularly adapting – rather complicated and sophisticated rules and formulas. The review team commends the efforts of the national and provincial leadership in negotiating these highly sensitive issues and in persuading all parties to stay focused on the constitutional vision of healing the divisions of the past, ensuring equal protection under the law and building a united South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996b, Preamble).

Elusive equity?

There is, however, still some way to go in achieving a reasonable level of parity in educational provision across South Africa. This is hardly surprising, given the legacy of Apartheid, as well as the inevitable differences in demographic and social patterns, natural and industrial resources and geographical conditions that occur in any country of this size and diversity. The *Country Background Report* and other documents provided to the OECD review team, as well as numerous interviews with national and provincial officials, reveal a complex system of education finance that has, despite all best efforts, some in-built and some unintended consequences that affect equal provision for all.

According to the documentation, 96.4% of the total provincial budgets for 2007/08 came from national transfers (ZAR 171.2 billion Equitable Share and ZAR 31.5 billion in conditional grants), and 3.6% from revenues raised by provinces themselves. As noted earlier, except for the conditional grants, the national financing of each province arrives in the form of a block

grant that must cover all its competencies and responsibilities. Provinces are autonomous in dividing this sum among education, health, housing, welfare, etc. The expectation (for 2007/08) is that education should take 42.5% of total provincial expenditure (National Treasury, 2007b, Table 2.7, p. 15).[7] There are, however, important differences among provinces: from 49.4% in Mpumalanga and 47.8 % in Eastern Cape to 33.4 % in Gauteng and 36.7 % in Western Cape. Clearly, poorer provinces spend a higher percentage of their Equitable Share on education.

The learner:educator ratios in public ordinary schools are slightly better in wealthier provinces: 31:1 (37:1) in Western Cape, 34:1 (39:1) in Gauteng, 35:1 (36:1) in Mpumalanga and 33:1 (35:1) in Eastern Cape.[8] The difference is much smaller in poorer provinces, where many learners are exempted from school fees (56.4% in Eastern Cape, 56.3% in Limpopo, but only 14.5% in Western Cape and 21.9% in Gauteng). It appears from a combination of all these figures that the more affluent provinces receive more substantial incomes from school fees, thereby reducing their education expenditure percentage, while nevertheless achieving a comparable or better learner:educator ratio. Poorer provinces, by contrast, can raise far lower amounts in school fees and thus must spend a higher percentage of their revenues on education. School governing bodies in poorer provinces also are less likely to be able to fund additional teaching posts, so that learner:educator ratios remain relatively high.

Conditional grants

As mentioned above, 15.5% of the national funding of the provinces is in the form of "conditional grants" (for agriculture, culture, education, health, housing, transport, etc.) In education, conditional grants are given for three purposes: Further Education and Training (FET) College sector recapitalisation; HIV and Aids (life skills education); and the National School Nutrition Programme. Conditional grants are the expression of national concerns for certain essential priorities for the whole country, but can be perceived by the provinces as an infringement of provincial autonomy and a lack of confidence in provincial capacity to address these concerns. It is, therefore, wise that the South African authorities respect the balance of power and limit conditional grants to a minimum: if provincial autonomy is the rule, conditional grants should be the exception. The

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[7]   In 2003/04 the percentage was 45.7%; it is decreasing year after year. The Treasury estimate for 2009/10 is 41.8%.

[8]   The numbers in brackets show the ratios without SGB-funded posts. See National Treasury (2007), Table 2.10, p. 18.

national government has the legal competence to monitor the provincial governments' overall implementation and can examine, together with the provinces, to what extent the constitutional principles and governmental priorities are respected. Only in exceptional cases can the national government intervene.

Per-learner expenditure

The best indicator of equity in education funding would seem to be the per-learner expenditure in public ordinary schools, exclusive of fees charged by schools:

Table 2.2 **Per capita learner expenditure in public schools by province, 2002/03 to 2007/08 (in ZAR)**

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Eastern Cape	4 173	4 553	4 576	4 786	5 357	5 852
Free State	4 564	5 277	5 687	6 132	6 776	7 381
Gauteng	4 265	4 853	5 102	5 259	5 611	5 768
KwaZulu-Natal	3 619	4 096	4 153	4 519	4 952	5 370
Limpopo	3 871	4 333	4 494	4 515	4 628	5 029
Mpumalanga	4 111	4 712	4 806	5 356	5 713	6 117
Northern Cape	5 231	5 757	5 502	5 898	6 181	6 544
North West	4 403	4 916	5 344	5 812	6 185	6 592
Western Cape	4 552	4 951	5 157	5 432	5 797	6 132
National average	**4 105**	**4 600**	**4 733**	**5 009**	**5 397**	**5 787**

Source: National Treasury (2007a), *Budget Review 2007*, Communication Directorate, National Treasury, Pretoria, Chapter 1; Department of Education (2006b), *Education Statistics in South Africa at a Glance 2005*, November, Department of Education. Pretoria; Wildeman, R. A. (2005), "A Review of National and Provincial Education Budgets 2005", *Occasional Papers*, 13 June, Budget Information Service, IDASA, p. 36.

The increase of per-learner expenditure during the period 1996/2004 varied from 140% in the poorer provinces to 40% in some of the richer ones. However, there are still certain rather small, but surprising differences: *e.g.* ZAR 6 132 in Western Cape versus ZAR 5 029 in Limpopo. The expenditure per learner depends not only on national funding, but also on the provincial priorities and on "technical-historical" factors (for example, the Western Cape has a larger number of well qualified, and thus better paid, teachers, which raises its per-learner expenditure compared to Limpopo).

Overall, the review team concludes that the per-learner expenditure (excluding fees) is almost equal across provinces. Taking account of the huge differences during Apartheid, this is a considerable achievement. It required a great deal of political courage from educational leaders and it shows a commendable level of solidarity on the part of the better-off provinces and schools.

Personnel funding

One clear objective of South African education law and policy is equity. Equity refers to fairness, or principles of justice, aimed at redressing inequalities in opportunity among individuals or groups. Equity does not mean treating everyone in the same way; indeed it recognises that people have different needs, and that it is sometimes necessary to take unequal measures in order to overcome a historical disadvantage.

Equity in non-personnel funding has been implemented through explicitly pro-poor policies: equal for learners in equal conditions, unequal and in favour of learners "at risk". Unequal funding is considered necessary to create greater equality and combat injustice. However, the objective in personnel funding seems to be equality, not (yet?) equity. The review team highly appreciates the effectiveness of policies in achieving equality in funding, but it is convinced that, for personnel funding too, the final goal must be equity. Children from poor economic and cultural backgrounds need more individualised education. In heterogeneous classes of between 30 and 50 learners, it is almost impossible for teachers to differentiate and pay special attention to those children who need it. The review team strongly recommends that the shift to equity in personnel funding be continued. At present, it is those better-off schools able to charge high fees that are therefore in a position to recruit additional, better qualified staff, while the schools that need it most are unable to do so.

Infrastructure

Another critical point is the infrastructural backlog. Despite the good intentions and efforts of national and provincial authorities, there seems to be a lack of clear, concrete objectives and planning. For example, the review team were very disappointed that in 2007 there are still schools built with mud by local communities – with mud floors, no electricity, no water, no heating, no sanitation and where children have to be sent home because they are cold and soaking wet. The team is well aware that the national and provincial authorities are equally disappointed that such conditions still

exist, but feels that a joint crusade to replace such schools must now be a national priority.

It reflects badly on South Africa as a country with reasonable financial resources and good economic growth that so many of its children continue to be educated in such unacceptable environments. The team respectfully suggests that this is an excellent issue upon which to launch an exemplary, co-operative initiative by both the national and provincial powers, in line with South Africa's enlightened concept of "concurrent legislative competence" and its high, constitutional ideals.

School fees, access, and poverty alleviation

It is alarming that the private cost of education as a percentage of total household expenditure has risen from 2% to 4%. For many poor families – and, more generally, for equity and democracy in South Africa – this is a serious problem. School fees are the most visible manifestation of the private cost of education to families.

The government and the DoE are well aware that South Africa's long-established practice to charge school fees during compulsory education runs counter to international conventions to which South Africa is a signatory[9], as well as to its own Constitution[10]. The DoE's declared intention, therefore, is to phase out school fees in due course.

However, the post-Apartheid Government, faced with huge inherited inequalities in the quality of, and access to, schooling, was forced to make a number of difficult choices. It was not possible to replicate for all learners the well-resourced education system for white South Africans; therefore the challenge was to create a credible, equitable, unified public education system that would not only provide for the poor and disadvantaged, but would retain the confidence of middle-class parents and encourage them to continue to send their children to public schools. The charging of school fees, whilst offering partial or full exemptions, was thus considered a compromise whereby parents who can afford to contribute to their children's education are allowed to do so, while those who cannot are assisted by the state. Thus far, this approach (along with other equalisation measures, such as pro-poor allocation of non-personnel, non-capital expenditures, reducing learner:teacher ratios in the poorest provinces) has been successful in that

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[9]   South Africa signed the CRC in 1995, and is committed to the EFA/Millenium Development Goals, 2000.

[10]   Section 29(1) (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, as amended.

some of the inherited inequalities have been dramatically reduced; also, the percentage of learners attending private schools has stayed below 4%.

The 1998 National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) distribute the funds available for non-personnel, non-capital expenditures progressively to the poor, on the basis of a Poverty Index derived from census data and other information about school conditions, for example through the "School Register of Needs". In the non-personnel, non-capital category, 60% of all available funds are allocated to the 40% poorest learners in ordinary public schools according to a "Resource Targeting List"; each year in September schools are notified of their allocation for the following school year, so that they can prepare their budgets and school governing bodies can convene the required annual general meeting (see below).

Aware that poverty is the most formidable barrier to school attendance, the DoE – in a bold effort to make education more accessible to even the poorest learners – has taken an explicitly pro-poor spending approach, three specific examples of which are the Fee Exemption Policy, the No fee Schools Policy, and the National School Nutrition Programme.

The Fee Exemption Policy

According to the Schools Act, parents must establish, by majority vote at an annual general meeting of their school's governing body (SGB), the amount of school fees and the criteria for fee exemptions. Parents are legally liable for the payment of established school fees unless they are granted a partial or full exemption, or unless their child attends a no fee school (see below).

The regulations oblige SGBs to inform parents in writing of the school fees to be paid, of the right to apply for an exemption and of the relevant procedures for doing so. They must also inform parents of their right to appeal any SGB decision to the head of the education department in the relevant province.[11] The regulations set out a mandatory minimum means test for granting exemptions; the amended 2006 formula takes into account the number of school-going children supported by a parent or care-giver, as well as the combined annual gross income of the parents. If this income is less than 10 times the annual school fee charged by the school, the learner

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[11]   The SGB must decide on an application for exemption within 14 days. A parent who is dissatisfied with this decision must appeal to the provincial department of education within 30 days. If a parent requires help in applying, or in lodging an appeal, the school must provide such help.

qualifies for a full exemption; if the income is more than 10 times but less than 30 times the amount of the fees, a partial exemption is available. In terms of the present funding norms, certain categories of children are automatically (*i.e.* without means test) exempt from paying school fees; these include beneficiaries of child support grants and children in foster care.

For a variety of reasons, the implementation of the Fee Exemption Policy leaves something to be desired. First, indigent parents are not always aware of their rights – including the automatic school fee exemptions if they qualify for child support or foster a child; SGBs do not always inform parents about these rights, including their right to assistance in lodging an application or appeal. Second, in some schools, principals themselves decide the rules for exemptions, or the school does not have an exemption policy in place at all. Third, the fee exemptions are not financed from public funds, but are, in effect, largely "funded" by parents who do pay the fees.[12] Fourth, the national DoE has no authority to enforce the Fee Exemption Policy, or to impose sanctions on SGBs that fail to implement it – or implement it in ways that exclude learners. The result is that many children qualify for fee exemptions, but few receive them.[13] The OECD team heard that a substantial number of learners are temporarily or permanently barred from school because of school fees arrears, although the SASA prohibits this. Moreover, cases have been reported where poor parents were put under pressure by debt collectors, without ever being told of their right to apply for an exemption or lodge an appeal (Veriava, 2005).

Schools might also find other ways to turn away poor or otherwise "inconvenient" children, for example by claiming that the school is full, or because the child does not have identity papers or has a disability. The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) has also heard testimony from parents and children that, in some schools, learners with fee exemptions are treated differently and stigmatised as "poor" learners.

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[12]   This is sometimes referred to as a "Robin Hood" approach and may be one reason why some SGBs are reluctant to publicise the fee exemption entitlements of poor families.

[13]   Research undertaken by the Cape Town Children's Institute in 2005/06 in Western Cape and Eastern Cape found that, in the schools studied, 57% of urban children and 80% of rural children would be eligible for a partial or full exemption, but that the uptake was "almost zero" (see Cape Town Children's Institute, 2006). A 2003 review by Fiske and Ladd similarly found that only 2.5% of primary school learners and 3.7% of high school learners received fee exemptions. Taking into consideration the level of child poverty in South Africa, this points to a serious problem.

Questions have also been raised about the situation of families headed by children or AIDS orphans; who acts for on their behalf?

Finally, the DoE's pro-poor policies benefit only those children who are actually in school. Specifically, fewer secondary schools than primary schools qualify for "no fee" status, even though (generally speaking) the post-grade 9 phases are more expensive. This might be one of the reasons why enrolments (and attendance) drop significantly after grade 9,[14] especially since the Child Support Grant (CSG) eligibility stops at age 14 and for 78% of CSG recipients this grant is the only source of income.[15]

The General Household Survey 2005 found that about 50% of all reasons why a 14-17 year-old was not in school are related to the cost of schooling or the need to work (37% "no money for fees"; 5% "working", 8% "needed at home".) If fee exemptions and other forms of support could be extended beyond the age of 14 – for example, through conditional cash transfers to poor families – more poor youngsters might complete high school and thereby have better prospects for their future.

No fee schools

As of 2006, a partial "no fee" policy empowers the Minister of Education to exempt certain schools from charging fees, based on poverty levels of the area they serve, using data from the Poverty Index supplied by Statistics South Africa. In September of each year, the Minister determines 40% of public-school learners nationally (quintiles 1 and 2) and, on that basis, provincial departments of education then identify schools that may not charge fees that year.

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[14]   NER (net enrolment = age-appropriate rates) drops significantly by the end of grade 9. In terms of headcount (=Gross Enrolment Rate), there are often more learners in grade 10 than there were in grade 9; this is probably due to large numbers of over-age learners who repeated in primary. The numbers then drop steeply down again between grade 10 and 11 (by about 200 000 learners, both in 2006 and 2007). Caution is needed in drawing conclusions about grade-specific (as distinct from age-specific) enrolment rates.

[15]   Eligibility for this grant has been gradually extended. From April 2003, children from 0-8 years old were eligible; from April 2004, children younger than 11 years; and from April 2005 the entitlement extends to children younger than 14. While this is to be welcomed, it also means that a child who was 13 years old in 2003 reached her/his 15th birthday in 2005 without ever qualifying for a child support grant.

To compensate, the provincial department of education provides a per-learner amount, which cannot be less than the national "adequacy benchmark" set by the Minister (ZAR 581 for 2008, increasing to ZAR 605 and ZAR 641 in 2009 and 2010 respectively).[16] This is the minimum allocation that provincial departments of education (PDEs) must make to no fee schools, although they are encouraged to allocate a higher amount (targets for 2008: ZAR 775 per learner in a quintile 1 school; ZAR 711 in quintile 2) (Department of Education, 2007b). According to the DoE, some provinces do more: the Western Cape announced in December 2007 that (with special permission from the DoE) it had also scrapped fees in quintile 3 schools, and intends to make education free for all quintiles over the next few years.

Table 2.3 **No fee schools and learners, 2007**

Province	Number of learners in no fee schools in 2007	Number of no fee schools in 2007	Per learner allocation quintile 1	Per learner allocation quintile 2
Eastern Cape	1 224 711	3 825	554	554
Free State	298 184	1 304	721	596
Gauteng	377 274	432	738	738
Kwa-Zulu Natal	1 173 503	3 341	629	560
Limpopo	1 015 524	2 557	579	579
Mpumalanga	404 431	983	829	648
Northern Cape	102 244	335	557	555
North West	267 042	728	658	658
Western Cape	132 560	407	738	677
Total	**4 995 473**	**13 912**	**667**	**618**

Source: Department of Education (2006c), Lists of no fee schools by province as gazetted on 1 December 2006; updated for Gauteng.

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[16]   It is important to note that no "extra" funding for this is provided to the PED; it has to be financed from the Equitable Share allocation.

Table 2.4 **No fee schools and learners, 2008**

Province	Number of learners in no fee schools in 2008	Number of no fee schools in 2008	Per learner allocation quintile 1	Per learner allocation quintile 2
Eastern Cape	1 206 316	3 739	581	581
Free State	304 206	1 253	775	711
Gauteng	382 571	426	775	775
Kwa-Zulu Natal	1 149 391	3 382	775	711
Limpopo	1 011 220	2 832	629	629
Mpumalanga	420 395	951	803	649
Northern Cape	110 919	349	775	713
North West	300 469	927	775	711
Western Cape	135 067	405	775	711
Total	**5 020 554**	**14 264**	**Average 740**	**Average 688**

Source: Department of Education (2007a), Lists of no fee schools by province as gazetted on 5 December 2007.

Tables 2.3 and 2.4 show that about 5 million learners are in no fee schools and that, in 2008, approximately 25 000 more learners and 352 more schools benefited from the no fee policy, compared to 2007. They also show that there are considerable differences among provinces in terms of the percentage of learners in no fee schools. The Eastern Cape, for example, has a combined total of 56.4% of its learners in quintile 1 and 2 schools; Limpopo has 56.3%; Gauteng has 21.9% and the Western Cape has 14.5%. The "richer" provinces will, therefore, find it easier to abolish school fees in quintiles 3 and above. While this would be a step in the right direction, the OECD team also fears that it would exacerbate inter-province differences in access to affordable schooling.

School visits made in November 2007 also suggest that the quintile system does not always seem to reach the most needy schools and children; some schools in poor communities are ranked in quintile 3 or even 4. Moreover, many observers have pointed out that there are anomalies created by ranking schools according to the poverty level of their communities, but not necessarily learners in relation to the poverty of their households. Clearly, there are poor learners in fee-paying schools and non-poor learners in "no fee" schools. Quintile 1 and 2 schools are also (rightly) prohibited from raising money by fees or other charges, while quintile 5 schools can – and do – augment their budgets by setting high fees that then enable them to hire more and better qualified teachers, improve laboratories and libraries

and maintain smaller class sizes. The quality gap between schools, and among provinces, widens as a result. It has often been suggested that fee levels should be "capped" for the top quintiles; but the present, "concurrent legal competence" governance structure – as well as the existing powers of SGBs – may not permit this.

"Hidden" fees

Fee exemptions and no fee schools do not, of course, cover all costs of sending a child to school. Payments for transport, uniforms, excursions, stationery and additional learning materials will still put a considerable burden on poor families, especially where there are several school-age children in the household. Although most parents are strongly committed to their children's education and daily attendance rates are relatively high compared with enrolments, poorer families face considerable hardship in meeting these costs.

The cost of uniforms and transport in particular might be a barrier to access and to daily school attendance. In the case of transport, the distance travelled, the availability of a bus or a car, child safety, and excessive tiredness are all factors that determine whether a learner will, or will not, be in school on any given day. According to an analysis of the *General Household Survey 2005*, 25% of school-age children in South Africa travelled more than 30 minutes to reach their schools. The Eastern Cape (34%) KwaZulu-Natal (34%), North West province (30%) and Mpumalanga (25%) have at least a quarter of their learners attending schools far from home (Statistics South Africa, 2006, 2007). The OECD team heard that the DoE is developing guidelines for the cost of uniforms and transport; it is hoped that these will address at least some of the "hidden fees" issues for poorer families.

The National School Nutrition Policy

School feeding is part of the 2002 Food Security Strategy for South Africa and is primarily designed to provide food directly to primary school learners in order to reduce hunger, alleviate the effect of malnutrition on their capacity to learn, improve school attendance and punctuality and contribute to their general well-being. Although learning depends on many factors explored elsewhere in this review, there is evidence that it is also affected by hunger, low-energy diets, disease, parasite infestations and micro-nutrient deficiencies. In South Africa, many children suffer hunger and poor nutrition, which is reflected in the high occurrence of nutrition-

related disorders such as stunting and anaemia, particularly among young children.

The School Nutrition Programme (formerly known as the Primary School Nutrition Programme or PSNP) was introduced in 1994 as one of the first Presidential Lead Projects. Since 2004, the national Department of Education has taken over responsibility for the School Nutrition Programme from the Department of Health, on the grounds that schools are where food is actually distributed to children, and that one of the main purposes of the policy is to improve learning outcomes. In addition, one of the aims is to involve the local (school) community in the delivery of food to children, thereby strengthening community participation.

The programme is now financed via a stand-alone (direct) conditional grant from the National Treasury, administered by the DoE.[17] The conditional grants to provinces (channelled via the DoE) amounted to ZAR 1 153 million in 2007/08, due to rise to ZAR 1 324 million by 2009/10 or a rise of about 14% over three years (National Treasury, 2007b). Given the rising cost of basic foodstuffs, an average annual increase of 4.6% is unlikely to be sufficient. Better targeting of available supplies to the neediest children, rather than on whole grades, may be necessary.

Targeting of the School Nutrition Programme has two stages. First, whole schools are selected to participate; then, within selected schools, learners are selected (mostly on the basis of age or grade) for receiving food. The minimum policy is to provide food for all learners in grades R-7 in selected schools, for at least 156 of about 196 school days per year. Reports suggest that regular delivery of food varies considerably among communities and between urban and rural sites. Much depends on whether the chosen menu is hot or cold; on the availability of ingredients; of basic facilities, such as access to potable water; and the efficiency of the delivery service, especially in rural areas where in the rainy season "bread trucks" may not get through. Where schools do not operate properly (for example, by closing early or not opening at all on some days), children are *de facto* excluded from the programme. On the other hand, although there is currently no state funding for the feeding of learners in grades 10-12, a

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[17] As noted in other sections of this Review, the two main funding channels from the National Revenue Fund to provinces and local government are Equitable Shares and conditional grants. The "Equitable Share" is a block grant with no conditions that is divided on the basis of an equitable formula (ESF). Conditional grants seek to promote the delivery of specific services according to prescribed national norms. In education, the National Treasury provides similar conditional grants for, for example, HIV/AIDS (life skills) programmes and vocational education bursaries.

number of provincial departments are themselves financing such initiatives. This would appear to be more equitable than selecting beneficiaries on the basis of their grade; children from the same disadvantaged household are likely to be equally "hungry", whether they are in grade 7 or in grade 10.

Other issues are the lack of accountability to the SGB and to the parents; and the fact that food often "disappears" from schools or is diverted to unintended beneficiaries. There have also been cases of mismanagement (and allegations of large-scale collusion and fraud) in tendering and contracting procedures for the SNP in at least one province. The OECD team would support moves to improve school-based and provincial accountability, tighter procurement and contracting controls, and transparency in payments to suppliers, so that funds available for school funding can be shown to benefit hungry children.

Recommendations – governance

- While respecting the Constitutional position of concurrent legislative competence, an administrative model based on "constructive oversight" should be devised in the interests of more accountable implementation of policy. It could beneficially include a revitalised professional inspectorate to ensure greater educational quality for pupils at school level.

- Within the policy cycle, more provision should be made for partnership representation of provinces in the design of policy and more attention paid to feedback on the implementation of policy into policy revision.

- Focused training programmes are required in building capacity and expertise of staff at provincial and district levels.

- Consideration should be given to periodic staff transfer arrangements from the national Department of Education to the provinces and vice versa to help greater co-ordination of the policy design and its implementation, in an on-going way.

- In devising a new policy or project it is desirable that a "road-test", or pilot phase be undertaken in the course of which appropriate "resonance groups" of field workers would be asked about the impediments that need to be overcome to make such a policy generally operational.

- More attention needs to be paid to the effective communication of policy initiatives, bearing in mind that the starting point of effective

communication is the receiver, not the sender. Communication strategy should be incorporated from the initial stage of the policy process, not added on at the "selling stage".

- A risk with the separation of policy development and its implementation is that a department whose core business is formulating new policy considers new initiatives as the main indicator of its productivity, especially in the case of a dynamic and competent department as is the South African Department of Education. In the context of a series of successive reforms, the review team encountered strong feelings of "reform fatigue" on the ground, particularly when necessary supports were not available. The review team recommends that, for the immediate future, the system would benefit from a period of relative stability resulting from new policies and allowing for an era of consolidation of the existing agenda for change.

Recommendations – financing

In the view of the OECD team (and of the South African Government, as evidenced by its own Laws and commitments under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Education For All [EFA] and the Millennium Development Goal [MDG]), the right to free, compulsory basic education of acceptable quality for every child is not negotiable. Recognising that immediate, full implementation is not feasible in South Africa's current circumstances, the OECD team suggests the following progressive steps:

- With all deliberate speed, remove remaining barriers to universal access and completion, whether they be in existing legislation or policy, in budgeting and targeting resources, in social exclusion, or as a result of a child's gender, HIV/AIDS status, mental or physical disability, nutritional deficiencies, or geographical location.

- In accordance with the National Education Policy Act of 1996 (Sec. 4[a], which supports "the advancement and protection of the fundamental rights of every person guaranteed in terms of Chapter 3 of the Constitution"), and in terms of international conventions ratified by parliament, gradually abolish every form of school fees, whether they are overt or hidden; this includes explicitly discouraging schools from putting any pressure on families to make ad-hoc private contributions, with particular attention to hidden costs to poor families or those with several children of school age. Meanwhile, ensure that fee exemption policies and procedures are clear, fair and respectful of the dignity of applicants, and that

assistance is given to parents (and to families headed by children) to exercise their rights. The OECD team acknowledges the very South African complexity of a large middle class within the public system and the desire of the government and the DoE to maintain quality standards so that these parents will continue to send their children to public schools. But free primary education is the non-negotiable, unconditional right of every child, as established in international conventions ratified by the South African Parliament. It cannot be subjugated to any other policy or political agenda, however understandable or indeed desirable it may be. The aim, therefore, must be to work towards the removal of fees across the compulsory schooling system. This does, of course, present formidable and policy challenges; but South Africa has committed itself to a range of international conventions, as well as national law and policy. Given these obligations, it is difficult to see how the charging of fees in compulsory schooling can be justified in the long term. As noted, the Western Cape announced in December 2007 that it had also scrapped fees in quintile 3 schools and intends to make education free for all quintiles over the next few years; it is hoped that other provinces will follow suit as soon as conditions allow.

- Prevent and reverse non-attendance and drop-out by learners by providing a child-friendly environment, paying attention to such potential barriers as hunger or excessive fatigue due to travel to and from school, and by early identification of (and support for) any child at risk of failing or repeating a grade.

- Consider whether, post-age 14, an alternative to the Child Support Grant (CSG) might encourage poor families to keep older children in school, especially because 2007 figures suggest that, for 78% of CSG recipients, this is the only source of income. One possibility might be to provide conditional cash transfers to families or care-givers living in poverty – *e.g.* providing a set amount per month, on condition that the learner remains in school. Those receiving the cash transfer would be automatically exempted from school fees (as is now the case under the CSG).

- Prevent the pushing out by schools of "inconvenient" children (fee-exempt children, low achievers, children with special needs including those with behavioural problems, children affected by HIV/AIDS) by ensuring that curriculum standards are achievable by children of all levels of ability and by ensuring that assessment methods are fair, transparent, and designed to support learning rather than selection or competition.

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Chapter 3: Curriculum, Learning Materials and Assessment

In 2008, for the first time, learners across South Africa will all be on the same national school curriculum. This marks the completion of the radical curriculum change first introduced in 1997 as Curriculum 2005 (C2005) and revised in 2002 (Revised National Curriculum Statement, or RNCS). Given the challenging post-Apartheid conditions, as well as the short time for implementation, this is a staggering achievement of which South Africa's education system can be justly proud. Not only are all learners from grade R through to grade 12 now following the same national curriculum, but the "Class of 2008" will also be the first to write the new National Senior Certificate examination (NSC). It will have a reduced number of subjects, but make high cognitive demands on candidates; for example, mathematics (or mathematical literacy), as well as life orientation, will be compulsory for all.

The expectation is that the 2008 NSC results will provide a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum change over the past 10 years.

National Curriculum Statement

Changing the school curriculum was a high priority for post-Apartheid South Africa, which recognised the need for a single national curriculum framework that would bring together, as Lawton describes, "those aspects of our culture which are too important to be left to chance" (Lawton, *et al.*, 1978). The 1995 White Paper on Education and Training promoted a vision of a prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice. It has been this vision that has driven curriculum reform.

Introduction of the National Curriculum Statement has not been unproblematic. Its critics addressed its political and epistemological base and its instrumentalist approach, but, above all, its complexity, language,

lack of alignment and inadequate implementation support.[18] In addition, the adoption of outcome-based education (OBE) was seen as an example of international "policy borrowing", with its roots in competency debates in New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, Canada and – in limited circles – in the United States (Chisholm, 2005a, p. 86), but not suitable for the conditions faced by South Africa's education system. However, it has become increasingly clear that South Africa's national version of OBE has been given local content and meaning by having its own roots in human rights, social justice, equity and nation-building. In this sense, "South Africa's curriculum is simultaneously borrowed and inflected with difference" (Chisholm, 2005a, p.96).

The Review Committee on Curriculum 2005 (which included both defenders and critics) argued in its Report (Chisholm, 2000) that outcomes-based education itself was not the issue, but that the design of the curriculum and aspects associated with its implementation: the teacher training, learning support materials, provincial support and time frames were. It also argued that, while there was overwhelming support for the principles of OBE and for Curriculum 2005 with their strong focus on results and successful learning, implementation was hampered by inadequate resourcing and insufficient regard for local realities.

Organisation of grades

The General Education and Training (GET) band consists of three phases: *Foundation*, grades R-3; *Intermediate*, grades 4-6; and *Senior*, grades 7-9. In schools, the Further Education and Training (FET) Band consists of three grades, grades 10-12.

Learning areas and subjects

According to the Revised National Curriculum Statement, the grade R-9 curriculum is structured into eight "learning areas": languages, mathematics, natural sciences, technology, social sciences, arts and culture, life orientation, economic and management sciences. For grades 10-12, curricula have been developed for more 29 subjects. Sets of learning outcomes have been developed in each learning area or subject and, beyond these, assessment standards for each learning area or subject at each grade spell out what the learner will be doing in order to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcome at the appropriate grade level. For example, technology, in the GET band, is as follows:

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[18] Among the most frequently cited critiques is Jansen, 1997.

Learning Outcome 1 (of 3) TECHNOLOGICAL PROCESSES AND SKILLS: The learner will be able to apply technological processes and skills ethically and responsibly using appropriate information and communication technologies.				
At Grade R we know this when the learner				
Investigates	Designs	Makes	Evaluates	Communicates
Physically manipulates products to explore their shape, size, colour and the materials they are made of.	Chooses from a given range, materials or substances that can be used to make simple products.	Makes simple products from a range of materials provided.	Expresses own feelings about the products made.	
At Grade 6 we know this when the learner				
Finds out about the background context when given a problem, need or opportunity, and lists the advantages and disadvantages that a technological solution might bring to people and the environment, etc	Writes or communicates a design brief for the development of a product related to a given problem, need or opportunity that clarifies the technological purposes of the solution, etc.	Chooses and uses suitable tools to make products by measuring, marking out, cutting or separating, shaping or forming, joining or combining, and finishing the chosen materials, etc.	Evaluates, with assistance, the product according to the design brief, and suggests improvements and modifications if necessary.	Chooses and uses appropriate technologies to present, record or communicate the design process (*e.g.* simple portfolio, posters, charts, models), etc.
At Grade 9 we know this when the learner				
Analyses existing products relevant to an identified problem, need or opportunity based on: • safety; • suitability of materials; • fitness for purpose; • cost; • manufacturing method, etc.	Lists product and design specifications and constraints for a solution to an identified problem, need or opportunity based on all of the design key words listed below: • people • purpose • appearance and aesthetics • environment • safety • cost • ergonomics • quality • production, etc.	Chooses and uses appropriate tools and materials to make designed products with precision and control by measuring, marking, cutting or separating, shaping or forming, joining or combining, and finishing a range of materials accurately and efficiently, etc.	Evaluates the product or system based on self generated objective criteria linked directly to the design brief, specifications and constraints using self-designed procedures (*e.g.* surveys, questionnaires, testing procedures) for self-testing, and suggests sensible improvements or modifications that would clearly result in a more effective or higher-quality end product, etc.	Chooses and uses appropriate technologies to combine and organise graphics and text effectively to produce project portfolios, poster presentations, case study reports, and so on, that they have a formal organised structure appropriate for the target audience.

For the grade 10-12 (FET) curriculum, technology is split into a number of individual subjects: agricultural technology, civil technology, computer

applications technology, electrical technology, information technology, and mechanical technology. Engineering graphics and design also becomes a subject in its own right. The competences that appeared under learning outcome 1 of the grade R-9 curriculum appear under learning outcome 2 in most of these technology curricula: "The learner is able to understand and apply the technological process".

Learning Programmes

The eight learning areas set out, grade by grade, the basic concepts, skills and values to be learned. However, they do not specify the scope, pace and sequence of classroom teaching and learning: these are formulated in Learning Programmes. According to the RNCS, Learning Programmes are to be developed by teachers and supported by national policy guidelines, as well as any additional guidelines developed by provincial departments to reflect local conditions. These Learning Programmes include work schedules, exemplars of lesson plans and assessment activities.

In the Foundation Phase grades R-3, there are three Learning Programmes: literacy, numeracy, and life skills. In the Intermediate Phase, languages and mathematics are specified Learning Programmes, but schools may offer other Learning Programmes, as long as these are in accordance with national priorities and appropriate to the development of learners. In the Senior Phase, there are eight Learning Programmes, corresponding to the eight learning areas in the RNCS for grades R-9.

Foundations for Learning Campaign 2007-2011

An intensive four year campaign has been launched by the DoE in order to improve the basic skills of learners in grades 1 to 6 (Department of Education, 2008b). All primary schools are expected to increase the average learner performance in Literacy/Language and Numeracy/Mathematics to no less than 50%, which implies an improvement of between 15-20% by 2011.

Detailed directives regarding time allocations, essential resources for teaching, and minimum expectations have been set out. The minimum expectations are that all teachers in grades 1-3 actually teach reading and numeracy skills every day; that all teachers in grades 1-6 will spend at least 30 minutes daily on additional reading for enjoyment and at least one hour on extended writing every week; and that all teachers in grades 1-6 will also teach numeracy (or mathematics) for at least 30 minutes every day, including 20 minutes of written exercises and 10 minutes of mental arithmetic exercises as appropriate to the grade level.

Teachers are expected to assess learners' progress regularly and maintain individual learner performance reports of their monthly tests. Each school will send records of quarterly assessment to the district office. In addition, all learners will be assessed every year, through national standardised tests developed by the DoE.

Monitoring of campaign activities and outcomes is a joint responsibility of the DoE and the nine provincial departments of education. District officials must visit all schools within the district at least once per term, to ensure that regular tests are conducted and that results are reported to parents. Frameworks for quarterly tests for all grades will be developed.

At the end of 2011, a national evaluation will be conducted for grade 3 and grade 6 learners. For the duration of the campaign, South Africa will not participate in any regional or international studies assessing literacy and numeracy in the GET band.

The OECD team welcomes this much-needed initiative, which should go a long way towards ensuring that all South African children acquire the basic skills they need to succeed in education and later life.

Time allocations

Any curriculum design needs to take account of the time available for teaching and learning; learners cannot be expected to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes if they have not had adequate opportunities to learn (OTL), and teachers cannot be expected to complete their learning programmes unless there is sufficient "time on task" in the classroom.

Currently in South Africa, a teacher's school day cannot be longer than seven hours and the formal teaching time per week is limited to 35 hours (Department of Education, 2002, pp. 17-18, 26-27). Time allocations set out in RNCS are roughly in line with international practice, although the scope and complexity of the curriculum in the higher grades, as well as the large number of formally recorded assessments, do appear to constrain "opportunity to learn", as the following tables indicate. The time allocations shown in Tables 3.1 to 3.3 were in use at the time of the OECD visit, but they may need to be adjusted to some extent for grades 1-6 to accommodate the requirements of the Foundations for Learning campaign set out above.

Table 3.1 **Foundation Phase (R-2)**

Learning Programme	22 hours 30 mins/week	Usable time per week (75%) (in minutes)	45-minute lessons per week	Formally recorded assessments per school year
Literacy (home language)	40%	405 mins	9	16
Numeracy	35%	354 mins	7.8	12
Life Skills	25%	252 mins	5.6	4
Total	**100%**	**1 011 mins**	**22.4 lessons**	**32 assessments**

Note: In grade 3, children have 2.5 hours more per week, which increases their OTL to 10 lessons/wk for literacy, 8.75 lessons/wk for numeracy and 6.25 lessons/wk for life skills.

Source: Department of Education (2002), "Policy: Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Overview", in *Government Gazette*, Vol. 443, No. 23406, May.

Table 3.2 **Grades 4-7**

Learning Programme	26 hours 30 mins/week	Usable time per week (75%) (in minutes)	45-minute lessons per week	Formally recorded assessments per school year
Languages (all)[1]	25%	298	8.8	24
Mathematics	18%	214.5	4.8	12
Natural Sciences	13%	155	3.5	8
Social Sciences	12%	143	3.2	8
Technology	8%	95	2	4
Economics & Management	8%	95	2	4
Life Orientation	8%	95	2	4
Arts & Culture	8%	95	2	4
Total	**100%**	**1 192 mins**	**26.5**	**68**

Note:

1. From grade 4, a second language is introduced, with a third one optional. The OECD team assumes that the available time for languages is divided among those, with further fragmentation of time for basic literacy skills (*e.g.* reading) in general.

Source: Department of Education (2002), "Policy: Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Overview", in *Government Gazette*, Vol. 443, No. 23406, May.

Table 3.3 **Grades 8-9**

Learning Programme	27 hours 30 mins/week	Usable time per week (75%) (in minutes)	45-minute lessons per week	Formally recorded assessments per school year Gr. 8
Languages (all)	25%	309	6.8	24
Mathematics	18%	222	5	12
Natural Sciences	13%	161	3.5	8
Social Sciences	12%	148	3.3	8
Technology	8%	99	2	4
Economics & Management	8%	99	2	4
Life Orientation	8%	99	2	4
Arts & Culture	8%	99	2	4
Total	**100%**	**1 237 mins**	**27.5**	**68 (52 for Gr. 9)**

Source: Department of Education (2002), "Policy: Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9 (Schools): Overview", in *Government Gazette*, Vol. 443, No. 23406, May.

Formal contact time is limited to (at best) a maximum of 27.5 hours per week; but knowledgeable observers have noted that, in reality, only about one-half of available time is spent on actual teaching (Chisholm, *et al.*, 2005b).

Curriculum statements have been developed for 29 subjects at grade 10-12, building from the learning areas of the grade 1-9 curriculum and offering both academic and vocational options. Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines have been developed to amplify these, including work schedules that stipulate the content to be covered in each week of the academic year.

For the purposes of the National Senior Certificate, the learner will offer seven subjects – two official languages, one offered at the home language level and the other at either home or first additional language level, mathematics or mathematical literacy, life orientation and a minimum of any three others from the list provided by the Department of Education.

Professional development opportunities to engage with this new curriculum and its associated assessment models have occurred.

Teachers we met told us that their experience of the support offered had been somewhat variable, ranging from facilitators reading the curriculum documents, to debate and sharing among the teachers of new approaches to teaching and learning and the resources to support this.

Curriculum at this level is closely related to the qualifications being sought by learners at this stage. Attention is given to the new qualifications later in this chapter. It was somewhat alarming at one school we visited to

hear that the teachers were not at all familiar with what would be expected of their students in the new National Senior Certificate in 2008.

Curriculum implementation

But curriculum also acts to provide a support base for teachers and where the stock of teachers is as varied in capability as it is in South Africa, curriculum carries the responsibility of ensuring that "those less competent do least harm".

As has been discussed earlier, a key change proposed in 1997 was a move from the traditional aims and objectives approach to an outcomes-based education (OBE). While this change is generally discussed in terms of curriculum design, it carries a fundamental change in the role and accountability of teachers, schools and the system. Where previously responsibility had primarily been for programme delivery, the new system looks to hold these groups accountable for students achieving the outcomes:

> *The National Curriculum Statement envisions teachers who are qualified, competent, dedicated and caring and who will be able to fulfil the various roles outlined in the Norms and Standards for Educators of 2000 (Government Gazette No. 20844). These see teachers as mediators of learning, interpreters and designers of Learning Programmes and materials, leaders, administrators and managers, scholars, researchers and lifelong learners, community members, citizens and pastors, assessors and learning area/phase specialists (Department of Education, 2002, p. 3).*

This is a fine vision, but in the reality of the average South African school, it does not hold true. The review team saw students' work in a rural school without electricity or running water where teachers were attempting to introduce their students to the concepts of computers and DVDs by showing them pictures of these artefacts in chain store catalogues. The ingenuity of the teachers is to be admired, but the chances of the pupils achieving the learning outcomes described above are minimal. This is not to say that the outcomes framed in the curriculum statements are inappropriate, but, on their own, the critical and developmental outcomes, the learning outcomes and the assessment standards provide inadequate support for meaningful implementation.

In this context, the team welcomes the DoE's recently launched (March 2008[19]) three year "foundation for learning" strategy; early in 2008, reading

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[19]   The four year Foundations for Learning Campaign was gazetted on 14 March 2008. It has important implications for "time-on-task" in the classroom and for

toolkits will be distributed to primary schools, to assist teachers in the teaching and assessment of reading. It is hoped that a similar effort will follow in relation to numeracy. Especially in the early grades, "less is more": unless basic skills are acquired, many children will find the increased number of Learning Programmes after grade 3 too steep a mountain to climb.

In response to grade 10 to 12 teachers' concerns about content to be taught, and pace and sequence of teaching and assessment, the DoE has developed:

- content frameworks for each subject that set out the content to be covered each year;

- 40 work schedules stipulating the content to be covered in each week of the academic year;

- Subject Assessment Guidelines providing minimum assessment requirements for each grade and subject and examples of good assessment tasks.

Learner support materials, books and libraries

In the view of the OECD team, the following principles should apply regarding learning materials:

- The objective is to get a choice of good-quality materials into the hands of all learners at a reasonable price.

- No child should, for whatever reason related to his/her family's financial situation, be without the books needed for school work.

- Learners in poor families should receive free textbooks from grades 1 through to 12, regardless of their school's "quintile" – this means that the entitlement remains with the learner, regardless of the school he/she attends.

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assessment. In addition, the Education Laws Amendment Act 31 of 2007 places more accountability for the quality of learner outcomes on principals of public schools; they are now required to prepare an annual report on the academic performance of their learners in relation to minimum standards. They must also prepare an annual plan showing how learner outcomes will be improved

- Textbook evaluation and approval panels should have no ties to curriculum groups, authors, publishers or printers.

- Choice should lie with schools. Teachers should have the responsibility (and the skills) to evaluate and select the books and materials that best suit the needs of their learners.

- Where provincial departments of education maintain competitive lists of approved materials[20], these lists must cover a wide range of needs – from the basics to enrichment – to accommodate all learners.

In any education system, books are a key tool for introducing and reinforcing national core curricula, unified national standards and national assessment. As such, they are important to the realisation of reform policy, especially in a country like South Africa, where the creation of a unified education system is a constitutional imperative, as well as a key political goal. For this reason, the National Treasury has prioritised spending on "critical components like learner support materials" (usually referred to as learning and teaching support materials or LTSM) within non-personnel spending (National Treasury, 2007b).

Although some empirical research suggests that the impact of books and materials on learner performance can be over-estimated because other, more powerful factors affect learner outcomes (Glewe, Kremer, Moulin, 2002), in South Africa the case for increased spending on LTSM is strong, because they are the main vehicle for getting the requirements of the revised National Curriculum Statement into the hands of teachers and learners.

In many schools, textbooks are the main – sometimes the only – educational resource. Especially in poorer areas, few teachers have copies of official curriculum documents; for them, the textbook – by default –"is" the curriculum. While bookstores in the larger cities have a variety of books and materials available for sale to better-off parents, including workbooks, "sourcebooks", and study aids, only a small number of these materials will find their way into less affluent classrooms.

South Africa, however, has a vigorous and competitive book publishing industry, supplying not only South African schools, but those in some other southern African countries as well. English-language primary and secondary school textbooks dominate: 74% of all locally published books are for the

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[20]   In core subjects, there may be a case for maintaining a national list of approved materials, for example in mathematics and science. However, any approved lists should be open-ended, and based on quality rather than price.

school market. The major English-language (mostly UK based) international publishers have either their own offices in South Africa, or are represented by agents. Publishers such as Maskew Miller/Longmans (now merged with Heinemann) and Oxford University Press have their latest catalogues circulating at national, provincial and school level and are taking care to keep up with curriculum requirements.

According to a 2006 survey (PASA, 2007), the total net turnover among 94 publishers in 2006 was ZAR 3.23 billion; of this, the education sector represented nearly ZAR 1.5 billion (53.54%) in books, plus ZAR 9.6 million in supplementary materials, such as wall charts and other non-book products. The great majority of books for schools (93%) were of local (South African) origin; of supplementary materials, 76.55% were local and 23.45% imported.

Table 3.4 **Books sales in 2006 by province**

Province	Books in ZAR	% of Total	Enrolment 5-17	Per learner in ZAR
Kwazulu-Natal	340 528 634	21.76%	2 773 634	122.78
Limpopo	270 002 244	17.25%	1 763 081	153.15
Eastern Cape	221 956 473	14.18%	2 101 768	105.61
Mpumalanga	206 511 786	13.20%	1 102 637	189.29
Western Cape	202 071 686	12.91%	978 826	206.45
Gauteng	146 416 633	9.36%	1 850 072	79.15
North West	127 094 000	8.12%	784 136	162.09
Free State	35 301 487	2.26%	686 346	51.44
Northern Cape	14 897 434	0.95%	261 736	56.92
Total	**1 564 780 377**	**100.00%**	**12 302 236**	

Notes:

1. School-age population (5 to 17) based on Census 2001 and actual enrolment drawn from the 2006 Snap Survey to reflect the relative demand for education, with each element assigned a weight of 50 per cent.

2. Note that provinces spending most on learning materials are those with the largest pupil populations, but not necessarily those spending most per learner.

Source: PASA (2007), *PASA Annual Industry Survey 2006*, University of Pretoria: Publishers Association of South Africa with the School of Information Technology, Department of Information Science and Publishing Studies, Pretoria, and author's calculations; Enrolment figures: National Treasury (2007a), *Budget Review 2007*, Communication Directorate, National Treasury, Pretoria.

Language

Medium of instruction is a critical issue. The government is well aware that the acquisition of initial literacy and numeracy in the home language for at least four years leads to improved literacy levels; however, the choice of the medium of instruction lies with the parents. Most parents choose to have their children taught in English, which is seen as the language of social and economic mobility, whether or not there is the right supportive environment for teaching and learning in it. In addition, the critical switch from home language to the target medium of instruction (again, mostly English) is not handled well, as teachers have little training in helping learners make the transition. (Oxford University Press, for example, published all core grade 1-3 textbooks and workbooks in all 11 languages; but there was so little demand for African language editions post-grade 3 that virtually no publishers published them, except for textbooks for learning African languages (McCallum, 2004).

PASA figures confirm this. Seventy-five percent of local-origin books were in English; 11% in Afrikaans; and 14% in nine African languages (mainly in Isixhosa and Isizulu). Thus Afrikaans titles have a smaller market than the combined titles in African languages.

Table 3.5 **Local education book sales per language group, 2006 (in ZAR)**

English	848 734 941	75.01%
Afrikaans	123 964 264	10.96%
African Languages (combined)	158 725 598	14.03%
Total	**1 131 424 803**	**100%**
Per African Language		
Isizulu	56 577 289	35.64%
Isixhosa	42 018 886	26.47%
Sepedi	17 430 849	10.98%
Setswana	15 277 500	9.63%
Sesotho	10 358 871	6.53%
Siswathi	7 548 549	4.76%
Xsitsonga	4 999 257	3.15%
Ndebele	2 548 959	1.61%
Tsivenda	1 965 438	1.24%
Total	**158 725 598**	**100%**

Note: Excludes learning materials other than books. Stationery is supplied free to schools in the poorest quintiles; in some provinces, stationery and books come out of the same budget, in others they are separate.

Source: PASA (2007), *PASA Annual Industry Survey 2006*, University of Pretoria: Publishers Association of South Africa with the School of Information Technology, Department of Information Science and Publishing Studies, Pretoria, p. 30.

Financing

As set out in Chapter 2, Equitable Share Funding (ESF) allocations to provinces arrive in the form of unconditional [block] grants (Reschovsky, 2006). Provincial governments then decide on the division of their block grant to various sectors, including education. However, their fiscal autonomy over the education budget is severely constrained: first, by the nationally set salaries and conditions for personnel (these constitute at least 85 to 90% of education expenditures); and, second, by the requirements of the National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF). These require, among many other things, that provincial departments of education allocate funds for books and other materials (classified as "non-personnel, non-capital" expenditures) in ways that explicitly favour the poorest learners. Nevertheless, there remain wide variations in spending on learner support materials across provinces.

One general concern of the OECD team is that there is a 14% value-added tax (VAT) on books in South Africa; at present this includes school books and libraries. Because all VAT is returned to the government, the OECD team supports ring-fencing VAT charged on school and library books, to be used only to ensure that schools are fully provided with textbooks and a basic library of support materials.

It should be noted that the principle of VAT on books was previously investigated by the National Treasury as part of a broader exercise on VAT exemptions. At that stage, the Department of Education supported the abolishing of VAT on books, based on the possible benefits for the education system. However, it was found at that time that there were too many practical difficulties to implement such a proposal. The Department of Education then agreed not to pursue the abolition of VAT on school books. It may be that this issue should be revisited, in particular because book publishers appear to be in favour of at least reducing the amount of VAT on educational books.

Provision

The national Department of Education has specified guidelines for the provision of textbooks for grades 10-12; there are no similar guidelines for the lower grades. In eight of the nine provinces, publishers submit their LTSM to the provincial DoE (and recently also to the National DoE) for approval. In the Western Cape, there is no approval system, nor is there an official "catalogue" other than for special projects. During the whole implementation of the Curriculum 2005 and National Curriculum Statement (NCS), there were significant differences among provinces in submission

dates, time-frames, submission fees to be paid by publishers, evaluation and re-evaluation rules and many other aspects of the provision process. When it comes to compiling catalogues for procurement, publishers complain that there is often little communication between the curriculum and procurement sections of the provincial DoEs, resulting in numerous errors in the catalogues.

As far as the OECD team could ascertain, the current practice is "one book per learner per subject per level"; this means that readers, workbooks, and literature are often not supplied. In secondary school, for example, learners study home/first language (language book, three/four literature books); first or second additional language (language book, two literature books), and in some cases a third additional language (language book, two literature books). These would not be covered under the current practice, although some provinces do provide for literature books.

Despite some concerns that the schools market is over-concentrated in the hands of a few giant publishers (which might restrict the range of books and drive up prices), it appears that South Africa's strong educational publishing industry is well able to provide reasonably priced, good quality books and supplementary materials to schools. However, the OECD team observed that in several of the schools visited, learners had to share books; and supplementary materials such as readers, wall charts, teachers' guides, and reference books were either absent or in short supply. In the absence of sufficient textbooks, photocopied notes were ubiquitous in classrooms and often teachers wrote notes on the chalkboard for learners to copy.

This happens not only in the poorest quintile schools; schools in the middle quintiles – most of which are ex-DET (Department of Education and Training) Apartheidor homeland schools – are resource-strapped. Many teach science and biology without proper laboratories. Though some Dinaledi schools do have laboratories (and all received calculators, some equipment, and some textbooks), even these "star" schools do not have what they need to meet all teaching needs.

The OECD team is well aware that one reason for the shortfall is that a new curriculum was introduced twice in 10 years and, each time; new books were required; while, before the introduction of the NCS in 1998, some 20 years had passed without any significant curriculum change. By necessity, provincial budgets could only cover the "implementing" grades (*i.e.* grades where new curricula were introduced), which means there was little money left for "non-implementing" grades and shortfalls built up over the period of curriculum implementation. Moreover, only about 35% of schools in South Africa report that they have any kind of storage facility or library (National Treasury, 2007a); this means that books cannot be kept at school in many

cases, which must be one of the reasons why so many school-owned books go missing every year.

To show the size and scope of the implementation, Table 3.6 shows timelines and LTSM requirements for curriculum implementation.

Table 3.6 **Implementation of New Curricula and LTSM needs 2003-2007**[2]

Year	Textbooks for curriculum implementation by grade	Number of grades being implemented	Books needed per grade	Total books needed	Enrolment (Publishers' estimate)[3]
2003	grade R[1]-3	3 (+ partial implementation of grade R)	4	12	±1 100 000 learners per grade
2004	grade 4-6	3	9 (excluding readers)	27 (excluding readers)	± 1 100 000 learners per grade
2005	grades 7 and 10	2	9 (gr 7); 7 (gr 10); (excluding literature)	16 (excluding literature)	grade 7: 1 000 000; grade 10: 900 000
2006	grades 8, 9 and 11	3	9 (gr 8+9); 7 (gr 11); (excluding literature)	25 (excluding literature)	gr. 8 and 9: 1 000 000; grade 11: 850 000
2007	grade 12	1	7 (excluding literature)	7 (excluding literature)	grade 12: 650 000

Notes:

1. Grade R is included in 2003. However, grade R will not be fully implemented until 2010. In 2003, only a few provinces bought grade R resources in a coherent manner.

2. The years stated in the table precede the years of actual implementation of the new curriculum in the classroom, in order to link the timeframes for expenditure to the implementation grade.

3. Notice the drop in enrolment estimates (last column). Between 2004 and 2007 (grade 7 and grade 12), publishers' estimates are that 450 000 learners left the system.

Source: Bursey, J. (2007), "Policies and Procedures Governing School Publishing in South Africa", unpublished paper prepared for the Publishers Association South Africa, December; Publishers Association South Africa (PASA) (2007), *PASA Annual Industry Survey 2006*, Publishers Association of South Africa with the School of Information Technology, Department of Information Science and Publishing Studies, University of Pretoria; figures compiled in December 2007.

Section 20/21 schools and private schools[21]

In theory, provinces procure LTSM on behalf of Section 20 schools; Section 21 and private schools purchase their LTSM from wherever they wish. In reality, the situation is less clear. In some provinces, Section 21 schools are given the option of procuring their materials via the same procedures that apply to Section 20 schools. In KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, a private company manages procurement of LTSM on behalf of the provincial department. The OECD team heard that this is intended to protect funds intended for LTSM procurement; the experience is that when schools in a province change from predominantly Section 20 to predominantly Section 21 schools, there is a dramatic decline in the amount of money spent on core textbooks because Section 21 schools use these funds for other purposes.

Because providing learner and teacher support materials is essential for implementing the National Curriculum Statement, provincial department of education spending on goods and services is set to rise by 14.2% annually to reach ZAR 13 billion by 2009/10. While such strong growth is to be commended, clearly the provincial management of efficient supply chain processes needs to be strengthened if the provision at school level is to improve. In particular, some provincial departments of education complain that, while the school books sector has grown with the government's prioritisation of learning materials in schools, lengthy tender and procurement processes and funding constraints complicate operations.

Non-retrieval of school-owned books

The costly problem of non-retrieval of school-owned books and materials is compounded by the lack of accurate controls, the often difficult home conditions of learners – many of whom live in crowded places, with little space for books – and the movement of learners between schools. Principals, rightly, are not permitted to withhold a learner's report card if books are not returned; therefore there is little incentive for learners and parents to do so. The team heard a number of suggestions to improve retrieval rates, for example to include textbooks issued in the National Learner Records database maintained by SAQA; to attach clear labels to books, showing the school that owns the book, as well as the name of the learner to whom it has been issued; and to make textbook retrieval rates an

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21 Under the Schools Act, the governing bodies of "Section 20" schools are managed by the head of the relevant provincial department, while the SGBs of "Section 21" schools have been granted additional powers, such as purchasing books and materials.

integral part of good school management, linking it to the granting of Section 21 status. All these are useful, but the key is for each school to take stronger responsibility for the management of its assets, including learning and teaching materials. With retrieval rates in many schools as low as 50% (Cape Town Region, 2007), the annual cost to the education system is unacceptably high.

A textbook rental scheme?

A number of countries use "textbook rental schemes" as a way to reduce the cost of materials provision. Under this system, books belong to the school, but are "rented" to learners annually at a percentage of the total cost of the book. The funds generated through rental schemes then accumulate in a revolving "textbook rental fund", which will pay for replacement of the book at the end of its 3-5 year lifespan. Once the initial "capital" (stock of books) has been acquired, this system reduces the annual financial burden on the budget, while ensuring that money is available for replacements in due course. In South Africa, a rental scheme would have to allow for provision of free textbooks to learners in schools in quintiles 1 and 2; and, if a learner's family is poor, this entitlement should follow the learner regardless of the quintile of the school he/she attends.

Experience shows that rental schemes work fairly well, provided that:

- choice and purchasing power reside at or close to the school level;

- a sufficient, one-time or phased investment is made (by the DoE or external donors) to finance and purchase the initial set of textbooks;

- an efficient system for collecting and "banking" the rental fees at school level is worked out;

- the books are of sufficient quality to last 4 -5 years;

- ways are found to factor in inflation, lost and damaged books, extra copies needed if school enrolments rise;

- publishers are willing (and able) to work much more closely with schools in terms of marketing and distributing their books.

Practical difficulties are:

- non-collection of rental fees from some parents;

- the administrative burden of keeping track of small amounts of money at school level;

- establishing a revolving account for the school that "hedges" against inflation;

- the relative lack of flexibility in textbook use – once chosen and bought, the same book will need to be used for at least 4 or 5 years, so that changes in curriculum or teacher preference cannot be accommodated easily.

For South Africa, the OECD team believes a rental scheme is not suitable. The schools that would benefit most (*i.e.* Section 20 schools) are also the ones least able to make it work. The same factors that now lead to non-retrieval of books apply: lack of storage space, difficulty in collecting rental fees from some parents, the administrative burden of keeping track of books and money. The experience in other African countries (*e.g.* Lesotho) shows that rental funds have to be "topped up" annually by the ministry because of non-collection of fees, poor record-keeping and failure to hedge against inflation. Other ways should be found to improve retrieval rates, for example by providing incentives for the school and for the learners: if a school or grade has a retrieval rate of (say) more than 85%, they might qualify for a prize, such as sports equipment or an outing. School pride would also get a boost.

Supplementary materials and libraries

A more intractable issue is that of supplementary materials, especially where wider curriculum choice, as well as changes in learning styles, require that learners have access to a range of sources. In South Africa, there is a ZAR 9.6 million commercial market in supplementary materials, such as wall charts and other non-book products, but they remain difficult to find outside the big cities and are often expensive. Furthermore, school libraries throughout South Africa are in poor shape; only 9 000 out of more than 25 000 schools have a library of any sort (36%) (National Treasury, 2007a). If the aims of the NCS – for example, to improve learners' opportunities for independent learning and for project and portfolio work – are to be achieved, library resources (and internet access) are essential. The provision of books and reference materials in African languages is of particular concern.

The OECD team learned that the DoE plans to provide extra resources – including libraries – to 5 000 schools that perform poorly and are located in the worst-resourced districts. "QIDS UP" (Quality Improvement, Development, Support and Upliftment Programme) aims to provide support in the form of libraries, laboratories, teaching materials and teacher training, with emphasis on maths, science and technology. Such an approach would

improve quality of teaching and learning in the neediest schools. As the 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) results show (Howie, *et al.*, 2007), the reading achievement of learners in the Intermediate Phase (grade 4 and up) is unsatisfactory, despite 40% of teaching time being allocated to literacy during the Foundation Phase (grades R-3), and 25% to Language Learning Areas (including literacy) during the Intermediate Phase (grades 4-6). Poor children fare worst, because they tend not to have access to good quality preschools and thus are less likely to be "school ready" when they enter primary school; they are also less likely to read books at home, or have access to school or local libraries. These factors affect reading achievement well into the Intermediate Phase, as is clear from the PIRLS data.

Learner assessment and examinations

There is grave concern in South Africa about the low levels of learner achievement. Despite considerable investments in education inputs (policy, finance, infrastructure, books and materials) and processes (curriculum, teaching, school leadership), learner outcomes are disappointing. South African learners consistently perform worse than their peers in international studies such as the Third International Mathematics and Science Study-Repeat (TIMSS-R) and PIRLS; nationally, the achievement of benchmarks in core subjects such as reading, mathematics and science falls far short of what could be expected. Since South African children are just as able as children anywhere else in the world, other factors must be at work to explain why – measurement after measurement – the results remain poor. Inadequate teacher preparation, language issues, shortages of learning materials such as textbooks and limited "opportunity to learn" because of tight timetables and a lack of basic resources, appear to be the main barriers to learning achievement.

The introduction of demanding new curriculum and assessment structures has raised these barriers even higher. Curriculum issues are addressed elsewhere in this chapter. The OECD team acknowledges the high professional quality of South Africa's curriculum design and its supporting arrangements, but in light of what is known about learner achievement so far, there must be some question whether a "wide and shallow" approach across a range of learning areas is the right one, especially for less able youngsters in poorly resourced schools. It may be that, at least during the

Intermediate[22] Phase, less is more – given that many learners now arrive in grade 4 with poor literacy and numeracy skills.

The issues of language of learning and teaching (LOLT) and "time on task" (TOT) are also relevant to learner achievement. Available data show that, where learners are taught in their home language by teachers whose first language is also the language in which they teach, learning outcomes are higher than for learners whose LOLT is not their (or their teachers') home language.

As for time, by law, teachers' work week cannot exceed 35 hours. This in effect limits the number of contact hours in the classroom to no more than 27.5 per week, of which only about one-half is spent on actual teaching (Chisholm, *et al.*, 2005b). As the school week progresses, time-on-task diminishes; many teaching hours are lost through teacher absenteeism, learner lack of punctuality and unproductive work such as copying notes from the blackboard because of a shortage of textbooks. Increasing time-on-task would bring notable improvements, as would (in the higher grades) meaningful homework, strict enforcement of attendance by both teachers and learners and good support materials that encourage independent study after school.

Reading literacy

Basic to nearly all learning is the ability to read with understanding. Thus, the Department of Education places great emphasis on the early acquisition of reading literacy as part of its national reading initiative; specifically through the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and the Molteno Project "Breakthrough to Literacy".[23] Quite rightly, the assessments are short and classroom-based; EGRA uses 15 minute oral assessments of literacy acquisition in grades 1-3, including pre-reading skills, like listening comprehension. Assessment tasks are available in all official South African languages and the results thus far are encouraging – for example, average student gains in learning achievement of up to 30% have been reported in some provinces where EGRA is used.

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[22]   The Intermediate Phase (grades 4-6) requires eight Learning Areas, each with detailed guidelines. Grades R-3 require three Learning Areas; literacy and numeracy take up 40% and 35% of the timetable respectively, with 25% on life skills.

[23]   USAID provided basic technical assistance, building on previous projects in Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal, Northern Cape and Eastern Cape.

Following the release of the of the 2006 PIRLS results at the end of November 2007 (Howie, *et al.*, 2007), the Minister of Education launched a three year "foundation for learning" strategy that will involve the annual testing of all children from grade 3. Early in 2008, reading toolkits will be distributed to primary schools. These kits will contain resources needed for teaching reading in grades R and 1, including EGRA's Early Grade Reading Assessment tool. Teachers will also receive intensive training. A similar effort is planned for foundation numeracy. In 2011, there will be a national assessment of the impact made by the "foundation for learning" strategy.

Literacy and numeracy strategies are already in place in at least two provinces – Gauteng (in co-operation with READ Educational Trust) and the Western Cape's Literacy and Numeracy Strategy 2006-2009, where all schools take part in provincial tests linked to targets for end-of-year achievement. These initiatives are already bearing fruit and will help win what the minister called a "war on the failure of foundational learning in our schools."[24]

While the OECD team welcomes these renewed efforts to raise achievement in basic skills, there must be concern about those learners who have already "lost the war". The 2006 PIRLS results place South Africa at the bottom of 40 participating countries, with a score of 302 (PIRLS average score is 500). Moreover, South African learners were the oldest (at an average of 11.9 years; the assessment is aimed at learners aged about 10) to take part in the study – so that after five or six years of schooling, their literacy skills are still extremely disappointing. If, at the average age of 11.9 years, the majority of learners have not mastered the most basic learning skills, attention needs to be paid to these youngsters, who still have at least three years of compulsory schooling ahead of them. The Department of Education is right to be concerned about learning outcomes; but this concern needs to extend to underachieving learners who are in the system now – and at secondary and tertiary levels, as well as in the GET band R-9.

The DoE's response to the PIRLS results favours increased frequency of tests and other forms of assessment, in accordance with the adage that, in education, "you get what you test". The powerful backwash effect of testing on classroom teaching and learning is well documented and need not be expanded upon here. Well designed tests linked to standards and curriculum can indeed help teachers teach and students learn and can provide useful data to guide education policy. But if nothing is done to improve the quality of learning, tests, in themselves will not raise student achievement.

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[24]   Minister Naledi Pandor, 30 November 2007.

Learning, not testing, is the issue. Care must also be taken to minimise the additional burden on teachers and on already limited classroom time.

Ensuring fairness in testing

- Learners must know in advance which skills and content areas will be tested, and must have some idea of what the test will be like.

- Learners must have sufficient opportunity to learn the skills and content that will be tested.

- Learners must have equal access to any specific preparation for taking the test – for example, study materials, time, practice and formative feedback.

- If the stakes are high, learners should have more than one opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities, for example through repeated testing with equivalent forms of the test, or by giving more time to allow for language difficulties unrelated to the subject being tested.

Qualifications and assessment in South Africa: current status

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA, established by law in 1995) developed South Africa's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and oversees its implementation. The purpose is to integrate all qualifications into a single framework, integrating education and training, according to a Joint Statement of Policy between the Department of Education and the Department of Labour, agreed in 2003. The ministers of education and labour have joint "custody" of the NQF, since it embraces standards and qualifications achieved in both formal, institution-based learning and workplace-based learning. SAQA advises the Minister on the educational implications of NQF, but it has no operational function.

The architecture of the NQF is complex and simplification, where needed, is not easy. It recognises three broad bands of education: general education and training, further education and training, and higher education and training. Schooling spans 13 years or grades, from grade 0 – known as grade R or "reception year" – through to grade 12, the year of matriculation.[25] The Framework has 10 levels; level 1 falls under General

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25   Compulsory schooling covers 10 years: grades R through 9. grades R-3 are called the Foundation Phase; grades 4-6 the Intermediate Phase; and grades 7-9 the Senior Phase. *Secondary* schooling covers grades 10-12.

Education and Training through grade 9. Levels 2 (grade 10), 3 (grade 11) and 4 (grade 12) are Further Education and Training, and encompass both FET schools and FET colleges. The Senior Certificate, therefore, corresponds to Level 4 in the NQF. Levels above this are considered tertiary level education and training, although some FET colleges that offer programmes for higher education institutions may have additional programmes that take the qualification up to Level 5.

Standards design and quality assurance

While these are under the same SAQA "roof", they are kept as separate functions. Standards are developed according to a number of "organising fields", each with its own, national, standard-setting body consisting of a range of stakeholders, as well as technical experts writing drafts. For qualifications and quality assurance, there are Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs), described to the OECD team as the "hub" of the quality assurance system. There are three councils:

- the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) for trades, occupational and professional qualifications, unique to the workplace (in the process of being established);

- Umalusi for general and further education and training qualifications;

- CHE, for higher education and training qualifications.

The latter two councils are based on existing education statutory bodies and are, therefore, overseen by the DoE. The QCTO is intended to advance the development of learning and career paths from sub-professional to professional levels in the workplace and is overseen by the Department of Labour. Where other departments or ministries have responsibility for professional qualifications (*e.g.* in health or agriculture), relationships between professional bodies and these sponsoring ministries are not affected by SAQA. In addition, some professions have their own qualifying requirements, for example chartered accountants, actuaries, civil engineers, etc.

Figure 3.1 **Standards and quality assurance**
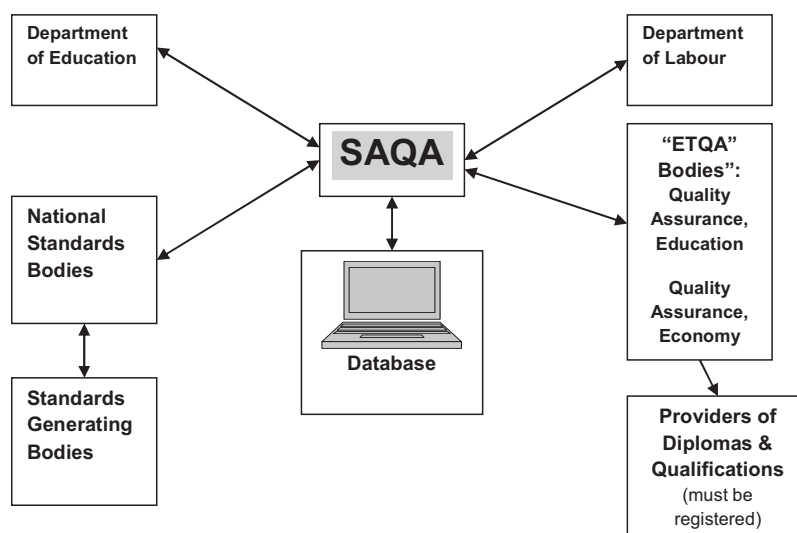
Non-completion, repetition, and drop-out

One consistent finding worldwide is that, in the past, those who failed to complete basic (compulsory) schooling were most at risk of marginalisation, unemployment or low-income jobs. Now, even the statutory period of education is insufficient as a basis for adult life. In most OECD countries, upper secondary education (while no longer "compulsory" in most cases) is necessary to improve the prospects of earning a reasonable living.

In this respect, South Africa – where, since 1996, schooling has been compulsory to the age of 15[26] – is doing well. No single age cohort between the ages of 7 and 15 recorded less than 95% enrolment by 2004. Since then, enrolments of six-year-olds, in particular, have been rising significantly, as a result of the phasing-in of grade R provision, which is expected to be completed by 2010. It is mainly from the age of 16 that the proportion of youngsters attending an educational institution starts to decline, although

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[26]   Or the completion of grade 9, whichever occurs earlier. Compulsory education periods for children with special educational needs are determined by the Minister (South African Schools Act 1996, section 3[1].)

they remain high by international standards: over 75% of 17 and 18-year-olds are still in the education system. It is also clear that significant numbers of learners take more than 9 years to complete compulsory basic education.

Grade-specific gross enrolment rates (GERs) must, however, be regarded with caution. High GER rates in grade 1, for example, suggest that many over and under aged children are enrolled, and also that a substantial number are repeating grade 1. Similarly, increases in secondary GERs could be a result of over-aged learners belonging to larger cohorts reaching these levels.

Following policy revisions in 2004, age-grade norms have been laid down that make it possible to calculate net enrolment ratios (NERs), which show the proportion of appropriately-aged children in the education system. As Table 3.7 shows, access to primary and basic education in South Africa is high, but full access has not (yet) been achieved, as confirmed by UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report 2008 (GMR), which concludes that South Africa is at risk of not achieving the Education For All/Millennium Development Goal (EFA/MDG) goal of universal primary education by 2015 (Aitchison, 2007). The Department of Education is concerned that the statistics reflected in the GMR do not concur with those provided by the Ministerial Committee on Learner Retention in the South African Schooling System, which found "good and improved" access up to the level of basic education; universal access to, and completion of, basic education is still to be achieved.

It has been pointed out that NER may not be a good indicator of access to grade 1 because of South Africa's dual age admission policy, which allows learners to be admitted to grade 1 either when they turn 6 or 7. UNESCO uses the concept of "Total NER" instead.

There is, at present, considerable debate about the accuracy of drop-out, repetition and completion figures and it is hoped that the recently convened Ministerial Commission on Drop-Out and Repetition will provide an up-to-date picture. On the basis of data available to the OECD team, the overall completion rate for the Foundation Phase (grades 1-3) is high, at greater than 90%, but this figure conceals differences between the best and worst performing provinces, districts and schools. Of those who complete the Intermediate Phase (through to grade 6, roughly age 12), about 96% go on to the Senior Phase (grades 7-9), even though attendance remains compulsory to age 15. Recent data suggest that 92% of the relevant age group for grade 9 (15 years) successfully complete basic education. Post grade 9, however, completion rates fall off substantially and only about one half of the age cohort takes the grade 12 (Matric) examination each year. This must be of concern in an increasingly demanding and competitive labour market.

Table 3.7 **Pupil enrolment patterns**

	Age-specific Enrolment Ratio (ASER)	Learner Population	Net Enrolment Ratio
Grade 1	1 188 219	1 204 303	99
Grade 2	966 876	1 003 796	96
Grade 3	915 831	1 005 714	91
Grade 4	789 444	1 010 057	78
Grade 5	702 204	1 018 708	69
Grade 6	757 135	1 025 743	74
Grade 7	781 652	1 026 315	76
Grade 8	716 871	1 020 424	70
Grade 9	632 577	1 008 070	63

Sources: Department of Education (2005), *Annual School Survey*, Department of Education, Pretoria*; Statistics SA;* Department of Education (2006b), *Annual Report 2005-2006*, Department of Education, Pretoria*;* Motala, S., *et al.* (2007), *Educational Access in South Africa: Country Analytic Report*, CREATE, Brighton p. 4.

"Automatic" promotion in basic education

In post-Apartheid South Africa, a "constructivist" approach to teaching and the adoption of outcomes-based education (OBE) have led to a great deal of confusion among teachers, as well as a heavy load in terms of continuous monitoring and recording.

There has also been a move away from formal, objective testing of learners. Apart from external summative tests at the end of grade 9, where learners must have demonstrated competence in all eight learning areas, learners do not "fail",[27] which in some cases means that learners carry their lack of skills through with them to the next grade, resulting in underachievement, frustration, and sometimes to premature school-leaving. According to the 2006 National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications in Schools in the General Education and Training (GET) Band, all learners in grades R-8 "should progress with their age cohort" and no learner should stay in the same phase for longer than four years (or five years in the case of the Foundation Phase where grade R is offered), unless the provincial head of department has granted approval. The Policy (section 87) also states that

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[27]   This is in line with the principle that learners should progress with their cohort. However, underachieving learners may be required to repeat a grade, within the limits set by the National Policy.

learners who need more time to achieve the Learning Outcomes specified should receive support, but should not normally be required to repeat the grade.

As long as a strong, effective learner support/remediation strategy is in place, the OECD team agrees with these policies. Grade repetition is rarely the right response to underachievement. International studies suggest that keeping underachieving learners in the same grade significantly increases the probability of dropping out, while keeping a learner back for a third year makes dropping out a virtual certainty. The ultimate "cost" of repetition, therefore, is sharply increased risk of drop-out, and thus increased probability of lifelong economic and social consequences, both for the individual and for the state.

Instead, the best approach to underachievement is early diagnosis of learner difficulties, and prompt, targeted support and remediation. On the other hand, teachers with large classes and little experience in diagnostic assessment and remediation will find it difficult to pay close attention to each child's progress towards achievement of specific Learning Outcomes. In practice, despite the extensive requirements for "planned, regular and cumulative" recording and reporting set out in the National Policy, underachievers may well find themselves passed on from grade to grade, eventually becoming victims of "silent exclusion" because they cannot keep up with classroom work.[28]

Assessment practices

Obviously, the very notion of "outcomes-based education" focuses on the achievement, by learners, of specified outcomes that can be expected of them at specified points during their school careers. The tight link with assessment and measurement is thus equally obvious. The OECD team was impressed by the meticulous, detailed, grade and subject specific articulation of assessment standards and expected learning outcomes set out in documents such as the National Curriculum Assessment Guidelines that link assessment to the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), as well as the National Policy on Assessment and Qualification for Schools in the General Education and Training (GET) Band (2007).

The matrix shown as Table 3.8 sets out current assessment practices. Some provinces, for example Gauteng and the Western Cape, have put in place additional systems to test and track learner progress, and national "systemic" testing is done at grades 3 and grade 6 by the Systematic

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[28]   In this context, see also the note for Table 3.8 about "condonation".

Evaluations Directorate of the DoE. These systemic evaluations[29] are sample based and are intended to monitor learning over time. A systemic evaluation at grade 9 is being planned, but may or may not fit with other plans (*e.g.* for a grade 9 examination, see below). The OECD team considers that the grade 3 systemic evaluation may be a useful "early warning" tool for youngsters who are falling behind during the crucial early learning phase in literacy and numeracy. However, such information is useful only if it forms the basis for timely, targeted remedial work with learners who are struggling.

A monitoring initiative of the Open Society Institute (OSI), the Network of Education Policy Centers has published *Monitoring School Dropouts: Albania, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Mongolia, Slovakia, and Tajikistan* (ESP, 2007 – see Chapter 1 "School Dropouts: Disadvantaged, Disaffected, Disappeared").

Continuous assessment

The National Policy on Assessment provides examples of record sheets, progression schedules, learner profiles and report cards to be used by teachers. In grade R, no formal assessment takes place. In grades 1-8, continuous assessment, using these recording and reporting tools, constitutes 100% of all assessment. In grade 9, 75% of all assessment is continuous (internal), supplemented by a nationally set Common Task for Assessment (CTA) for each learning area. The CTA is moderated by Umalusi; it forms 25% of the final result and consists of a range of performance-based, as well as pencil-and-paper tests externally set and moderated; the CTA is administered during the final term of grade 9, and no other (internal) assessments are done during this term. The CTAs were being piloted at the time of the OECD visit.

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[29]   The OECD team heard some reservations about the technical quality (in terms of sampling, validity, reliability and analysis) of the systemic evaluations, and caution is advised in using their results in isolation of other evidence of learner achievement.

Table 3.8 Assessment practice matrix

Part 1 of 3

Band (grades, NQF level)	Qualifications & Public Exams	Institutional framework for assessment (School and Classroom emphasis) and grading (See National Protocol for Assessment [2005], National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the GET Band and Subject Assessment Guidelines)	Professional Instruments (systemic assessments, international comparison, student monitoring)	Olympiads	Financing
Further Education and Training (grades 10, 11, 12, NQF 2,3,4)	Matriculation certificate (grade 12)/NQF diplomas (Level 4)	Learners take 7 subjects, home language, another official language, mathematics or mathematics literacy, life orientation, three additional subjects. Some learners take more than seven. The year mark contributes 25% and the final exam 75% (except for life orientation, where there is 100% school based assessment) . The 25% is made up of class tests, a portfolio of work and group projects. National codes, from 1 – 7 are use to report on the achievement of learners. Symbols A, (80+%) B, C, D, E, F (30+) are allocated. University entrance is based on this exam. The format of the exams is mostly constructed response with essay type questions in some of the subjects. Multiple choice is used in physical science (about 15%) and the life sciences. Some multiple choice items are used in Afrikaans.	For grades 10 and 11, exams are set internally, marked by teachers and moderated by subject advisors. In grade 12, exams are set externally.	Mathematics, Science and Biology, English and Afrikaans Olympiads are conducted by professional bodies, university staff and teachers. Achievement here is given credit by tertiary institutions though it plays no formal role. The young historians competition is the history equivalent.	Costs of national examinations are largely financed by the national department of education. Applicants for Matric pay a nominal fee of about ZAR 100.

Table 3.8 - Part 2 of 3

Band (grades, NQF level)	Qualifications & Public Exams	Institutional framework for assessment (School and Classroom emphasis) and grading (See National Protocol for Assessment [2005], National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the GET Band and Subject Assessment Guidelines)	Professional Instruments (systemic assessments, international comparison, student monitoring)	Olympiads	Financing
General Education and Training — Senior Phase (7, 8 and 9)	Grade 9 School leaving	Under the South Africa Schools Act of 1996, education is compulsory for all South Africans from ages 7 (grade 1) to age 15, or the completion of grade 9. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) sets out minimum standards and skills. Continuous Assessment (CASS) comprises 100% of assessment form grades R-8 and 75% for grades 9. A portfolio of work is required, in addition to formal tests and examinations. Some subjects use multiple choice items. There is a mixture of short answers and answers requiring more reasoning. Multiple choice is used, though this is not common. Common task assessments (CTAs) are set nationally and comprise 25% of the final result. These are moderated by the Quality Assurance Council (Umalusi). Promotion occurs only at grade 9. The learner must have demonstrated competence in 8 learning areas and been assessed through external summative assessment component. Reporting of learner performance is provided for in policy, as per seven codes outlined below: 1 (0-29) – not achieved 2 (30-39) – elementary achievement 3 (40-49) – moderate achievement 4 (50-59) – adequate achievement 5 (60-69) – substantial achievement 6 (70-79) – meritorious achievement 7 (80- 100) – outstanding achievement	SA participated at grade 8 level in TIMSS 1995, 1999 and 2003 (not in 2007). PIRLS was conducted at grades 4 and 5 levels in 2005/6. SAQMEC was conducted at grade 6 in 2002. South Africa also participated in MLA. Systemic assessments are conducted nationally at grade 3 and 6 level on samples of learners. These take the form of pencil and paper tests, conducted in a group. In the Western Cape, all learners at grades 3, 6 and 8 are monitored and results communicated to schools. Western Cape uses sample-based assessment at grade 9 as well. The Gauteng Department of Education instituted "international" tests designed in Australia across the whole cohort.	Mathematics and Science Olympiads are conducted at this level.	Mathematics and Science Olympiads have entrance fees ranging from ZAR 20 – ZAR 50.
Intermediate Phase (4, 5, 6)		Reporting of learner performance occurs through four codes., as follows: 1 (0-34%) – Not achieved, 2 (35-49%) – Partial achievement, 3 (50- 69%) – Satisfactory achievement, 4 (70 – 100%) – Outstanding		Mathematics and Science Olympiads are conducted at this level by Association for Mathematics Education in Southern Africa (AMESA)	Mathematics and science Olympiads have entrance fees ranging from ZAR 20 – ZAR 50.

Table 3.8 - Part 3 of 3

Band (grades, NQF level)		Qualifications & Public Exams	Institutional framework for assessment (School and Classroom emphasis) and grading (See National Protocol for Assessment [2005], National Policy on Assessment and Qualifications for Schools in the GET Band and Subject Assessment Guidelines)	Professional Instruments (systemic assessments, international comparison, student monitoring)	Olympiads	Financing
General Education and Training	Foundation Phase (1,2,3)		Continuous assessment is advocated in official policy for grades R – 3. Assessment guidelines for R-3 were published n 8 January 2008. Codes for reporting are given from 1 to 4: 1 (0-34%) – Not achieved 2 (35-49%) – Partial achievement 3 (50- 69%) – Satisfactory achievement 4 (70 – 100%) – Outstanding			
	Grade R			No formal testing in grade R		

Note: The curious practice of "condonation" – "condoning" for promotion a maximum of one subject at grade 9 with achievement at level 2; or allowing one subject per grade 10-12 with a rating of "Not Achieved" (= mark below 30%) to be "deemed" to have been achieved at Elementary level (= 30-39%) – can have unintended consequences. Some schools classify learners who are unlikely to pass grade 12 exams as "private" candidates who are not included in the school's pass rate and are not required to produce a portfolio. Other schools "block" underachieving learners from entering grade 12, so that there may be large classes at grade 11, but only small ones at grade 12. In addition, the 2007 grade 12 was the last cohort to offer subjects and syllabuses under the "old" curriculum; if they repeated grade 11, therefore, in 2008 they would face different subjects, as well as new curricula for FET. Therefore the pressure to "condone" grade 11 failures at the start of 2007 was high. This may now no longer be the case, but clearly such practices distort pass rate statistics. See Schools that Work, 2007, p. 72.

Source: Data supplied by the Centre for Evaluation and Assessment, Faculty of Education, University of Pretoria, 2007.

Examination practices

Pass rates on external exams provide only a partial measure of the quality of primary and secondary education. Nevertheless, they serve as "report cards" that are used by the education system and the general public as proxy indicators of quality. In their present state, however, the South Africa exams cannot provide valid information about the performance of a particular school, teacher, or provincial department of education, because they do not reflect the powerful background effects of non-educational factors like culture, family background, economic status, or urban/rural location. For this, a far more sophisticated "value-added" approach is necessary. Value-added measurement has at least the potential of identifying the unique contribution of a particular school or teacher, by separating these contributions from other factors that affect learner performance;[30] and by following the performance of the same learner cohort over time.

Grade 9 is the end of the compulsory cycle and for some learners this is the first exit level. In addition to continuous assessment and the CTA mentioned above, a portfolio of work is required. The majority of learners continue into secondary education (grades 10 to 12). The minimum entrance requirement for grade 10 is an official grade 9 school report, indicating either promotion to grade 10 or a general Education and Training Certificate (GETC) for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), or an NQF Level 1 certificate obtained otherwise.

The OECD team learned that there is some support for an all-external grade 9 examination, to make the exam more objective and reduce the continuous assessment component (now 75%) to zero. Although this would avoid "grade inflation" caused by over-generous marking by teachers, it would also raise the stakes of the grade 9 exam and thus require stringent technical criteria for validity, reliability and fairness of the examination. Moreover, what are the consequences for learners who fail? Will they simply need to repeat grade 9, or will other, more targeted remedial programmes be put in place in schools? Will the same teachers who were unsuccessful in preparing a learner for the exam be once again teaching the repeat or remedial classes? Experience shows that repetition increases the danger of drop-out; and, in any case, the learner's lack of achievement may not be due to her/his grade 9 work, but may have a much longer history

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30   The international literature on value-added measurement is substantial. One source is Harvey Goldstein's (2001) work on using learner performance data for judging schools and teachers.

going back to primary school. Finally, if the experience of grade 11 is anything to go by, there may be a temptation for schools to "hold back" underachieving learners in grade 8, to protect grade 9 pass rates. This would further reduce the life chances of slow learners and effectively exclude them not only from the education system, but from meaningful participation in the labour market.

It seems to the OECD team that great care should be taken before introducing an external exam that may turn into a "selection" exam for grade 10 and an insurmountable barrier for the very youngsters who most need help. It is true that the prospect of an external grade 9 examination might motivate teachers and learners to work harder; and it might also reduce the number of learners now arriving in grade 10 with poor [English] reading, writing and mathematical skills. But what will happen to these youngsters, if they cannot progress?

In this respect, combined schools (offering grades 1-12) are better placed to follow and support a learner from the start, as teachers will know the child, be able to confer with each other, and make transitions from one phase to the next less upsetting for slow learners.

For grades 10 and 11, examinations are set internally, marked by teachers in accordance with marking guidelines and moderated by subject advisors. However, in 2006 and 2007, examinations were set nationally for Grades 10 and 11 respectively. These exams are intended to monitor the implementation of the new curricula and to provide data for adjusting standards where needed. At the time of the OECD visit, a small-scale pilot study of the grade 10 exam (based on the NCS) was being analysed. The purpose was to investigate whether the standard of assessment, the form of assessment and the quality of the grade 10 examination paper were appropriate to grade 10 and to use the experience as a basis for reviewing the grade 11 examination. The aim is to prepare the ground for the introduction of the new grade 12 (Senior Certificate) examination in 2008.

The new **grade 12** National Senior Certificate (previously known as "Matric") is a 130 credit qualification at Level 4 of the National Qualifications Framework. The new NSC will be introduced in 2008 and will no longer distinguish between Higher Grade and Standard Grade qualifications; all subjects will be offered at Higher Grade level.

The current Matric (and no doubt its NSC successor) is the largest public examination in South Africa, as well as the one with the highest stakes; the results determine not only which of the nation's 12th graders will graduate, but where they will go in South African society. Learners who fail are largely destined for unskilled jobs. A simple passing score gives access

to blue-collar work, but not to more prestigious jobs. Only those who earn a pass with endorsement are qualified to attend a four year university course.

No surprise, then, that the release of the Matric scores is nothing short of a national event. The Minister of Education's announcement makes banner headlines and public interest is intense. The 2007 pass rate (65.2%) was down by about 1% on 2006, a further fall from the 73% success rate in 2003. While the number of candidates passing the grade 12 exam has risen since 2000, the pass rate has declined since 2005, as Table 3.9 shows.

Table 3.9 **Candidate entry and pass rates, 1998-2007**

Year	Entered	Passed	%
1998	552 384	272 488	49.3%
1999	511 159	249 831	48.9%
2000	489 941	283 294	57.8%
2001	449 371	277 206	61.7%
2002	443 824	305 774	68.9%
2003	440 267	322 492	73.2%
2004	467 985	330 717	70.7%
2005	508 363	347 184	68.3%
2006	528 525	351 503	66.5%
2007	**564 775**	**368 217**	**65.2%**

Source: Department of Education, Pretoria, 28 December 2007.

There are wide differences among provinces: Western Cape and Gauteng continue to have the highest pass rate, with pass rates of 80.6% and 74.6% respectively in 2007; Eastern Cape and Limpopo had pass rates of 57.1% and 58% respectively. Nationally, the pass rate in 2007 was 65.1%. The number of learners endorsed for university study also declined, from 18.2% in 2004 to 15.1% in 2007; on the other hand, the number of youngsters actually entering university remains above 85 000 each year. Again, Western Cape and Gauteng had the highest endorsement rates (24.6 and 20.4% respectively) and Eastern Cape and Limpopo had endorsement rates of 9.3 and 11.7%.[31]

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[31]   Available data show clearly that there are also wide differences within provinces, with excellent performances in some quintile 1-2 schools and poor ones in some schools in higher quintiles. In each quintile, there are schools with 100% pass rates, while in all but quintile 5 there are schools with a zero pass rate (Department of Education, 2007b).

Although it is worrying that youngsters in these provinces consistently appear to be less well prepared than their peers in other parts of the country, it must be remembered that these provinces have large numbers of schools in quintiles 1 and 2 and that many candidates do not write Matric in their mother tongue. In Gauteng, for example, the majority of schools (about 60%) are in quintiles 4 and 5; in the Western Cape, nearly half of all schools fall in quintile 5, and very few in quintiles 1 and 2. Nevertheless, it is of concern that, nationally, about 50% of all schools in quintile 1 have pass rates of 55% or lower.

Another sign of continuing inequalities is the overwhelming difference between quintile 5 schools and all other quintiles (including quintile 4) in terms of "Pass with Endorsement" rates.[32] Nearly three quarters of all quintile 5 schools are former "white" or former "Indian" schools; but the majority of former Department of Education and Training (DET) schools, independent homeland (TBVC) schools and Self-governing Homeland schools, as well as so-called "New" schools (new Department of Education schools created after 1994, about 84% of which have 100% African learners) are found in quintiles 1 to 3 (DoE, 2007b). Top-scoring schools remain those former "white" schools situated in urban areas, some charging fees as high as ZAR 15 000 (USD 2 200) per year and thus able to provide better facilities and employ additional, well qualified staff who are first language English or Afrikaans speaking. Most of the learners in these schools will be learning in their home language and, increasingly, they will have started in these schools at grade 1, avoiding the language difficulties experienced by children who have to make the transition from their home language to the language of instruction in school.

It is of concern to the OECD team that, nationally, the overall percentage of endorsed passes has fallen to 15.1% in 2007 and that learners in quintile 5 remain at least twice as likely to progress to higher education than those in any other quintile. As referred to in Chapter 8, increased participation in higher education is essential if South Africa is to meet the challenges of future development and to redress inequities of the past. Instead, while access to higher education for African students and women has been dramatically broadened, the overall participation rate has dropped. The DoE accepts that (numerical) enrolment growth has not been accompanied by quality improvement and that it has been "unplanned, unrelated to available funding resources, and detached from the available institutional physical and personnel resources." (Department of Education, 2005d). High drop-out rates, with almost 50% of entering students dropping

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32   In 2006, quintiles 1 and 2 had about 13% passes with endorsement; quintile 3 had 15%; quintile 4 had 17%, and quintile 5 had 35%.

out without obtaining a qualification, further reduce the number of qualified young professionals entering the labour market.

Given also that ever fewer youngsters seem to opt for higher grade Matric exams in mathematics and the physical sciences – especially in the lower quintiles – access to high-skill areas such as the sciences, engineering and post-graduate programmes remains dangerously limited.

Mathematics and science

Thus far, Mathematics and Science performance does not bode well for the nation's urgent requirements for skilled personnel in engineering, science and technology. The figures for Matric 2007 show that increasing numbers of candidates entered for the Standard grade examination in both subjects, while most universities require a Higher grade pass for engineering and actuarial sciences. The design of the new National Senior Certificate no longer differentiates between Higher and Standard levels, and proposes to have one (higher) level only. In these subjects in particular, which many learners find difficult even at Standard level, the OECD team anticipates lower overall pass rates, although the number of endorsements may not be adversely affected and may even increase as more youngsters are encouraged to set their sights higher.

Much has been written about mathematics and science teaching and learning in South Africa, mostly as a result of the poor performance of South African learners in the TIMSS international surveys in 1995, 1999, and 2003 (*e.g.* Howie and Plomp, 2006) Scores were consistently well below the international average and show no sign (thus far) of improving. But the issue goes well beyond international rankings. Under Apartheid, black students were systematically underexposed to mathematics and science; instruction was designed to prepare them for jobs available to them, jobs that rarely required mathematics or science. Moreover, the institutions preparing teachers for African schools often did not even offer mathematics as a specialisation. Black students are still far less likely than whites to take mathematics courses all the way through high school, or to choose them as a higher grade subject. Between grades 10 and 12, the proportion of maths courses offered at higher level tends to drop sharply: a combination of learners dropping out of school, dropping out of maths, or switching from higher to standard grade means that few black youngsters gain the kind of Matric results that would give them access to jobs or university courses that require reasonable competence in maths or science. Labour statistics for 2000 show that only about 9% of employed South Africans aged 15-65 years were in occupations that require some mathematical competence, such

as technicians and bookkeepers (Department of Education, 2004). This is too weak a base to sustain South Africa's rapid economic growth.

In 2001, the Dinaledi ("star") schools initiative targeted 102 schools in disadvantaged areas to improve participation in maths and science and provided these schools with extra resources. In 2005 additional schools were added to the Dinaledi Project and, by 2008, 500 schools will form part of the project. At the time of the OECD team's visit, the results of this initiative were encouraging. The team was told that a further 100 schools will become Dinaledi schools in 2008 and that, by 2009, the national aim is to have 50 000 higher-level passes in mathematics. Since, in 2007, the number of higher-grade passes in maths was only about 25 000, this would be a major achievement, especially since the trend is that learners opt for standard rather than higher grade exams both in maths and science.[33]

In prefacing its National Strategy for Mathematics, Science and Technology for 2005-2009, the DoE expressed concern that the teaching of mathematics in schools is rarely the first choice of talented maths graduates. Consequently, there is a vicious circle of poor teaching, poor learner achievement and a constant shortage of competent teachers.

It is to be hoped that the DoE's National Strategy, combined with the Dinaledi project and the minister's "foundation for learning" initiative, will tackle these issues, for example by strengthening fundamental numeracy skills in basic education so that more learners will stay with maths as they move to more advanced levels. Encouraging more gifted learners to take part in Olympiads would also help. The African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) in Cape Town, in partnership with New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and a number of prestigious international universities, including Cambridge and Oxford, offers summer schools and post-graduate courses that may catch the imagination of gifted youngsters.

Vocational qualifications

The new Further Education and Training Curriculum (FET) has been implemented recently. In 2008 the first FET College cohort wrote an examination for the National Certificate (Vocational) (NC[V]), based on the new curriculum. The purpose of the NC(V) is to certify candidates'

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[33]   Higher grade passes in maths increased from 25 217 in 2006 to 25 415 in 2007 and standard grade from 110 452 in 2006 to 123 813 in 2007. In science, higher grade pass numbers in 2007 (28 122) were down on 2006 (29 781), but standard grade passes increased from 81 151 in 2006 to 87 485 in 2007 in the number of standard grade passes.

knowledge, practical skills, and applied competence needed for jobs and progression to higher education. At the time of the OECD visit, however, Umalusi had carried out a quality assurance exercise of the proposed examination, and raised some important concerns about its validity and quality.

The NC(V) structure, as proposed, is for a qualification consisting of 130 credits: a fundamental component of 50 credits, divided into language (20), mathematics/mathematical literacy (20), and life orientation (10); and a vocational component of 80 credits, consisting of four vocational subjects at 20 credits each. There are three levels: Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4. For vocational subjects, there are "Integrated Summative Assessment Tasks" (ISATs) that test practical skills and applied knowledge.

The main concerns raised by Umalusi and shared by the OECD team are:

- that the pass rate for vocational subjects – originally set at 70% – was dropped to 50%, which appears quite inadequate in terms of vocational (job) skills;

- that thus far there is little or no evidence of practical tasks, and that portfolios contain mostly tests rather than evidence of the learner's own work;

- that ISATs are, thus far, not based on explicit assessment criteria and that observation and moderation of ISATs have not been thought through in terms of relevance, practicability – resources, tools, equipment – and authenticity of the task in relation to the work place.

In the view of the OECD team, it would be a great disservice to youngsters now in the FET system if the NC(V) failed to gain credibility among employers. The DoE insists that every effort has been made to ensure that the FET College curriculum has credibility with employers, from the curriculum design to examinations, ISATs and external assessment. Considering the substantial investments made – in efforts and in funding – it will be important to monitor, protect and enhance the "market value" of the NC(V).

National and international comparative surveys of learning achievement

South Africa has participated in TIMSS 1995, 1999, 2003 (not in 2007); and in PIRLS 2005/6. The literature about and, to some extent, the analysis

of, South Africa's performance in these studies is extensive – and, on the whole, dispiriting for learners, parents, educators and policy makers alike. There is growing concern that the country spends a great deal of money on these studies, but that results are usually poor and stay the same from year to year: in other words, that nothing is learnt from the results. Little serious secondary analysis is done and there seems to be only limited feedback into curriculum revision, assessment practices, or teacher training. Yet these studies are a rich source of detailed information about what South African learners have, and have not, mastered in comparison to their peers in other countries. The OECD team would, therefore, urge much more in-depth secondary analysis of the data, so that learning "blockages" can be accurately pinpointed and scarce resources can be better targeted at removing them.

In addition to international sample-based surveys, there are data from more regional and national studies – such as those carried out by the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), and UNESCO's Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA[34]) measurements.

MLA and SACMEQ

South Africa's survey results are, generally speaking, disappointing, but perhaps not as universally gloomy as is often stated. The much-cited MLA study, for example, did place South Africa at the bottom of 12 African countries in numeracy; but in tenth place in life skills, and eighth in literacy. Moreover, it should be noted that this survey was done in 1998/99 and that none of the other countries surveyed (with a few exceptions) achieved across-the-board learning scores that could be expected by the end of grade 4.

With respect to SACMEQ data, these are generally regarded as more reliable and therefore they can be used with more confidence. Available SACMEQ data for South Africa describe schooling at the grade 6 level in 2000; and because the schooling system is changing rapidly and continually, the situation in 2008 will clearly not be the same as in 2000. But although SACMEQ covered a small sample – 168 schools and 3 163 learners, or

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[34] The Monitoring Learning (MLA) is a project of the UNESCO/UNICEF Education for All campaign. The testing of a national sample of grade 4 learners in literacy, numeracy and life skills was conducted in South Africa in 1999 in conjunction with a number of African countries. UNESCO and UNICEF have distanced themselves to some extent from MLA studies, because of doubts about their technical quality.

0.3% of the grade 6 population – this is statistically adequate, given that the sampling methodology used by SACMEQ was sound; and therefore the 2000 data should be taken seriously, in particular because some of these learners may still be in the education system now.

Table 3.10 **Average MLA scores (percentage), ranked by numeracy results**

Country	Numeracy average	Literacy average	Life skills average
Tunisia	60.4	77.9	74.7
Mauritius	58.5	61.0	58.0
Morocco	56.4	67.6	62.3
Botswana	51.0	48.0	56.0
Uganda	49.3	58.7	66.8
Madagascar	43.7	54.7	72.1
Mali	43.6	51.8	56.9
Malawi	43.0	35.0	77.0
Senegal	39.7	48.9	45.7
Niger	37.3	41.1	44.7
Zambia	36.0	43.0	51.0
South Africa	**30.2**	**48.1**	**47.1**

Source: Chinapah, V., *et al.* (2000), *With Africa for Africa: Towards Quality Education for All,* HSRC Publishers, Pretoria; Strauss, J. P. and M. A. Burger (1999), *Monitoring Learning Achievement Project: Report of a Survey*, Research Institute for Education Planning, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

Interestingly, the SACMEQ data suggest that the management of learner repetition is crucial for improving performance scores: "The repetition variable emerges as the single most significant variable explaining performance and the expected impact of any policy or management change in this regard is large" (Gustafsson, 2005). As stated earlier, South Africa has a repeater policy that says that no learner should repeat a phase more than once. In 2000, SACMEQ data showed that about 15% of learners were exceeding this level of repetition. But even if no learners exceed the threshold, the SACMEQ data indicate clearly that the levels of repetition prevailing in 2000 were not good, not only for the learner performance of the repeaters themselves, but also for that of their peers. Better management of repetition – for example by reducing class sizes, targeted remediation as soon as learners fall behind and improving teachers' capacity to spot problems early, especially in reading and mathematics – would make a considerable difference.

In addition, the most cost-effective current expenditure interventions appear to be to ensure that all learners have at least a minimally acceptable level of access to textbooks and that they arrive at school every day, on time and reasonably nourished.

None of this will come as a great surprise to South Africa's policy decision-makers and indeed new policy efforts are aimed specifically at these factors as they affect learning outcomes. It is also clear from the data, however, that the large backlogs in educational provision and the wide, inherited disparities in socio-economic status have a formidable impact on children's learning and thus on their future well-being. Increasing the frequency of testing will not, by itself, overcome these difficulties.

Recommendations

- The OECD review team recognises the investment South Africa has made in developing and revising its curriculum. The team recommends that for the next substantial period the National Curriculum Statement remain, and that attention be focused on the three areas that will bring it to life: the development and distribution of teaching and learning materials, the professional development of teachers and the development of assessment tools. This is not to say that the team sees the current curriculum as perfect, but rather that little further gain in student achievement can be expected unless the focus shifts to its implementation.

- Ring-fence VAT returns on school books and school (and local public) library acquisitions, to be used solely to improve the provision of textbooks and reading materials to all learners.

- Tighten controls on textbooks issued to learners and improve retrieval rates to 85% or higher, introduce incentive schemes to encourage schools to raise their retrieval rates.

- Take a realistic approach to curriculum design and subject assessment guidelines.35 This means costing the learning and teaching materials needed to deliver the NCS, so that annual funding implications are clearly understood and are within affordable limits. A second element is stability of the curriculum, so that books and learning materials can be used for several years. Thirdly, curriculum design and instructional methods should recognise that few schools – or provincial budgets – can afford the individual purchase of

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35   In other systems, these are sometimes called "syllabuses".

reference and reading materials. Instead, a basic "school library package" could be designed, so that learners can use them as needed.

- Review procedures for approving textbook lists. Approved lists are typical of countries where there is school based choice of textbooks, as in South Africa. Except in Western Cape – where there is no approved list – provincial departments do consider price as a criterion in selecting books. However, any approved-book system needs to allow for annual price increases in publishers' catalogues; most publishers tie up no more than a year's worth of sales in working capital, so that books are usually reprinted annually. The best competitive environment is an open ended list with no limit on the number of approved prices, allowing provincial departments (for Section 20 schools) and schools (for Section 21) to decide how best to spend their LTSM budgets. Outsourcing procurement of LTSM to a private company (*e.g.* in KwaZulu Natal and Gauteng) has some advantages, such as bulk buying and efficient distribution.

- Formulate textbook policies that aim to reduce the cost of LTSM to provincial budgets, and include libraries as an integral part of the package. The main problems in South Africa are lack of adequate, secure space to store and use books in the school; and underfunding which, in many cases, means little or no funding at all. As a result, learners read very little and do not acquire basic library skills. When they progress to secondary and higher education, these skills become increasingly important; but also at primary level, school libraries play a part in increasing learning achievement.36 It is clear that good small libraries and core content textbooks are potentially cheaper and more effective in terms of learning outcomes than no school libraries and rarely used textbooks in non-core subjects.

- Consider whether introducing eight learning areas from grade 4 onwards is too heavy a load for youngsters who, as available data show, have not mastered fundamental skills in literacy and numeracy.

- In making decisions about additional testing, ensure that learners have enough time and opportunity to learn what is required. If the

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36   The key benefits of school libraries are (a) the development of improved reading and comprehension skills, which also underpin performance in all other curriculum subjects; and (b) the ability to access required information, and to "read around" curriculum subjects (see also Williams, Wavell and Coles, 2002).

stakes are high, learners must have additional opportunities to take the test and plans must be in place to offer remedial support to those who fail. Merely increasing the frequency of testing will not raise achievement: learning will.

- Early diagnosis and prompt remediation of learning problems is preferable by far to grade repetition. Teachers should be trained to use continuous assessment for immediate, formative feedback – not just for giving marks – so that failure and repetition can be avoided.

- Take great care before introducing a new external grade 9 examination and ensure that it does not, in effect, become a "selection" exam for grade 10. While this might improve grade 12 pass rates, it is likely to block less able youngsters' progress beyond grade 9 and put their future life chances at risk.

- Provide additional chances for learners to obtain essential qualifications, for example, the early success of the Second Chance initiative for students who failed Matric in 2007. The last cohort following the old curriculum shows that students are keen to take advantage of opportunities to improve their results. With over 100 000 students registering for the supplementary exam in May and June 2008, the onus now is on provincial departments of education to make sure that these students are provided with extra tuition, with national DoE support.

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Chapter 4: Early Childhood Education and Adult and Basic Education and Training

The results of an audit undertaken by the South African Department for Education and the publication of a white paper on early childhood education in 2001 serve as a baseline against which to monitor progress in ECD provision. This chapter discusses some of the results that led to the formulation of the national Guidelines for Early Childhood Development (ECD) Services (2006). The documents illustrate the efforts of the South African Government in prioritising Early Childhood Education to address both, equity and economic growth.

Attention is also given to the system Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and the multifaceted challenges it is facing. Some examples are discussed in detail, such as the necessity to decrease illiteracy levels in a multilingual context, the need to bridge the gap between regional education and training provision and the challenge to link and adjust the National Qualification's Framework to the needs of the labour market.

The authors also stress the need of collaboration across Governmental Departments for both complex fields and conclude with recommendations for both, ECD and ABET.

Government priorities in South Africa focus on addressing equity and building economic growth. In both areas, education plays a significant role and, within that, early childhood education and adult and basic education and training could make major contributions. In their current states, however, it is unlikely that they will be able to do so.

What they have in common is that responsibility is shared among departments – in ECD between Social Development and Education, and in ABET between Education and Labour. While this shared responsibility approach could lead to a strong co-ordinated whole of government policy and implementation at both central and provincial levels, in reality this does not occur.

The Review team has linked these elements so that some common issues around cross-departmental leadership can be considered. First, though, this report will deal with the issues individually.

Early childhood development (ECD)

Prior to 1994, the legislative and policy frameworks for ECD in South Africa were incomplete and fragmented. There was limited access to ECD services, inequities in provision and variability in quality.

The response of the new government to this situation was spelt out in a number of policy statements and programmes ranging through health, nutrition, education and social welfare.

The 1996 National Programme of Action for Children in South Africa established a framework giving priority to nutrition, child health, water and sanitation, early childhood development and basic education, social welfare development, leisure and cultural activities, and child protection measures. It gave leadership roles to the Departments of Social Development and Education, while recognising the important contribution of many other departments.

2001 was a watershed year for early childhood education in South Africa. An audit of provision was undertaken by the Department of Education funded by the European Commission. And, in October that year, the South African Government published its white paper on early childhood education: Meeting the Challenge of Early Childhood Development in South Africa.

The 2001 nationwide audit of ECD provisioning offers a baseline against which to monitor progress. The survey identified 23 482 sites, only 61% of which were registered. Seventeen percent were school based, 49% community based and 34% home based. Most (64%) had been providing ECD services for more than five years, although there had been substantial growth in both the school and home based sites in the previous two years.

While English was the home language of only 12% of the learners in the 2001 survey, it was used as a language of instruction in 83% of the sites. Conversely Xhosa and Zulu were under subscribed. Only 0.1% of the learners enrolled were identified as having disabilities. Of these, 65% were 5 or older.

Below the national data, the provincial data shows significant variances. Eastern Cape had significantly more community based sites (56%) than Gauteng (32%). Twenty-four percent of sites in Eastern Cape had no mains electricity, piped water or flushing toilets, whereas in Gauteng only 0.01%

had none of these resources. Participation rates varied also, as is indicated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 **Percentage of young children attending by provinces**

Eastern Cape	15.7%
Free State	11.1%
Gauteng	19.7%
KwaZulu Natal	8.2%
Limpopo	9.2%
Mpumalanga	8.0%
Northern Cape	7.2%
NorthWest	9.0%
Western Cape	13.8%

Source: Statistics South Africa (2005), *Census 2001 South Africa: Stages in the Life Cycles of South Africans*, Statistics South Africa, Pretoria.

Learner:educator ratios averaged at 19:1 across the country, but in Gauteng the ratio was 16:1 and in Eastern Cape it was 24:1. Educator qualifications in these provinces also revealed a different set of variances.

Table 4.2 **Educators' qualifications**

	Two provinces	
	Eastern Cape	*Gauteng*
No training	480	4 098
NGO training	3 831	4 076
Underqualified	576	1 610
Qualified	367	1 895
Non-ECD qualification	159	1 265

Source: Department of Education (2001b*), The Nationwide Audit of ECD Provisioning in South Africa*, Department of Education, Pretoria.

The differences in profiles show that while Eastern Cape province had fewer staff with no training, they also had very few with anything more than NGO training.

Internal variances across participation rates, natures of sites, learner:teacher ratios and educator qualifications need to be considered carefully in developing national policies for systems, structures, staffing,

curriculum, or its accompanying materials. It is unlikely that simply adopting good practice from Gauteng and using it to create norms and standards across the country is going to help the Eastern Cape meet its challenges. Too often the review team heard that the best practice in the most advanced state was being used as the basis for national policy to be implemented in each province.

The quality of a policy programme should be judged by the extent to which it provides a framework for those most disadvantaged to proceed. In the course of implementation, those most advanced will take advantage of what is useful to them in the policy and will certainly not be harmed. Where policy is designed on the basis of the practice of the most advanced, it provides little support to those who are really struggling.

The 2001 early childhood education white paper defined its purpose as protecting the child's rights to develop full cognitive, emotional, social, and physical potential.

The white paper addressed two specific areas of ECD: the expansion of provision in the context of coherent and targeted inter-sectoral programmes for children from birth to four years and the provision of grade R education in schools, community settings.

In the white paper, the Department of Education undertook to develop, within the ECD priority group of the National Programme of Action on Children, appropriate curricula for pre-reception year programmes with a special emphasis on mathematical literacy, language and life skills. It also undertook to expand, over the medium term, its work on practitioner development and career paths for pre-reception year practitioners and to develop best practice models for the management and quality development of pre-reception year programmes.

Progress has been made in each of these areas, but with mixed results.

Curriculum support material has been developed, most obviously in the *Takalani Sesame* series developed in conjunction with the South African Broadcasting Corporation, with contributory funding from USAID and Sanlam. The web page for *Takalani Sesame* states:

> *The rich curriculum is designed especially for preschoolers – presenting messages that encourage children to develop positive self-esteem and self-image, to respect and appreciate others, to celebrate South Africa's diverse culture, to develop basic skills with letters and numbers, and to encourage a life-long love of learning.*

> (*http://archive.sesameworkshop.org/international/za/home.php*).

Accompanying print materials have been developed for parents and caregivers and for educators in grade R. Suggestions for extension are also provided on the *Takalani Sesame* website under the heading Family Play.

In May 2006, the Department of Social Development, with the support and assistance of UNICEF, published The Guidelines for Early Childhood Development Services. The Guidelines report that research in South Africa and internationally indicates that the early years are critical for development. They note that from birth to seven years is a period of rapid physical, mental, emotional, social and moral growth and development. The early years of a child's life are a time when they acquire concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. These include the acquisition of language, perceptual motor skills required for learning to read and write, basic numeracy concepts and skills, problem solving skills, a love of learning and the establishment and maintenance of relationships.

The Guidelines also note the importance of the early years for the passing on values that are important for the building of a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society.

In the area of practitioner development and career paths, there appears to be ongoing confusion about the position of ECD practitioners. In 2006, the DoE reported "The professionalisation and recognition of ECD practitioners and teachers is still one of the department's major challenges, because there is no clear legislation that supports the inclusion of the current cohort of ECD practitioners as educators." (Department of Education, 2006a).

A new set of Level 4 unit standards for ECD practitioner training were registered in 2006, leading to a Further Education and Training Certificate described as an entry level qualification for those who want to enter the field of early childhood development. The SAQA description notes that its design recognises that many seeking to achieve it are already practising within the field, but without formal recognition of their capabilities. The Certificate has optional pathways for those who wish to specialise in grade R and those who wish to focus on management of an ECD service and a further option for those who wish to specialise in inclusive education in an ECD context.

Unfortunately, no providers are currently registered to deliver on this qualification. Providers registered by SAQA to provide ECD qualifications are either providing Basic Level 1 Certificates or Higher Certificates at Level 5.

While the policy documents place the child at the centre of ECD, implementation and funding policies appear to put this second to parental labour market participation. Given the very large numbers of young South Africans not currently in any form of early childhood education, high

importance should be given to expanding the provision of high quality, multimedia, multilingual support material for parents and other care givers.

The significance of this need can be seen from analysis of the PIRLS study of nine-year-old reading. Data from the Learning to Read survey of parents conducted in association with this assessment was available for only between 70 and 84% of the students assessed in South Africa. While no explanation is given for the low response rate, levels of adult illiteracy in South Africa suggest it is likely that a significant number of those who did not answer could not answer.

Parents were asked to report on activities specifically designed to foster literacy, such as reading books, telling stories, singing songs, playing with alphabet toys, playing word games or reading aloud signs and labels. Of those South African parents who responded, 11% reported that they never or almost never did these things. The average reading score of South African children in this group was 277, compared to the international average of 476, and South Africa had the lowest score of children from homes with low levels of early literacy activity of any of the participating countries.

Twenty six percent of parents reported that they had low levels of home education resources, as evidenced by the number of books in the home, educational aids and parents who had completed secondary education. The average score for these children was 264, against an international average of 426.

For the 3% of South African children whose home resources were judged to be at the high level, the average reading performance was 528. The difference between the high and low averages is 264, almost double the international difference of 137.

Yet only 4% of the parents who responded reported low attitudes to reading. Most recognise its importance, but clearly need more support in channelling this recognition into positive action. The Takgalani Sesame programme, while providing a good base, is not providing sufficient impetus for this.

If the Department of Education can increase its contribution to enabling parents and care givers in the home and community to provide appropriate developmental activities for young children, it will have a ready audience. Programmes which help parents:

- understand how their child grows and develops;

- act to encourage this growth and development;

- ensure their child's safety and well being;

- gain confidence in their parenting skills;

- get the support and professional assistance they may need for their child's health and development;

- will play a major role in improving long term education outcomes.

For the introduction of grade R, the white paper announced a progressive roll out across the country. Its intention was for all public primary schools to become sites for the provision of accredited reception year programmes.

Schools have been encouraged to provide the reception year through a subsidy mechanism which allows the school governing body to employ appropriately trained staff for grade R.

In addition, grants in aid are provided to community based ECD centres on a per-learner basis. The white paper acknowledged the variability of quality in such community based ECD provision, but recognised the need to use them to reach children who otherwise would have no practical option for access.

Reality has seen less-than-desired take up by schools and therefore greater reliance on community provision. The 2007 Community Survey from Statistics South Africa showed the impact of the introduction of grade R.

Even if the end intention of positioning grade R in schools remains, the policy needs to be adjusted to ensure that the very large number of children in grade R in community based centres receive the highest quality provision possible. For example, grade R teachers in ECD centres need the same access to professional development programmes and curriculum support materials as their peers in schools.

Table 4.3 **Percentage of five-year-olds attending an educational institution**

Census 1996	22.5%
Census 2001	45.6%
Community Survey 2007	80.9%

Source: Statistics South Africa (2007), *Community Survey 2007*, Statistical Release P0301, Statistics South Africa, Pretoria.

Table 4.4 **Number of children in grade R in schools in the provinces, 2006**

Eastern Cape	96 364
Free State	20 072
Gauteng	47 314
KwaZulu Natal	92 948
Limpopo	104 081
Mpumalanga	25 734
Northern Cape	7 259
NorthWest	15 311
Western Cape	33 650

Source: EMIS (2006), *School Realities 2006*, EMIS, Department of Education, Pretoria.

The decision in the rollout to fund grade R at a lesser rate than grades 1-7 was controversial at the time of its announcement and remains so. At the time, Government stated that it had found through studies into grade R that it is possible to offer quality grade R at a cost that is lower than the existing costs in grades 1-7. This claim was made on the basis that the National ECD Pilot Project on community based sites demonstrated that costs could be reduced using community energies and relative informality. The policy, however, is to introduce grade R not in community based sites, but in schools, because parents had greater confidence in the school based provision.

The quality/cost argument would appear to be contrary to the experiences of other countries that have identified the early years as requiring the most intensive teacher:child ratios to ensure the best possible acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

The cost of not attending to this evidence can be seen in the performance of South Africa's nine-year-olds in the 2006 PIRLS assessment. With an average class size of 42 for reading and language instruction, South Africa was almost double the international average of 24.

Outcome 3 of the Language Learning Areas of the grade R curriculum specifies that the learner will be able to read and view for information and enjoyment and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts. The assessment standards for grade R state that this can be known when the learner, among other activities, can make sense of picture stories, match pictures and words, hold a book the right way up, distinguish pictures from print, recognise initial consonant and short vowel sounds,

recognise and name some common letters of the alphabet and recognise some rhyming words in common songs.

Given the prevalence of low levels of early literacy activities or resources in the home, the grade R teacher is faced with an enormous task to teach for the acquisition of these competences, let alone monitor whether any individual child is exhibiting them. And this is just one outcome of one learning area of the grade R curriculum.

Only 4% of South African nine-year-olds had negative attitudes toward reading, but their average score was considerably better than the 60% whose responses were categorised as being at the medium level (Low: 324; Medium: 277). Greater care needs to be given to meeting the needs of those who want to learn, but who start from weak foundations.

By funding grade R provision as a bulk grant to schools and requiring them to employ staff directly, government has signalled that it does not regard those who work in grade R as equivalent to other educators in the school. Schools have been explicitly told to balance the class size/pay and qualification level trade off at the site level.

In 2006, SACE, the South African Council for Educators, resolved that all ECD practitioners should be recognised as educators and that SACE should register ECD educators who have completed recognised NQF level 4 training programmes. Those with Level 4 ECD qualifications must now register, but schools are not constrained to employ only those who are registered. And, as noted earlier, there are no registered providers of the Level 4 training programmes.

The variation in early childhood education experiences, especially when correlated to ethnicity, rurality and socio-economic status, makes it inevitable that, by the time children are ready to begin grade R, individual, community and provincial differences that are likely to lead to long term education disparities are well embedded. Indeed, in rural areas the team was told that children did not attend school regularly until much later, when they could manage the physical challenge of getting to school.

Shortly after the review team visited South Africa, the government announced a ZAR 9.7 billion investment to enable a fourfold expansion of educational and care services for children under the age of six. The money has been split between the Department of Social Development for ECD provision and the Department of Education for grade R in primary schools. If the money is to be used to provide quality learning experiences for young South African children, then the issues relating to the training of their teachers will need to be addressed.

Adult basic education and training (ABET)

Recent years have seen minor debates regarding the figures of South Africa's illiterates – whether classified as totally illiterate (never attended school) or functionally illiterate (left school before grade 7) – and major debates about the statistics relating to government programmes to address their needs.

The 2007 Community Survey Statistical release showed a continuing reduction in the percentage of the population aged 20 years and above reporting no schooling, or only some primary schooling.

Table 4.5 **Highest level of education amongst population aged 20 years and above by population group**

	Black African			Coloured			Indian/Asian			White		
	1996	2001	2007	1996	2001	2007	1996	2001	2007	1996	2001	2007
No schooling	24.1%	22.3%	12.8%	10.0%	8.3%	5.6%	6.4%	5.3%	3.6%	1.1%	1.4%	0.6%
Some primary	19.4%	18.5%	18.8%	19.5%	18.4%	16.3%	7.9%	7.7%	7.3%	0.6%	1.2%	1.0%
Completed primary	8.3%	6.9%	6.5%	11.1%	9.8%	8.8%	4.9%	4.2%	3.5%	0.5%	0.8%	0.8%
Some secondary	32.6%	30.4%	40.9%	42.2%	40.1%	46.1%	39.3%	33.0%	35.6%	31.6%	25.9%	31.6%
Grade 12/ Std 10	12.0%	16.8%	15.4%	12.3%	18.5%	17.4%	29.9%	36.9%	33.3%	39.3%	40.9%	35.0%
Higher	3.6%	5.2%	5.6%	4.9%	4.9%	5.6%	11.6%	14.9%	16.6%	26.8%	29.8%	31.0%

Source: Statistics South Africa (2007), *Community Survey 2007*, Statistical Release P0301, Statistics South Africa, Pretoria.

However, earlier analysis of the 1996-2001 trends showed that, while the percentage figures were falling, real numbers were continuing to rise. This earlier analysis assessed outcomes for the population aged 15 years and above.

Of course, the figures for South Africa as a whole disguise the considerable inequities between the provinces. Illiteracy is highest in KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and Limpopo. The language groups affected the most are *isiZulu*, *isiXhosa* and *sePedi*. The Western Cape had the lowest proportion of adults with no schooling in 2001. In other cases, provincial numbers are affected by internal migration by low skilled and unemployed adults seeking work.

The adult population reflects the disparities of the education policies prior to democracy. This makes the role of adult basic education and training very important as a means to enable full participation in the new

democracy and to deliver the improvements sought in the economic transformation of South Africa.

Table 4.6 **Levels of education of 15-year-olds and above: 1995, 1996, 2001**

Level of education	1995 October Household Survey		1996 General Population Census		2001 General Population Census	
Full general education (grade 9 and more)	14.3 million	54%	13.1 million	50%	15.8 million	52%
Less than full general education (less than grade 9)	12.2 million	46%	13.2 million	50%	14.6 million	48%
Less than grade 7	7.4 million	28%	8.5 million	32%	9.6 million	32%
No schooling	2.9 million	11%	4.2 million	16%	4.7 million	16%

Source: Aitchison, J. J. W. and Harley, A. (2006), "South African Illiteracy Statistics and the Case of the Magically Growing Number of Literacy and ABET Learners", *Journal of Education*, No. 39, pp.89 -112.

The debate regarding base figures is, however, overshadowed by the debate regarding the performance of the country in addressing the needs of adult learners, where there appears to be particular confusion about the inclusion or otherwise of adult students studying further education and training programmes and some claims about progress that appear to be inflated.

It is difficult to identify accurate figures that represent the impact of ABET programmes over the past 13 years to address the needs of this group. However when one considers budget attribution (less than 1% of the education budget until 2007/08), and outcomes in terms of SAQA certification of ABET learners, the impact would appear to be minimal. In its discussion paper for the 2007 National Skills Conference, the Department of Labour noted progress toward the Skills Strategy Success Indicator 2.7; by March 2010, at least 700 000 workers should have achieved at least ABET level 4. Its progress report showed that the numbers up to and including the first quarter of 2007 amounted to only 82 468 for those entering and 14 048 for those who completed ABET levels. Department of Education figures from 2006 as quoted in the *Country Background Report* provided to the review team give the figure of 270 000 learners in the Public Adult Learning Centres offering ABET levels 1-4, and an adult literacy rate comprising those 15 years of age and older as rising from 14.6% in 1991, to 67% in 1996, to 89% in 2004.

The Department of Education's national definition of ABET in South Africa states: "Adult basic education and training is the general conceptual

foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts. ABET is flexible, developmental and targeted at the specific needs of particular audiences and, ideally, provides access to nationally recognised certificates." (Department of Education, n.d.)

Responsibility for ABET is shared between the Department of Education and the Department for Labour. ABET is regulated by the Adult Basic Education and Training Act of 2000, which sets out to regulate the area, to provide for the establishment governance and funding of public adult learning centres; the registration of private adult learning centres and quality assurance and quality promotion. The Act gives priority response to the human resources, economic and development needs of the Republic, and complementarity with the National Skills Development Strategy in co-operation with the Department of Labour.

Critics of South Africa's engagement with ABET over these years highlight its heavy formalisation with structured programmes and qualifications. The ABET Act stated "adult basic education means all learning and training programmes for adults from level 1 to 4 where level 4 is equivalent to grade 9 in public schools or NQF level 1."

As such, ABET is more likely to meet the needs of those with some schooling and currently in employment. It is unlikely to address the needs of those with no schooling, or to enable them to participate in the new democracy.

Recognising these issues, in 2006 a Ministerial Committee of Literacy was set up to plan for a mass literacy campaign. It viewed literacy as "the use of reading, writing and numeracy skills in relevant contexts, including those of active citizenship, health and livelihoods and ongoing lifelong learning". It also noted that there should be no false dichotomy between literacy and post-basic literacy/adult basic education, and stressed the importance of this principle if the literacy skills developed during the campaign period are to be sustained and used.

The brief of the Committee was to present a proposal for access to mass literacy in South Africa, utilising social mobilisation or a national call to action of a broad range of partners and communities, along with an implementation plan and proposals for monitoring and evaluation of progress.

In developing these proposals, the Committee was directed to investigate the nature, character and content of the Cuban literacy model, particularly when translated and practised in other countries such as

Venezuela and New Zealand, and to learn from the SANLI (South African Literacy Institute) experiences.

South Africa has frequently borrowed from policy frameworks established in other countries. Very often the review team saw that, in practice, these did not meet the challenges of the unique South African situation. The New Zealand experience of the Cuban literacy model took a number of years and involved expenditure of many millions of New Zealand dollars to ensure that the materials were adequately responsive to the local situation of the learners. In addition, as the Committee noted, the scale and nature of the learners in the New Zealand situation were not comparable to South Africa's situation. The diversity of the South African landscape and the multilingual challenges being faced suggests that implementation in South Africa will be an even greater task. The experiences of countries such Venezuela, India and Brazil will be much more relevant.

It is a relief to see that, in the end, the Committee recommended the upscaling of a programme very much based on the earlier UNISA-SANLI (University of South Africa, South African Literacy Institute) experiences from 2002-2003.

To implement the report of the Committee, the Department of Education has set itself challenging goals in its 5 year Strategic Plan:

Strategic Objectives	Performance Indicators				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
To expand provision of basic literacy for adults	An implementation plan and communication strategy for the mass literacy strategy developed.	Implementation of the mass literacy strategy amongst 30% of the total illiterate adults.	Implementation of the mass literacy strategy amongst 75% of the total illiterate adults.	Implementation of the mass literacy strategy amongst 100% of the total illiterate adults.	Report on impact of mass literacy strategy.

Source: Department of Education (2007a), Strategic Plan (2007 – 2011), Department of Education, Pretoria.

The funds available for the campaign are impressive at ZAR 6.1 billion. The timetable and scale of implementation are ambitious, but, in implementation, the review team hopes that South Africa has learnt from its experience with SANLI and other attempts at addressing the issue and from its importation of other policy frameworks.

The specific learning outcomes developed for the campaigns are:

- mother tongue alphabetisation and functional literacy concentrating on all South Africa's official languages;

- a basic verbal component of usage of the language of the economy;

- numeracy at the level of basic number concepts and arithmetic operations in everyday texts.

A national secretariat for the campaign is being established as a separate branch of the Department, with a deputy director general appointed to run it. The secretariat will be supported by an organisation that will provide financial, administrative and management support. This will enable Kha Ri Gudi to run as a campaign independently of the Department. The operational plan calls for some 80 000 tutors to be recruited and provided with the appropriate learning materials.

In most countries, employment conditions for adult literacy tutors are often marginal, with part time, casual employment a common feature and often with reliance on a volunteer workforce. While these features support the flexibility required to respond to individual learner demands, they make it difficult to build a workforce with the appropriate professional skills. Finding 40 000-80 000 tutors and ensuring they develop the knowledge, skills and competences to meet the needs of the illiterate and functionally illiterate will be a major challenge in which quality standards and flexibility will be major elements.

The report identifies the 60 000 UNISA-trained ABET educators as a national resource that can be mobilised for the new South African campaign. There are only so many times that the goodwill of these people can be drawn upon, especially as most will receive a stipend only and have no structured employment relationship from their engagement with the programme. Such goodwill needs to be nurtured.

A history of low and spasmodic investment in ABET and heavy reliance on NGOs has left a legacy of low confidence in the system to provide sustained high quality programmes. Local critics have already voiced concern at the way in which the tender process for implementation has been handled and have challenged just how responsive the Department of Education will allow the programme to be.

However, the OECD has, in recent years, completed two studies of adult learning, *Beyond Rhetoric* (OECD, 2003), and *Promoting Adult Learning* (OECD, 2005) both of which provide analyses of how systems can make more effective investments and promote access to learning opportunities.

The OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) undertook a study in 2006-2007 as part of "What Works in Innovation in

Education" to look inside the adult classroom: improving adults' language, literacy and numeracy skills. This study brought together reviews of literature, international case studies of exemplary classroom practice and background reports detailing how countries face the challenges and policy responses for adult foundation skill learners.

While these reports should be viewed with caution by South Africa, as they generally reflect the experiences of countries dealing with much smaller numbers of illiterate citizens, some of their findings may be useful for consideration as South Africa moves to the next stage of its campaign.

Countries found it most effective to invest in adult learners at young ages, by reducing the rate of drop-out at school level and getting those who do drop out into other opportunities as early as possible.

Strong links between training and employment, particularly through flexible qualifications pathways, provide a structure for adult learners to see progressions ahead. In this regard, South Africa's Qualifications Framework permits the recognition of training experienced in a wide variety of settings to be recognised for conventional qualifications. However, local perceptions are that the models are too bureaucratic to support the hardest to reach adult learners. Learning takes many forms and occurs in many different settings, from formal courses to various types of experience in families, communities and workplaces. All types of learning need to be recognised and made visible, according to their content, quality and outcomes, rather than their location and form, while the process for doing this needs to be geared to meeting the needs of newly emergent learners.

At the same time, strong links between adult learning and social development programmes recognise the importance of adult basic education for effective democratic participation and the power of family literacy learning.

Achieving both of these requires collaboration with the social partners, including employers, unions and representatives of local communities. They can be most useful in developing delivery methods and in the recognition of learning.

Studies also show the value of setting clear policy priorities and targets. South Africa's mass literacy campaign appears to be targeted at those learners who have never attended school, or who left before completing primary schooling. Experience has shown that it is generally those learners with higher levels of skills than these who are most likely to take up adult learning opportunities. The greatest effort has to be made to reach those who have been least well served by the formal education system. Learning centres in some of the most marginal of South Africa's townships, squatter

camps and rural areas will need intensive management support of a style that will need to be able to preserve their flexibility to meet local needs.

Many potential learners bring the outcomes of negative school experiences with them, or indeed the experience of being deliberately excluded from schools. The system of provision needs to be flexible enough to respond to these learners, without reminding them of the ways in which they have been failed in the past. Access is not simply a matter of enrolment; it includes the quality of the provision involved.

A mass literacy campaign of the nature planned will focus on addressing the democratic demands for literacy as a tool for effective participation. South Africa also needs to continue its focus on building the broader base of skills it needs to deliver on economic transformation. The greater benefit in this area may come from attending to those only marginally below the skills levels needed by industry.

Collaboration across government departments

Early childhood and adult basic education policies are both complex fields. The former spans education, social development, health, employment and a myriad of other interests, as identified in the early childhood white paper. Countries studied by OECD in *Starting Strong II*, a review of ECEC (early childhood education and care) policies and practices across member countries, found two main ways of addressing this complexity. One option has been the creation of an inter-departmental and/or inter-governmental co-ordination body to generate co-operative policy frameworks.

South Africa is not alone in finding that there are limitations with using co-ordinating bodies and cross-sectoral co-operation. In the absence of a lead ministry or agency with a sound knowledge of early childhood policy and a mobilising agenda for young children, government finance departments may treat children's services primarily from a labour market or public expenditure angle (May, 2001).

Alternatively, a number of countries have brought all national responsibility for ECEC to one lead ministry at the national level. Ministries of education, with their focus on children and the networks required to create a quality system (qualified staff, appropriate programmes, quality monitoring) may address the policy field more coherently.

The *Starting Strong II* report found advantages in bringing policy making under one agency. It found more coherent policy and greater consistency across sectors, more effective investment in young children,

enhanced continuity of children's early childhood experiences and improved public management of services.

At present, with overall leadership of ECD residing with the Department for Social Development, ECD appears to be a "poor relation" in the broader education field. On the one hand, the role of the Department is limited in the integrated plan and, on the other, the importance of ECD within the DoE is dwarfed by responsibilities in the schooling sector.

The review team would urge the South African government to revisit the underlying principles of its ECD policies and ensure that the governance structure in place is best addressing these.

In adult basic education and training, leadership is shared between the Departments of Education and Labour. This division, however, seems to have resulted in each waiting for the other to take decisive action. In January 2007, the Department of Labour put out calls for a substantive programme, but advised the review team in November that no contracts had been agreed, as they were waiting for the Department of Education to release its Adult Literacy Strategy to ensure they were working in harmony.

Meantime NGOs and other local provider organisations had prepared and submitted proposals in response to these calls, but have seen nothing decided. As noted earlier, the good will of such volunteers can only be relied on so far.

Adult learning systems are complex, not least because the players involved – national and provincial ministries, the private sector, NGOs and educational providers – may have different objectives. The resulting picture is an extremely fragmented one, with different stakeholders focusing on different outcomes. This can eventually affect potential learners, who may not have a clear view of the learning situation. Improving co-ordination among the different actors and between potentially conflicting objectives can be key to improving adult learning participation.

In the South African context, clarifying the groups of learners that are the key responsibilities of each agency and then ensuring smooth integration for the learners in moving between opportunities, needs to be determined early.

Recommendations

- Additional investment in ECD should focus on support for parents as early educators, through multimedia, multilingual programmes.

- All teachers of grade R programmes, whether the programmes are run in schools or ECD centres, should have access to the same professional development and curriculum support materials.

- Improve the accuracy of statistics regarding adult literacy levels and outcomes of programmes to enable policy design to target where the greatest needs lie.

- Prioritise investment in the development of programme support materials and assessment tools for the mass adult literacy programme to ensure those involved are able to deliver it appropriately.

- Plan for a longer term strategy to use the skills and knowledge of volunteers on the mass literacy programme in further upskilling the general population.

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of national ministries responsible for ABET and ECD.

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Chapter 5: The Place of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Human Resource Development

Education and training plays a key role in the Reconstruction and Development Programme of the South African Government.

Starting from the priority areas and related objectives for skills development, as identified by the Deputy President's Joint initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA), the authors of this chapter analyse the following areas in Vocational Education and Training (VET): first, the current situation in initial education and training, including the reform of colleges and establishment of focus schools; second, the system of continuing training and lifelong learning based on the National Qualifications Framework; and third, a key initiative in the field of vocational guidance and counselling, which is carried out by the Ministry of Labour.

A series of general and specific recommendations complement the sector findings.

The place of VET in human resource development

The imperative of economic growth and social cohesion represents an overarching theme when analysing the challenges that South Africa is facing in order to reach a competitive position in the global, knowledge-based economy.

From the Reconstruction and Development Programme of 1994 through to GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution), to the current economic strategy known as AsgiSA (the Accelerated Shared Growth Initiative – South Africa) adopted in 2006, the government has consistently emphasised that sustained economic growth is a necessary precondition for South Africa's continued transformation. AsgiSa's main objective is actually to halve poverty and unemployment by 2014.

Priority areas for actions identified include:

- infrastructure programmes

- sector investment (or industrial) strategies

- skills and education initiatives

- second economy interventions

- macroeconomic issues

- public administration issues

The strategy outlines that for both public infrastructure and private sector investment programmes, the single greatest impediment is shortage of skills, including professional skills, such as engineers and scientists, managers such as financial, personnel and project managers and skilled technical employees such as artisans and IT technicians.

Consequently, to counteract these shortages, the key measures identified in AsgiSA in relation to education and skills development are aimed at:

- achieving high levels of literacy and numeracy;

- increasing maths and science high school graduates up to 50 000 by 2008;

- upgrading career guidance programmes;

- upgrading Further Education and Training (FET) colleges;

- revamping Adult Basic Education Training (ABET) programmes on the basis of the models developed in other countries (Cuba and New Zealand).

Other interventions in the skills sphere include the development of an Employment Services System (to close the gap between potential employers and employees) and other projects aimed at the deployment of experienced professionals and managers and the establishment of the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA), which is a project launched by the Deputy President in March 2006.

As regards skills needs, the following priority areas and related objectives to be reached by 2010 have been identified by JIPSA:

- A need to increase the number of engineers graduating from higher education by 1 000 to a total of 2 400 per year. Measures should also be put in place to ensure that these graduates register as engineers.

- Increase the number of artisans from the present 5 000 per year to a projected need of 12 500 per year. This objective should also be achieved through a better articulation of the various pathways (apprenticeships, learnerships and the new vocational qualifications in FET colleges). Sixteen different priority trade areas have been identified.

- Improve the competitiveness of the tourism sector through the development of programmes to deal systematically with skills gaps. A sector skills plan has been drafted outlining skills shortages and providing recommendations and actions plans.

- Address the issue of ICT skills shortages through the elaboration of a HR and training plan (it is estimated that in 2007, skills shortages were around 300 000, whilst the training capacity of Sector Education and Training Authorities [SETAs] was only 7 000 per year);

- Strengthen town and regional planning capacities through the definition of the required competencies, of professional registration and continuing professional development.

- Training of young unemployed people from disadvantaged backgrounds for the business process outsourcing.

- Address the issue of mismatch between black graduate unemployed skills and skills demanded by the economy (unemployment between 1995 and 2005 increased from 6.6% to 9.7%) through the organisation of job placement both in the private and public sectors.

The key principles as regards the skills development requirements are aligned with the National Skills Development Act (1998) and the National Skills Development Strategy, which foresee an increase up to 3% in the skills development levy, from the existing 1%.

In addition to AsgiSA and JIPSA, another good example of strategic policy framework aimed at addressing the issue of social inequity is represented by the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE or BEE), which was originally designed in 1994 and, through various steps, was finalised and adopted as a framework in 2003. The aim of this strategy is to encourage South Africans who were previously disadvantaged under the Apartheid regime to be more fully involved in the formal economy. BEE sectoral charters and scorecards have been developed to apply the framework. The codes include weighing factors, such as indirect empowerment (encouraging the expansion of black companies generating income for black people, in particular), employment equity (encouraging

companies to identify, recruit and develop black professionals and to invest for their training) and, finally, promotion of direct empowerment (encouraging the sharing of equity and voting rights with black people and black women and participation of black people at senior levels).

BEE charters and scorecards have been developed for 17 sectors in order to apply the framework. These charters and scorecards are extremely detailed. The one for construction, for instance, under skills development, define objectives such as:

- 1.5% of payroll per annum should be invested in skills development;

- 70% of skills development should be spent on black people, out of which 25% should be spent on black women and 25% on black management;

- 25% of the amount spent on black management should go to black women in management;

- 2.5% (1.5% of BEPs – built environment professionals) of employees on learnerships should be calculated as a rolling 12 month average;

- 70% of total learnerships for black people;

- 35% of learnerships for black people must be black women and 30% from designated groups;

- 0.3% of payroll on bursary expenditure for black students.

A recent report shows that, whilst economic growth has risen impressively in South Africa during recent years, reaching 5-6% of GDP, inequality within society continues to be deep, rapidly worsening with serious consequences for stability and security. Economic growth has not represented a correlated increase in employment which, particularly in some provinces, remains very low and is often the driver of an uncontrolled process of internal migration leading to poverty, marginalisation and social inequality (Department of Labour, n.d.-c, p.3).

Data, such as the household *per capita* expenditure related to national average based on race, show that whites have the highest expenditure, followed by Asian, coloured and Africans, thus leading to the conclusion that social inequality inherited from Apartheid is still evident (Department of Education, 2006).

In addition, geographical location is also deeply rooted in the Apartheid legacy, as Africans in Eastern Cape province and Limpopo had the lowest expenditure index in 2003. Data on poverty and vulnerability-related

statistics show that the highest share of population in poorest rural areas is in the Limpopo province, where 88% of the population live. On the other hand, the lowest poverty rate is in Western Cape, where the rural population accounts only for 12% of the total population (Statistics South Africa, 2004).

Existing policy frameworks and reports show that, at national level, there is widespread knowledge and understanding in South Africa that human resources development strategies and policies are key tools for successfully achieving socio-economic goals.

However, the situation is very serious, as education forms part of this problem of social inequity and schools are becoming places where these social problems are very tangible and send alarming signs to the community and, in general, for South African society. This is actually also pointed out in the Budget speech delivered by the Eastern Cape Member of the Executive Council for Education, "the high prevalence of violence in our schools which manifests itself in the form of substance abuse, rape, assault, vandalism and theft had prompted the Department of Education to resuscitate the school safety programme in partnerships with the Department of Safety and Security" (Makgato, 2007). The problem of school security was also raised during the visits of the review team in a focus school in Cape Town, which is located in a marginalised area with serious socio-economic problems characterised by a very high unemployment rate.

Findings

- The issue of economic and social cohesion as an instrument for alleviating disparity is not adequately integrated into the national strategic policies like the AsgiSA, JIPSA and BEE. This principle seems also not to be adequately reflected into the priority actions of the provincial development strategic frameworks. The provincial departments of education prepare annual plans linked to local needs and targets for investment in education and specify related actions, performance objectives and quantitative indicators as regards higher participation in all levels of education, as well as improvement of physical infrastructures and of teachers' provision. However, the links between education and training to economic development and, in a broader way, the role that human resources development can play in reaching the set objectives, are not sufficiently stressed. The dialogue between the world of work and education is not adequately addressed in the provincial plans and not with a standard approach. For instance, the plans from Western Cape and Gauteng emphasise the need for economic growth and the related links to human

resources development, whilst the ones from Eastern Cape and Limpopo are based on the objective of eradicating poverty, but without a clear strategic link between economic growth and human resources.

- Representatives of the communities are members of the school governing bodies. However, the fact that those schools are somehow locations for instigating "criminal" behaviour show that these bodies are not as effective as they should be.

- Education was, for a long time, the symbol of Apartheid in South Africa, because of its tangible and visible inequity based on racial discrimination and schools were often a rallying point for the struggle against Apartheid. The system is still suffering from that image and schools are still considered places where discontent can be manifested with aggressive behaviour.

- Young people constitute 70% of the unemployed and are the dominant identifiable cohort within the group of long-term unemployed individuals (Department of Labour, n.d.-c, p. 9).

- The issue of poverty in South Africa is partly addressed through the payment of social grants, primarily in the form of old age pensions, disability grants and child support grants. Nationally, household access to social grants almost trebled between 1995 and 2003 and expanded from 11.6% to 32.8%. This had an important impact on raising the living standards of the population. However, the system lacks efficiency, as is mentioned in studies related to children that are eligible for receiving the Child Support Grant, which show that 22% of eligible children aged 0-18 are not receiving it. During the field mission, the review team had the possibility of finding out that, especially in rural areas, the communities are living only on social grants with no incentive for contributing to local development.

Further education and training (FET)

Upper secondary education in South Africa is provided through the Further Education and Training (FET) system and covers the period of post-compulsory schooling, namely after grade 9, up to pre-higher education learning. It includes both the three year academic programme in schools and the provision of vocational education and training through 50 FET colleges, which are the result of the rationalisation of the system. With this transformation process, 50 colleges have been created through combining smaller and weaker colleges (152) within stronger institutions with the aim

of creating multi-campus institutions capable of offering post-compulsory and high skills training. The levels of qualifications provided in accordance with the NQF are 2, 3 and 4. The previous vocational and technical system (NATED) was mainly theory-based school curricula organised in a two year cycle of trimesters, starting from N 1 level up to N 6, and it was up to students to find a situation placement after completion of the school-based training in order to acquire some practical skills. The NATED system was set up in 1935 to meet the needs of the labour forces of the South African harbours and railways systems.

The post-Apartheid FET system was established with Further Education and Training Act of 1998 with the objective of regulating all learning and training programmes leading to qualifications from level 2 to level 4 of the National Qualifications Framework, as contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995. The levels referred to above are general education and below higher education.

At the beginning of 2007, a provincial further education and training (FET) colleges system was designed and it is governed by a new act, the FET Colleges Act (2006), which replaces the one from 1998. The aim of the reform is to develop the skills needed for economic growth and reduce poverty and unemployment, make VET more attractive, both for the learner and the employer, and lead to the delivery of a National Certificate (Vocational) (NC[V]).

In 2005, there were approximately 400 000 students enrolled at Further Education and Training colleges and, it is estimated, another 700 000 enrolled in private FET institutions (CBR, p. 21). Twenty-five thousand and eighty-seven students (the set target was 27 000 students) enrolled in 2007 and the national objective is to reach a million by the school year 2016. In order to attract more students, bursaries have been made available and 12 087 have been allocated. The availability could have been even higher, but in some cases it appears that learners are reluctant to apply for it as this would imply being automatically classified as "poor". The authorities seek to address this problem in 2008.

A recapitalisation grant of ZAR 1.9 billion has been allocated for the period 2005/06 and a further allocation is expected for the period 2008/09, for the 50 FET colleges, which is mainly going to be spent on upgrading workshops and classrooms and staff training.

Considering that the total enrolment in upper secondary education from grade 10 to 12 is close to 2 500 000 students, the percentage of enrolment in colleges (public and private) in the vocational education and training system is around 30%, which follows the general trend of enrolment in other

African countries, namely that VET is considered unattractive and "fit for only those who are academically less endowed" (African Union, 2007).

The policy of the South African government for revitalising the VET system and making it more attractive is, in general, in line with the strategic framework adopted by other African countries, for whom the major drivers for a VET strategy are: employability, entrepreneurship, efficiency and sustainability, the support of economic development and the creation of national wealth, and contributing to poverty eradication.

The Draft National Sector Plan for FET colleges identifies 6 broad objectives:

1. creating a nationally co-ordinated FET system with a unique identity;

2. broadening student access and participation and improving achievement;

3. entrenching quality and excellence;

4. promoting institutional autonomy, responsiveness and relevance;

5. encouraging diversity and differentiation;

6. monitoring systemic and institutional performance and fostering public accountability.

An important innovation introduced with the FET Act is related to the possibility for the colleges to "employ" the lecturers, who should be transferred from the provincial departments of education. This innovation is meant to recognise industry-specific professional qualifications and, thus, improve the effectiveness of vocational practical training provided in the colleges.

The Educational Measurement, Assessment and Public Examinations Unit manages the setting, marking and moderation process for all the 2, 3, and 4 NQF level programmes, whilst Umalusi, the quality assurance control body, issues certificates and statements of results. At the time of writing this report, it is not clear whether the SETAs will recognise the subjects passed on the basis of learning outcomes contained in the corresponding Department of Education guidelines.

Eighty percent of the proposed programme funding for the National Certificate (Vocational) FET system is from a national budget subsidy on a per student basis per vocational programme through the provincial departments of education. The remaining 20% is through the payment of enrolment fees, which, in many instances, can be covered by bursaries

awarded to the students. Other programmes offered at FET colleges must be funded on a cost recovery basis.

The National Certificate (Vocational) is offered in eleven economic sectors, identified by AsgiSA, and clustered to be covered by the FET system in accordance with the AsgiSA classification of priority skills areas, as follows:

1. civil engineering and building construction

2. electrical infrastructure construction

3. engineering and related design

4. finance, economics and accounting

5. hospitality

6. information technology and computer science

7. management

8. marketing

9. office administration

10. primary agriculture

11. tourism

As regards the structure of the NC(V), there are three compulsory subjects: communication (language, which should be one of the official languages in South Africa and should be offered as a language of teaching and learning), mathematics or mathematical literacy and life orientation. There are four vocational subjects (three for each programme are compulsory and allow for high level specialisation, whilst the fourth subject may be chosen from any vocational programme). The curriculum has been designed by sector committees including representatives from industry and sectoral training authorities. The process of consultation was uneven and thus delayed and the new curriculum was only introduced in the school year 2007.

A total of 1 861 college lecturers were trained to offer the new programmes and examiners were appointed to start preparing for the first NC(V) NQF Level 2 examination at the end of 2007.

Publishers were also commissioned to produce materials and textbooks.

The split between theory and practice is 60:40 and the practical training is mainly based on simulation carried out in workshops that are located in the colleges.

The transition to higher education is still under discussion between the national Department of Education, Higher Education South Africa (HESA) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in order to formalise this study pathway.

During their mission, the review team had the possibility of visiting two FET colleges: the Tshwane South College in Pretoria and the Port Elizabeth College. The Tshawne South College is the result of the merger of the former Technical Colleges in Centurion, Pretoria West and Atteridgville. It has a total of 27 777 students, with a full-time equivalent of 8 702. The facilities, which also include hostel accommodation, are very good. The programmes offered by the college cover: finance, economics and accounting, management, office administration, marketing, electrical infrastructure construction, civil engineering and building construction, engineering and related design, IT and computer science, tourism and hospitality. The college has established very strong partnerships with companies like BMW, Mercedes and important groups in the field of construction.

The Port Elizabeth College is also the result of merging of technical colleges in the Eastern Cape. It has a total headcount of 12 410 students with a full-time equivalent of 3 400. The programmes offered by the college cover: electrical infrastructure, construction, engineering and related design, civil engineering and building construction, IT and computer science, finance, economics and accounting, management, hospitality, tourism.

The college has more than 200 public and private partnerships. These include a large number of corporations, government departments (health, social welfare, correctional services and labour), local government and the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU).

Findings

- The review team appreciates the establishment of the FET colleges and appreciates the enormous investment (ZAR 1.9 billion re-capitalisation RECAP grant) that has been made in order to upgrade the 50 colleges.

- The Tshwane College is very impressive because of the size and the volume of its training activities, which are also run as evening classes. However, the visit took place in the late afternoon and, for security reasons, it was not possible to visit the workshops and see the new equipment bought with the RECAP grant.

- The fact that the colleges will employ the lecturers creates instability and insecurity as regards working conditions due to widespread concern from the lecturers that some personnel may be replaced by trainers coming from industry. This creates a difficult working environment, which may have a negative impact on learning effectiveness.

- When young people enrol in the college, there is, in general, a very broad idea about the choice of the vocational stream that would best suit their personal interests and aspirations. The fact that there are only two vocational guidance teachers in the Tshwane college is a constraint, as they are so overburdened that it is extremely difficult for them to provide the necessary support and advice.

- With the new Act, flexibility in working hours has been introduced in FET colleges and this will allow for better organisation of the activities and, in particular, for the integration of initial and continuing training.

- Partnerships with companies seem to work on an ad hoc basis; they are invited to participate in the college council board meetings, but they participate very rarely.

- The fact that access to higher education from the FET colleges is still an unresolved question and also that recognition by SETAs of the NC(V) subjects/levels is still an open issue, limits the attractiveness of the system.

- The review team was highly impressed by the variety, quality and quantity of the material produced by the DoE in order to promote the reform of FET colleges. Presumably, the objective of the material is to disseminate what's going on with the reform in order to make the VET system more transparent, open to the public and more attractive.

- The distribution of the 11 programmes over the 50 colleges is not clear and a question that remains open is whether they are based on an analysis of the local labour market demand, or supply driven and based on college traditions.

- Under the NATED system, in order to get practical experience recognised by employers, a learner had to attend a "learnership" programme organised by the Department of Labour. This practice remains unchanged. The major difference now is that the theory and practical programme lasts a minimum of one year, whilst the duration with the NATED system was only a trimester.

- The review team didn't receive any information about the private technical FET institutions, where 700 000 learners are enrolled. Thus, the elements necessary to make any assessment on the links between the public and private systems are not available.

Focus schools

The focus schools are innovative initiatives aimed at providing access to excellence in various educational fields and to contribute to the development of skills aligned to key growth sectors within the provincial economy.

Twenty eight secondary schools, serving historically marginalised communities, were converted into focus schools during a period of three years from 2005 to 2008, in the fields of: arts and culture; business, commerce and management; and engineering and technology.

For the period 2005 to end of March 2007, ZAR 82 million was made available to the 28 schools to be used for buildings, infrastructure, ICT equipment, LTSM, security, marketing and advocacy, human resource development, monitoring and evaluation. In addition to the normal establishment, 32 redress posts were also allocated to the schools.

One hundred and fifty-six specialist workshops and facilities have been completed, with another 64 under construction and 16 planned. As the venues are being completed, the equipment that will allow for the meaningful use of the facilities is being installed. A total of 2005 learners and educators attended conferences and workshops in 2006 and 2007.

The budget allocation for this financial year for the focus schools is ZAR 30 million. As part of the 2007/08 phase of the project, more emphasis will be on curriculum development processes, capacity and skills development and career opportunity programmes.

Findings

- The review team visited a focus school in Cape Town and was impressed by the fact that some parents (mainly mothers) are working as volunteers in the school (in the parking area, in the secretarial office, as cleaning ladies…), etc. This implies that, at least for some of the families, this school is considered an important opportunity for their students and for the community in general. This school has 1 357 students and 41 teachers and the training areas include engineering and tourism; the student/teacher ratio is of 33/34:1. The ratio is very high in the lower classes, but it decreases

because of drop-outs. Violence against women has been reported by the school principal as very high, as well as criminality and two of the existing 140 gangs in Cape Town can be linked to this school. A pregnant girl is considered as a child with special needs and therefore the advice to the family would be not to send her to school. A school clinic with counselling services is aimed at providing psychological support to the women who have suffered from violence. The school board is made up of 13 people including: 1 principal, 2 learners, 2 teachers 1 non teaching staff member, and 7 parents. The school fee is ZAR 950 (EUR 95) per year; however, 35% of students do not pay any fee because of their low income. The school covers grades 8 to 12.

- The school principal has been in his post for 18 years and he is very committed and knowledgeable about the school environment.

- The school governing body was represented during the review team visit by the young mother of a girl attending the school. It is very usual in this area to have single parent families.

- The review team was extremely impressed by the level of security installed in the school, such as burglar bars on all doors and the internal television surveillance system. In spite of this security system, some thieves tried to enter one of the workshops through the ceiling.

- The school is located in a very poor area, where unemployment reaches 40%. As there are no employment opportunities locally, most of the people (mainly men) migrate to look for work in more developed areas.

Continuing training (lifelong learning)

The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was adopted in South Africa in 1995 in order to promote an egalitarian educational system. Some of the stated objectives are:

…to facilitate access to education and training, to facilitate mobility and progression within education, training and career paths; to enhance the quality of education and training; to accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities and to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at a large… (Republic of South Africa 1995)

In accordance with the NQF's objectives, skills and knowledge are measured at the end of a learning or training period against "socially agreed standards", *i.e.* in terms of the learning outcomes that the qualifying learner is expected to have demonstrated. Recognition of prior learning permits accreditation of certain learning achievements and the calculation of learners' readiness for admission into specific programmes.

The NQF is managed by the South African Qualification Authority, which is a board of 16 members appointed by the Ministers of Education and Labour and the main tasks include:

- registration of standards and qualifications regulated under the framework;

- definition of policies and criteria for the registration of bodies that are responsible for the formulation of education and training standards or qualifications;

- accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards and qualifications;

- ensuring the management of information systems;

- ensuring quality through the education and training quality assurance bodies;

- recognition of foreign qualifications;

- promotion of the NQF in the region in order to facilitate mobility of workers.

In order to regulate the qualifications provided to the employees or to those seeking employment, 25 SETAs were established in 2000.

The SETA/NQF model of quality assurance is based on decentralised assessment, without examinations, whereby individual institutions are accredited to offer specific qualifications that have been registered with the NQF. Each SETA has its own requirements for the accreditation of providers within its sector, which have to design their own learning programme against the qualifications, on the basis of the learning outcomes and assessment standards that are in the registered qualifications. The mechanism that has been introduced to ensure assessment is of a required standard is the registration of assessors (Umalusi, 2006). The process requires providers (institutions) or individual educators to prove that they have the required competence to the unit standards that have been registered for assessment. However, in order to become a "registered constituent assessor", the process requires further registration with the Education,

Training and Development Practices SETA and a further one, with the relevant SETA, to prove the competence on the area of the course in question.

The SETA approach to the moderation of assessment is based on the general idea that samples of assessments are moderated by "registered moderators" through the SETAs and, in turn, a sample is verified by "registered verifiers". In some instances, for language and mathematics courses (fundamental), moderation is done by independent examination authority, contracted by the different SETAs.

It is clear that in such a decentralised system, not all providers and all programmes can be scrutinised, the structure depends on the mechanism described above with the result that some SETAs regard themselves as certification bodies whilst others argue that the accredited institutions must issue certificates.

Any registered firm doing business in South Africa must, by law, pay a skills development levy that equals 1% of their total annual payroll. Most of this levy is transferred to the appropriate SETA to promote firms within its sector to participate in training initiatives with a view to improving competitiveness and offering opportunities to workers by way of training and development.

Companies have to contact the South African Revenue Services (SARS), which is responsible for the collection of skill levies. SARS assists them with the registration process, which is a relatively simple matter. Once registered, a firm is assigned a Skills Development Levy number that enables them to partake in SETA activities. Eighty percent of the levy is transferred directly to the SETAs (10% of which is spent in administration). SETAs spend mandatory grants on receipt of workplace skills plans and implementation reports from employers. In addition, they disburse "discretionary grants" for projects that address specific sectoral needs identified in their sector skills plan. SETAs are also currently the implementing agents for the National Skills Fund's (NSF – mentioned below) funded strategic objectives.

The NSF was established in 1999 following the adoption of the National Skills Development Act, 1998 and it is mainly aimed at financing training for those people seeking a job. NSF sources come from:

- 20% of the skills development levies;

- the skills development levies in respect of those sectors in which there are no SETAs;

- funds allocated directly by the parliament.

The Fund is administered by the National Skills Authority (NSA), which is a statutory advisory body to the Minister of Labour on the National Skills Development Strategy. The functions of the NSA are to advise the Minister of Labour on:

- a National Skills Development Policy (NSDP);

- a National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS);

- guidelines on the implementation of the NSDS;

- the allocation of subsidies from the National Skills Fund;

- any regulation that may be needed.

In 2005, a further NSDS was adopted to cover the period up to 2010, with the aim of following up the first National Skills Development Strategy of 2001-2005.

The main goal of the new strategy is to support the broader goal of the government to halve unemployment and poverty and reduce inequality by 2014 through the investment of ZAR 21.9 billion of income from the skills development levy.

Some of the quantitative targets of the NSDS for 2010 are the following:

- At least 80% of government departments spend at least 1% of personnel budget on training and the related impact is measured and reported.

- At least 500 enterprises will achieve a national standard of good practice in skills development and will be refunded 50% of the levy paid.

- At least 700 000 workers will have achieved at least ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) level 4 (completion of grade 9 equivalent to NQF level 1).

- SETA discretionary grants to include grants for learnships, bursary grants, internships grants and support of learners acquiring basic entry, intermediate and high scarce skills identified as scarce in their sectors.

Findings

- The NQF was criticised to the review team on different occasions as complex, slow, costly and over bureaucratic. A particular concern is related to the management of NQF's parent body, SAQA, regarding

the number of existing qualifications (10 000) and the mismatch between skills demanded by employers and skills possessed by graduates.

- The review team noticed that there is a lack of clarity in the use of the terminology between labour and education; the former speaks in terms of NQF levels, whilst the latter in terms of grades completion. Schools visited during the review seemed not to be that familiar with NQF system.

- On different occasions, the review team were told that the SETAs' system of grants to employers for training is too complex and bureaucratic, with SETAs mainly investing resources in their own staff. The result is that a lot of funds that should go for the training and the upgrading of employees are not spent and are just waiting in bank accounts. This would, in particular, be the case with small companies, judging from the results of a survey carried out in 505 registered and non-registered enterprises that have between 1 to 10 workers. The results highlight that, out of the 51% companies eligible to pay the levy, only 16% were claiming grants (Department of Labour, n.d.-a, p. 36). The reason given for not claiming grants against levy payments were mainly related to "lack of awareness of the process, not worth the efforts financially and too complex applications".

- The same survey reports that there is still a degree of uncertainty about SETA registration in the sense that some of the companies interviewed did not know whether or not they were registered with a SETA, even if their name appeared in the SETA's list. The issue of training quality within the small business industry seems to be more vexed, as the bulk of the training was reported to be on the job and linked neither to the NQF, nor another formal recognition system.

- The same report shows that the utilisation rate of the Department of Labour provincial allocations under the Social Development Initiative (NSFDIS) funding window for the period 1 April-31 March 2005 goes from a minimum of 17% in Western Cape up to a maximum of 57% in Eastern Cape with a national average of 38%. The main reasons for low spending are related to lack of staff, changes in the contracting system and in the procedures for registration of training providers.

- As regards training for the unemployed, a minimum of 50% of those who have completed training are, within 6 months of completion,

employed in full time study or further training, or are in a social development programme.

- The documents/reports produced by the Department of Labour are extremely detailed and provide substantial information about the system, the indicators and achievements. However, the reports highlight mainly the quantitative indicators of achievement and they present only data. There is no reference to qualitative impact, or identification of problems, lessons learnt, etc.

Vocational guidance and counselling

Findings

- The review team were able to visit the Umsobomvu Youth Fund's (UYF) centre in Pretoria and was extremely impressed by the level of motivation of the staff and of the dynamic working environment. The Fund was initially established through private donations and, in 2001, it was transferred to the government in order to promote the job creation and skills development of Africans between the ages of 18 and 35. In order to carry out its mandate, the UYF makes strategic investments to create opportunities for people to acquire skills, to access job opportunities and to set up their own business through a micro-finance system. The UYF is under the Department of Labour. In 2001 it received a financial allocation of ZAR 1 billion, to be spent over 5 years. The services are provided through:

  - Youth advisory centres (YACs - there are 124 centres at the moment);

  - Mobile Youth Advisory Centres, operating in 5 mobile units that travel across the country and have an Internet connection that permits applications for the South African Youth Card.

YACs may be established within other existing institutions, such as the FET colleges, local government, or higher education institutions. Twenty-six YAC have been approved and are currently in the implementation phase at the FET colleges.

- Many reports and other documents are available on the UYF website and give a very wide description of the ongoing and planned activities.

- Little evidence was provided to the review team about an effective vocational guidance service in South Africa. Advice is provided by some psychologists/teachers at higher education and FET college level, but, in general, the service of vocational guidance and counselling has been neglected during the last few years and this, combined with the high level of youth unemployment, has contributed to the overall social situation (World Bank, 2003).

Recommendations

General

- In addition to social grants, poverty alleviation should be based on sound, active policies for economic and social cohesion and the budget allocation to the provinces should follow the principles of alleviating regional disparity and of promoting economic growth within an overall strategic framework, also specifying the contribution that human resources can play in the process. The model of the Structural Funds used in European Union Member States with the aim of promoting economic and social cohesion could be studied, analysed and used as an example to be adapted to the South African reality.

- Dialogue with the business community should be strengthened, as it is mentioned in many strategic documents, and a mechanism to monitor the process, particularly at provincial level, should be put in place. In some provinces, it is improving; however, it is not systematic and mainly left to the personal initiative of college principals and lecturers.

- It is very important to make sure that schools are not considered by the young as places without hope, but, rather, the route to a professional career and, consequently, a place in society. Therefore, better links and partnerships between education and the world of work should be ensured. School governing bodies can play a vital role in achieving this objective and should be more directly involved in the issue of criminality, and ad hoc initiatives should be carried out in co-operation with the local community.

Further education and training (FET)

- Priority should be given to solving the issues related to access to higher education and recognition by SETAs in order make the reform really attractive, otherwise the set objectives risk not being reached. This problem might be dealt with by the establishment of a special commission to develop a proposal quickly.

- There is widespread concern in the country that the labour market is weak and cannot absorb the graduates, irrespective of their level of qualifications. Therefore, mechanisms should be established in order to make the demand in the labour market more dynamic and flexible and better linked to VET provision. Social partners should support and publicly promote the VET system, with a very direct and simple promotional campaign aimed at highlighting how VET can help in creating employment and, therefore, growth.

- The fact that practical training is mainly provided through simulation in the college does not give learners a picture of the real work environment. This is extremely important, particularly in order to make VET graduates more "suitable" for employment. Therefore, real, on the job training opportunities should be pursued in co-operation with companies and be part of the curriculum, as is the case in many countries.

- Partnerships between the world of education and the world of work are not part of the present system, but are mainly left to the initiative of the individual colleges and staff. Companies should be represented in the college governing councils on a sector basis and participate in the meetings on a regular basis. Companies should actively participate in the design of curricula. This does not occur sufficiently at present.

- It is still premature to assess the impact of the reform of the FET colleges as the first year of implementation ended in December 2007. It would be important, therefore, for the provincial departments of education to put in place – as soon as possible – a mechanism to monitor the impact of VET college offers in the local labour market, following learner pathways through tracer studies. The results of this monitoring process should ensure system flexibility in order to introduce changes and adaptations whenever a mismatch is noticed.

Focus schools

- It was not clear to the review team whether the aim of Focus Schools is to prepare for employment or for higher education, as both objectives seemed to be quite a remote opportunity. The role of Focus Schools within the system should, therefore, be better defined. In addition, the link to FET colleges or to higher education should be clarified within a perspective of ensuring vertical or horizontal mobility within the system.

- Companies or social partner organisations should be represented on the school governing body in order to:

    - improve links with the local area, or;

    - to establish partnerships in localities that are better developed so as to increase employment opportunities for school leavers (Umalusi, 2006, p. 29).

Continuing vocational education and training

- The training for both the employees and for the unemployed managed through SETAs and the NSF looks rather complex and fragmented, with many bodies involved with different tasks, procedures and responsibilities. The complexity of the system is very demanding in terms of the staff with the result that it's rather costly and this may be to the detriment of its effectiveness. It should be simplified both at a national and provincial level in order to make it more transparent, compatible, accountable and easier to monitor.

- FET colleges can be providers of training under the NSDS and they can receive accreditation under the NQF. However, during the review team's visits to the FET colleges, there was no reference to this training. This implies that the world of education/initial training and the one of continuing training are still considered in isolation and not as a part of a comprehensive system for human resource development. Addressing this issue is of the utmost priority; otherwise it will be difficult to see how the principles of lifelong learning can fit, in practice, into the system.

- It is important to promote co-operation and synergy between the quality assurance model provided by the Umalusi system and SETAs.

Vocational guidance and counselling

- The establishment of the UYF will surely contribute to the improvement of the situation and the list of projects and the target objectives they want to achieve are very ambitious. It would be important also in this case to monitor developments, not just on the basis of the quantitative indicators, but also on the basis of the qualitative ones. For instance, it would be important to assess the impact of the training provided in terms of duration, content, didactical approach, etc.

- Since concluding its analysis, the review team notes that many of its recommendations are echoed in the recent (February 2008), Skills Development Strategy Review of the Western Cape.

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Chapter 6: Inclusive Education and Equity in Education

This chapter describes the legal framework, analyses the current system of education provision and identifies the barriers to overcome in order to direct a formerly highly segregated education system towards inclusion and towards favouring an education system focusing on each learner's needs and success.

Whereas South Africa's inclusive education policy explicitly focuses on the needs of individual learners and has, so far, undertaken important reform steps, a number of obstacles still need to be faced. Amongst these are the high poverty rate amongst families with students with special educational needs, gender issues, the lack of adequate resources deployed to teaching and learning, insufficient physical access to schooling and the gap of education provision between urban centres and rural areas. Special attention is given to the impact of additional resources allocated by the government to mainstream schooling, special schools and newly established resource centres in order to enable institutions and individuals to cater for the learning needs of all students.

The chapter also provides a set of recommendations for policy makers and practitioners that support inclusive approaches for a mid-term to long-term perspective.

South Africa gives "educational inclusion" a much broader meaning than simply "access to schooling for persons with disabilities". It is part of a fundamental shift away from the segregated education system of the Apartheid period towards the principle of social inclusion and reflects the country's determination to promote equality and prevent any form of discrimination – whether it be on the basis of race, gender, language, disability or poverty – in all spheres of life. Beyond mere access to education and breaking the cycle of poverty, inclusive education is part of the nation's promotion of diversity, citizenship, and economic and social well-being.

Inclusive education means therefore that no child should be excluded from education and that each child should be able to participate actively in all domains of society. It requires education systems that are receptive to diversity and are physically, pedagogically and socially accessible to all children. It relates to the ability of the school system to enable learners to be successful at school and to be included in society by meeting the full range of learning needs that learners may have.

Inclusive education is therefore rooted in an education system's ability to be equitable by fostering high levels of initial enrolment at the prescribed age, regular attendance and a learners' progress from one grade to the next at the appropriate time, as well as keeping levels of repetition and drop-outs low. It is also rooted in an education system's ability to be inclusive by considering not only educational issues, but also broader issues like poverty, health and employment.

Inclusive education: from segregation to inclusion

Government policy emphasises the mainstreaming of all individuals – regardless of race, gender or health – into society. The Constitution of 1996 guarantees the fundamental right of all citizens, including those with disabilities, to basic and further education, and forbids any form of discrimination. The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000) makes it mandatory to eliminate obstacles that unfairly limit or restrict a) people with disabilities from enjoying equal opportunities or b) anyone taking steps to reasonably accommodate the needs of such people.

Access to employment is fostered by the Employment Equity Act (1998), which determines the employment-equity quotas that apply to the private and public sector, and the Skills Development Act (1998), which aims to redress, through training and education, the employment prospects of those individuals previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination.

The South African Schools Act (1996), the Higher Education Act (1997), the Further Education and Training Act (1998) and the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000) require educational institutions to be receptive to learners with special needs and to provide the legal basis for an inclusive education system. Public schools are required by law to admit all learners and to meet the necessary educational requirements without discrimination. For instance, the South African Schools Act requires regular public schools to provide, wherever reasonably possible, education and "relevant support services" for learners with special educational needs (SEN). School facilities have to be made physically accessible to people

with disabilities and sign language has the status of an official language in the public education system. The National Plan for Higher Education commits higher education institutions (HEIs) to increasing the access of learners with special educational needs. They are expected to develop accessibility plans, including the aims followed, the strategies implemented to improve their level of accessibility and the steps undertaken with the relevant time frame.

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), created in 1994, has a national mandate to protect and secure the rights of all citizens, including those with disabilities. It receives complaints from citizens whose rights have been violated and takes appropriate legal action on their behalf.

Education policy

The 2001 White Paper 6 (Department of Education, 2001) requires the education and training system to be inclusive and to meet the learning needs not only of those with physical, mental or neurological impairments, but also those experiencing learning difficulties as a result of socio-economic deprivation or those hindered in their education by illness. It envisages an integrated education system involving special schools, regular schools and partnerships with stakeholders from the health and social development sectors and allowing for pathways to all levels of education and all types of provision. It plans to link the educational provision to learners who do not require intensive support to the general restructuring of the further education and training sector by creating, for example, full-service technical colleges. It distinguishes, consequently, between mainstream education opportunities for those learners having a low level of support need (level 1-3), "full service schools" enrolling those learners requiring a moderate level of support (level 4) and special schools admitting those students requiring the most intensive level of support (Level 5) and wishing to be accommodated in such settings.

Mainstream schools

White Paper 6 plans to support mainstream schools in opening to the diversity of learners' needs by providing training, additional teaching and support staff, specialised skills and support from the disability support team, as well as support from its resource centre.

Full-service schools

White Paper 6 plans, over a 20-year period, to transform 500 of the approximately 20 000 primary schools into "full-service" schools serving a dual purpose of catering for learners requiring a moderate level of support (level 4) and also acting as a resource for teachers and schools in the area. Full service schools are provided with extra personnel, infrastructure, non-personnel and non-capital resources to develop flexible teaching practices and to accommodate a number of learners from the local neighbourhood who require specialised support. They are also expected to provide indirect support to all the surrounding schools that include learners with disabilities.

In 2007, the national Department of Education (DoE), in partnership with a number of provinces, set up pilot projects to introduce the basic requirements of inclusive education into schools, to develop human resources, to build support structures in schools and communities and, finally, to create a wider understanding of inclusive education in society (Da Costa, 2003). At the time of the OECD team's visit, 30 full-service schools and 30 resource centres were created in 30 "nodal" districts. Some provinces also set up their own initiatives; the province of the Western Cape prioritised some primary schools in order to upgrade their physical and pedagogical accessibility.

Special schools and resource centres

White Paper 6 plans to improve the cost effectiveness of special schools, as well as the quality of services provided, by converting them into resource centres. Resources centres will be part of the district support team and thus complement the full-service school and "mainstreaming" in public ordinary schools. They will provide, via a district-based support team, expertise and support to schools and teachers; for example with regard to curriculum adaptation and teaching methods, to psycho-social and health support, to system and administrative support, and to institutional and monitoring support.

Being resource centres, special schools will also continue to serve learners requiring the most intensive level of support (level 5). White Paper 6 also plans to improve the teacher-pupil ratio and professionals' ability to cope with severely disabled people by increasing the quality of facilities and materials.

Teacher training

Training programmes have also been provided. Western Cape, for example, received nearly ZAR 1 million from the National DoE to hold workshops involving all special schools, as well as teachers from primary schools. The objective was to help special school principals adapt the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for their schools and help teachers use the curriculum in their classrooms. It is expected that these trained teachers will assist their colleagues in mainstream schools in curriculum implementation and to give curriculum officials an insight into the challenges faced by teachers and learners in special schools.

In mainstream education, White Paper 6 states that training should focus on multi-level instruction enabling teachers to develop responsive teaching methods, co-operative learning and, more generally, to deal with learners with behavioural problems. In full-service schools, teacher training should focus on multi-level classroom instruction, co-operative learning, problem solving and development of learners' strengths. In special schools and in resource centres, teacher training should focus on problem-solving and methods focusing on the development of learners' strengths and competences rather than on shortcomings.

Teachers should also be empowered to adapt the National Curriculum Statement to all learners, thanks to the guidelines for inclusive learning programmes published in 2005 by the Department of Education (DoE, 2005).

Identification and assessment of learners

Under Apartheid, policies relating to special needs were based on categories focused on medical or biological impairments. By contrast, South Africa's inclusive education policy focuses now on the needs of individual learners, distinguishing them not by their impairment, but by the level of educational support they need. In 2008, the DoE will introduce its national inter-sectorial Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS), aiming to ensure a more rigorous and consistent process of screening and assessment across the system. It was being tested when the OECD team made its visit.

SIAS is intended to foster parents' involvement, as well as inter-departmental and inter-sectorial co-ordination of services and schools. It outlines a set of guidelines assisting parents, teachers and support teams at institutional level, and managers and district teams in: engaging the screening processes, developing forms for screening, identifying learners who are facing barriers to learning and development, as well as the means

that have to be developed to address these barriers. Western Cape used it to develop schools' human resources and to train teachers, school headmasters and members of support teams.

Modes of funding

The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) apply to special needs education in the following ways:

- They apply uniformly in all provinces, and are intended to prevail in terms of the Constitution.

- They apply only to public ordinary schools.

- They do not apply to funds raised by ordinary public schools through their own efforts.

- Some norms will apply to the public school financial year (January to December) and others to the state financial year (April to March of following year).

Under current law, there are no designated funds for special needs education (this term covers the funding of "special schools" for students with disabilities, plus education of these students within the regular schools, as well as programmes for learners with special talents, such as in music, art). Therefore, funds for special education must come from the general education budget of each province, via the province's Equitable Share allocations and from (very limited) provincial revenue sources.

At present, there are no fiscal incentives for provinces or schools to accommodate SEN learners in public ordinary schools. For example, schools do not receive a "weighted" per-learner allocation if they include SEN learners. The DoE did, however, include such incentives in its 2006/07 budget bid, and the OECD team learned that they will be included in the new Norms and Standards for Inclusive Education, the framework of which has been approved, but not yet formally gazetted.

Most ordinary schools visited by the OECD team – especially those in the lower quintiles (1-3) – would not, in their current circumstances, be able to be fully "inclusive" without additional resources in terms of staffing, equipment, building alterations and materials; targeted incentives (provided they are sufficient to overcome the often formidable material and social obstacles to inclusion) would help to remove the often-heard objection from principals and teachers that "this school cannot afford to include SEN learners".

At the time of the OECD team's visit, full-service schools were funded in the same way as other public ordinary schools, *i.e.* based on an annual head-count of learners enrolled as a percentage of the age cohort. Provincial departments are financially responsible for special schools in their territory, as part of their Equitable Share allocations, although the number of special schools may vary considerably among provinces. Until now, additional learner funding and teacher ratio were dependent on the weighting allocated in terms of the perceived degree of severity of the learner's impairment/disability or barrier to learning.

The new norms and standards for special schools that are expected to be gazetted in the course of 2008 will shift the basis for funding full-service schools and special schools from a simple head-count to the level of support needed by learners and will require those schools to qualify for additional funding, based on the SIAS (Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support).

Disability support

A lack of precise, recent and reliable data means a lack of precise information on numbers of people with disabilities. According the 2007 census, 1 916 218 people (3.9% of the population) declared they had a disability, of which 52.2% are male. Of these people, 40.2% have a physical impairment, 22.4% a sensorial impairment, 19.5% an emotional difficulty and 6.7% an intellectual impairment. According to available figures, the prevalence was higher among Asian/Indian (4.6%) populations and lower among coloured populations (4.2%). People with disabilities were more likely to live in Northern Cape (5.4%) and Eastern Cape (5.1%) than in Gauteng (2.9%) and Western Cape (3.4%), suggesting a link with poverty (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1 **Number of people with disabilities by type of disability (2007)**

Type of impairment	Numbers	Percentage
Sight	249 786	13.0
Hearing	180 397	9.4
Physical	769 722	40.2
Mental	128 841	6.7
Multiple	122 741	6.4
Communication	91 065	4.8
Emotional	373 617	19.5
Total	**1 916 169**	**100**

Source: Department of Education (2007), *Community Survey 2007*, Department of Education, Pretoria.

Unfortunately, currently available data from the 2007 census do not allow for more precise information on the profile of people with disabilities and analysis will, therefore, mainly be based on the 2001 census, as it appears to be more complete than the 2007 census.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the South African Constitution give children with disabilities the right to basic health and education provision. In South Africa, they are eligible for free health care; since 2004, adults with disabilities are also eligible for free health care. In the fiscal year 2006/07, services to people with disabilities amounted to ZAR 207 million (6.69% of overall expenditure on welfare services.)

Table 6.2 **Number of recipients of social benefits (numbers and percentages)**

Type of benefit	2002	2007
Old age	1 903 042	2 186 189
	40.9%	*18.2%*
War veterans	5 266	2 326
	0.1%	*0.02%*
Disability grant	694 232	1 437 842
	14.9%	*12.0%*
Grant in aid	10 332	
	0.22%	
Foster care	95 216	381 125
	2%	*3.2%*
Care dependency	34 978	103 992
	0.75%	*0.86%*
Child support grant	1 907 774	7 879 558
	41%	*65.7%*
Total	**4 650 840**	**11 991 032**
	100%	*100%*

Source: National Treasury (2007), *Provincial Budgets and Expenditure Review 2003/04 to 2009/10*, National Treasury, Pretoria.

According to the 2001 census, South Africa counted 585 589 children and youth with disabilities (3% of the population under the age of 20), of which 52.1% were male. Of these, 23.4% had a visual impairment, 21.9% had a sensorial impairment, 17.5% an intellectual impairment, 16.1% a physical impairment, 12.7% an emotional difficulty and 8.4% a communication impairment (Statistics South Africa, 2005).

Assessment panels

Access to both the Disability Grant and the Care Dependency Grant rests on decisions made by "assessment panels" appointed by provincial departments of social development. According to the Social Assistance Act (59 of 1992, as amended in December 2001), the assessment panel's task is to "evaluate information and determine disability" in connection with grant eligibility. Assessment panels may have flexible membership, but they must include a senior social security official, a rehabilitation therapist, a representative from the disability sector or a "reputable member of the community". Additional members, if necessary, may include a doctor or specialist, a psychiatrist, paramedical personnel, or a traditional healer (Department of Social Development, 2001). As of 2006, assessment panels have been implemented formally in the provinces of Free State, KwaZulu-Natal and North West (Swartz and Schneider, 2006).

Disability Grant (DG)

In 2001, South Africa counted 2 039 519 people with disabilities of 20 years of age or older. Twenty-eight-point-seven percent of these had a visual impairment, 15.9% a hearing impairment, 4.8% a communication impairment, 28.1% a physical impairment, 8.7% an intellectual impairment and 13.7% an emotional impairment.

People over 17 years of age with disabilities may apply for a Disability Grant and children may have access to a Care Dependency Grant (see below). The Disability Grant is means-tested and awarded to a person who is unfit for employment due to a physical or a mental disability (Social Assistance Act – Act 59 of 1992 or Act 13 of 2004). It is intended to provide for the person's maintenance: men are eligible until they reach the age of 65 and women until they reach the age of 60. Disability Grant beneficiaries can also claim grants on behalf of their children (as of October 2005, 31% of beneficiaries were receiving a Child Support Grant); in addition, they may qualify for a grant-in-aid that is awarded to people unable to care for themselves.

In 2007, 1 437 842 (11.9% of all recipients of social grants) people received a Disability Grant. According to the survey on social security recipients' profiles, Disability Grant recipients have a low level of education: 29.3% have no formal schooling, 30% have formal schooling from grades one to six, 37% have completed seven to eleven years of formal schooling and 4 % completed Matric (grade 12) and/or tertiary education (De Koker, de Waal, Vorster, 2006). For 96% of all recipients of the Disability Grant, it was their only source of income.

Care Dependency Grant (CDG)

Families that have a child under the age of 18 with a severe disability and in need of full time care may be eligible for a Care Dependency Grant. The child must live at home, or not be enrolled on a 24-hour basis in a fully funded special school for a period exceeding six months. The Care Dependency Grant cannot be received in combination with the Child Support Grant, but it may be received together with a Foster Child Grant[37] for the same child. At the age of 18, the child may have access to the Disability Grant described above.

In 2007, 103 000 families having a disabled child (0.86% of all recipients of social grants) received a Care Dependency Grant.[38] The survey on social security recipients' profiles reveals that children who benefited from this grant were more likely to have an intellectual impairment (26.3%), a physical or mobility impairment (23.2%), a speech impairment combined with another type of impairment (36.6%) or a specific illness like tuberculosis, cancer or AIDS (9%) (de Koker, de Waal and Vorster, 2006). Forty-nine percent of children lived with both parents and 45.8% with the mother only. In most cases (90.8%), the child has always lived with the biological mother in the same household. If the care giver was not the mother, the child most likely lived with the grandmother (56.4%) or the father (29.5%).

In 2005, a grant was the only source of income for the majority (79%) of families receiving a Care Dependency Grant for their disabled child, while 18.6% received a grant together with a salary. Forty-five percent of all recipients benefited exclusively from the Child Dependency Grant, 41% receive a combination of the Care Dependency Grant and the Child Support Grant that may be received for another child, while another 4% received a combination of the Disability Grant and the Care Dependency Grant.

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[37]   In 2007, the Foster Child Grant was a monthly payment of ZAR 560 made to foster parents for the purposes of caring for a child who has been placed in their custody under the terms of the Child Care Act (1983).

[38]   In terms of numbers, this is a steep rise since 2002, when the number of recipients was 35 000. However, in terms of percentage of all social grant recipients, the rise is only from 0.75% in 2002 to 0.86% in 2007.

Table 6.3 **Care Dependency Grant recipients by type of disability**

Type of impairment	Number and percentage
Intellectual impairment	11 905 *26.3%*
Physical impairment	10 508 *23.2%*
Speech, physical, intellectual and emotional impairment	4 555 *10.1%*
Specific illness (cancer, TB, Aids)	4 057 *9.0%*
Speech, intellectual and emotional impairment	3 251 *7.2%*
Speech and physical impairment	3 013 *6.7%*
Speech, physical and intellectual impairment	2 964 *6.6%*
Intellectual and emotional impairment	2 435 *5.4%*
Speech and intellectual impairment	1 355 *3.0%*
Emotional impairment	1 216 *2.7%*
Total	**45 258** ***100%***

Source: de Koker, C., L. de Waal and J. H. Vorster (2006), *A Profile of Social Security Beneficiaries in South Africa*, commissioned research for the National Department of Social Development, University of Stellenbosch, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Stellenbosch.

Child Support Grant (CSG)

In addition, families with a disabled child may also have access to the Child Support Grant. This grant is means-tested and is provided monthly to the primary care giver until the child reaches the age of 14. Both the child and the primary care giver must be South African citizens and reside permanently in the country. To be eligible for the CSG, the care giver must earn less than ZAR 1 100 a month or ZAR 13 200 a year and live in a rural area or in an informal setting or in the slums. Those living in a house or a

flat must earn less than ZAR 800 a month or ZAR 9 600 a year. According to the 2005 survey on social security recipients' profiles, the median income of a Child Support Grant recipient is ZAR 360 per month, while the poorest 25% of Child Support Grant recipients have a monthly income of ZAR 180 or less. In 2007, the amount of the CSG was ZAR 180 a month.

In 2005, the Child Support Grant was the only source of income for 78% of recipients, while 17% received the grant together with a salary, 3% received a grant with a remittance and only 2% received a grant and private maintenance. The majority of recipients (61%) received only one child support grant, 28% accessed two child support grants and 9% three child support grants. Five percent obtained the grant in combination with the disability grant (de Koker, de Waal and Vorster, 2006).

In 2007, nearly 8 million families received the CSG, up from about 2 million in 2002. Most children were of primary school age (47.8% between 6 and 11); nearly 30% were under 6 years of age. Although compulsory education continues until the age of 15, only 2.2% of recipients were between 12 and 14 years of age in 2007.[39] The OECD team has expressed its concern that the cut-off age of 14 may be a contributing factor to drop-out among the more vulnerable children (poor and/or with disabilities) before they finish basic schooling (see the section in Chapter 2 pertaining to *School fees*).

Disability, an additional poverty factor

Having a disability or being a parent of a disabled child increases the chance of living in extreme poverty, since the majority of people with disabilities in South Africa are excluded from the mainstream of society, compared to their non-disabled peers. Their chances of access to employment are lower than those of the non-disabled population: while 35% of non-disabled people were employed in 2001, only 19% of disabled people were employed at that time. Their chances of accessing management posts and being promoted are also lower than those of their non-disabled peers: according to the 2005 employment equity report, the total number of people with disabilities promoted between 2003 and 2005 amounted to 0.2% of all

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[39] The CSG has only recently become available to children between 11 and 14. Eligibility was extended over a three year period: from April 2003, children between 0-8 years of age were eligible; from April 2004, children younger than 11; and from April 2005, the entitlement extends to children younger than 14. While this is to be welcomed, it also means that a child who was 13 years old in 2003 reached her/his 15th birthday in 2005 without ever qualifying for a Child Support Grant.

employees promoted for the period (Commission for Employment Equity, 2006).

Being more likely than non disabled people to be excluded from employment, people with disabilities belong, for the most part, to the lowest income categories and would have no income without any social assistance grants: according the survey on social security recipients' profiles, the median monthly household *per capita* income of DG recipients was, in 2005, ZAR 320 per month, including all income sources. Twenty-five percent of CSG recipients who live in the wealthiest households had a monthly *per capita* household income of ZAR 178 or higher, while the median *per capita* household income of CDG recipients was ZAR 206 per month.

Apart from their actual disabilities, such vulnerability may be related to the lack of access to education faced by people with disabilities. Indeed, the 2001 census demonstrates that people with disabilities have fewer access opportunities to education than their non- disabled peers: 29.8% of them had no schooling, 34.6% attended primary education, 29.5% secondary education and 2.9% higher education institutions.

Table 6.4 **Level of schooling of disabled compared with non-disabled people (2001)**

	Total population	Disabled population
Not applicable	4 449 816	71 321
	9.9%	*3.1%*
No schooling	6 389 654	672 288
	14.2%	*29.8%*
Primary education	14 894 181	780 147
	33.3%	*34.6%*
Secondary education	16 897 670	666 884
	37.7%	*29.6%*
Higher education	2 188 456	65 342
	4.9%	*2.9%*
Total	**44 819 777**	**2 255 982**
	100%	*100%*

Note: The OECD team could not find out the precise meaning of the category "not applicable" and, therefore, excluded this category from the analysis.

Source: Statistics South Africa (2005), *Disability Prevalence 2001*, Statistics South Africa, Pretoria.

In 2001, the rate of people with disabilities without any formal schooling was twice as high (30%) as the rate of their non-disabled peers (15%) and access to education for children with disabilities between 6 and 18 years of age is, on average, 10% lower than it is for non-disabled children.

School enrolment of learners with special educational needs

Lack of data impedes precise information on the actual numbers of SEN learners in education, as well as to what extent they actually do participate. According to the survey on social security recipients' profiles, 24% of Child Dependency Care Grant recipients aged 0 to 6 attended a crèche or a child minding group in 2005, of which 65% attended only on a half-day basis. The same survey shows that 63% of child dependency care children aged 7 to 18 attended school in 2005 (de Koker, de Waal and Voster, 2006). Using World Health Organization benchmarks, White Paper 6 estimates that, in 2001, between 260 000 and 280 000 children with disabilities were out of school. In 2005, 87 865 SEN learners were enrolled in 404 special schools (representing 0.6% of all South African schools) and 32 463 in regular schools. There were more special schools in Gauteng (38.3%), Western Cape (16.9%), and fewer in Northern Cape (1.4%) and in Mpumalanga (3.7%). Free State, Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal had the highest percentage of SEN learners in mainstream schools (62.4%, 11%, and 14.1% respectively).

From about 2003 onwards, SEN learners' access to education seems to have been improving. In the early post-1994 period (1995-2003), school attendance for 7-15 year-old SEN learners fell by about 24%, and for 16-18 year-olds by about 28% (DoE, 2006). Since 2003, however, rates of SEN learners enrolled in special education rose from 0.52% of all South African learners (64 603 learners) in 2001 to 0.68% in 2005, with the greatest progress in Western Cape (from 0.96% to 1.5%), Gauteng (from 1.62% out of all learners to 1.93%) and Free State (from 0.40% out of all learners to 0.72% of all learners). While the attendance rate at preschool, crèches and day care centres rose very slightly, the rate of learners enrolled in regular schools grew from 0.16% in 2001 to 0.26% in 2005, in particular in the province of Free State, where the number of learners in inclusive education rose from 6 403 in 2001 to 20 265 in 2005.

In some other provinces the situation has, on the contrary, become worse: in Northern Cape the rate of learners attending mainstream schools fell from 0.67% in 2001 to 0.19% in 2005 and the rate of learners with special needs attending special schools fell from 0.68% in 2001 to 0.60% in 2005.

Clearly, access patterns vary among the provinces. Some, like the Western Cape, promoted the schooling of learners with special needs by generalising access to special schools: the attendance rate in special schools has risen from 0.96% of all learners to 1.5% in 2005, whereas the rate of learners with special needs attending mainstream schools has fallen from 0.22% in 2001 to 0.04% in 2005. Other provinces, like the Free State, developed schooling in mainstream schools, as well as access to special schools: here, the rate of SEN learners attending mainstream schools grew from 0.89% in 2001 to 2.9% in 2005 and the rate attending special schools from 0.40% in 2001 to 0.72% in 2005.

Although by law the type of provision to which SEN learners have access depends on their level of educational needs, it may in fact depend on their type of disability. Those learners with a disability due to a medical impairment[40] are, once the disability is identified, mainly directed towards a special school from the age of 3 until the age of 18 or even later, while learners with a learning difficulty are most often placed in ordinary schools.

Access to special schools and institutions

Despite the fact that schooling in specialised settings only represents 22% of learners with disabilities registered in 2001 (CBR), it still is the most frequently used way of educating SEN learners. Special schools are mainly designed for learners with more severe types of intellectual impairments (42.9%), those with mobility impairments (13.9%) or sensorial impairments (13.2%). Special schools enrol on average 217 learners per school and have a national average ratio of 12 learners per teacher, while the teacher ratio in ordinary schools is 32 learners per teacher. Most special schools are boarding schools and tend to separate the learners from their family environment, as well as from the support the latter may offer.

The team was told that access to these schools is difficult, since many have waiting lists and may be reluctant to accommodate children with severe impairments. With the exception of schools for learners with a severe intellectual impairment or multiple impairments, special schools offer, in theory, the same curriculum as ordinary schools, but with some teaching adaptations. The team was told that children with a visual impairment may be seated in the classroom according to their sight, use audiotapes instead of

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[40]   In terms of the OECD classification (A, B, and C), these learners would be considered to be in category A; learners with intellectual, behavioural or other learning difficulties are in category B; while disadvantaged (*e.g.* poor or marginalised) learners are in category C. The OECD categories were developed to make cross-country comparisons more meaningful.

textbooks, or may be given additional time for exams or tests. The use of computers may, in some cases, help a learner with hearing problems to do better in reading and maths than his/her non-SEN peers. It may also help learners with physical or intellectual impairments, even severe impairments, to acquire some basic skills. But the team was also told that special schools do not always have the necessary teachers, paramedical and medical support and technical help that would provide the learners with good learning conditions. Teachers find it difficult to adapt the textbooks to the different languages spoken in the province, or to adapt their teaching strategies to learners who, in addition to their main impairment, have additional learning difficulties. As in ordinary schools, learners are expected to adapt to what the schools can offer and many applicants have to wait for a place.

Access to mainstream schools

SEN learners in mainstream education may face many obstacles, even if they are enrolled in one of the 30 existing full-service schools. These obstacles may be physical: only about 2% of schools have paved access, ramps and appropriate toilet facilities for disabled learners; 6% of schools do not have toilets on site; 8 470 schools have pit latrines and 5 216 have ventilated improved pit latrines, both being unsuitable for SEN learners. In addition, despite existing experimental programs, few schools are equipped with computers and even fewer use them in classroom teaching.

These obstacles may also be due to pedagogical inaccessibility: the lack of assessment tools hinders proper evaluation of the learner's concrete needs, as well as the development of an individual learning plan (IEP) based on their needs. Even where IEPs exist, their implementation may be hampered by a lack of resources, support teachers, or the necessary technical devices. These obstacles may also lead schools, teachers and parents of non-disabled children to be reluctant to include a special needs child. Interviewees told the team that many learners with learning difficulties attend school without a precise assessment of their needs. They may struggle to follow the same curriculum as other learners, until their specific difficulties are identified either during a process developed by the school or because their problems become obvious. In some cases the child will remain in ordinary classes, or – if he/she is lucky – in special classes with a support teacher. Sometimes, parents pay for the necessary adaptations, or even participate actively in their child's schooling, often until the end of primary education.

Although many SEN learners could be directed to mainstream schools that are accepting such learners, in most cases they are directed towards a special school once they are identified as having special needs. Indeed, the

increasing numbers of learners who are re-directed by mainstream schools to special schools (that number rose from 77 752 in 2004 to 93 000 in 2007) suggests that children with special learning needs may face barriers to progress within the education system, even after they are admitted. According to the 2001 census, people with disabilities were less likely to attend secondary or tertiary education than their non-disabled peers. Data provided by some provinces reveal that, even in special schools, access to secondary education may be difficult: Gauteng reported 33 707 learners attending special schools in 2005 with 7 002 learners in grades 8 or above; Western Cape had only 4 812 in grades 8 or above, or 32% of all learners in Western Cape special schools.

An inclusive education policy favouring education in special schools

The projects developed by the DoE will, of course, be helpful in optimising the situation. The principles for financing inclusive education,[41] which are under internal discussion, intend to support the development of full-service schools rather than special settings: the plan is to reduce funding for special settings by one half and double the funding of mainstream schooling (including full-service schools). Whereas special schools represent 60.1% of the budget devoted to inclusive education in 2008-09, they will go down to 25.1% of the budget forecast for fiscal year 2010-11. Conversely, allocations to full-service schools should double in the next three years, rising from 15.3% of the inclusive education budget in 2008-09 to 35.7% in 2010-11. The aim is to promote the development of district-based support teams, as well as identification and assessment of special needs. Beyond these budgetary measures, improvement of schooling for SEN learners will depend on how supportive the DoE is of the new institutional framework, as well as on the education system's ability to meet the requirements of equity.

A lack of reliable data hindering planning and monitoring of policies

However, planning and monitoring of inclusive education may be hindered by a lack of precise and reliable data. Lack of accurate assessment procedures does not allow precise identification on learners that may have a learning difficulty due, for example, to a mild intellectual disability or to dyslexia and who may, therefore, require additional support to be successful

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[41] New *Norms and Standards for Inclusive Education* will be formally gazetted in 2008. See section on financing SEN in this Chapter.

at school. Precise analysis on the impact of policies and practices may be impeded by the inconsistencies of the information given by the provinces, by varying levels of information among provinces, as well as by data on learners with disabilities providing little information on a school system's ability to meet its requirements in terms of efficiency and equity.

The various definitions of disability contained in the 2001 census and the 2007 census do not allow reliable analysis over a certain period. While the 2001 census counted people facing a serious disability preventing them at the moment of the census from participating in social activities (South Africa Statistics, 2006), the 2007 census counted people who had a physical or a mental handicap that lasted for at least six months preventing them from carrying out daily activities independently or from participating fully in educational, economical or social activities (Department of Education, 2007). The definitions being so different, people considering themselves or their children to be disabled may differ substantially, as well as the numbers of people with disabilities that may be counted.[42] Interpretation of evolutions becomes uncertain and measuring the impact of policies may be very difficult.

A specialised sector that needs to be prepared to change and innovate

However, at present, inclusive education seems to be focused on access to special schools. Expenditures on this sector rise faster than those on mainstream schooling: while spending on public ordinary schools grew by 9.4% annually between 2003/04 and 2006/07, spending on public special education during the same period grew by 10.8% annually. In fiscal year 2006-07, the DoE allocated ZAR 700 000 for inclusive education, a slight (0.13%) decrease compared to 2000-01. The per-capita expenditure increased by 15% between 2003/04 and 2005/06, while the per-capita costs in regular schools rose by 9% in the same period. (However, there are variations in the rate of growth among provinces; it was slower in Gauteng and Limpopo than in Western Cape and Eastern Cape.)

It appears that this strategy has slightly improved the education opportunities of SEN learners who were not in school at all. The number of learners per special school or setting rose from 170 in 2001 to 217 four years later on. Some provinces created more specialised settings, for example in Gauteng the number of such settings has grown from 96 in 2001 to 108 in 2005, while in Limpopo it rose from 19 to 25 settings during the same period. Other provinces also preferred to increase the number of learners in

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[42]   In 2001, the census counted 2 255 982 people (5% of the total population) while the 2007 census counted 1 916 218 people (3.9% of the total population).

each setting, as was done in Western Cape, where the number of special settings decreased from 42 in 2001 to 40 in 2005, while the average number of learners per setting rose from 112 to 187 over the same period.

Table 6.5 **Characteristics of special schools in 2005 and 2001**

Province	2005			2001		
	Learners	Schools	Learners per school	Learners	Schools	Learners per school
Eastern Cape	8 521	42	203	6 483	41	158
Free State	5 020	20	251	3 127	19	165
Gauteng	33 707	108	312	25 451	96	265
KwaZulu-Natal	10 578	62	171	7 631	58	131
Limpopo (Northern Province in 2001)	6 659	25	266	4 250	19	224
Mpumalanga	3 218	18	179	2 692	15	180
Northern Cape	1 278	9	142	4 250	8	531
North West	3 957	40	99	4 364	42	103
Western Cape	14 927	80	187	9 213	82	112
South Africa	**87 865**	**404**	**217**	**64 603**	**380**	**170**

Source: National Treasury (2007), *Provincial Budgets and Expenditure Review 2003/04 to 2009/10*, National Treasury, Pretoria; Department of Education (2001b), *Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System*, 1 July, Department of Education, Pretoria.

The OECD team is concerned that the DoE strategy does not appear to have been connected with either the improvement of the quality of provision, or with the requirement that special schools are to become resource centres. Funding allocated to special schools or institutions is still based on the number of learners accommodated in each fiscal year and might not, therefore, encourage special schools to change their practices. Being exclusively based on a per-capita basis, the mode of funding leads special schools to focus primarily on those learners who are in the school; it may, therefore, discourage special schools from opening up to other dimensions of learners' profiles and also discourage them from considering issues of possible access to tertiary education and employment in formulating their education plans.

Being based on the annual number of learners enrolled in a special school, this mode of funding may also lead schools to be reluctant to enrol additional learners not anticipated in the budget, thereby encouraging lengthy waiting lists. Furthermore, it may prevent special schools from

paying more attention to guidance services that could or should be offered to SEN learners in mainstream schools.

By focusing initially on a small number of special schools that are to be transformed into resource centres, this strategy may not have favoured the overall quality of the services delivered by special schools in general. As for infrastructure, the OECD team observed that lack of adapted premises (or premises in poor condition) has a negative effect on the quality of schooling for those learners with significant impairments. The team was also repeatedly told that special schools have great difficulty in finding and keeping qualified personnel trained in disability provision and social work. Interviewees told the team that registered social workers or paramedics are scarce, and that schools have to hire non-qualified personnel who have to be trained "on the job". The team also heard that teachers lack teaching materials adapted to the profile of the learners and have to rely on the private sector to provide appropriate ones. Instead of being dynamic and open to their environment and to the diversity of the profiles of their learners, the settings visited by the OECD team appeared not only to be deprived of educational and teaching means, but also rather hesitant towards all kinds of innovation, because they seemed too hard for them to implement in practice.

The OECD team strongly supports an inclusive education policy improving special schools' ability to provide a high quality of teaching and to act as resource centres supporting schools, professionals and individuals. If such a policy is successful, it may discourage mainstream schools from using special settings simply as a "refuge" whenever they feel they cannot cope with learners having problems, thereby putting these learners at risk of being considered *umtwana karulumente*, "children who belong to the government" (Mji, 2006).

An institutional framework that requires visibility

The implementation of inclusive education policy as envisaged by White Paper 6 also requires that the new institutional framework is clearly visible and supported by incentives for provinces and schools to open up to diversity and accommodate learners with special needs. According to the principle of "concurrent legislative competence", opening up mainstream schools depends on the priority given by provinces to the issue of inclusive education. It also depends on whether schools (and their staff) believe that they are able to accommodate learners who need accessible premises in addition to appropriate teaching. And, finally, it depends on the ability of learners and their families to insist on their legitimate right to education of equal and acceptable quality.

At present, the lack of funding norms for inclusive education – as well as the large number of reforms recently undertaken in South Africa – may have led some provinces to be hesitant about implementing the DoE's inclusive education policy. Instead, they seem to have given priority to legally required changes, pertaining to the compulsory education system, to higher education, to the National Nutrition Plan, to the consolidation of the sectors of further education and training and, finally, to the development of pre-school education (Wildeman, 2005, pp. 45-6). Perhaps these hesitations are understandable, given the problems faced by national co-ordinators of inclusive education in supporting the provinces, as well as the lack of precise guidelines and tools related to implementing the general principles set out in White Paper 6. The new institutional framework may have appeared unclear, in terms of budgetary, political and social issues in each province. "Inclusive education" may, therefore, have been seen as a side issue, pertaining only to those having an identified impairment.

As a consequence, implementation until now has tended to depend on pilot projects financed by foreign donors,[43] on individuals' good will at ministerial and local level, as well as on certain strategies adopted by school governing boards. Implementation has also become dependent on each school's teaching team's ability to be imaginative about making *ad hoc* adaptations for learners with a mobility impairment, a sight impairment or with other particular needs. Lack of tools and statistics allowing for policy planning and monitoring has hindered the evaluation of initiatives, in terms of their efficiency, cost effectiveness and equity. Instead of being considered a vector of efficiency, inclusive education is perceived as an additional constraint, which is open to opposition by the trade unions, as well as by the various stakeholders. Instead of being a fundamental right, the schooling of learners with specific needs may be felt to be, especially by provinces facing severe poverty issues, as a "luxury" to be reserved to richer provinces. Richer provinces, in turn, may consider inclusive education as a priority, but only as long as no other new, more urgent priority appears on the agenda.

Incentives for schools to open up to learners with special needs and, more generally, to diversity are another factor to be taken into account. Although the situation is different among provinces, schools are given few incentives to include learners with special needs. Discrimination is prohibited by law, but there are no rules – as is the case in other countries – that place the responsibility on schools to root out any form of

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[43] Finland funded a 4 year (2000-03) programme (SCOPE) that developed support structures for inclusion in schools in communities and trained teachers of voluntary pilot schools in Mpumalanga and Northern Cape in order to identify good practices and to generalise inclusive education (Da Costa, 2003).

discrimination, not only in their policies, but in their actual practices. The funding system currently in use provides very little support to schools (especially those in poor or rural areas) to make premises and teaching accessible. There are still very few district-based support teams and these teams are not (yet) really able to provide support to mainstream schools at technical and teaching level.

Creating environments that are favourable to the rhythms and needs of learners with special needs requires appropriate training and support. During their initial training, the teachers – especially the older ones –were not prepared take into consideration the diversity of modes and rhythms in learning. They may lack, therefore, an understanding of how to help each learner reach his/her maximum potential, *e.g.* by differentiating their teaching practices and encouraging self-reliance in learning. Understandably, these teachers are not really in favour of having SEN learners in their classrooms; they say that they are not sufficiently trained, that they cannot cope with the many reforms that are taking place, especially in classrooms that may have as many as 45 learners. They lack the assessment tools that would allow for a better knowledge of these learners' specific needs and help them develop appropriate teaching plans. As there is no resource teacher available, teachers feel alone when facing problems. They also fear that they will not be supported by the local service providers of the Department of Social Development or by the professionals of the district-based support teams. These fears may be reinforced by grants allocated for university-based training, which is not always adapted to the teacher's needs and expectations.

The effectiveness of incentives for schools and teachers also depends on the motivation of learners and their families, especially those who are poor or come from a disadvantaged social background. In the poorest areas, SEN learners whose parents cannot afford to be involved in their child's education because they have to work far from home, or have work schedules that do not fit with school hours, may face difficulties in attending school on a regular basis. Despite the existing grants, parents of deaf learners may not have the financial means to hire a sign language interpreter enabling them to have the same educational opportunities as their non-disabled schoolmates (Heap and Morgan, 2006).

But beyond these factors, barriers to education for learners and parents depend also on a lack of means to pay for technical and human support to education. The Care Dependency Grant, for example, aims primarily to compensate for the implications of the disability and allows parents or care givers to pay for medical expenses (36%), for therapy or treatment (22%) or other expenses such as nappies or special food related to the child's disability (17%) (de Koker, de Waal andVorster, 2006). The current concept

of the Care Dependency Grant is based on a medical approach, and not on the intention to support the child's learning or development. Therefore the grants are not linked with educational issues, and do not cover costs of necessary learning assistance or devices; consequently, SEN children enrolled in mainstream schools are less likely to have access to assistance and devices than those attending special schools. They may therefore be more likely to define their disability as "severe", and thus less likely to feel able to participate in education or work (Schneider, *et al.*, 1999).

Equity in education, a key factor for inclusive education

Implementation of inclusive education strongly depends on the ability of the school system to be inclusive for all learners, regardless of their academic or physical ability, social background, gender or race and to allow each learner to be successful at school and included socially and professionally. Thus, the implementation of inclusive education is closely linked with the ability of the educational system to reduce inequalities and to foster equity, as well as participation in employment and society. Equity in education for SEN learners can only be reasonably expected and achieved if all learners have equal opportunities in education. Equity in employment can only work if all learners have the best opportunities to develop their skills and abilities for the labour market. Inclusion in society can only be expected if participation in employment and education is possible for all individuals, as guaranteed by the Constitution and human rights legislation.[44]

Equity in access is indeed a factor affecting SEN learners. According to the 2007 community survey, there are still 26.9% of learners aged 5 to 24 years who do not attend an educational institution, although many of them may want access to or to stay in education. Access difficulties can be related to increasing costs, especially for the poorest households who may (proportionally) pay twice as much as middle or upper-class households (Department of Education, 2003). Chief among these costs are the fees charged by schools. According to the 2001 audit of early childhood

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44   See Art. 23 (2) and (3) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (signed by SA in 1995): "Recognising the special needs of a disabled child, assistance …shall be provided *free of charge*, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child, and shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development."

education, access to pre-school education was reserved to better-off households, while the poorer ones tended to use extended family connections. As described in Chapter 3, parents whose children are enrolled in no fee schools are still facing costs, for example for school uniforms, transportation, and – in the case of children with SEN – special devices, services, or learning materials. According to the office for the status of disabled people, lack of financial means hindered 40.1% of learners in attending school. Direct costs related to education may particularly hamper learners with special needs whose families belong to the poorest households, who cannot afford to buy the additional learning materials or devices their child may need to progress in school (Office on the Status of Disabled People, 2003). Direct costs also limit access to pre-school and thus may deprive children from assessment and screening that could help early identification of special learning needs or cognitive impairments.

The financial burden increases the risk of discrimination; for example, although principals are explicitly not allowed to do so, a 2001 systemic evaluation of grade 3 learners revealed that some schools withheld report cards of learners whose parents could not afford to pay the fees, withheld books from them, or even excluded them from attending school (Centre for Applied Legal Studies Africa, 2006).

Lack of public transport is another barrier. In 2003, the most common mode of transport to both primary and secondary schools was to travel by foot (Department of Education, 2006b). Lack of public transport is likely to have a negative impact on SEN children: they may have to walk long distances between buses/taxi stands and home or school, may have difficulty in getting on and off transport; in addition, the OECD team heard that taxi drivers sometimes refuse to pick them up and/or are aggressive towards them (Coulson, Napier and Matsebe, 2006). Those having a motor or visual impairment may find it hard to cope with muddy, uneven, rocky and unpaved roads, in particular in informal settlements. Their journeys to and from school become more tiring and longer and thus reduce their time for homework. Their access to school depends on the availability of their parents or other relatives who may be obliged to co-ordinate their daily organisation with the school timetable and thus may be forced to stop working or leave the child at home. Education may become a burden and may come to be considered unnecessary by learners, as well as their families. According to the survey on social security recipients' profile, distance to school or college was considered a barrier by 6.4% of those children not attending school and receiving the Child Dependency Grant (de Koker, de Waal and Vorster, 2006).

Equity in learning outcomes is another issue. Although repetition is on a downward trend (Department of Education, 2006b), significant numbers of

learners fall behind age-grade norms and take more than 9 years to complete grade 9 (Perry and Arends, 2003). The overall percentage of repeaters is highest in grade 1[45] and net enrolment ratios drop significantly after grade 3 (from 91% to 78%) in 2003. In this year, only 62% of learners in grade 3 were of appropriate age (*i.e.* between 7 and 9 years old). This falls to 54.1% at grade 6 and 44.4% at grade 9. National and international assessments also show that significant numbers of learners do not acquire the basic skills required for the next phase of schooling (see Chapter 3 for assessment).

Moreover, a considerable number of learners leave education before completing their courses. In 2003, the completion rate at grade 9 was only 47%; and while some three-quarters of South African adults over the age of 25 have completed at least grade 6, only half of them have completed grade 9 and less than one-third have completed grade 12. At post-compulsory level, data suggest that learners older than 15 years were at increased risk of dropping out; school attendance rates for 16-18 year-olds were lower (83.1%) than the school attendance rates of 7-15 year-olds (92.2%).

Obviously, repetition, as well as drop-out, reduce young people's job prospects and may lead to poverty and exclusion: according to Statistics South Africa, individuals between 25 to 34 years of age who completed secondary education or accessed tertiary education were better protected against unemployment than those who had lower levels of qualification (Statistics South Africa, 2004b). Boredom and lack of motivation also affect attendance and completion. Data also shows that, in 2003, 11.6% of learners between 16 to 18 years of age did not attend school because they considered education "useless and uninteresting" (Statistics South Africa, 2004b).

Inequities based on gender and race also affect SEN learners' education opportunities. Even though interracial disparities have declined over time, African and coloured learners are still less likely to complete secondary education (grades 10 to 12). Asians and whites, by comparison, more often complete their education with a Matric certificate (33.3 % and 40.9 % in 2007).

Neither the 2001 census nor the 2007 census provide information on the education opportunities black people with disabilities have by comparison with white South African disabled people. Nonetheless, according to research on OECD member countries, it may be reasonably assumed that the overrepresentation of black people facing difficulties in accessing education may be even higher for those black people presenting a disability (Hutmacher, Cochrane and Bottani, 2001).

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[45]   This reflects the high numbers of late or early entrants into grade 1, as well as low achievers.

Table 6.6 **Highest level of education among people aged 20 years or over, by population group, in 2001 and 2007 (in percentages)**

	Black African		Coloured		Indian/Asian		White		Total	
	2001	2007	2001	2007	2001	2007	2001	2007	2001	2007
No schooling	22.3	12.8	8.3	5.6	5.3	3.6	1.4	0.6	17.9	10.3
Some primary	18.5	18.8	18.4	16.3	7.7	7.3	1.2	1.0	16.0	16.0
Complete primary	6.9	6.5	9.8	8.8	4.2	3.5	0.8	0.8	6.4	5.9
Some secondary	30.4	40.9	40.1	46.1	33.0	35.6	25.9	31.6	30.8	40.1
Std 10/grade 12	16.8	15.4	18.5	17.4	33.0	35.6	25.9	31.6	20.4	18.6
Higher education	5.2	5.6	4.9	5.6	14.9	16.6	29.8	31.0	8.4	9.1

Source: Department of Education (2007), *Community Survey 2007*, Department of Education, Pretoria.

Similarly, although gender disparities have decreased, female learners are still disadvantaged compared to their male counterparts. While the percentages of males without formal education was reduced by half between 1996 (17.1%) and 2007 (8.4%), the percentage of females without formal education declined only by 40% (to 12.1%) during the same period. In 2003, at primary level, boys outnumbered girls by around 106 to 100. Girls had lower completion rates than boys (boys' completion rate at grade 6 [76%] was almost 5% higher than that of girls [71.2%]). In grade 9, the completion rate for boys was 55% compared to 49.7% for girls.

For girls and young women with disabilities, the struggle for access is made worse by the fact that they have fewer *a priori* chances to participate in or complete education and to find work. Indeed, the 2001 census reveals that disabled women are more likely to have no formal education (32.2%) than their non-disabled peers (15.4%) and are less likely to access secondary education (29.1% vs 38.1%) and tertiary education (2.8% vs. 4.9%). They are also less likely to have a Matric certificate than non-disabled women (7% vs. 12.4%); thus their chances of being employed are only half those of women without disabilities (9.9% vs. 17.1%).

Beyond the factors linked specifically to disability, access to "inclusive education" clearly depends on the ability of the school system to cope with diversity and to protect learners who struggle to gain fair access to education, skills and work opportunities. Learners who have difficulties in managing English at school, as well as those who have additional learning needs due to poverty or other social conditions, may be left behind. According Statistics South Africa, 9.7% of 7-15 year-old learners who did not attend school were impeded by family commitments and 6.2% of 16-18 year-olds indicated that they had to leave school due to pregnancy (Statistics South Africa, 2004a). The team was told that many children – especially

orphans – experience hunger, tend to attend irregularly, are often ill and are at risk of dropping out or being excluded from school. Children affected by HIV/AIDS may progress slowly, missing both learning time and important assessments.

Finally, schools with very poor facilities and large classes cannot reasonably hope to provide high-quality teaching and learning for all, including learners with SEN. Despite the efforts made by the DoE to improve school facilities, 26% of schools are still in poor or very poor condition, especially in the province of Eastern Cape where 40% of the schools are below national average. Some of these schools are built from mud, without heating, electricity or proper sanitation; they struggle to recruit and retain good teachers because of the poor conditions and large class sizes.

Implementing inclusive education will require intensive information and capacity building campaigns to help provinces and schools regard inclusive education as a way of achieving effectiveness and equity for all learners, rather than relating it only to the schooling of disabled children. Since not all school governing bodies have the same views of the role and purpose of education, legal requirements may have to be imposed whereby every school should include special needs issues in its strategy. In addition, financial incentives may be needed to motivate mainstream schools to formulate and implement accessibility strategies, as well as information systems to make the schools accountable for the implementation of their mission statements.

Capacity building strategies for teachers and other educators would also improve the schools' ability to recognise the diversity of learners' profiles and to plan and monitor their pedagogical accessibility strategy. This may require assessment and evaluation tools to help schools plan their admission strategies, to improve the quality of teaching and be cost effective in using their resources. At pre-school and grade-R levels, for example, better diagnostic tools and closer co-operation with health and social services would help schools identify needs early and provide the relevant support to teachers. More sophisticated classroom assessment in schools would also pinpoint more precisely when – and why – a learner falls behind, so that targeted remedial help can be given immediately.

Recommendations

- Develop a precise, reliable and consistent data gathering system on SEN students and on a school system's ability to improve each learner's skills, to meet efficiency, as well as equity requirements

and to increase learners' inclusion opportunities. Data should therefore focus on the enabling or disabling effect of policies and practices instead of looking primarily at learners' disadvantages and difficulties.

- Strengthen financial and methodological incentives and supports at provincial, local and school level, leading stakeholders to include inclusiveness for all in their strategies and empowering them to fulfil their missions and tasks. Schools should be invited to implement tools for evaluating students' needs and for individualising educational approaches, diversifying educational options and identifying appropriate support and assistance.

- Support special schools more effectively in their new roles and missions by improving facilities, as well as by empowering teachers to provide high quality teaching and social workers to provide appropriate services and guidance.

- Make mainstream schools, full service schools and special schools accountable for their pedagogical, physical and social accessibility strategies, and link modes of funding with performance management. Schools should be required to provide an annual report showing data and stakeholder comments on physical, as well as pedagogical accessibility.

- Training schemes offered to teachers, paramedical personal and social workers should focus on problem solving and methods focusing on the development of learners' strengths and competences rather than shortcomings. Initial, as well as continuous training should bring together parents and professionals from educational, social and health departments allowing for the sharing of professional culture and improving co-operation.

- The Departments of Education, Health, Social Development and Labour should co-ordinate their policies at a national, provincial and local level in order to foster multisectoral approaches improving the appropriateness of services and increasing students' transition opportunities between the types of provision, as well as to the various levels of education and to employment.

- Foster distance learning opportunities to overcome, on a short term basis, physical barriers and improve SEN learners' education opportunities.

- Develop measures and initiatives empowering parents and learners to be aware of their rights and needs and to participate actively in the educational process as well as in society.

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Chapter 7: The Teaching Career and Teacher Education

A national audit on teaching was the starting point of education reform in this field and was carried out by the South African Government in 1995. It was followed by various top-down approaches by the recently created national Department of Education to change education practices, culminating in the publication of Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE) in 2006.

The chapter analyses some aspects of the contemporary teaching force (such as teaching careers, working conditions, recruitment, the salary system, professional support and the workload of teachers) and describes the key challenges of initial and in-service training and development. It also points to areas that need further attention to increase the quality of future teacher education and development: amongst them the national policy framework for teacher education and development, the recently established teacher salary structure and the necessity of well established linkages with other initiatives and developments in education.

Recommendations include a variety of measures, ranging from a comprehensive action plan to initiatives for more effective school teaching and management.

Education policy change and the teacher context

When the new South African government took office in 1994, it inherited an education system with embedded inequality, much fragmentation and serious underinvestment. The new regime signalled early on that the transformation of the education system was a high priority, viewing education as a key agency in building the new South Africa. High hopes were entertained that a reformed education system would open up great opportunities for all citizens. Inspired by optimistic and idealistic aspirations, a drive was initiated for the early formulation of education policy and legislative enactments that, it was hoped, would give South

Africa a modern, high quality and efficient education system. Less attention was paid to the dynamics and time scale involved in the achievement of major educational change and to the on-the-ground circumstances in which the reforms had to take root. While a minority of fine, well equipped and resourced schools existed, in the great majority of cases schools were very poorly positioned to deliver sophisticated policy programmes.

If the state's aspirations for a high-quality education system were to be realised, the most significant agency on which it would have to rely was the teaching force. It is the teachers, in classrooms throughout the country, who would be charged with converting the policy into reality. To achieve this, a great deal would depend on the training, capacity, motivation, resourcing and conditions of work of the teaching force. Under the Apartheid regime, teaching was one of the careers open to black, coloured and Indian people. However, their training, salaries and conditions of work differed greatly from those of the white minority. A teaching career was not highly considered and this attitude has continued in the post-Apartheid era, when other professions have become available to black people.

In 1995, the government carried out a national audit on teaching that revealed many disparities and problems. The new national Department of Education (DoE) immediately set about creating non-discriminatory school environments, delivering certain basic services to schools and, through legislation and persuasion, greatly increasing learner attendance. A very important structural change was undertaken, in 1996-97, referred to as "teacher rationalisation". This had two elements to it: the equalisation of teacher salaries and the equalisation of learner:teacher ratios among all schools. In the latter case, the aim was to establish general learner- teacher ratios of 40:1 in primary schools and 35:1 in secondary schools (Jansen and Taylor, 2003). While prompted by the political equalisation policy, such a major adjustment of the school system was not accomplished without considerable upheaval and difficulty. The scheme led to a significant increase in the number of new teachers being employed and to improved salary and pension entitlements for many teachers. However, the policy also led to the exit from the profession of many skilled and experienced practitioners who preferred to take the voluntary severance package offered rather than be involved in redeployment and what they saw as diminished working conditions.

In 1997, the national guidelines for redeployment were abolished and provincial departments of education henceforth could decide on the number of teachers to be employed depending on their budgets. This led to a long and damaging clash with teacher unions. In 1999, the Department of Education and the teacher unions signed an agreement on redeployment. School governing bodies now had the right to employ extra teachers if they

had the resources to pay for them, which, again, gave rise to inequalities between well financed boards and those operating in disadvantaged circumstances. For a period, new recruitment into teaching was halted until all the teachers deemed to be in excess were redeployed or removed. This gave a sense of uncertainty about teaching as a stable career.

Another contemporary policy that caused upset in teacher education circles was the decision, in the late nineties, to close the 120 training colleges that had existed in the Bantustans and to locate teacher education within the higher education sector (in universities or technikons). These higher education institutions also underwent a process of rationalisation and amalgamation. Such a process is difficult to achieve and the pains involved have not yet been fully alleviated. While the decision to close the training colleges and locate teacher education within the university sector was aimed at improving quality and standards, it had side effects and problems. Thus, from a number of viewpoints, teaching as a career was subject to considerable upheaval and change during the years immediately after 1994. Yet, it was into this milieu that radically new educational policy proposals, most of which emerged simultaneously, were to be implemented.

In 1997, the Department of Education launched its new curriculum policy, Curriculum 2005. In its ideology, content and pedagogical approach, this curriculum was in strong contrast to that which had traditionally been in operation. It was an outcomes-based model linked to the objectives approach in education. It identified 8 learning areas, with 66 learning outcomes. It urged that the curriculum be treated in an integrated way, with much active learning by learners and the teacher viewed as a facilitator of learning. It drew from models operating in some highly developed countries and it sought to place the South African curriculum among the most progressive internationally.

This curricular policy became a highly contested issue within South Africa. In 2000, the Minister of Education set up a Curriculum Review Committee, which reported in 2002. This led to a modification of the curriculum, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), with a more "streamlined" approach. This is the curriculum that has been rolled out since that time. The policy and the ensuing debate caused much confusion and uncertainty. Many teacher educators and teachers did not understand or take ownership of some of the concepts involved. The mode of curriculum dissemination did not help. The "cascade model" of in-service education proved to be very inadequate and reached the schools in a much-diluted form.

In 2000, the government published the Norms and Standards for Educators (NSE). This set out, in a broad and generic manner, the

requirements of the Department of Education in respect of the knowledge, values and skills that an educator must acquire. It represents a competence-based approach to teacher education. The word "educator" is preferred to "teacher" and is aimed at encompassing all personnel with an educational role to play. It set out seven roles for the educator and each role was broken down into three units – practical competence; foundational competence; and reflexive (sic) competence. These were further elaborated into a total of 132 specific competences. The qualifications of teachers were linked to the new National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The Bachelor of Education (B. Ed.) degree was placed on level 6 of the NQF, while the B. Ed (Hons.) was placed at level 7. Teacher educator institutions were informed that "All the competences must be developed in all initial teacher education qualifications" (Department of Education, 2000). This was by far too elaborate a superstructure for the circumstances that prevailed. It was particularly unrealistic to seek such competences from beginning teachers. Competency models should gradate the competences to match different stages in the teacher's career.

This elaborate competency framework was very new to South Africa, involving concepts and terminology with which the vast majority of teacher educators and teachers had no familiarity or experience. The teaching force available at the time had been trained in a very different tradition and, in some cases, in training institutions that suffered from serious deficiencies in quality.

For many black teachers, neither their school education nor their teacher training obliged them to study mathematics, or science. They were now required to teach an altogether new curriculum and to exhibit a set of competences that the most highly skilled professionals anywhere in the developed world would find difficult to demonstrate. Major assumptions were being made about the capacity of teacher educators and teachers that were not based on reality. Furthermore, a dangerous and misleading policy assumption was being made that the policy could be implemented on a universal basis. The on-the-ground conditions of schools varied enormously throughout South Africa, as they still do, from elite, well-equipped schools to mud cabins without heat, water, electricity, or proper blackboards. The policy statements were impressive to read in the abstract, but they did not sufficiently relate to the traditions and circumstances that existed in South Africa. For many schools it was "mission impossible" in relation to the training and capacities of their staffs, to the conditions of work that prevailed and to the lack of equipment and teaching resources.

Long established insights about the achieving of educational reform in developing countries, such as those of Beeby relating to the stages of system development were ignored (Beeby, 1996). More contemporary work on the

achievement of major educational change in developed countries – such as that of Fullan and Sarason – was also ignored. In South Africa an unjustified, if understandable, reliance was placed on the impact that policy statements and regulations could make on genuine implementation of educational change. Policy makers had a great appetite and urgency to use the education system to build quickly the new society to which they aspired. Their motivation was unquestionably for the greater good of society. However, there is no quick fix for education reform. It is a complex and gradual process in any country and was exacerbated by the nature of the education system inherited by the new administration. More reflection on the South African context than fascination with some international models of curriculum and teacher competences might have better served the situation. The achievement of "deep change" in educators' practice takes time and many supportive elements.

In the event, the top-down approach, in a compressed time-scale, with inadequate preparation or resourcing, posed daunting challenges for the teaching force and teacher educators. The pressure for change was on, but the means to achieve it were inadequate. This was coupled with a sequence of measures aimed at evaluating teacher performance to which salary provision and modes of career advancement were linked. A rewards-and-sanctions approach was adopted as a guiding tool for teacher remuneration. These various factors gave rise to teacher attitudinal and behavioural problems that are not favourable to good professional engagement and performance. If a conscientious teacher is faced with a set of objectives for which he/she does not have the capacity, nor is in a position to deliver, the result is likely to be feelings of guilt, inadequacy, low self-esteem, and alienation, or, at best "shallow coping" with the new requirements without real engagement. In sum, the teaching career in South Africa is facing many problems. Some of these are rooted in the experiences of the early years of national policy formation, which have left their mark. Any future policy on teacher education and the teaching career now needs to examine the issues in a comprehensive way, rather than focus on specific issues whose resolution might appear straightforward.

Some aspects of the contemporary teaching force

Supportive agencies

Two institutions were established by the new regime that are of particular importance to teachers. One is the Education Labour Relations Commission (ELRC), which is a statutory body. Teacher unions are

members of this body and contribute financially to it. Its key role is to engage in collective bargaining, and conciliation and arbitration issues. It also has a dispute prevention dimension, particularly with regard to promotion and dismissals. The ELRC commissions research reports on issues affecting teachers' lives. Two such recent reports relate to the health of teachers and to teachers' workloads. The ELRC provides a multilateral forum where teacher issues can be discussed, problems resolved and claims processed. While the concept and role of the ELRC are impressive, the review team formed the view that its potential is not being fully realised, and that it would benefit from a tighter focus on current problems.

Another major agency in relation to teachers has been the South African Council of Educators (SACE), set up in 2000. During the Apartheid era, there had been the Federal Council of Teachers, but this excluded black and coloured teachers. SACE has three major responsibilities, namely: the professional development of teachers; the registration of teachers; and the regulation of teachers through the operation of an agreed code of ethics. In general, SACE is regarded as devoted to the promotion of teaching as a profession.

It is compulsory for all recognised teachers to be registered. Following its establishment, SACE extended registration to all existing teachers. Now specific qualification requirements, such as the four year B. Ed. degree, are needed for registration. At present, SACE is positioning itself to be the co-ordinator and endorser of continuing professional teacher development (CPTD) for teachers into the future. Of the 30 person Council, the majority (18) are teachers. The remainder represent stakeholders, such as the teacher education agencies, school governing bodies, and independent schools. The chairperson and five members are appointed by the Minister of Education. SACE has contributed significantly to the teaching profession and has the potential to achieve more.

Profile of the teaching career and its working conditions

At present, there are almost 390 000 teachers in the system. The vast majority teach in public schools, with only 5% teaching in independent schools. The national average learner:teacher ratio in public schools is about 33:1, down from 35:1 in 2004 (National Treasury, 2007, p. 11). But, of course, many schools have higher ratios than the average. Two-thirds of the teachers are aged between 35 and 50 years and so most of them were trained during the Apartheid era. Women predominate in the teaching force, amounting to about 66%, but, as in many countries, this proportionality is not reflected in the holding of senior positions in the schools. The attrition

rate is about 5/6%, per annum. Teachers are highly unionised, with about 88% being members of the main unions (Shisana, *et al.*, 2005).

Teaching as a career has low public status. The image of teaching as portrayed in the media also tends to be negative. This is sometimes compounded by the lack of professional behaviour by teachers as in drunkenness, absenteeism and so on. Many teachers have internalised a negative image of their work, experiencing a lack of confidence and low morale. By common consent, the type of in-service education that has been available to them to cope with many new policies was very poor. Teachers expressed themselves to the reviewers as being overburdened with paperwork and regulations and felt they were "at the end of their tether". Some teachers who saw themselves as resisters to the Apartheid system prior to regime change felt disenchanted and rather alienated from the work context in which they now found themselves. In a study conducted in South Africa by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) for the ELRC in 2005, it was found that 55% of teachers would leave teaching if they could. The reasons cited for this included workload stress, low salaries, lack of discipline in schools and lack of career advancement (CBR). Attrition rates seem greatest among younger teachers; employment options and pension considerations act as a holding force for many older teachers. The loss of young blood is, of course, a drain on the vitality of the teaching force.

The working conditions for teachers vary enormously, depending on the location and environmental circumstances of schools. Reviewers visited schools that were as well equipped and organised as good schools in other countries, but even here dedicated teachers voiced dissatisfaction with their lot. At the other extreme, there are schools that are little better than hovels. The reviewers visited an exemplar of this category that was a mud hut built by the local community, with uneven mud floors, no heating, no water or sanitation, no electricity, having holes in the roof and with only the most rudimentary school furniture. To the quiet, reticent teachers who tried their best in such a situation, the high powered discourse of the Norms and Standards for Educators could have little or no meaning.

Apart from their direct professional responsibilities, many teachers have to cope with the effects of major socio-economic disadvantage and domestic dysfunction. The national unemployment rate of 25% masks a much higher incidence in some areas, with the attendant social consequences. It is estimated that over 50% of people live below the poverty line (Jansen and Taylor, 2003).

While attendance rates at school are commendably high, many parents are unable to give the understanding and active support to their children to help their progression at school. Many would have little or no formal

education themselves; overall there are 4.7 million people completely illiterate. There is great concern among policy makers and teachers about a growing, but destructive subculture impinging on school life. This includes incidences of vandalism, learner violence, intimidation and rape, which are sometimes fuelled by indulgence in drug taking.

In the past, most educational current expenditure went on paying teacher salaries. The proportion retained for discretionary funding on school resources has improved in recent years – from 9% in 1998/99 to 12% in 2002/03, to 20% in 2006/07 (National Treasury, 2007, p. 15). However, expenditure on the security needs of some schools has been making inroads into these funds. Schools are also coping with the side effects of family breakdown, increased incidence of single parent families and the migratory patterns of parents who have to travel far from home in search of work. Some provinces have been finding it very difficult to recruit teachers for remote rural areas, while for some subject areas – such as mathematics or science – it has been virtually impossible. Incentives such as bonuses and transport are being used to encourage teachers to go to such schools.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on South African society has been severe and has also taken its toll among the teaching force. A recent study on the health of educators, conducted for the ELRC, revealed that there was a high incidence of HIV among educators, at 12.7%, with the highest prevalence among Africans at 16%. The highest proportion of affected teachers was in the younger age bracket, those who had been teaching from 0 to 14 years, who accounted for 55.5% of those affected. Educators residing and working in rural areas had significantly higher HIV prevalence than those in urban areas (Shisana, *et al.*, 2005).

The study also found that all chronic conditions, including being HIV positive, use of tobacco and high risk drinking were associated with high rates of self-rated absenteeism. The report stated: "Low morale at the educational institution, intention to quit teaching, low job satisfaction and high job stress were significantly associated with higher numbers of self-rated absenteeism and decreased 'presenteeism' (inadequate performance when present)" (Shisana, *et al.*, 2005, p. 129).

A study on teacher workload for the ELRC reported that many teachers often come late to school and leave too early; and too much of the time they do spend at school is devoted to administrative tasks, rather than to teaching and learning, a trend which becomes progressively worse as the week progresses (CBR). Thus, the working conditions for many teachers are not propitious to high level performance and the response of some teachers reveals a dismal picture. In such a large-scale system, with so many complex variations of circumstance, problems are bound to occur. However, the

situation suggests to the OECD team that if real progress is to be made in educational achievement for the masses in South Africa, DoE policy on teacher education and the teaching career needs much sustained and long-term attention.

Recruitment into teaching

The problematic state of the teaching career is aggravated by the current situation affecting recruitment into teaching. The education system needs the competitive recruitment of high quality, well motivated applicants into the teaching profession. However, due to the poor public image of teaching as a career, and to factors outlined above, this is not what is happening. As an illustration, while it is calculated that about 20 000 teachers are needed annually during these years, only about 6 000 are graduating. Even at that, teacher education institutions have problems with the standards of education of some entrants due to academic weaknesses that prevent an appropriate level of engagement with the teacher education courses on offer. Teacher shortages are expected to reach at least 15 000 by 2008 (Department of Education, 2006, p. 11). The problem is further compounded in that not all teacher education graduates will take up teaching jobs, or stay in South Africa to teach. A 2005 sample study of newly qualified teachers in KwaZulu-Natal suggested that fewer than two-thirds intended to teach in South Africa, if they teach at all (CBR, p. 23). There is also evidence of campaigns to entice South African teachers to take up teaching jobs in other English speaking countries where more favourable work conditions and salaries are on offer. Of course, some teachers also immigrate into South Africa, but, on balance, the brain drain is outward.

Salary patterns

While in 1996 many black teachers were given a significant salary boost along with the teacher rationalisation process – particularly at beginning salary levels – over the subsequent decade there was relatively slow growth in teacher pay. Over this period the real inflation-adjusted annual increase in teacher salaries has been on average around 0.5%; in other words teacher pay increased only slightly more than the cost of living. There was also a moratorium for a number of years on notch progression within the incremental scale. The *General Household Survey 2005* revealed that teachers earned about 2.5 times more than the typical parents of the teacher's learners, many of whom would be unemployed. However, the data also showed that teachers' income was about 9% lower than the average pay across other professions (Department of Education, 2007). This may be partly linked to the fact that there was a higher proportion of blacks and

females within the teaching profession, reflecting residues of race and gender discrimination in the labour market.

A striking feature of the salary structure for teachers in South Africa was that pay for beginning teachers was relatively good, but "with age teacher pay, relative to pay in other occupations, became relatively worse to the point of becoming undesirably low" (Department of Education, 2007, p. 17). It is clear that years of experience in a profession outside teaching yielded much better pay returns than years of experience in teaching. In discussions with teachers and teacher union representatives, the OECD review team was informed that this had been a major cause of teacher dissatisfaction. Between 2003 and 2007, teachers engaged twice in strike action, the last occasion being when teachers joined the public service workers strike in June 2007.

Looked at in comparative perspective with other developing countries, studies have shown that the purchasing power of South African teachers' emoluments is greater than teachers in such countries. This needs to be balanced with the number of teachers employed, with South Africa having a high learner:teacher ratio of 33:1 in 2006. Furthermore, the ratio of pay of more experienced teachers to less experienced teachers was below the average of a number of developing countries. Within South Africa itself, teachers see that the pay differentials that exist between them and other professionals, as well as the non-progressive structure of their salary scales, linked sometimes to very daunting conditions of work, as making the teaching career unattractive to bright, ambitious school leavers.

Teacher selection and appointment

An ongoing problem regarding policy on teachers, which is well recognised by the South African authorities, is the lack of a satisfactory database on all aspects of the teaching force. Significant information lacunae exist on demand and supply, retention patterns, mobility, subject shortages and so on. Plans are afoot for a comprehensive electronic database that, when in place, should greatly assist informed policy and planning.

The appointment procedures for teachers have been a cause of some concern. Teacher selection is done by the school governing bodies (SGBs), and it has been suggested that sometimes the SGBs (including parent representatives) may not be well equipped for this role. There have also been complaints of local interests and relationships unduly influencing teacher selection. However, the establishment of SGBs was seen as significant plank in the policy process of democratising education and is unlikely to be altered. Better training of school governors to prepare them for management responsibilities would be a worthwhile investment.

Proposed appointments are subject to the confirmation of the provincial departments of education, which are the teachers' employer. Rigorous procedures at this level should act as a restraint on any unfair teacher selection procedures.

Quality assurance

In South Africa's education system, regulation and accountability processes regarding teacher employment loom large. This involves the preparation of much documentation and reportage at school level. The inspection system that existed during Apartheid had fallen into disrepute and was abandoned. Under the IQMS, introduced in 2003, "accountability" involves whole-school evaluation and self-appraisal by schools and teachers. An incentive scheme operates where evaluation of a teacher's performance is linked to salary progression. The evaluations are categorised as "good", "satisfactory" and "unsatisfactory". Those evaluated as good go up two notches in the salary scale at three yearly intervals, those with a satisfactory grade go up one notch, while those regarded as unsatisfactory receive no advancement. The scheme has been operated by internal school committees. However, the tendency to classify the majority as "Good" has prompted the planning of a new performance incentive scheme, with more external moderation. Such processes involve a great deal of time and effort and questions can be raised as to whether there are better systems directed towards teacher support and development. A different type of teacher incentive scheme exists in the form of an annual National Teachers' Award. Under this scheme, the nine provincial departments of education nominate a total of 72 teachers who are given awards at national level. A worthy aim of this scheme, which could be further developed, is to highlight the public's esteem for distinguished work by teachers.

Professional support

There is considerable variation between provinces regarding the funds devoted to education, the status of education in the province, and the school infrastructure. Some provinces are better positioned than others to promote education and provinces vary in the priority they give to education in relation to their other responsibilities. As regards the local support for schools and teachers, this is a responsibility of districts, of which there are 80 in the country. Again, the performance of the districts varies greatly. Some are inadequately staffed, or inappropriately staffed. Some staff members would have worked in and been influenced by the previous regime. Some would have little practical experience of teaching under the new policy paradigms. They do not exhibit the sense of fluency within, nor

ownership of, new policy approaches that would carry credibility and conviction among school staffs (Taylor, 2006). As advisors to teachers, many staff tend to be overstretched, even if they were in a position to demonstrate best practice to teachers and leaders in the schools. There is now acceptance that, however much policy makers may have wished the districts to be able to perform what official policy aspired to, the reality is otherwise. Accordingly, a major reform of the operation of the districts is in gestation that, if realised, could have the potential to provide much-needed, quality support to teachers on the ground.

Workload

As mentioned earlier, the lack of fit between the policy expectations of teachers and the daunting circumstances in which many teachers find themselves seeking to deliver on such expectations cause significant attitudinal and health problems for teachers. The Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education in its report of 2005 has stated, "Many conscientious teachers feel permanently overworked and overwhelmed by their responsibilities" (Department of Education, 2005, p. 39). Teachers are also faced with self-identity problems as the concept of the role has been changed from the teacher as the mediator of disciplines of knowledge to that of facilitator of learners' learning experience, within an integrated curricular policy (Coleman, Graham-Jolly and Middlewood, 2003).

Furthermore, policy makers and the general public have been gravely disappointed that, despite the great hopes for educational achievement in the new South Africa and improved inputs to the system, the performance of South African learners on a range of international and intra-African tests has been very poor (see assessment section in Chapter 3). This has not helped the public valuation of the teaching force and, consciously or unconsciously, it has been affecting the morale and self-confidence of teachers. However, it is clear that the problems cannot be narrowed down to the culpability or intransigence of teachers. It is a much more complex issue. Of course, there are inefficient and ineffective teachers among the teaching force and the review team was informed that it has been extremely difficult to dismiss chronically inefficient teachers in the South African context. SACE, for example, informed the team that, since its establishment in 2000, it had deregistered only about 60 teachers. As in other education systems, ineffective and inefficient teachers may be a small minority; although of course they should be dealt with. But it should be remembered that learner underachievement is due to many factors besides teacher competence.

Teacher Education

The desire of the post-Apartheid administration for radically new curricular and pedagogic policies – against a background of an inherited system with sharply contrasting policies and traditions and with very weak human and material resources – posed major challenges for teacher education, if teachers were to be prepared and equipped to implement the new policy agenda. While Curriculum 2005 was to be rolled out over a number of years, changes in teacher education policy were required as a matter of urgency. Ideally, close consultation and collaboration should exist between the policy makers and those in charge of teacher education when engaging on such major changes. But higher education institutions and teacher training colleges were, in subsequent years, to undergo a major rationalisation process, with the closure and amalgamation of many institutions causing stress and uncertainty for staff.

Furthermore, there were tensions relating to the DoE's Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) policy, as well as to the new Norms and Standards for Education. The universities had not been closely involved in designing those policies and they had reservations about their suitability. They were also aware that translating these sophisticated policies into practices that fitted with the harsh realities of schools would be difficult. In addition, there were tensions between the higher education institutions and the provincial departments of education, particularly about in-service training of teachers in relation to Curriculum 2005. This work was largely undertaken by the provinces on a cascade model, which was weak and insufficient. Instead of a partnership, there was rivalry and lack of trust between the teacher education institutions and the provincial education authorities (Department of Education, 2005, p. 23).

Initial professional education of teachers (IPET)

The faculties of education in the universities and technikons also faced significant difficulties. Some staff had little or no practical experience of implementing the new policies and had little sense of ownership of them. This places them at a significant disadvantage if they are to be exemplars, models, or proponents of the new policies to student teachers. Up to 50% of staff are on part-time contracts (Department of Education, 2005, p. 10). The recruitment of specialist staff on a part-time basis can have advantages, but when it is on such a large scale it is harmful to the academic and research work of the faculties. Faculties of education are listed at the lowest rung of the universities' financial grading for their faculties. The subsidy level for initial teacher education programmes is pitched at too low a level and

ignores the fact that quality teacher education is a very labour intensive process. It needs to make provision for small group and individual attention, as well as large groups; some of the work needs to be done in laboratory-type conditions, with the aid of information and communications technology; and the intern/practical dimension needs skilled monitoring and feedback. The lack of provision for this is a serious defect in the present system.

Student:staff ratios tend to be high; existing staff are overstretched, which in turn impedes their research output, which is badly needed in the system. The Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (MCTE) put the matter very forcefully when it stated, "Their [the faculties'] institutional capacity to provide quality Initial Professional Education of Teachers (IPET) programmes is deteriorating rapidly...The truth of the matter is that many Faculties of Education are facing financial meltdown" (Department of Education, 2005, pp. 19, 20).

The deans of the education faculties have formed the Deans' Forum, which meets on a regular basis. This has proved to be a useful consultative agency and, as a united forum, it is hoped that it may help to improve the present doleful situation.

Qualifications

The main pathways for initial teacher education are the four year B. Ed. degree and a one year post-graduate diploma – following an approved first degree – known as the PGCE, or the Higher Diploma in Education. Unqualified or underqualified practising teachers can top up their experience with the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE). These education courses are validated by the Council on Higher Education (CHE). In recent times, CHE has conducted a full quality assurance review of a number of B. Ed. courses and given feedback on desired improvements to the institutions. Such a quality assurance mechanism is important to the institutions, the policy makers, employers and the profession. It provides an important lever regarding the sustaining of standards.

Student intake in IPET

A key problem facing teacher education institutions is attracting high quality applicants. The Department of Education reported in 2006 that "there has been a significant decline in the enrolment of student teachers over the past decade" (Department of Education, 2006, p. 11). In particular, there has been a decline in African students and in those who would have a proficiency in indigenous languages. Of the approximately 6 000 graduates

in 2005, only about 500 had a knowledge of local African languages, which has a huge bearing on achieving the curricular aims of the Foundation Phase of schooling. The preponderance of applicants is female, with a teaching career appearing unattractive to males. It is also reported that some students who end up in education faculties do so by default, having failed to obtain a place in more prestigious faculties. Some students who undertake B. Ed. courses have no long-term intention of teaching in South Africa.

The cost of a four year B. Ed. course, with attendant travel and accommodation costs, is a serious obstacle to participation for some students. In response to this, the government introduced, in 2007, a scheme of bursaries to benefit about 3 500 students per annum. Such students sign contracts that they will teach for a number of years, at least, in South Africa. This is an enlightened policy initiative that is likely to pay good dividends.

Questions also arise as to how well student teachers are prepared for the courses they undertake. In its 2005 report, the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education stated: "It has to be acknowledged that many students in initial teacher education programmes have very poor levels of (print) literacy and numeracy" and it urged IPET programmes "to focus sharply on this issue." Mathematics and science teaching has traditionally been weak in many schools and this weakness is reflected in student teachers' capabilities. There is also a shortage of teachers specialising in these subjects, which is a major national concern.

Also, students bring with them to teacher education images and models of teaching that they have experienced in their own schools and which may be out of harmony with what is being proposed to them in their training course. A key factor in helping to transform such imprinted concepts is the availability of intensive small group and individual work, with targeted feedback and monitoring by skilled staff. However, such benign circumstances are not always available. Education faculties in universities and technikons vary greatly in their staff expertise, resources and contextual environments. However, even where favourable circumstances exist (as, for instance, in the University of Pretoria), staff are over-stretched and desired policies are underfunded. Education faculties seem to try very hard to respond to students' needs. As well as full-time courses, evening courses and weekend courses are made available. Some faculties also incorporate a distance education dimension. Student staff ratios tend to be very high and there is a heavy reliance on large class lecturing.

As in other countries, sometimes the expectations of initial teacher education programmes can be unrealistic and faults may be imputed to them that are not always within their control. Internationally, it is now recognised that initial teacher education is but the first of three phases of teacher

education, the others being induction and continuing professional development (sometimes referred to as the 3 I's – initial, induction and in-service teacher education). In South Africa, a great deal of reliance has been placed on initial teacher education which, even in the most propitious circumstances, can only deliver so much. Nevertheless, a well informed agency such as the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (2003-05) records criticism of courses on the following lines: "Initial teacher education materials tend to over-emphasise theoretical rather than practical strategic actions that novice teachers require." It also points to frequent criticism that "…newly qualified teachers are underprepared in the knowledge content of the subjects/learning areas they teach…" and the Committee urges "…a re-emphasis on the key importance of content knowledge…" (Department of Education, 2005, p. 13). To the extent that courses are weak in practical strategies and knowledge content, it is then unrealistic to expect that graduates will be well equipped to deal with the challenges of implementing national policy in the classrooms.

Classroom practice

The balance of time devoted to teaching practice throughout the four year B. Ed. course seems satisfactory. Generally, students spend six weeks on teaching practice in schools for each of the first three years and six months in the final year. The question that arises is the quality of the on-site experience of trainee teachers. While good practice exists, it is often only by chance that trainees find themselves in favourable circumstances. Education faculties have established contacts with schools for practice purposes, sometimes at quite a distance from the institution. However, links with schools in general are not well structured. Education faculties depend on the goodwill of schools for co-operation. They do not have the resources to reward schools for assistance given. In some instances, training is provided for school staff to act as mentors to trainees, but this is an extra burden on sometimes overworked teachers, without any reward. Faculty supervisors visit students and give guidance and feedback on performance, but this can only be episodic due to circumstances. For the trainee, a great deal depends on the nature of the school to which he/she is assigned, the quality of the school's leadership, the interest of staff and whether, in general, the school is a good exemplar of best practice. Sometimes the experience of handling very large, multicultural classes in confined surroundings is a rude culture shock to the trainee.

From the point of view of modelling good practice by trainees, a great deal depends on the attitudes and teaching styles of the teachers in the practising schools. Some research on teaching practice in South African schools points to "many negative experiences" of student teachers.

Researchers also suggest that to bring greater synchronicity between the discursive aspects of the lecture hall and real classroom conditions, "Teacher educators need to model best practices in classrooms and student teachers need to practice best practices in classrooms" (Parker and Deacon, n.d.). While it may be unrealistic to expect this to happen in the short term at least, the crucial area of teaching practice of trainee teachers needs closer attention and more resourcing. The MCTE report stated "There is, in general, a lack of tradition of effective supervision and mentoring of novice teachers" (p. 12). This is too important an area of teacher formation to be allowed to drift without improved provision.

Induction

The second phase of the teaching career continuum – induction – is non-existent as a formal provision in the South African system. To have it as a meaningful experience for beginning teachers, a number of important prerequisites would be required, including trained and rewarded mentors, timetable provisions and closer relationships between schools and the teacher education institution. The MCTE, in its 2005 report, made an insightful and practical proposal of adjusting the four year B. Ed. into a three year IPET programme that would lead to registration, followed by a one year school-based induction, which would then lead to a teaching licence. This is discussed later in this chapter.

In-service: continuing professional teacher development (CPTD)

The DoE accepts that continuing professional teacher development (CPTD) is an essential dimension of teacher education if national policy is to be achieved. In the past, CPTD has often taken the form of acquiring increased academic qualifications, sometimes divorced from professional skills and current policy concerns; dissemination of information of new policies; short updating courses in various subjects; and short courses on emerging issues. Teachers were expected to spend 80 hours per annum on CPTD, but this was not always realised. Some provinces, such as Gauteng, have been experimenting with new initiatives, involving education centres and encouraging networks of "cluster learners".

However, traditional CPTD has not enjoyed a high level of esteem and is sometimes dismissed as lacking professional credibility and applied impact. The MCTE in its report stated that "CPTD is left to the haphazard and unco-ordinated interventions of a variety of providers" (p. 17). This view was shared by the DoE (2006) when it stated: "Current provision (of CPTD) remains fragmented and unco-ordinated and, therefore, makes a

rather limited impact" (Department of Education, 2005, p. 17). Looking to the future, the conclusion reached by the MCTE was "CPTD needs to be given much higher prominence in our conception of teacher education" (p.7), a view with which the OECD review team concurs.

Planning for a better future for the teaching career

The review and analysis of the teaching career and teacher education in this chapter lead to the conclusion that it is high time that a comprehensive, multifaceted policy be devised for the teaching career that will address present problems and lay the foundation for a new era ahead. This needs to be accompanied by an acceptance that it takes time to bring about culture change and to embed new practices and procedures in teachers' performance.

One of the strengths of the South African system is its openness to self-questioning and its willingness to review past practice, linked to an undoubted concern for reform. In this context, it is gratifying to note that initiatives are already afoot in South Africa to bring about changes aimed at addressing some of the problems. Potentially these initiatives may yield valuable outcomes. At present, however, they tend to be somewhat compartmentalised. To yield the maximum added value, they would benefit from a more joined-up, integrated policy approach. If this were done, coupled with some other improvements, the changes could be presented and understood as a blueprint for reform. There is scope for greater synergies between distinct initiatives. As well as addressing the issues directly, the overall impact of the policy moves could give a much-needed infusion of hope and confidence to the profession and help to change for the better the public image of, and regard for, teaching as a career.

MCTE proposals

One of the significant catalysts for policy changes has been the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education (MCTE), which was established in 2003 and reported in 2005, having consulted widely with all relevant stakeholders. Among the fresh statement of premises upon which it built its proposals were:

- Recognition that policy alone will not realise our transformation goals and an acceptance that "deep change" of teachers' practices is a long-term enterprise. This entails the establishment of sustainable enabling environments and conditions within which fundamental and critical engagement with transformation is promoted.

- Retrieve the word "teaching" (as distinct from "educator"), understand it as the practice of organising systematic learning and relocate it at the heart of how we think about, plan and organise the education system (Department of Education, 2005, pp. 4, 6).

The MCTE report made 40 recommendations for change. Among the most significant were to restructure the four year B. Ed. degree into a three year programme leading to registration, followed by a one year induction process leading to licensing with the award of an Advanced Diploma in Education (ADE). The existing PGCE would be replaced by another form of ADE. A third ADE would relate to the pursuit of a specialisation in educational studies. It recommended that a student loan scheme be introduced for IPET. Initial teacher education was to be supplemented by a radically new form of CPTD, which would be co-ordinated and endorsed by a better-resourced SACE. The recommendation stated:

Authorise SACE to fulfil its mandate for the professional development of educators by establishing a CPTD system which will endorse professional development activities and allocate Professional Development (PD) Points to them, keep a register of endorsed PD activities, and maintain a record of PD Points earned by Registered Educators. Require all Licensed Teachers to earn a specified number of PD Points, in three year cycles, as a condition for maintaining their License (p. 17).

The report urged that distinctions be made between academic and professional teacher career paths and that more support be given to professional paths with an emphasis on teaching and learning. It also recommended that education faculties be better resourced and supported. The report called for an improved data base on teacher supply and demand to be monitored by a new body, the National Teacher Career and Recruitment Centre. In addition, the important recommendation was made that the development of districts be prioritised "as the key management nodes in the delivery of quality education for all" (p. 24). The Ministerial Committee also laid stress on the importance of consultation and urged the setting up of a national teacher education consultative forum and provincial teacher education liaison committees.

The DoE's National Policy Framework

In 2006, the Department of Education issued The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, a policy which, it stated, "has been a long time in preparation, and is certainly overdue given the state of our education system." (Department of Education,

2006, p. 27). Influenced particularly by the MCTE report, but also by reports such as the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education (2005) and ELRC-commissioned reports, it adopts some of the recommendations made, but follows its own policy preferences.

The Framework posits as a starting point the strategic importance of the teacher's role and accepts that teachers "work in extremely complex conditions, largely due to the pervasive legacies of Apartheid, but also as a result of the new policies needed to bring about change in education" (p. 6). The document expresses concern about teacher shortages and the poor image of teaching and commits itself to "an appropriately-pitched recruitment campaign promoting the visibility, attraction and challenge of teaching as a career" (p. 12). This is a highly desirable development and, if sustained and buttressed by associated interventions, in a variety of fora, it could be most beneficial. It needs to be seen as more than a once-off, finite intervention. Another commendable policy was the introduction, in association with the provincial authorities, of a bursary scheme for IPET students, linked to contractual obligations.

The Department of Education did not, however, accept the MCTE's recommendation of re-structuring the B. Ed. into a three year programme leading to registration and a one year induction programme leading to a license. It retains the four year structure, and suggests confusing ways in which the teaching practice could be conducted. One option is that it could be confined "to an extended period of service during the final year with a structured mentorship programme" (p. 13). In the view of the OECD review team, it would be very unwise to postpone practical experience of teaching until the final year of a four year programme. This was not what was intended by the MCTE induction year proposal.

The DoE document sets out five modes of delivery for the B. Ed. degree. Apart from the first mode, the four other modes lay huge emphasis on distance education forms of delivery, three of them indicating an exclusive reliance on distance education. While distance education has a role to play in teacher education, particularly in CPTD, there are huge dangers to the quality of IPET if there is an over-reliance on distance education, particularly in the case of South Africa, which has a poor track record in this form of education, and where the educational standards of many IPET students are admitted to be weak. The DoE does accept that a new Advanced Diploma in Education (ADE) will replace the PGCE, as the MCTE suggested.

Also in line with MCTE recommendations is the DoE's policy on CPTD. While it does not address the distinction between academic and professional modes of CPTD, it accepts that SACE should manage a new

CPTD system and endorse programmes and courses submitted by providers. In-career teachers will be required to earn a specified number of PD points per three- year cycle. Compulsory CPTD courses will be paid for; in the case of self-selected courses, teachers will pay themselves. The DoE stated that it will ensure that SACE has the necessary resources to undertake its CPTD responsibility role (p. 20).

Another key policy statement was that the DoE would establish an electronic data base and information service on teacher demand and supply, in collaboration with other stakeholders. In pursuance of its responsibility for monitoring the performance of schools and teachers, the DoE announced its intention of establishing a National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU). It would "provide the necessary moderation processes in regard to both the Whole School Evaluation policy and the agreement on an Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) for the appraisal of teachers" (p. 22). No detail was given as to how it might operate, but it has been suggested that it might involve a new form of national inspectorate with an "assist and assess" role for schools. The DoE did not accept the MCTE proposals regarding a national recruitment centre, provincial liaison committees, or a national education consultative forum. It did, however, state that it would convene a forum on a regular basis to assess progress and determine new priorities (p. 26).

Discussions have been taking place within the ELRC regarding the roll-out of the CPTD scheme. Teacher unions have not yet given their agreement to it. They have concerns about the resourcing of SACE so that it can satisfactorily fulfil its new responsibilities. The DoE has been in discussion with SACE regarding feasibility, structuring and resourcing for the scheme to come into operation. As envisaged, teachers will be required to achieve 150 points over a three year cycle. If, after two successive cycles they fail to achieve the target, then the plan envisages that they would have to apply to SACE for re-registration. Teacher unions fear there may be a punitive dimension associated with the scheme and it seems that negotiations are likely to remove the threat of deregistration, for the moment at least. It seems likely that the new CPTD scheme will be introduced on a phased basis.

Teacher salary structure, 2007

Teachers benefited from a substantially altered salary structure in 2007, following a period of almost static progression. The redesign of the salary structure provided more generous entry-level salaries for teachers, aimed at recruiting high calibre candidates to teaching. The new scales also resolved the problem of the flat "pay plateau" whereby salary scales remained fixed

after about the age of 45. The policy aim here is to retain teachers and also to reward skilled teachers for staying in the classroom rather than seeking promotion and better remuneration in administrative and managerial positions. There is a complex salary framework of 12 levels or grades, most with a 16 notch structure of progression. The redesigned salary scheme allows varying percentage amounts of increase to all levels (Department of Education, 2007).

Linked to the redesigned salary framework was the development by the ELRC of a Draft Collective Agreement of October 2007 entitled "Occupation-Specific Dispensation (OSD) for Educators".[46] Its aim is to build in merit based progression along the various salary tracks. One of the key aims is to facilitate adequate salary progression to employees who choose to remain in the classroom instead of aspiring to move into supervisory or management posts. The plan is to systematically increase salaries after three yearly periods, based on specific criteria such as performance, qualifications, competencies, experience and scope of work. There are three streams intended for teachers to enhance career paths – general classroom, specialist education and supervisory/management. Two new categories of specialist teacher are envisaged – teaching and learning specialist, and senior teaching and learning specialist – emphasising the centrality of classroom based teaching and learning.

The draft OSD document spells out the detailed processes of how, and by whom, teacher performance is evaluated. The ordinary two-yearly progression of the teacher is to be conducted by a team at school level. The accelerated progression will be based on "good" or "outstanding" performance for a cumulative period of three years at their respective post levels. The evaluation in this instance is to be conducted by the newly envisaged National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU). Dates are set for the roll-out in future years of this OSD system (ELRC, Draft Collective Agreement (OSD) of 2007).

At the time of writing, final agreement on the planned OSD scheme remains to be achieved. The operation of such a scheme will involve a great deal of time, documentation, reportage and administration. The scheme is based on the application of incentives or sanctions in relation to teacher performance. The hope would be that, in due course, teachers would

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46   The occupation-specific dispensation is a revised salary structure that is unique to each individual occupation in the public service. Currently, employees in the public service are all part of the same salary structure. The new salary dispensation is part of the government's strategy to improve its ability to attract and retain skilled employees.

internalise the importance of high professional and performance standards and find their satisfaction in the sense of a job well done, rather than relying on external, periodic incentives for motivation. If this happened it might alleviate the need for such an elaborate superstructure of teacher evaluation, releasing more time and resources for improving the conditions of work.

Bringing cohesion to the reform agenda

Looking to the future of South African schooling, it seems clear that the system would not benefit from a major change of policy direction at this time. Already over the last 14 years a great deal of change has taken place. The key direction now should be one of consolidation and bedding down the various changes which have been introduced.

As has been mentioned above, a good approach could be to put together a comprehensive policy, with the teaching force as the unifying focus. The teacher affects many of the core aspects of the schooling system and, in turn, most aspects of the schooling system affect the teacher. The learner has to be the central concern of the system, but the teacher – as mediator, guide and nurturer – is central to the learner's well-being and progress.

As has been noted, over recent years a number of initiatives are in progress that hold promise for the teaching force. These include:

- acknowledgement, at the highest level, of the complex situation in which teachers find themselves, for a variety of reasons;

- an intention to promote the profile of the teaching career as part of a recruitment campaign;

- a bursary scheme to assist student teachers;

- a focus on initial teacher education, with various proposals for its reform;

- a new CPTD system for in-career teachers;

- a national electronic data base in relation to the supply and demand of teachers, which, as it develops, could be more comprehensive in its coverage than just demand and supply, as an aid to policy makers and the profession;

- a new, and much-needed salary structure, introduced in 2007, with improved beginning salaries and more long-term increments for teachers who stay in the classroom;

- a great deal of useful work on the Occupation-Specific Dispensation (OSD) scheme for teachers, incorporating merit based incentives for teacher salary progression;

- plans for a new National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU);

- proposals for consultative fora of all education partners, to monitor progress and make suggestions for improvement.

The OECD review team considers that such initiatives are going in the right direction, but that they could do with more cohesion and cross-referencing in their presentation and projection.

Linking other initiatives

This is also the case with some other constructive initiatives that are in gestation, but tend to be planned in isolation from related developments.

1. The Standards for Principalship initiative: In mid-2005, the Department of Education established a National Management School Leadership Committee, involving key stakeholders. It has been devising and piloting a school leadership programme in line with present and emerging school needs. It involves 12 modules, yielding 120 credits on level 6 of the National Qualifications Framework. There are, at present, five universities involved in the two year, part-time programme, which is accredited by the Council on Higher Education (CHE). The provincial departments of education are involved. They select the participants and, in February 2007, there were 446 students on the course, who were awarded bursaries.

   The methodology involves a number of valuable features, including learning networks of eight participants to one facilitator; the preparation of portfolios; use of ICT and site-based creative problem solving. Assessment is based on 80% continuous assessment and 20% examination. Field testing with existing school principals is now in its second phase. In the light of existing circumstances, the organisers are anxious to promote female participation and encourage an ethnic mix and school-type mix. Eleven other higher education institutions have applied for accreditation to deliver such a course. It is projected that 1 000 participants could be accommodated on such courses, in the long-run. A positive feature of the planning is that the timescale is not being rushed. It is planned to present a report to the Minister of Education in 2008, with a

possible rolling-out of the scheme by 2009, but it could be later. The main concern is to get the programme to the best level possible.

2. Reform of Districts: Another significant development is the planning for a reform of the Districts as a support mechanism for schools. It is accepted that there are many inadequacies in the way the existing system works, with much variation of effective impact throughout the country. The challenge is to put a more effective, efficient and standardised system into place in support of schools. As the MCTE report recommended, the district is being seen as the key agency to liaise with, and support, schools at local level. A good deal of consultation and research has gone into the planning and discussions have been taken with the provinces and district representatives. The drafting team has been assisted by a high-profile task force.

   It is hoped to have the plan ready by 31 March 2008, at which point it goes for approval at national level. One of the habitual problems in the districts was the lack of sufficient staff with the capacity to deliver on expectations. A key concern of the new plan is to try to remedy this, which will not be an easy or short-term job. The resourcing of the new scheme is also a formidable problem. A current costing, excluding infrastructure, puts it at ZAR 63 billion. A possible implementation date of 2010 has been suggested, but it remains to be seen if the financial resources can be procured and capable staffing be recruited.

In the view of the OECD review team, there is great merit in the policy commitments announced by the Department of Education in its National Framework on Teacher Education. The work going on to improve the training of school leaders and to restructure and reform the districts is also likely to be very beneficial and developments on teacher salaries and associated areas are progressive. The review team is glad to be in a position to acknowledge and support these various reform efforts. However, the availability of resources for the various initiatives, if they are to be implemented more or less concurrently, is likely to be problematic. It is crucial that costings are built into the planning stage and that implementation strategies are integral to the policy-making process.

The review team, however, considers that there is too much compartmentalisation in relation to the steering of the various initiatives. There needs to be better communication, consultation and joined-up thinking in relation to them and how they might interact with one another. There are issues of timing to be borne in mind.

As has already been mentioned, the OECD team recommends that an overall policy position paper should be prepared by the DoE, in consultation with the provincial departments. This would set out the contemporary context of the teaching career and teacher education and highlight, as a coherent plan, the initiatives that are being introduced. As well as fostering synergies and linkages between different initiatives, it could have a major effect in raising the morale of the teaching force. It could also assist the planned marketing ploys to raise the public profile of teaching as a career. Another possible beneficial outcome might be to strengthen the Minister of Education's hand at the cabinet table in seeking to regain a better percentage of GDP for educational resourcing. A coherent, well argued, multifaceted plan geared towards improving South Africa's teaching force could help to shape the issue as a priority of national policy, which is essential if the aspirations for a high quality education system in the future are to be realised. The plan should also include an agreed implementation process, with a timescale.

Areas for further attention

As well as the policy lines that have been discussed, the review team also recommends action on a number of other areas that have not been getting the backing they deserve. Among these, a more thorough and co-ordinated approach should be taken to the problem of chronically ineffective teachers. If remedial measures prove fruitless, then there is too much at stake for learners to allow such personnel to remain in the system.

The review team also supports the DoE's plans for the introduction of teacher assistants as a help to deal with high learner:teacher ratios. It also favours the prioritisation of such staff for the Foundation Phase of schooling, but efforts also need to be paid to reduce the very large ratios, particularly in disadvantaged schools, those in the worst positioned quintiles.

The review team regrets that the DoE's National Policy Framework on Teacher Education does not deal with the strong recommendation of the MCTE concerning the gross underfunding of the faculties of education. The team recognises that the higher education institutions have a responsibility here too, but the resolution of what is emerging as a crisis at the heart of teacher education requires joint action by the DoE, as well as the providing institutions.

While recognising potential cost-effective aspects of distance education for the initial (pre-service) training of teachers, the review team urges caution about an over-reliance on such approaches in terms of the qualitative

outcomes. The outcomes may not repay the investment involved. To date, the experience of the distance education provided has not been impressive. Good quality initial teacher education is, by its nature, a costly process and is labour intensive.

Some elements of the IPET courses need to be reformed and greater provision needs to be made to help prepare trainee teachers for teaching in inclusive education settings.

Greater support also needs to be available for the higher education institutions and schools to foster closer, productive partnerships, for a variety of reasons. If the practical dimension of teacher education is to be improved, then better mutual understanding and closer collaboration are essential. Both partners need support from the national and provincial departments of education to bring this about.

The MCTE quite rightly argued for better processes for the induction of new teachers into the schooling system. At present, this is an extremely weak feature of the system, with often very deleterious consequences. It is well established that the early formative experiences of beginning teachers have a long-term influence on how such teachers develop in their careers – that is, if they stay in teaching at all. In current circumstances, there is no quick or easy solution to the inadequacy in the induction of beginning teachers, but the provision of better induction can be worked at and improved over time. It should not be ignored as a policy issue.

The review team also considers that there is an urgent need to build a greater sense of mutual understanding, upon which partnership may be built, between the provincial departments of education and the teacher education institutions. Damage has been done in the past through the absence of such a partnership. In going forward, both parties should reach out to each other and establish better relationships in the interests of their mutual concern, the developing of effective, efficient and motivated teachers.

In association with the re-organisation and *reform of the Districts* as support agencies for schools, the review team recommends that more training be provided for school governing bodies to enable them to fulfil their managerial duties more effectively. This might be rolled out gradually, with priority given to identified weak performers.

The review team considers that the planned *National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU)* could serve very useful purposes, if sufficiently well staffed. The national DoE has overall responsibility for education policy; yet it depends on the provincial departments for implementation. Without upsetting Constitutional structures, the NEEDU could be a valuable agency for the DoE. It could, for

example, both assist and assess schools, particularly with regard to whole school evaluation. It might also be a useful agency in dealing with chronically ineffective teachers. Furthermore, it would be a help in ensuring that teachers are present – and on time – at school, and that the main focus of their work is on teaching and learning.

The review team considers SACE as a very valuable agency for the teaching profession in South Africa. Its projected role in relation to CPTD, if it is sufficiently resourced and staffed to do the job, will bring it into more intimate contact with the providing institutions and the in-career teachers. This should assist it in enhancing its professional development mandate. Its workshops and handbook promoting the Code of Professional Ethics are of major importance in improving standards of behaviour and sense of identity of the profession.

In 2002, SACE launched a three year pilot project in compiling Guidelines for *Professional Development Portfolios* (SACE, 2005). This was aimed at encouraging teachers to take responsibility for their own professional development and engage in crucial reflection on their own practice. These portfolios should be of great help to teachers in relation to the OSD scheme, in the future.

The review team considers that SACE is also well positioned to help improve the public image of teaching. It would be desirable if it could be involved in the DoE's recruitment campaign, but also deliver on a standing brief for the building of a better image and profile of the teaching career which, if successful, would reap many benefits. A closer liaison between agencies such as the ELRC, the Deans' Forum and SACE could be beneficial.

The review team also recommends that more public resourcing be allocated to the important dimension of research into the teaching career and teacher education. A number of reports have been produced in recent years with valuable insights on many aspects of the system. At a time of major transition for the teaching career, and in the context of supporting its development, such research has an indispensable role to play. The discussions held with researchers impressed the review team in terms of the understanding, concerns and skills which they revealed. As well as formal groups of research teams, there is evidence of good research work by individual South Africa teacher educators as is summarised, for instance, in the Centre for Education Policy Development's publication *Theory and Practice: South African Teacher Educators on Teacher Education* (Parker and Deacon, n.d.). However, resources for educational research have been limited and funding needs to be expanded for the future.

There is a great deal of evidence that South African policy makers and administrators are keen to come to grips with many of the difficulties that confront teacher education and the teaching career. Much reform is underway, which the review team commends; in addition, the team makes some added recommendations in the light of the analysis set out in this chapter. Overall, the team takes the view that the incorporation of initiatives and recommendations into a comprehensive policy plan would have many advantages at this time.

The team also acknowledges that there is concern and disappointment that the performance of learners in various tests is much less than is desired. It would, however, be a mistake to respond in a knee-jerk way at this time and seek short-term responses to the problem, for example, by increasing the frequency of testing without addressing the root causes of underachievement. This is a period for steady nerves and for frank appraisal of all the contributory factors, combined with a determination to take multifaceted, long-term action to address the underlying problems.

There is much at stake for South Africa in ensuring that it has a high quality teaching force who will deliver the high quality education that is required. The review team is confident that, with right action, the desired goal can be achieved.

Recommendations

- The Department of Education should produce a policy position paper that would set out a coherent and cohesive action plan highlighting policy initiatives that are being introduced, or in gestation, regarding the teaching career. Such a policy statement would include reference to such features as: the recruitment campaign; the bursary scheme for student teachers; the 2007 salary scheme and the OSD plan; the CPTD policy; the planned electronic database on teachers; the planned NEEDU; the training plan for school leaders; and the planned reform of school districts. The aim should be to demonstrate that the DoE is facing up to, and seeking to resolve, problems currently facing the teaching career, emphasising the significance it places on the well-being and quality of the teaching force.

- In carrying forward elements of the policy paper, greater communication, consultation and collaboration should be promoted among the agents leading the initiatives.

- Faculties of education in higher education institutions need to be better supported and resourced so that they can satisfactorily fulfil their remits in the education of teachers over their full careers, and engage in educational research, which provides the well-springs for the future.

- Initial teacher education needs to be reformed to include more emphasis on practical teaching strategies, to prepare teachers better for the inclusive education policy and to provide more structured support for the classroom practice dimension of teacher education.

- Plans should be put in place to improve the quality of distance education provision relating to all forms of teacher education.

- Pilot schemes should be initiated for the induction of beginning teachers, which could pave the way for the induction of all new teachers, in a context suitable to South African conditions.

- SACE needs to be satisfactorily resourced to enable it to fulfil its important remit in relation to the teaching career and to undertake the new responsibilities being proposed for it.

- The planned initiative of employing teacher aides in the Foundation areas of schooling should be monitored carefully with a view to its extension, in the first instance, to unduly large classes in disadvantaged areas.

- A more structured approach is needed to deal with the problem of chronically ineffective teachers.

- More training is required for school governing bodies to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in a satisfactory manner. This might be done on a phased basis, with priority given to those which are currently weakest.

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Chapter 8: Higher Education in South Africa

This chapter gives an overview on the latest developments in the higher education sector in South Africa and specifically analyses the implications of key tertiary education documents published by the National Commission on Higher Education in the late 1990s. After discussing the current higher education system, the chapter analyses the issues of student access and equity, quality assurance and governance of higher education institutions. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the development of funding mechanisms over the last 15 years and offers a set of recommendations for more targeted educational planning and monitoring mechanisms.

The legal and policy context of higher education

Situation before 1994

Prior to 1994, higher education under Apartheid rule was characterised and shaped by sets of legal and policy provisions that distinguished and separated the different components and actors within the system according to race and ethnic group, on the one hand, and to institutional types, on the other (Council on Higher Education, 2004).

By 1968 the administration of education for Africans was decentralised and became the responsibility of the regions or self-governing territories. Each self-governing territory had its own education department that responded for African education at all levels, including higher education. Adding to the self-governing territories later in 1976, the Apartheid government created four Bantustans (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei – also known as "TBVC states"). The Extension of the University Education Act of 1959 provided the legal framework for the establishment of higher education institutions (HEIs) as part of the "Bantu self-government" policy. As a result, by 1988, 11 institutions were operating in the self-governing territories. However, all African education, including

HEIs in these territories, was under the control of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of South Africa.

The administration of education for the coloured and Indian population of South Africa has shifted on various occasions in the period between 1910 and 1983 between provincial and specified central departments. The first HEIs specifically designated for coloured and Indian citizens were formally established in the 1960s. In terms of the 1983 Constitution, both coloured and Indian education fell under the Minister of Education and Culture; however, according to the principle of separate representation, the Minister of Education and Culture reported to different chambers in the national parliament: the House of Representatives, on matters related to coloured education, and the House of Delegates on matters pertaining to Indian education. There was no provision for representation of Africans in the parliament.

Prior to September 1984, education at all levels, except higher education, for the white population was provided by provincial departments. Higher education was under the reserved authority of the Department of National Education. According to the 1983 Constitution, provincial departments fell under the Department of Education and Culture, and the Minister reported to the House of Assembly (the white chamber).

With regard to education and culture, the Constitution made a distinction between "general" and "own" affairs. The term "general affairs" referred to those affairs vested in a central department, whereas the term "specific affairs" connoted those matters specific to the culture and values of different population groups. Accordingly, education was defined as "own affair" for all groups, except Africans, whose education was regarded as "general affair" under the responsibility of the Department of Education and Culture.

The arrangement of higher education according to the racial and ethnic composition of the population had serious consequences both in terms of access and governance and funding. Since public HEIs were designated for a particular "race", students of one racial group could not have access to an HEI of another group without special permission granted to the HEI by the appropriate government department. On the other hand, differences in the legal status and racial make-up of different HEIs implied different arrangements for governance and funding.

HEIs were also divided according to their type: universities, technikons and colleges. Although such differentiation was consistent with international experience, in the South African case, under the Apartheid state, it had peculiar nuances. For instance, the relationship of universities to society had been carefully defined in legal and policy terms. From a legal standpoint

each university was regarded as "corporation" founded by an act of Parliament. In other words, the functions of a university were prescribed and could be terminated by the state. On the other hand, in policy terms, a university was seen as "an independent sphere of societal relationships" (separate from other spheres, such as the state, religion, etc.). Accordingly, for as long as it existed the state would abstain from interfering in a university's affairs. Conversely, the university could not interfere in the affairs of the state, including the state's decision to designate it to a particular racial or ethnic group (Council on Higher Education, 2004).

The technikons were established in the late 1970s following an investigation commissioned by the government into the training of engineering technicians in the former colleges of advanced technical education (CATEs). The investigation recommended that CATEs should be renamed "technikons" and assigned the role of training technicians and technologists. This role should be parallel to, but separate from the role of universities and remain distinct from that of colleges, which would be vocationally oriented, focusing on practical training in non-technology fields (Council on Higher Education, 2004). In policy terms, this distinction meant that science and knowledge production would be confined to the universities, while technology and its application would be the domain of technikons. Consistent with this separate development strategy, each type of institution should have its own qualification structure, parallel to the others. As a result, before 1993, technikons, unlike universities, did not award degrees, did not enjoy academic freedom, and their curricula, examinations and certification were subject to the control of the central government.

In sum, the binary higher education system that was inherited from Apartheid was based on racial segregation and reflected administrative division. Missions were differentiated based not so much on resources, position or vision of the institutions themselves, but on deliberate efforts of the state to allocate particular roles in social and economic reproduction to the institutions. The quality of teaching and learning and research production and the levels of community engagement in each of the then existing 36 institutions was very unequal and so was the allocation of the financial and human resources these institutions needed to accomplish their mission (Reddy, 2001; Lange, 2006). On the other hand, the size of the South African higher education system was much larger than its further education and training (FET) system and this was perceived to lead to increased costs and a failure to address the needs for middle-level technical skills in the country (Reddy, 2001).

Situation after 1994

According to the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, higher education is a national government competency, whereas all other levels of the education system are a functional area of concurrent national and a provincial competency. Thus, higher education provision falls under the administrative responsibility of the national Department of Education. The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 provides the legal foundation and framework for South African higher education.

In the early1990s, a number of initiatives took place designed to develop the bases for post-Apartheid higher education policy. These include policy research conducted by the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI), a civil society initiative originating in the "people's education" movement; the Union of Democratic University Staff Union (UDUSA) policy forum, and the Centre for Education Policy Development, linked to the African National Congress (ANC) (Moja and Hayward, 2001; Council on Higher Education, 2004).

In January 1994, the ANC announced a new draft policy framework for education and training. This policy framework provided a vision for higher education, as well as the foundation on which the new, transformed education system was to be built. It also contained recommendations to set up a commission to investigate the entire higher education system as part of the policy formulation process.

Evidence suggests that a common denominator of all the policy initiatives outlined above was their emphasis on the principles of non-racism, non-sexism, democracy, redress and a unitary system of higher education.

At the end of 1994, the office of the President proclaimed the nomination of a National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE). The OECD review team suggests that this is as a landmark in the formal process of higher education policy formulation in the new, democratic South Africa, as it opened a space for policy debate, negotiation, consultation with stakeholders, consensus-building and the inclusion of dissenting views as alternative views of individual commissioners in the final report. In view of this, the NCHE report was widely acclaimed both domestically and internationally, regarded as a model tertiary education policy document (Moja and Hayward, 2001; Badat, 2004; Council on Higher Education, 2004; Bundy, 2006).

The NCHE report, *A Framework for Transformation*, was submitted in September 1996. This historical document contained three sets of ideas emerging as "pillars" for a transformed higher education system, namely:

1. increased participation;

2. greater responsiveness;

3. increased co-operation and partnership.

In anticipation of the administrative burden and the rising expenditure resulting from **increased participation,** the NCHE proposed the transformation of the existing system into a single, co-ordinated system as the best way to overcome and eradicate the inherited inequities, ineffectiveness, and inefficiency. Additionally, in order to deal with differences in quality across institutions and steer overall quality improvement within the system, and in anticipation of the potentially damaging effects of rising enrolments on academic standards, the NCHE also advocated a policy of quality assurance and quality promotion through various forms of capacity building within a National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The second "pillar" of the NCHE report was a policy of **greater responsiveness** to societal needs and interests. In order to address properly the challenges of its social environment, the report argued, higher education needed to move away from a traditional, disciplinary conception of and approach to knowledge and knowledge production to more "open", interactive and externally receptive approaches (so-called "mode 2 knowledge production"). The report also claimed that closer interaction of higher education with its surrounding environment would lead to the incorporation of the views and values of previously disenfranchised groups. In practical terms, a policy of greater responsiveness would require changing curriculum content and focus and modes of delivery of academic programmes, quality assessment, and research in order to adapt them to the needs of the market and civil society (Council on Higher Education, 2004).

The third policy "pillar" called for **increased co-operation and partnership** in governance structures and emphasised the need for "co-operative governance", in terms of which the state would play an enabling and supervisory role (as opposed to a role of control and interference), intermediary bodies between the state and HEIs would be established and a set of linkages between HEIs and civil society would be developed.

Following the NCHE report, an additional consultative process was needed before its recommendations might be turned into policy. This was led by the Ministry of Education and the recently established Department of Education (DoE). In terms of the 1996 South African Constitution, education at all levels, except the tertiary level, is the concurrent responsibility of the national and provincial governments. Therefore, the DoE had administrative responsibility at national level for higher education.

Following a green paper (December 1996) and a draft white paper (April 1997), the DoE was able to build broad consensus around the new higher education policy that was released as Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (July 1997).

White Paper 3 sets out policy in support of a plan to transform higher education through the development of a programme-based higher education system, planned, funded and governed as single co-ordinated system.

The social purposes of the South African higher education system are outlined in the white paper as follows: "to redress past inequalities and to transform the higher education system to serve a new social order, to meet the pressing national needs, and to respond to new realities and opportunities" (Department of Education, 1997, 1.1). More specifically, as the white paper stipulates, higher education in a knowledge-driven world is called upon to fulfil three important roles:

- Human resource development: the mobilisation of human talent and potential through lifelong learning to contribute to the social, economic, cultural and intellectual life of a rapidly changing society.

- High level skills training: the training and provision of person power to strengthen this country's enterprises, services and infrastructure. This requires the development of professionals and knowledge workers with globally equivalent skills, but who are socially responsible and conscious of their role in contributing to the national development effort and social transformation.

- Production, acquisition and application of new knowledge: national growth and competitiveness is dependent on continuous technological improvement and innovation, driven by a well organised, vibrant research and development system that integrates the research and training capacity of higher education with the needs of industry and of social reconstruction (Department of Education, 1997, 1.12).

White Paper 3 argued that these purposes should be viewed in light of the impact on higher education systems of the changes associated with globalisation. It further asserted that the onset of a new century had signalled a series of changes in social, cultural and economic relations spawned by the ICT revolution, and their impact on the way in which societies are organised and managed was likely to be as fundamental and far-reaching as the changes caused by the industrial revolution in the 18th century. It also espoused the notion that the 21st century knowledge and the processing of information would be the key driving forces for wealth creation and social and economic development.

In order to ensure that the social purposes of the higher education system were pursued and accomplished, the white paper has established a set of guiding principles and values that actors must observe and promote within the system: equity and redress; quality; development; democratisation; academic freedom; institutional autonomy; effectiveness and efficiency, and public accountability.

The white paper endorsed the three NCHE "pillars" as consistent with these principles. However, it did not accept the specific recommendations of the NCHE to increase participation through massification; instead, it argued for a policy of **planned expansion** of higher education.

White Paper 3 provided a detailed description of the role of planning, funding and governance in a single, co-ordinated higher education system covering the full range of HEIs: public universities, technikons and colleges (education, nursing and agriculture) and private higher education providers. It advocated the need for a national higher education plan, including benchmarks for transformation and a system of three year rolling institutional plans designed to facilitate responsiveness by the system, and to ensure planned expansion linked to sustainability. In addition, a goal-oriented, performance-related funding system to be put in place would allow resource allocation to be in line with policy goals and objectives. Moreover, a system of co-operative governance would reserve for the state a steering and co-ordinating role, while autonomous HEIs would retain authority over their resources in exchange for the obligation to be publicly accountable for the use of those resources.

The review team notes that while the white paper did not endorse the NCHE recommendation for a higher education forum of stakeholders with policy advisory functions, and a higher education council with an intermediary status, responsible for planning and resource allocation, it chose instead to concentrate those functions on a single body – the Council on Higher Education – with a policy advisory and quality assurance mandate.

Following White Paper 3, the next key policy framework that was released was the National Plan for Higher Education (February 2001). Therefore, a gap of four years separated the publication of these two policy documents. The National Plan justified this "implementation vacuum" pointing to the "incremental approach to the development and implementation of the key policy instruments necessary to enable the creation of a single, coordinated system" (National Plan, 1.2).

As the National Plan explains, the reasons for adopting an incremental approach were threefold: first, the lack of human capacity and technical skills, in particular statistical modelling and analytical skills, within the

system, to implement the comprehensive and all-encompassing planning agenda articulated in White Paper 3; second, the absence of an adequate information base, in particular analyses of systemic and institutional trends; third, the need to develop a consultative and interactive planning process, through dialogue between the DoE and HEIs, in order to strengthen the principle of co-operation and partnership.

As one would expect, the absence of a national plan had given rise to a number of significant developments including, perhaps, some unintended and unanticipated consequences. One of the developments was a build-up of a "competitive climate" between public HEIs. This competitive environment, in turn, may have been fuelled by perceptions of an emerging market in higher education resulting from a growing private higher education sector. Some HEIs took advantage of market opportunities: historically advantaged institutions (HAIs) embarked on a number of entrepreneurial initiatives to put themselves in an advantageous position (*e.g.* via distance education programmes using ICTs to deliver their courses; partnerships with private providers allowing them to tap into expanding markets and adding market shares of contract research and consultancies).The National Plan rightly observed that the increased competition between HEIs had further fragmented and exacerbated the inequalities within the higher education system.

The National Plan saw the intensification of competition between public HEIs also as the product of two inter-related factors: declining student enrolments in the late 1990s and financial constraints. With regard to student enrolments, the National Plan observed that the average annual growth rate of 5%, which characterised the higher education system between 1993 and 1998, had declined sharply and showed no sign of recovery. Indeed, there had been a 4% drop of enrolments between 1998 and 2000. (Later in this chapter the team will return to enrolment trends). On the other hand, in its assessment of government expenditure on higher education (excluding the National Student Financial Aid Scheme – NSFAS) the National Plan noted that as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) it had increased from 0.72% in 1995/96 to 0.77% in 1996/97, oscillated between 0.75% and 0.77% until 2000/01, when it fell to 0.73%. It was 0.72% in 2001/02 and according to the Medium Term Expenditure Framework it was projected to decline to 0.68% in 2003/04. The combined effect of declining enrolments and financial resources, the National Plan concluded, had impacted on the budget amounts made available to the institutions. In its assessment of the decline in enrolments and budget allocations to higher education institutions, the CHE (2004) claimed that it was partly caused by financial constraints facing students in historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs): "HDIs had increased enrolments without initial concern for fee recovery, on the

assumption that a broad programme of redress funding would eventuate. When it did not, and given their unequal capacity and opportunity to develop entrepreneurial activities, several of these institutions faced serious threats to their sustainability, further aggravated by governance crises" (Council on Higher Education, 2004, p.27).

The CHE report argued that these, together with other factors, such as students' greater choice of institutions; student and parental perceptions of declining quality at historically black universities (HBUs); increased competition from private providers; and the expansion of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), may have produced "the net result of unplanned change": differentiation among HEIs linked to market pressures, but also to inherited differences from the Apartheid era, thus exacerbating institutional inequalities with respect to resources and outcomes, as well as disparities with regard to institutional governance capacity. (In later sections the review team will re-examine in more detail some of these claims.)

The system of higher education

The organisational and institutional landscape before 2004

The higher education sector in South Africa is predominantly public. Before 2004 it encompassed public HEIs – universities and technikons – as well as a large number of small single purpose private providers of higher education. By 1994, there were in South Africa 36 public HEIs, which were structured along racial and ethnic lines and characterised by a sharp distinction between universities (21) and technikons (15). The administration of HEIs fell under the responsibility of the relevant national authority (in total eight different government departments in the Republic of South Africa or in one of the "bantustans" and so-called self-governing territories). Out of the 21 universities, four were English-medium universities originally reserved for white students; six were Afrikaans-medium universities originally reserved for white students; seven technikons were reserved for white students; six universities and five technikons located in "bantustans" and self-governing territories were reserved for African students; two urban universities and two technikons were reserved for coloured and Indian students; two urban universities were reserved for African students; and there were two distance education providers (one university and one technikon) (Council on Higher Education, 2004)

In addition to the universities and technikons, there were a number of colleges (*e.g.* education, agriculture and nursing) also administered along

racial and ethnic lines by provincial administrations or by the government departments in the various self-governing territories and "bantustans". The 1997 white paper indicated that colleges would be gradually incorporated into the higher education sector, beginning with the colleges of education.

During the pre-1994 period, there were 120 colleges of education, 24 colleges of nursing and 11 agricultural colleges. In 2001, all colleges of teacher education were incorporated into universities and technikons (Badat, 2004).

The current Constitution of South Africa provides for private higher education; as long as private HEIs do not discriminate on the basis of race or colour, they register with the state and they maintain standards that are not deemed inferior to those at their public counterparts. The Higher Education Act 101 (Republic of South Africa, 1997) stipulates the legal conditions for registration of private HEIs, as well as their obligations.

Since 1996, the population of local and foreign private providers of higher education and a variety of partnership arrangements between public and private HEIs has increased dramatically. A number of explanations for the mushrooming of private HEIs in South Africa have been put forward. These include greater student interest in the types of programmes offered by private providers (particularly short courses, flexible modular programmes and distance education), and perceptions of declining quality in public education and instability at public HEIs (Mabizela, *et al.*, 2000 in Council on Higher Education, 2004). Around 2004 private higher education accounted for 93 institutions and 382 different programmes (Council on Higher Education, 2004).

Universities normally awarded a bachelor's degree after 3 or 4 years of study (5 years in the case of veterinary medicine and architecture; 6 years in the case of medicine. An honours degree required one additional year of study. A master's degree was awarded after one or two years of study after the bachelor's degree. The minimum time for completing a doctorate was two years. Universities also offered a wide variety of certificate and diploma programmes (International Bureau of Education, UNESCO, 2003).

Tecknikons offered a variety of programmes in the technical and professional fields leading to a national certificate (one year course), a national higher certificate (two year course), a national diploma (three years of study) or a national higher diploma (four year course). Technikons also offered bachelor's degrees (four year course), as well as master's and doctoral degrees programmes in technology (minimum of one year and two years of study, respectively) (International Bureau of Education, UNESCO, 2003).

Most colleges of education offered a three year programme leading to the Diploma in Education (four years of study in the case of higher diplomas). Agricultural colleges offered a one year certificate, a two year higher certificate and a three year diploma courses. Nursing colleges offered certificate programmes and four year courses leading to a diploma. It was legally required that all institutions offering four year courses in nursing are affiliated to a university (International Bureau of Education, UNESCO, 2003).

Unlike the colleges, universities and technikons were autonomous institutions in the sense that the conditions of service for the academic staff were not prescribed by the government and their respective councils were fully responsible for their management.

The organisational and institutional landscape after 2004

Based on what was perceived as geographic dispersion, racial fragmentation, structural inefficiencies and institutional duplication within the system, policy makers and reformers concluded that the field of higher education during the Apartheid rule in South Africa was less of a "system" than a "collection" of different kinds of HEIs (Badat, 2004).This has prompted the Department of Education to restructure the higher education landscape through mergers and incorporations of institutions and programmes. The new public higher education landscape (see Figure 8.1) resulted in 24 public HEIs: 11 "traditional" universities that focus on research and a mix of discipline-based and professional degree qualifications; seven universities of technology that offer a mix of technological, vocational, career-oriented and professional programmes leading to a certificate, diploma or degree; and six "comprehensive universities") that combine both types of HEIs. In addition, two National Institutes of Higher Education were established in the Npumalanga and the Northern Cape provinces (Council on Higher Education, 2004).

The size of the private higher education sector is very small, representing less than 10% of the total student population. It tends to be specialised and to operate on the skills side, with little if any research being produced. Most of the private HEIs offer certificates and diplomas, a few offer bachelor's degrees and very few are moving toward doctoral degrees. In 2007 there were 17 private HEIs in South Africa.

Figure 8.1 **The current institutional landscape of South African public higher education**

Part 1

Institutional Type		Institutions
Universities	8 separate and incorporated universities	1. **University of Cape Town** (UCT) 2. **University of Fort Hare** (UFH) + Rhodes University East London Campus 3. **University of the Free State** (UFS) + Vista University (Bloemfontein) + University of the North (Qwa-Qwa) 4. **University of Pretoria** (UP) + Vista University (Mamelodi) 5. **Rhodes University** 6. **University of Stellenbosch** (US) 7. **University of the Western Cape** (UWC) + University of Stellenbosch Dental School 8. **University of the Witwatersrand** (Wits)
	3 merged universities	1. University of Durban-Westville (UDW) + University of Natal = **The University of Kwazulu-Natal** 2. The University of the North (UNIN) + Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA) = **University of Limpopo** 3. Potchefstroom University of Christian HE (PUCHE) + University of the North-West (UNW) +Vista University (staff and students of Schokeng) = **North-West University**
Universities of Technology	2 separate and incorporated (technikons) universities of technology	1. Technikon Free State (TFS) + Vista University (Welkom) = **Central University of Technology** 2. Vaal Triangle Technikon + Vista University (infrastructure and facilities of Sebokeng) = **Vaal University of Technology**

Figure 8.1 - Part 2

Institutional Type		Institutions
Universities of Technology	3 merged (technikons) universities of technology	1. Cape Technikon + Peninsula Technikon (Pentech) = **Cape Peninsula University of Technology** 2. **Durban Institute of Technology** (DIT) + Mongosuthu Technikon + infrastructure and facilities of the Umlazi campus of the University of Zululand 3. Technikon Pretoria (TP) + Technikon Northern Gauteng (TNG) + Technikon North-West = **Tshwane University of Technology**
Comprehensives	2 separate comprehensives	1. University of Venda = **University of Venda for Science and Technology** 2. **University of Zululand**
	4 merged comprehensives	1. Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) + Technikon Witwatersrand + Vista University (East Rand and Soweto) = **University of Johannesburg** 2. University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) + Port Elizabeth Technikon (PET) + Vista University (Port Elizabeth) = **Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University** 3.**University of South Africa** (UNISA) + Technikon South Africa (TSA) + Vista University Distance Education Centre (VUDEC) 4. University of Transkei (Unitra) + Border Technikon + Eastern Cape Tecknikon = **Walter Sisulu University of Technology and Science**
National Institutes		1. **Npumalanga Institute of Higher Education** 2. **Northern Cape Institute for Higher Education**

Source: Council on Higher Education (2004), *South African Higher Education in the First Decade of Democracy*, The Council on Higher Education (CHE), Pretoria.

Restructuring the system: coping with the challenges of mergers and incorporations

The South African government's decision to restructure the higher education system through institutional mergers and incorporations was based on the notion that the new system should reflect a wide spectrum of HEIs, differentiated in terms of their missions, qualifications and programmes, entrance requirements and research capability, while displaying some degree of unification, integration, and co-ordination that would allow academic staff and students to enjoy mobility and transferability. In line with this assumption, "comprehensive universities" were expected to combine formative and career-focused, technological, higher education through student access to a wider variety of courses with different entry requirements, student mobility between career-focused and formative courses, expanded research opportunities by linking applied research (a typical strength of the former technikons) to basic research (a typical strength of the traditional university), and through their increased scope and capacity to address regional needs.

The review team's assessment of the situation suggests that while most "traditional", research intensive universities have not been affected by the mergers, a limited number has been affected, as a consequence of the Apartheid legacy. However, other types of institutions, namely the "comprehensives" are struggling with multiple challenges that, coupled with management problems, leave these institutions at academic risk.

Indeed, there are clear indications that, as a result of mergers between universities and technikons, "comprehensive universities" now face numerous challenges related to their curricular and institutional identities, and market relevance. In a seminar organised by the Center for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) in late 2007, which has focused on "the curriculum debate in comprehensive universities", a prominent leader of a major comprehensive university – the University of Johannesburg – claimed that after the mergers there was no "very clear idea of what the institutions are and how they should deliver on their mandate. It has been left to universities to decide" (Professor Angina Parekh, in MacGregor and Maslen, 2008b). Under these conditions, she argued, comprehensive universities may be tempted to emulate "traditional" universities. In doing this they will run the risk of academic drift and miss their purpose; as a consequence, they will become a threat to programme differentiation and will end up rated as second class universities. If they persist in pursing their mandate as "new generation" universities (that is, as entrepreneurial and engaged universities), they run the risk of alienating their students and themselves *vis-à-vis* the labour market. As Professor Parekh puts it, "We are

struggling with how to brand ourselves in the marketplace. Do we produce technicians or mid-level careerists or high-flying professionals, or all of them but as master of none? We do not want to confuse the market, or it will simply move elsewhere" (MacGregor and Maslen, 2008).

In summary, comprehensive universities now face multiple challenges. On the one hand, they try to respond to market needs by expanding the number and type of course offerings and engaging in commercial activities by creating companies or market oriented courses. On the other, they find themselves in the peculiar position of offering a variety of qualifications and programmes, from undergraduate certificates to doctoral degrees, and a mix of types of knowledge, from technological, vocational, career-oriented and professional to general formative. As a result, they are now struggling to reconcile the divide between academic (discipline-based) knowledge and professional (applied) knowledge that emerged from or has been exacerbated by programme mergers. These problems, in association with serious management problems, undoubtedly put comprehensive universities at risk.

Choosing a "knowledge niche" based on intellectual competency (*i.e.* the exit point in terms of qualifications, skills and attitudes that a programme intends to produce) appears to be best way forward. As one participant in the CHET seminar suggested "…comprehensives cannot have it all – they have to choose. If institutions do not choose they will be hollowed out from within. Effectively they will not be an institution, but many different institutions in one…" (Professor Joe Muller, in MacGregor and Maslen, 2008c).

Student access and equity

The policy of increased participation

One of the fundamental goals of higher education transformation in South Africa is the achievement of equity in the higher education system. This goal is clearly articulated in key policy documents, such as the NCHE report, the Education White Paper 3, and the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE).

According to the NCHE report, in order to address effectively the needs of equity and redress, the tension between equity and development would have to be resolved through a policy of increased participation. In order to achieve this, NCHE advocated a change from an "elite higher education system" to a "mass higher education system" and estimated the overall

participation rate of the relevant age group (20-24-years-olds) as 20% in 1996 and projected a further increase of up to 30% by 2005, the great bulk of which would "need to come from the Black community". In other words, student numbers, including private higher education enrolments, were expected to rise from some 800 000 in 1995 to nearly 1.5 million in 2005 (Department of Education, 2001, p. 19). Following a recommendation of the Council on Higher Education, and taking into consideration financial constraints, the Department of Education agreed to increased participation rate from 15% in 2001 to 20% by 2010-15 (Council on Higher Education, 2004, p. 63).

Based on available evidence, the review team suggests that the assumptions on which this expansion was premised were unrealistic and problematic, particularly in terms of projected numbers of high school leavers with the required credentials for study in higher education. As a matter of fact, only15% to18% of secondary school students who sat for the final exam known as "Matric" every year obtain a pass "with endorsement" (*i.e.* qualify automatically for university), and this number decreases because more students choose to take Matric at standard, not high, grade level, especially in maths and science, the two fields of critical skills shortage in South Africa. Thus, increased participation is not meeting the NPHE target, not only because of the poor school-leaving examination results, but also because of where those youngsters who manage to get into the system come from: most of them are from quintile 5 schools (that are richer and predominantly white). This situation has forced universities to accept under-prepared students, the vast majority of whom are from severely disadvantaged backgrounds (MacGregor, 2008).

Prior to 1994, the South African higher education system was characterised by serious inequities. Public HEIs were reserved for the exclusive use of specific racial groups and legal arrangements prohibited those institutions from enrolling students from another group. Attempts by white, English-medium HEIs to escape the Apartheid laws after the introduction of the three-chamber parliament in 1984 resulted in 28% of student enrolments in white English-medium HEIs being black (38% by 1993) (Council on Higher Education, 2004). Overall participation rates (total number of student enrolments divided by the total population in the 20-24 age group) in the public higher education sector, although significantly higher than in many developing countries, were still below the international norm. For instance, it is generally held that a 17% gross participation rate is below the rate of fast-developing and developed nations. Moreover, participation rates were highly skewed by race: nearly 12% for Africans, 13% for coloureds, 51% for Indians, and 60% for whites (Council on Higher Education, 2007, p. 10).

Policy outcomes: access, equity and student performance

Based on previous reviews (see, for instance, Jansen, *et al.*, 2007) the following claims can be made with regard to the goal of equity in the higher education system. First, there has been a steady, albeit uneven, growth in student enrolments over the past decade. Second, there are more female students in higher education than male. Third, more black African students (and fewer white students) attended public higher education. Fourth, while female enrolments have increased considerably, female students remain underrepresented in the fields of science, engineering and technology (SET). Fifth, there are currently more women being appointed for academic positions in public HEIs and women are reaching parity in male/female permanent staff. Last, senior academic positions in public HEIs are still overwhelmingly white and male. This section concentrates on the first four claims; the remaining ones will be dealt with in the following section).

More equitable composition of student population

A headcount enrolment reveals that in most HEIs the composition of the student body is currently far more equitable compared to their staff and gender. As Tables 8.1 and 8.2 portray, in early 1994, 40% of all students in public HEIs were black African, 47% white, 7% Indian, and 5% coloured. Twelve years later (in 2006) the proportion of African to white students had radically changed, as 61% of the students were black African (a 21% increase) against 25% white students (a 22% decrease). The proportion of Indian and coloured students (7.4% and 6.6%, respectively) had shown a minor increase over the same period. By contrast, 55.1% of all students were female (CBR). Access to higher education for black African students and women has been considerably broadened, the overall participation rate has slightly increased from 14% in 1995 to 16% in 2006. As some analysts observed, while there was an increased participation rate of Africans in the public higher education system, the decline of white student enrolments in the public sector had the effect of lowering the average participation rate from 17% in early 1994 to 16% in 2000 (Bunting, 2002; Cloete, 2004). Furthermore, it also can be argued that, despite this remarkable change in the composition of the student body, the access of black students to the high-status and high-skill areas such as the sciences, engineering and post-graduate programmes is very limited (Cloete, 2004; MacGregor, 2008).

Table 8.1 **Proportion of higher education headcount enrolments by race, 1993-2006**

Race	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2002	2005	2006
African	40	50	58	59	60	60	60	61
Coloured	5	6	5	5	5	5	6.3	6.6
Indian	7	7	7	7	7	7	7.4	7.4
White	47	37	31	29	27	27	25.3	25
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Council on Higher Education (2004), *South African Higher Education in the First Decade of Democracy*, The Council on Higher Education (CHE), Pretoria; *Country Background Report: South African Education*; 2005, 2006 figures from the Department of Education in 2008.

Gender equity

With regard to gender equity, whereas in 1993 52% of the students were male and 48% female, ten years later (in 2002) the proportion had reversed: 46% of the students were male and 54% female. In 2006 the proportion was 44.9% male against 55.1% female students. These developments, however, mask important inequities in the distribution of female students across academic programmes and at higher levels of post-graduate training. Female students tend to enrol in larger numbers in the field of humanities, particularly in teacher education programmes, while remaining seriously underrepresented in programmes in science, engineering and technology and in business, commerce and management (Badat, 2004; Cloete, 2004).

Table 8.2 **Headcount higher education enrolments by gender, 1993-2005**

Gender	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2002	2005	2006
Male	221 000	305 000	300 000	273 000	304 000	312 000	335 205	332 662
	52%	*54%*	*50%*	*48%*	*47%*	*46%*	*45%*	*44.90%*
Female	202 000	262 000	296 000	291 000	347 000	363 000	402 267	408 718
	48%	*46%*	*50%*	*52%*	*53%*	*54%*	*55%*	*55.10%*
Total	**423 000**	**567 000**	**596 000**	**564 000**	**651 000**	**675 000**	**737 472**	**741 380**
	100%	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*	*100%*

Source: Council on Higher Education (2004), *South African Higher Education in the First Decade of Democracy*, The Council on Higher Education (CHE), Pretoria; *Country Background Report: South African Education*; 2005, 2006 figures from the Department of Education in 2008.

Retention and completion rates

An important indicator of equity and redress is the extent to which the system manages to retain the majority of its students until graduation (retention rates). Apart from the historically white English-medium institutions, by and large retention rates for the system have declined after 1997. For instance, while in 1993 17% of new university enrolments completed their degrees or diplomas, in 2000 the figure was only 16%. The corresponding rates for technikons were 10% and 9%, respectively. On the other hand, considering the number of people aged 25 years or more who have completed some sort of higher education, and the share of the population who have obtained a degree or diploma, it was found that out of the 120 063 graduates produced in South Africa in 2005, the average success rate of black African students in contact undergraduate programmes was only 69.8%. By contrast, the average success rate for white students is 84.7% (CBR).

Both the poor throughput rate and the limited access of male African students and women to the high-status fields of study are suggestive of a significant departure from the policy intentions of the 1997 white paper. The current state of affairs with regard to poor student performance in South African HEIs is a matter of serious concern. Since the introduction of the new funding framework (NFF) for higher education, which is goal-oriented and performance-oriented, enrolment and graduation targets are set by the DoE after consultation with each HEI, thus, it is reasonable to expect that both HEIs and the DoE are fully aware of and committed to solving this problem. The question, then, is finding out what factors, and to what extent and in what ways those factors influence student performance, and how the status quo can be improved.

The review team suggests that detailed, systematic investigation into these issues is needed. Drawing on disaggregation of cohort data produced by the DoE, a recent CHE study identified some key factors affecting student performance in the context of South Africa. Some of these factors lay outside and others within the higher education sector's control. Taking into consideration some indicators of performance (*e.g.* numbers of students in school, numbers of students passing the Senior Certificate, quality and challenge in the Senior Certificate examination, numbers of students obtaining a matriculation endorsement, numbers of students writing exams and succeeding in maths and science, teachers' qualifications, availability and quality of learning resources, etc.) and the prospects of improvement in the school sector, the study concluded that improvement in schooling per se should not be relied upon as a primary means for achieving substantial improvement in graduate output and equity of outcomes in higher education. The study focused, instead, on key factors of the educational process that are

deemed within the control of the system, and argued that such factors, namely affective and institutional cultural factors, and the teaching and learning processes taking place in HEIs, had a major influence on student performance (Council on Higher Education, 2007).

On the other hand, as shown in Table 8.3, enrolments in the field of humanities and social sciences (HSS) rose significantly from 269 000 (57%) in 1993 to a peak of 320 000 (58%) in 1997, then declined to 277 000 (49%) in 1999, followed by a slight rise in 2002 and 2006 to 287 000 (44%) and 311 894 (42.3%), respectively. By contrast, enrolments in the fields of science, engineering and technology (SET) and business, commerce and management science (BCMS) rose steadily throughout this period, almost doubling in each case. As a result, the ratio of HSS:BCMS:SET enrolments had changed remarkably from 57:24:19 in 1993 to 42:29:29 in 2006, indicating that the overall ratio has been progressively coming closer to the target set in the NPHE of 40:30:30, with additional effort needed in SET. Despite these positive developments, data reveal that while 42.3% of students were enrolled in either teacher education or the broad humanities and social sciences, 29.1% were enrolled in business and management and only 28.6% were studying the sciences, engineering and technology.

Table 8.3 **Ratio headcount enrolments by field of study, compared with NPHE targets 1993-2002**

Field of Study	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	2002	2005	NPHE Target
Humanities & Social Sciences	269 000	329 000	320 000	277 000	287 000	298 197	311 894	40
	57	*58*	*54*	*49*	*44*	*44*	*42.3*	
Business, Commerce &	113 000	126 000	139 000	146 000	200 000	204 728	214 509	30
	24	*22*	*23*	*26*	*30*	*30*	*29.1*	
Science, Engineering &	90 000	111 000	138 000	140 000	167 000	172 203	211 069	30
	19	*20*	*23*	*49*	*26*	*26*	*28.6*	
Total %	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: Council on Higher Education (2004), *South African Higher Education in the First Decade of Democracy*, The Council on Higher Education (CHE), Pretoria; 2005 figures from the Department of Education in 2008.

As the above trends in enrolment figures suggest, the targets for science, engineering and technology (SET) set by the NCHE have not yet been met. Possible explanations for this underperformance include a set of interrelated and sometimes conflicting factors, namely:

- the declining number of high school leavers with the required credentials for university study, *i.e.* those who have passed the Matric examination with endorsement, which is a pre-requisite for direct admission into universities and, to a lesser extent, into universities of technology;

- a significant fall in retention rates in higher education, owing to high drop-out rates (associated with financial and/or academic exclusion);

- increased costs of higher education, which may have impacted on the ability of students from lower and middle class backgrounds to enter higher education;

- the changing value of higher education programmes (in connection with the rise of the economic sciences and the decline of the humanities) and perceptions of falling standards in public higher education that may drive students from more affluent backgrounds to move to expensive private higher education or to study abroad.

Higher education staff

Prevailing employment practices in public higher education during the pre-1994 years were in tune with the basic tenets of the Apartheid division of labour in South Africa. Accordingly, academic staff and senior administrative staff positions, including at historically black universities (HBUs), were overwhelmingly filled by male and white South Africans, while lower-level and service positions were filled by blacks and women (Council on Higher Education, 2004).

By 1994, the public higher education sector employed about 45 000 staff, of whom 17 000 were professional staff (academic, executive management and support professional staff). The overwhelming majority (80%) of professional staff were white as against 12% Africans, 4% coloured and 4% Indian; 34% were women and they enjoyed a generally lower status than their male counterparts. The sector also employed non-professional staff, of whom 52% were African, 29% white, 13% coloured, and 6% Indian; 47% of non-professional staff were women.

Nearly 70% of full-time black academic staff members were employed in historically black universities (HBUs) and in historically black technikons (HBTs). Thus, in 1993, 36% of permanent black academic staff worked in HBUs, 33% in HBTs, 15% in English-medium historically white universities (HWUs), 8% in historically white technikons (HWTs), 5% in distance education institutions, and 3% in Afrikaans-medium HWUs.

Of the entire population of permanent academic staff, the best proportion of women was found in distance education HEIs at 44% in 1993, followed by other categories of HEIs at between 20% and 27% (Council on Higher Education, 2004).

Both White Paper 3 and the NPHE indicated as a key policy goal the transformation of the racial and gender composition of the staff – especially academic and senior management and administration staff – to ensure equitable access and progression in the academy for previously disenfranchised groups. With regard to race and gender equity, the NPHE specifically observed that "changes in the demographic profile of the student body of the higher education system have generally not been accompanied by a similar change in the staff profile so that black people and women remain under-represented in academic and professional positions, especially at senior levels" (NPHE, 3.1.4).

In its 2004 assessment of the *South African Higher Education in the First Decade of Democracy*, CHE observes that "a persistent feature of the higher education system has been the slow rate of change" (p.78) of the racial and gender composition of the staff. Despite the promulgation of the Employment Equity Act and the requirement for HEIs "to develop employment equity plans with clear targets for rectifying race and gender inequities" (NPHE, 6.1) progress has been limited. This situation may result from a combination of structural and institutional factors. Structural factors are linked to the limited pool of available and suitably qualified black, women and disabled academics and senior managerial and administrative personnel. The institutional and academic disciplinary cultures are also believed to work hand in hand with the dynamics of power struggles at the local level to further constrain efforts towards staff equity.

The size of the higher education workforce declined from 45 848 to 43 291 between 1995 and 2002, and was at 44 187 in 2006. It should be noted, however, that this drop did not result from a decline in academic or professional staff, but rather from a reduction of service staff, whose functions were outsourced to private contractors. However, as Table 8.4 indicates, staff losses affected only universities (down by over 4 500 between 1995 and 2002) not technikons, where staff members have increased 1.2 times during the same period.

Table 8.4 **Overall number of higher education staff, 1995-2006**

Institution	1995	1998	2002	2005	2006
University	36 847	34 780	32 061	n.a.[1]	n.a.
Technikon	9 001	10 478	11 230	n.a.	n.a.
Total	**45 848**	**45 258**	**43 291**	**44 336**	**44 187**

Note:

1. Following the merging of universities and technikons after 2004, figures are no longer reported separately.

Source: Council on Higher Education (2004), *South African Higher Education in the First Decade of Democracy*, The Council on Higher Education (CHE), Pretoria; 2005, 2006 figures from the Department of Education in 2008.

As the review team noted earlier, apart from the remarkable increase of the number of African staff in the former technikons, very little change took place in the racial composition of the professional staff. The team also recognised that, where serious efforts have been made to alter the demographic profile of the academic staff, in many HEIs, junior lecturers and lecturers did not receive formal training in the pedagogy of higher education. Nevertheless, such courses now exist in many developing and industrialised countries.

Table 8.5 **Changes in the proportion of women academics by rank, 1995-2002**

	Professors	Senior Lecturers	Lecturers	Junior Lecturers
1995	13	28	46	53
2002	18	38	53	55
2005	18.5	39.5	51	56.3
2006	19.1	40.6	50.9	54.7

Source: Council on Higher Education (2004), *South African Higher Education in the First Decade of Democracy*, The Council on Higher Education (CHE), Pretoria; 2005, 2006 figures from the Department of Education in 2008.

With regard to gender, women who had been extremely underrepresented in the academic category improved their standing between 1995 and 2006. Table 8.5 shows the changing proportion of women academics by rank over the period of 1995-2006. As proportion of the professoriate their number increased from 13% to 19.1%. Similarly, their

proportion as senior lecturers increased from 28% to 40.6%, as did their proportion as lecturers, from 46% to 50.9%, and junior lecturers, from 53% to 54.7%.

Quality of teaching and learning

In an increasingly globalised and competitive world quality has become central to education systems in general and to higher education systems in particular. In the South African context, where the equity and redress imperatives have dominated policy discourse, there is the danger that if too much emphasis is put on equity without taking into account quality, then equity may become an empty rhetoric, and a narrow conception of equity would be unhelpful in dismantling the Apartheid legacy and helping build the human capacity that South Africa needs in order to become a strong, united, democratic and prosperous nation in the 21st century.

As already discussed earlier (see *Legal and policy context of higher education*, the second "pillar" of the NCHE report focused on greater responsiveness of the higher education system to global trends and societal needs and interests. In order to properly address the challenges of globalisation and the complex needs of South Africa, higher education was expected to move away from "Mode 1" (the traditional, discipline-based knowledge-production model in universities) to "Mode 2" (interdisciplinary or "transdisciplinary" knowledge production, carried out by teams of researchers both from within and outside universities). This latter "mode" was deemed more "open", interactive and responsive to ever changing external environments and circumstances of HEIs. The report also claimed that closer interaction of higher education with its surrounding environment would lead to the incorporation of the views and values of previously disenfranchised groups. In other words, a policy of greater responsiveness seemed to imply a necessary shift in curriculum content, focus and organisation. Such change would not only be a change from disciplinary to interdisciplinary, but also from "courses" to "credits"; from "departments" to "programmes"; from "subject-based teaching" to "student-based learning"; from "knowledge" to "competence"; and from "theory-based learning" to "problem-based learning"(Council on Higher Education, 2004).

From the NCHE in the mid 1990's to the white paper of 1997, to the NPHE of 2001 and beyond, policy has been attempting to balance simultaneous challenges for higher education curriculum – social and economic transformation and globalisation – through the application of specific principles and practices. In concrete terms, higher education has been asked to generate new curricula and pursue new models of teaching and learning to accommodate a larger and more diverse student population.

In the meantime, higher education is expected to deliver the required research results, the highly trained people with knowledge, competences and attitudes to equip a developing society with the capacity to address national needs and to participate effectively in a rapidly changing and competitive global marketplace.

With the stated intention of lending support to HEIs in their attempt to achieve the abovementioned goals and as part of a new set of governance arrangements for a restructured higher education system, the government has developed a steering mechanism that includes a programme-based definition of higher education, which drives planning and funding; an outcomes-based definition of higher education; a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) that integrates all education and training and on which all higher education qualifications must be registered; and a single national quality assurance system, comprising programme accreditation and re-accreditation, institutional audits and development and promotion of quality in higher education (Singh, 2006).

Many observers have criticised the approach that was followed as part of the responsiveness agenda. Some have suggested that, as with a number of other educational policies, this one was not intended to change practice, because its primary motivations had little if anything to do with transforming the realities of teaching and learning in classrooms (Jansen, 2001). Realising "the lack of fit between education policy and education practice", Jansen claimed that education policy making in South Africa could be best described as "a struggle for the achievement of a broad political symbolism to mark the shift from apartheid to post apartheid society" (p. 272) and he argued that the state was preoccupied with "settling policy struggles in the political rather than in the realm of [educational] practice". Meanwhile, other, perhaps less radical critics, have pointed to the unanticipated and unintended outcomes of the policy itself. For instance, Bundy (2006, p.13), explains how a limited number of HEIs, among which there were Afrikaans-medium universities, have seized the opportunity provided by the restructuring and responsiveness agendas to reinvent themselves as "entrepreneurial universities", through curriculum diversification and new market-oriented courses, and by experimenting with new delivery modes, and entering into new public/private partnerships. On the opposite side of the coin, Bundy found that: "the weaker historically black universities went to the wall. They lost staff and students to historically white competitors, tenuous academic cultures grew weaker, and a mix of 'crisis management and decision-avoidance' led to a dismal pattern of falling enrolments, mounting debts and endemic conflict" (Bundy, 2006, p.13).

Others have pointed to the "complexities and contested areas of NQF implementation", and drew attention to the "tensions between the institution-based education and workplace-based education" and the need to ensure compatibility and articulation between the three types of learning postulated in the NQF – discipline-based learning, trade, occupational and professional (TOP) learning, and career-focused learning (Council on Higher Education, 2004, p.97).

With regard to the new model of curriculum transformation implied by the NQF, some critics from the academic community have also expressed concerns that reformatting curricula in an outcomes-based fashion (as a requirement for pre-registration on the NQF by SAQA) may have been an effective way of grappling more with form than with content of the curriculum, which they saw as a total failure "to engage the most critical question of all: the types of knowledge, capacities, skills and competencies that the higher education curriculum must deliver, in order to meet the needs of the South African society and economy". The review team believes that this is a fundamental question to be recurrently asked if HEIs are to remain the central actors of curriculum change and the realities of teaching and learning in the classroom are to be transformed in South Africa.

Based on observations and interviews with faculty members, senior administrators, students and other relevant stakeholders during the site visits, the review team concurs that the entry requirements to universities are a matter of serious concern. The team is well aware that severe deficiencies among most secondary school graduates, particularly in the subjects of mathematics, science, and languages are affecting their ability to cope with the demands of academic work at the higher level. In response to this situation, some HEIs are currently offering foundation year courses or considering an extension of the curriculum from one semester to a full year. However, all of these initiatives seem to be taking place in isolation and on an *ad hoc* basis, without proper co-ordination and with limited funding.

Quality assurance

The situation in 1994

Prior to 1995, there was no single, coherent system of quality assurance in South African higher education. There were different types and levels of quality assurance designed for different sectors of higher education. In some HEIs, quality assurance was mandatory, but in others it was voluntary; internal and external quality assurance did not exist or were irregular. For instance, while technikons had a system of external quality assurance in

place from 1986 and some professional councils were involved in periodic quality assurance in relation to professional programmes and qualifications, many other HEIs, particularly the HBUs, did not have any quality assurance arrangements (Council on Higher Education, 2004).

Policy developments after 1994

The establishment of a new national system of quality assurance began following the recommendations of the NCHE report (1996). In light of the prevailing situation in the country, the NCHE report defined the establishment of a single co-ordinated system of higher education as a first priority. It also saw the development of "an effective regulatory environment" and of appropriate "steering mechanisms" as indispensable to the emergence of a more coherent system. A quality assurance system was listed by the NCHE among the key steering mechanisms for higher education. The other steering mechanisms include a national qualifications framework, new research funding, national provision of distance education and resource-based programmes, systematic planning processes, and improved capacity and infrastructure of all HEIs.

Quality assurance, coupled with planning and funding, was also regarded by the government as part of an overall strategy designed to forge a new set of governance relations between government and HEIs, and to ensure stronger accountability and efficiency in higher education (Singh, 2006).

The review team has noted earlier in this chapter that while the Education White Paper 3 (Department of Education, 1997) had not endorsed the NCHE recommendation for a higher education forum of stakeholders with policy advisory functions and a higher education council with an intermediary status, responsible for planning and resource allocation, it had chosen instead to concentrate those functions on the Council on Higher Education (CHE), with policy advisory and quality assurance responsibilities.

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) was established in terms of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997, and appointed in June 1998 (International Bureau of Education, UNESCO, 2003). It is an independent statutory body, with both advisory and executive roles. The CHE advises the Minister of Education on all aspects relating to the transformation and development of higher education in South Africa.

The CHE also has executive responsibility for: accreditation, quality assurance and quality promotion through a permanent subcommittee, known as the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC); monitoring and

evaluation of the achievement of policy goals and objectives, including reporting on the state of higher education in South Africa; and promoting students' access to higher education (Republic of South Africa, 2007).

Every year the CHE is expected to publish a report on the state of higher education for submission to the Parliament. It is also expected to convene an annual meeting of relevant higher education stakeholders (Republic of South Africa, 2007).

From the outset, the challenge for the CHE was to create a quality assurance system capable of accommodating a wide range of objectives and demands, including equity and social justice objectives, accountability, funding, and human capacity development demands. Taking up this challenge would require, as Singh (2006) suggested, being committed "to making the issue of improved quality for all an essential component of a restructured and transformed higher education system, and quality assurance an arena of action for achieving such a goal" (p.69).

As was discussed earlier, of special relevance for quality assurance is the role of the HEQC. The HEQC was established in 2001. Since then it re-defined quality to include standard elements common to other higher education systems around the world, but also elements specific to the South African context, priorities and purposes, such as "fitness of purpose", "value for money", and individual and social "transformation" (Council on Higher Education, 2004; Singh, 2006).

In focusing on "value for money" issues, the HEQC claims that it was not driven by economic rationalism, nor was it guided by an exclusive preoccupation with "outcomes"; on the contrary, it directs peer review panels to focus on institutional initiatives and resourcing for quality development and improvement as much as for quality assurance, paying attention to the "inputs" and processes for intended quality "outcomes", rather than paying attention only to "outcomes" and "outputs" (Council on Higher Education, 2004; Singh, 2006).

Critical issues and challenges

In the past few years the HEQC has moved from system-building to policy implementation. Consequently it is now faced with new challenges. From a systemic standpoint, the strategic and operational links between planning, funding and quality assurance seem more important than ever, particularly in view of the challenges facing some historically disadvantaged institutions, the newly established type of university (*i.e.* the universities of technology) and those that result from mergers and incorporations in general, and specifically those affecting "comprehensive" universities. In

this process, all major players (the HEQC, HEIs and the DoE) ought to be involved.

Other equally important challenges include: a need to safeguard institutional autonomy in the process of external quality evaluation; the importance of ensuring that the new funding formula does not reward underperforming HEIs at the expense of those that perform at standard or above average level; equally important is to ensure active involvement and commitment of academics and students in the quality assurance process, by making their voices and needs heard. Finally, sustained effort is needed in order to ensure that internal quality management and continuous improvement are institutionalised and become part and parcel of the culture of each public and private HEI.

Governance of HEIs

The policy context

The relationship between the state and South African universities since 1994 has been described in terms of "co-operative governance" and "conditional autonomy". The third "pillar" for a transformed higher education system in South Africa that originated from the NCHE report (1996) called for increased co-operation and partnerships in governance structures and emphasised the need for "co-operative governance", in terms of which the state would play a steering and supervisory role, rather than a role of direct control and interference.

The idea of "co-operative governance" was further elaborated in the 1997 white paper (3.7) as being a relationship which "assumes a proactive, guiding and constructive role for government". It also assumes a co-operative relationship between the state and higher education institutions.

Accordingly, at institutional level, governance should become more democratic and participatory, a set of linkages between HEIs and identifiable stakeholders in the civil society should be established, and a new structure known as the "Institutional Forum" was expected to represent multiple and often conflicting stakeholder interests. This was based on the notion that "while different interests exist and contestation is inevitable, governance should enable co-operative rather than conflicted negotiation of these differences" (Council on Higher Education, 2004, p.176). The purpose of intra-institutional co-operation and collaboration was to promote dialogue between academic cultures and ease the formation of new institutional identities.

At national level, "co-operative governance" was portrayed as a benign form of state supervision, distinct from state control and state interference. At this level, co-operative governance is "based on the principle of autonomous institutions working co-operatively with a proactive government and in a range of partnerships" (Department of Education, 1997, 3.6). The idea of institutional autonomy is further developed in the Higher Education Act No.101 of 1997, which states that "it is desirable for higher education institutions to enjoy freedom and autonomy in their relationship with the State within the context of accountability and the national need for advanced skills and scientific knowledge" (Republic of South Africa, 1997, p.2).

The introduction of quality assurance mechanisms, together with planning and funding, was portrayed by the government "as part of forging a new set of governance relations between government and academia, the need for higher education to meet social and economic priorities, competitiveness in a global marketplace, greater responsiveness to the world of work, and the development of stronger accountabilities and efficiencies in higher education" (Singh, 2006, p.68).

Policy outcomes and challenges

The extent to which the outcomes of "co-operative governance" have been consistent with the above policy formulations is a matter for dispute. The tension between deeply held values of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, on the one hand, and, on the other, the requirements of accountability, as well as the steps taken by the government to ensure that the national demand for qualified skills and scientific knowledge is met, have led some commentators to argue that university autonomy in South Africa remained as controversial an issue as it was during the Apartheid rule (Coughlan, *et al.*, 2007, p.77). Reflecting on this situation, critical voices like Jansen's (2004) saw changes in the higher education sector as constituting a "gradual but systemic erosion of historical standards of autonomy that were ingrained within the institutional fabric of universities" (p.5).

Moreover, there are observers who contend that, because of the slow and/or ineffective implementation of institutional forums, across the board, and confusion and uncertainty regarding the functions, role and accountability of the major governance structures (councils, committees and senates) academics, students and staff had a strong feeling of being denied participation in governance. As a result, in the late 1990s, some contestation concerning the appropriate role of institutional forums took place and in three historically black universities (Fort Hare, the North and Transkei)

governance structures collapsed altogether, prompting the government to intervene in these institutions (Council on Higher Education, 2004).

The inefficiency of institutional forums, particularly in relation to the participation of previously disadvantaged groups, coupled with multiple demands on universities, forced some institutional leaders to start playing "a most pivotal role in the governance and management of their institutions" (Kulati and Moja, 2002, p.234, quoted by Bundy, 2006). On the other hand, most notoriously in some Afrikaans speaking universities and technikons, but generally across the system, South African HEIs started applying to themselves the governance models and styles described in the comparative international literature as "New Managerialism" (Kulati and Moja, 2002).

As the review team has already discussed earlier in this chapter, South African higher education is currently struggling with effective governance of mergers and incorporations. Since May 2002 the merger programme has taken centre stage in the higher education policy arena. Amidst legal challenges, in some cases, institutional opposition, in others, and sustained media and academic criticism, in general, most "comprehensive universities" that came out of mergers now face complex human resource issues, the challenge of melting together different institutional cultures and the possibility that some of them are too large, too amorphous, and too geographically dispersed to be easy to lead.

Funding for higher education

Funding mechanisms before 1994

Prior to 1994, funding policy for public higher education was consistent with the fragmented, divisive and inequitable character of the higher education system developed by the Apartheid state. Accordingly, the following sets of funding arrangements were in place:

- *Formula funding:* Initially applied to historically white universities (HWUs) formula funding for higher education was used by the government to allocate funds to institutions by means of a formula that was based on two measures: full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrolments as input variables and student success rates and research publications, as output variables. The global amounts available were distributed by the council of the HEI, and unused funds could be retained (Council on Higher Education, 2004).

- *Negotiated budgets:* This funding arrangement was first applied in historically black universities (HBUs) and technikons. Accordingly,

each HEI was expected to submit its "needs" budgets to a government department, showing expenditure and partial income (student fee). Once approved, the proposed budget had to be spent strictly in terms of its line items, and unspent balances had to be returned to the government. As a result of this funding practice, HBUs and technikons could not build up a reserve and because their expenditure budgets were not linked to student enrolments, but subject to a percentage increase year after year, these HEIs were unable to catch up with universities funded under the formula system. On the other hand, by 1986 funding for HBUs was generally on a higher level than for the HWUs. So when all HEIs were brought into the same formula – the South African Post-Secondary Education (SAPSE) – funding for the HBUs had to be reduced (Council on Higher Education, 2004, p. 188).

- *Full funding:* This funding mechanism was mainly designed for the college sector. Under this funding scheme institutions were not required to submit a budget proposal or to prepare independent institutional accounts, because the government department accepted responsibility for all the costs of an HEI, and expenditures were taken as those of the relevant government department.

Funding mechanisms after 1994

From 1995 to 2003, public higher education in South Africa was financed by the government and its appointed agency, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), which was established in 1995. The NSFAS was administered by the Tertiary Education Fund for South Africa (TEFSA), which had been founded in 1991 as a not-for-profit company to provide loans to higher education students (Steyn and de Villiers, 2007). The private sector also played an important, though limited, role in financing higher education.

Government funding for higher education was guided by the principles of shared costs, equity and redress and development (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). The principle of shared costs states that, apart from a few specialised colleges, because of the anticipated high private returns, the government and students and/or their parents must share the costs of higher education. But for students in colleges and other higher education institutions designed to produce "pure public goods", such as nursing, teacher education and police training colleges, the government alone was responsible for all financing.

The principle of redress followed from the notion that government financing of higher education must ensure equitable access and that race, ethnicity, gender and social class should not justify denying access and equal treatment to anyone with proper qualifications.

The principle of development links funding for higher education to its role in the production of highly qualified human resources to meet the economic and social development needs of the country. Other related principles include efficiency, sustainability and quality, as well as the principle of democracy. The latter advocates that stakeholders at different levels of decision-making should be involved in the allocation of financial resources to the higher education sector.

The mechanisms and formulae used to allocate funds were as follows. The government allocated subsidies and other financial resources to universities and technikons through South African Post-Secondary Education (SAPSE), by means of a base formula funding. The SAPSE subsidy formula (one for universities, another for technikons) was enrolment driven, with funding following students as they enrolled at institutions of their choice (Steyn and de Villiers, 2007). By applying the formula, HEIs received a subsidy from the central government on the basis of the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students multiplied by their various unit costs (Merisotis and Gilleland, 2000).

Apart from the subsidy allocations based on a formula, while the SAPSE formulae were being used as the primary source of public funding for the universities and technikons, the government also provided separate earmarked funds for the following expenses:

- *Capital projects:* Earmarked funding for the acquisition of land, new buildings, and land improvements other than buildings.

- *Municipal assessment rates:* Due to vast differences in the value of the land owned by HEIs, until 2004, municipal rates were paid in full by the state, upon receipt of the actual accounts from institutions. From that year on such payments were discontinued.

- *The National Student Financial Aid Scheme* (NSFAS) was established in 1995 and, starting from that year, the state has annually made earmarked allocations for NSFAS to each HE institution.

- *Redress funding:* In the financial years of 1998/99, 1999/2000, and 2000/01 the amounts ZAR 28 million, ZAR 60 million, and ZAR 30 million, respectively, were allocated to universities and technikons for redress purposes. All historically disadvantaged HEIs

benefited from the 1998/99 redress allocation of ZAR 28 million; however, official DoE budget documents did not disclose information pertaining to the division of allocations for 1999/2000 and 2000/01.

- *Incorporation of teacher training colleges: Ad hoc* allocations for the incorporation of colleges of education were made available to HEIs that were incorporating these colleges in 2001/02 and 2002/03. These allocations were designed to compensate the recipient HEIs for the relatively low tuition fees traditionally paid by teacher training students.

The total earmarked funding for universities and technikons as a percentage of the total state funding for universities and technikons decreased from15.6% in the 1996/97 financial year to 10% in the 1997/98 financial year. This reflected the termination of allocations for the purpose of construction of new buildings at HEIs. Despite some increase in the allocation of earmarked funds, during the subsequent three years they declined gradually to 10.3% in 2003/04. This trend was not consistent with the Education White Paper 3, which advocated that earmarked funding as a percentage of total state funding to universities and technikons should increase to levels well above the 1996/97 level of nearly 16%.

The New Funding Framework (NFF) for higher education

In December 2003, a new funding framework (NFF) for public higher education was published. The NFF started being implemented during the 2004/05 fiscal year.

The underlying philosophy of the NFF can be summarised as follows:

- The basic premise that underpins the policy framework for the transformation of higher education in the White Paper 3 is that the higher education system must be planned, governed and funded as a single, national, co-ordinated system.

- The emphasis on planning is informed by the fact that if the higher education system is to meet the national development agenda in terms of access, redress and human resource development needs, the size and shape of the system cannot be left to the chances of the market, in particular, unco-ordinated institutional decisions on student enrolments and programme offerings.

- In the market model, the role of the government is limited to funding student demand and to correcting any market failures that may occur. However, under Apartheid, the market model itself was

distorted by ideological factors, which restricted and constrained institutional and student choices and decisions.

- The higher education system therefore needs to be steered to meet national goals and priorities through a combination of instruments, namely planning, funding and quality assurance.

- The planning model of higher education funding involves three steps: (1) the DoE determines national policy goals and objectives; (2) institutions develop three year rolling plans indicating how they intend to address the national goals and objectives; (3) interaction between the DoE of Education and HEIs result in the approval of institutional plans, which would be the trigger for the release of funds, based on the sheer amount of funds available.

According to the DoE, the NFF is goal-oriented and performance-related, and this is intended to enable the distribution of government grants to institutions in line with national goals and priorities and approved institutional plans. According to a DoE assessment, the NFF departs from the assumptions of the old SAPSE formulae in two fundamental ways. First, the size and shape of the higher education system is no longer determined by student demand and institutional decision alone. Secondly, the starting point for determining the allocation of funds is not how much a student costs to the institutions (actual cost), irrespective of affordability criteria; nor whether the costs refer to the principal functions of HEIs, that is, teaching, research and community service. The DoE has argued that the fact that costs are not the starting point of the NFF does not mean that they are unimportant, nor does it preclude the possibility and desirability of determining and monitoring the unit costs underpinning institutional activities.

Despite these and other clarifications, it is argued that the NFF (like any other funding formulae) contains a number of important omissions and apparent contradictions that, in the review team's view, require further attention:

- Compared to the SAPSE the NFF makes no provisions for funding for residences and for additional fixed assets in the case of student growth.

- The NFF makes no funding available for experiential training (*e.g.* veterinary medicine), and for capital projects.

- The effect of these omissions, especially the reluctance of the state to subsidise new buildings and for maintaining minimum building

standards for physical facilities, may have serious consequences in the near future.

- While the SAPSE formulae were decentralised and enrolment-driven, with funds following the students as they enrolled at institutions of their choice, the NFF is based on central enrolment planning via approved institutional enrolment plans and on graduate outputs, which makes it seem a simple distributive mechanism; that is, a tool for dividing the pool of funds made available by the National Treasury.

- Since few of the NFF's elements are related to the actual costs incurred by HEIs, the funding grid (teaching output grid) weighs the FTE students according to relative costs, but, as with the other three grants of the NFF, serves only as a distributive device of predetermined sheer grant allocation. Moreover, as a distributive mechanism, the NFF is said to have no inbuilt provision for inflation.

- The way in which incentives for institutions to become more efficient are being administered under the NFF, through norms for research outputs and for graduation rates, may have the adverse effect of neutralising the very same intended effect within the sector. This can happen because the money not allocated to "under-performing" HEIs that have not met the norms, will be re-allocated to the same institutions in the form of development grants. This may push these institutions to do more, but it does not seem to provide incentives to institutions where more research is done to do more. Thus, setting higher standards does seem to have the reverse effect: it channels money away from HEIs producing the research that high standards are supposed to stimulate.

- The fact that the NFF makes subsidies to HEIs available based on the racial composition of their student body and on the size of each institution has also been a matter for concern. In this regard two researchers have warned that:

A perhaps unintentional or unanticipated consequence of coupling funding to an institution's demographic composition could be that thousands of black students, enrolled at formerly "white" institutions, will be funded by government at levels lower than those applicable to their peers at formerly "black" universities. If this is eventually reflected in different levels of fees, the financial incentive of this element of the funding framework, on the one hand, and the stated intention to de-

racialise institutions, on the other, will be in contradiction. (Steyn and de Villiers, 2007).

In view of these and other biases, some observers have suggested that the new funding formula, along with the deregulation of the system and the promotion of market relations had contributed to the creation of a new, differentiated, but also more unequal institutional landscape in South Africa (Cloete, 2002; Bundy, 2006).

Recommendations

- The review team does not question the value, opportunity and timeliness of the ongoing restructuring in higher education. Given the historical legacy of Apartheid, restructuring was a necessary step to render the system more accessible and equitable and to reshape it in order to bring it to a more integrated, rational and manageable size and shape. This has implied, in a number of cases, institutional mergers and incorporations. What the review team is concerned about is the underlying notion that the benefits accruing from institutional mergers would always be greater than the costs for the system as a whole, the institutions and actors and stakeholders involved, irrespective of their past experiences, histories and capabilities. On the contrary, the review team suggests that one important lesson to be learned from this process is that the human (subjective), material and financial (objective) conditions needed to bring about the planned change – including the capacity to manage change, overcome change resistance and cope with the unintended and unexpected consequences of the process – were seriously underestimated. Yet, they are all very important components of planned change. Therefore, more attention should be given to detailed planning, budgeting and monitoring of change, particularly at the institutional level. In order to be effective, systemic change must take into account both subjective factors (*e.g.* clear focus of change, shared vision and values, learning while doing and learning from doing, professional development, empowerment, etc.) as well as objective factors (*e.g.* competent leadership, proper funding, professional development, availability of support, etc.) and be aware of local power dynamics.

- A product of institutional mergers and incorporations, most comprehensive universities are now facing enormous challenges and in a state of disarray. Following an assessment of their present situation, the review team believes that most comprehensive

universities will have to make a difficult but necessary choice: either to become "specialised" by identifying one particular "knowledge niche", or to become many different institutions simultaneously and, as a result, face the risk of collapsing.

- Taking into account current patterns of enrolment and low graduations rates, particularly in the fields of mathematics, science, and technology, it is apparent that the higher education system is still far from fulfilling its function in terms of producing the high quality human capital needed to propel and sustain the social and economic development of South Africa. In view of this, the review team recommends that longitudinal and ethnographic/qualitative studies designed to provide a better understanding of the ways in which external and institutional factors affect student performance, in terms of high attrition and poor completion rates, be undertaken.

- The team also suggests that a more pro-active and long-term approach to the academic preparation and social integration of first year undergraduate students be taken, having in mind their increasingly diverse and heterogeneous backgrounds and motivations. The last 13 years of education under democracy in South Africa provide ample evidence that the proportion of high school graduates with matriculation endorsement has declined over the years, and that standards of maths, science, and languages are also declining. This is largely due to the shortage of qualified and well motivated secondary school teachers and administrators, on the one hand, and the precarious conditions of teaching and learning in many schools, on the other. Strategies for dealing effectively with the poor academic preparation of students, or to ease transition from secondary school to higher education should include: conventional extra-curricular bridging programmes (foundation courses), designed to bridge specific knowledge gaps, curriculum extension (designed to provide particular groups of students more time to complete their programmes), as well as co-curricular and academic literacy programmes, designed to develop generic and trans-disciplinary competencies and skills (study skills, leadership skills, metacognitive skills, team work, time management, oral presentation skills, etc.). The review team is aware that a number of these programmes and activities are already taking place in some HEIs in South Africa. Therefore, the team believes that time has come to systematise the existing experience, distil good practices and turn them into regular components of teaching and learning in higher education.

- Many HEIs have put a lot of effort into changing the demographic profile of their academic staff. This has resulted in growing numbers of junior lecturers being admitted into the academic career, with little or no formal training in the pedagogy of higher education. Yet, such courses are on offer as part of regular preparation for the academic career in both developing and developed countries. The review team strongly recommends that the DoE in co-ordination with HEIs and particularly, but not exclusively, HDIs, ensures that these types of courses are offered on a regular basis. In some cases this may entail the establishment of academic development units in each institution or the selection of one HEI to become the focal point and a resource centre for a designated number of HEIs located in the same geographical area. The review team also recommends the use of selected senior faculty members as mentors for junior staff.

- In its assessment of the new funding framework (NFF) for higher education, the review team has raised a number of critical conceptual and practical issues that it believes deserve consideration and, where possible, alteration or, at least, additional explanation to stakeholders. The issues raised include, inter alia, the lack of funding for residences and experiential learning (for students and staff in Veterinary Science); lack of subsidies for the maintenance of new buildings; ways of using incentives for increasing research and teaching productivity; providing subsidies to HEIs based on the demographic composition of their student body, not on cost, etc.

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Chapter 9: Conclusions: Strategic Recommendations for Action

This chapter presents a set of overarching recommendations, focusing on key issues of the reform agenda and some qualitative aspects to improve educational provision. They summarise and focus the list of specific recommendations as presented at the end of each chapter in order to discuss some strategic directions for the continuation of education reform in South Africa.

On its establishment in 1994, the post-Apartheid government of the Republic of South Africa inherited an education system beset by a host of problems. A fundamental issue was the structured inequality that was embedded in the system. Added to this were weaknesses, such as major infrastructural deficits, inadequate financing, lack of democratic procedures, imbalanced curricular policy, poor teacher education, very unsatisfactory provision of teaching materials. Thus, the new government was facing the daunting task of building an education system based on altogether different ideological principles, with a basis in human rights and equality of treatment.

To its great credit, the regime set about this task with a clear sense of vision, accompanied by an impressive and efficient commitment to action. During its early years, the new government devised the elements of a very different education system to replace the inherited one. Impressive policy documents on all aspects of education were devised and published and an extensive range of reforming education legislation was enacted. In the short time-span of fourteen years to date (2008) a great deal has been achieved. The fact that many of the high aspirations and ideals have not all been realised is understandable.

Gaps exist in all countries between policy aspirations and their full implementation. In the case of South Africa, in the context of the compressed time-span, the magnitude of the on-the-ground problems which existed, the inadequate financial resources available in relation to the nation-

building processes afoot, and the fact that major educational reform is a long-term, rather than a "quick-fix" process, what is surprising is that so much has already been achieved, rather than that serious shortcomings continue to exist. South African education is still in the process of transition. It will take time, sustained strategic planning and resourcing, and a steady nerve by policy makers to ensure that the reform vision is realised.

The review team views itself as working in constructive partnership with the South African authorities as they continue the work of the reform process. The team is conscious of its own limitations in grasping all the issues, contextual factors and cultural aspects involved in a major country, of which none of them is a citizen. Despite the site visits, the discussions, the study of documentation the team is aware that, of necessity, its view is that of external observers. A strength of this is that the reviewers examine the issues without preconceptions or over-familiarisation and can view them in the light of their international experience. It is this international perspective that the team hopes will be of benefit to the South African authorities.

As a system in transition, the team is aware that some of its recommendations are in close alignment with policy perspectives and initiatives of the South African authorities. Where this occurs the external view may serve as a collaborative and consolidating influence that may benefit the achievement of policy. Other recommendations may have more novel perspectives or may indicate new approaches that, it is hoped, the authorities may find beneficial in their policy deliberations.

The preceding chapters analysed many central elements of the education system and made specific recommendations relating to each of them. The context, analysis and rationale for the recommendations can be found in the individual chapters. The recommendations have been clustered at the end of the relevant chapter and are best understood in relation to that chapter's content.

This chapter summarises the lists of discrete recommendations with the aim of highlighting a number of overarching, strategic directions for reformative action. Some proposals, if accepted, could be put into practice in the near future, while others will require a longer timeframe.

The review team considers that the South African authorities, with their firsthand knowledge of circumstances, are best positioned to establish a hierarchy of priorities for implementation. The reviewers have sought to emphasise practical steps for implementation and incremental rather than sweeping changes. South African education has been subjected to a great deal of significant policy change and, in general, the review team considers

that the system would benefit from a period of stability and consolidation to allow changes take root, rather than an overloading of the change agenda.

The team would also urge that the general focus of attention should be on qualitative improvement in educational provision, which has implications for many elements of the system and which is integral to most of the review team's recommendations. It is realised that education is not a discrete, compartmentalised entity, but is interlinked with many features of the social conditions which prevail. Education on its own cannot be a panacea for all problems. Frequently, to achieve qualitative improvements within the formal education system socio-economic conditions that impinge upon the system need to be simultaneously addressed.

Another underlying theme of the recommendations is the capacity building of administrators and practitioners in the system. If the potential of the lifelong learning era is to be realised, in the years ahead in South Africa, investment in the qualitative development of its human capital is crucial.

Governance and financing of the education system

The main goals of this set of recommendations are to improve aspects of the concurrent mode of administration, with greater interaction between staff at the national Department of Education and at the provincial departments. They also propose practical steps whereby the financing of the system may further enhance the aim of educational equity.

- Within the context of the concurrent model of governance between the centre and the provinces it would be desirable to build in a dimension of representation from the provinces at the design stage of education policy and a mutual staff transfer scheme should be devised between staff of the national Department of Education and of the provincial departments of education.

- Focused training programmes are needed for staff capacity building at provincial and district levels.

- Before promulgating new policy measures for schools, feasibility studies at the level of average or below average schools should be conducted, with more attention paid to effective communication of policy.

- On a deliberative basis, remove remaining barriers to universal access and school completion and gradually abolish every form of school fees, whether they are overt or hidden.

- Take specified measures to prevent drop-out from schools and consider an alternative to the Child Support Grant to keep older (post-age 14) poor pupils in school.

- Prevent the pushing by schools of vulnerable categories of children and ensure that assessment methods are in support of learning, rather than being over competitive.

Curriculum, learning materials and assessment

The reviewers take the view that further change of curricular policy would be counterproductive at this time. The focus needs to be on satisfactory implementation which involves attention to quality of teaching, learning materials and assessment processes. Greater attention needs to be paid to aspects of textbook and learning materials provision. Assessment needs to take more account of learners' readiness and opportunities for weak learners.

- The emphasis of curriculum policy should be on the implementation of the current curriculum emphasising provision of learning materials, the professional development of teachers, the development of appropriate assessment tools and early diagnosis and remediation of learning problems.

- Review procedures for approving textbook lists and introduce new schemes for the provision of textbooks, as well as good small libraries and core-content books.

- In making decisions about additional testing, ensure that learners have enough time and opportunity to learn what is required, and provide additional chances for learners to obtain essential qualifications.

Early childhood education and adult education

Early Childhood Education (ECD) and Adult Education (ABET) have tended to be marginalised in South African education, despite some admirable policy documents. The significance of ECD is now internationally recognised and, in the era of lifelong learning, the improved provision of adult education is crucial. This is particularly the case in South Africa where, due to the racially discriminatory policy of the past, many adults lost out on educational opportunities. The recommendations aim to provide practical guidelines for early action to improve provision in these areas.

- Additional investment in ECD should focus on support of parents as early educators through multimedia, multilingual programmes.

- All teachers of grade R programmes should have access to the same professional development and support resources.

- The roles of national ministries responsible for ECD and ABET should be clarified.

- Statistics on adult literacy levels should be improved and investment should be prioritised for the development of support materials and assessment tools for the mass adult literacy programmes.

Vocational educational training (VET) and human resource development

As in many countries, VET in South Africa has not enjoyed the same status as academic-type schooling. The review team welcomes the recent efforts of the authorities to reform the provision of VET and to improve its status. The aim of the recommendations that are summarised in this section is to give targeted guidance on a range of issues that the review team considers necessary so that VET can play its proper part in the educational and economic life of society. In particular, it is proposed that much greater liaison be established between the labour market and world of work with VET institutions. It is also urged that practical work experience be established as a norm for students, and that monitoring of the new policies be carefully done with a view to feedback for the policy loop.

- Poverty alleviation should be based on sound active policies for economic and social cohesion and the budget allocation to the provinces should follow the principles of alleviating regional disparity, within an overall strategic framework. Better links and partnership between the business community and the education sector should be established and links between schools and the world of work should be more systematic.

- Mechanisms should be established to make the demand in the labour market more dynamic and flexible and better linked to the VET provision and real, on-the-job training should be provided by companies as part of the VET curriculum.

- A monitoring process should be put in place to assess the impact of the FET Colleges' reform, and provision made for feedback to any policy adjustments.

- The role of Focus Schools and the progression opportunities of their graduates should be clarified.

- The provision of continuing VET should be simplified both at national and provincial levels, in order to make it more transparent, accountable and easy to monitor. It is important to monitor developments in vocational guidance and counselling from a qualitative, as well as quantitative basis.

Inclusive education and equity in South African education

The review team was impressed with the emphasis given in South African policy to equity and inclusivity, which acknowledges that this has a much broader meaning than simply "access to schooling for persons with disabilities". The goal of the recommendations is to assist the authorities to make the education system receptive to diversity and to be physically, pedagogically and socially accessible to all children. All countries are facing this challenge in one way or another. In the case of South Africa, it is realised that this is a long-term process. The recommendations aim to give strategic guidance in sustaining the effort which is required.

- Develop a precise, reliable and consistent data gathering system on SEN students and on school's ability to meet the needs of all learners, with the emphasis on system deficiencies rather than learners' difficulties.

- Strengthen incentives for all involved agencies to incorporate inclusiveness in all their strategies to fulfil their tasks. Schools should be encouraged to evaluate students' needs and to individualise educational approaches.

- Special schools should be supported more effectively to fulfil their new roles.

- All schools should be accountable through annual reports on their pedagogical, physical and accessibility strategies, modes of funding should be linked to performance management.

- Training schemes should focus on problem solving and methods focussing on the development of learners' competences rather than shortcomings. Where possible, training courses should be shared by the involved stakeholders.

- The Departments of Education, Health, Social Development and Labour should co-ordinate their policies in order to foster

multisectoral approaches to services, and improving students' transition opportunities.

- Empower parents and learners to be aware of their rights and needs, and foster distance education opportunities to overcome barriers to access.

The teaching career and teacher education

The review team is convinced that without greater and sustained attention to improving teacher education and aspects of the teaching career the prospects for success of the educational reform agenda are limited. The teaching career does not enjoy a good public image, it is not attracting high quality candidates, initial and continuing teacher education suffer from many deficiencies, the supervision of teachers' work is very weak, and the pedagogic supports are very inadequate in many schools. To bring about many of the reforms needed is an expensive and long-term task; but it is also an unavoidable one. The recommendations are aimed at a comprehensive policy approach to the issues involved. The review team is pleased to acknowledge that the South African authorities have been embarking on a range of appropriate policy measures, and endorses these, while recommending a range of additional policy lines to address the identified needs.

- The Department of Education should produce a policy position paper setting out a coherent and cohesive action plan highlighting policy initiatives which are being introduced, or in gestation, regarding the teaching career, accompanied by a communication plan.

- Initial teacher education needs to be reformed in a number of designated ways, and the faculties of education should be better supported and resourced.

- Pilot schemes should be introduced for the induction of beginning teachers, with the aim of paving the way for the induction of all new teachers.

- SACE needs to be satisfactorily resourced to enable it to fulfil its important new responsibilities, particularly concerning CPD for teachers.

- Efforts should be made to improve the quality of distance education provision relating to all forms of teacher education.

- The planned initiative for teacher aides in the Foundation areas should be applied to unduly large classes in disadvantaged areas, in the first instance.

- A more inclusive approach is needed to deal with the problem of chronically ineffective teachers, perhaps with the aid of the planned NEEDU.

Higher education

Higher education in South Africa has undergone major restructuring in recent years, the institutional effects of which are still being felt. New organisational arrangements, quality assurance procedures, financing processes and new relationships between the state and the institutions have called for new responses and adjustments by the key stakeholders involved. South Africa is concerned that its higher education institutions can provide the quality of teaching and research, as well as the disciplines required to allow its socio-economic development progress within the competitive globalised world in which it now operates. The government also seeks to achieve equity in higher education provision and a tension exists regarding the simultaneous achievement of these goals. The review team acknowledges the efforts that have been made in South Africa in the higher education policy arena and its recommendations are aimed at giving some strategic guidance to a process that is still ongoing.

- More attention should be paid to the management of the change process in terms of detailed planning, budgeting and monitoring of change and dealing with change resistance.

- Comprehensive universities are advised to become "specialised" by focussing on particular "knowledge niches".

- Longitudinal and ethnographic/qualitative studies should be undertaken to provide a better understanding of the ways in which external and institutional factors affect student performance, in terms of high attrition and poor completion rates.

- A more proactive and long-term approach should be taken to the academic preparation and social integration of first year undergraduate students.

- Formal training in the pedagogy of higher education should be made available to academic staff, particularly junior lecturers.

- The new funding framework (NFF) should be reappraised with a view to considering a number of critical and practical issues which the review team highlights.

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Reviews of National Policies for Education

SOUTH AFRICA

Reforms of education, training and human resource development are integral parts of a market economy. South Africa has made progress in all these areas since reform began in 1994. The challenge for the national and provincial departments of education has been to promote and support changes that meet the needs of both the new economy and society and the interests of all young people and adults, in the face of a shortage of financial and human resources.

Reviews of National Policies for Education: South Africa covers the entire system of education, from pre-school to tertiary education and lifelong learning, and analyses it in terms of its economic, social and political impact.

This review is based on co-operation between the OECD and non-member economies around the world. It is particularly interesting for those involved in educational policy, as well as for professionals directly working in the education system of South Africa.

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