



## DAY 2: EMERGING RESEARCH FINDINGS ON QUALITY BASIC EDUCATION WORKSHOP

### AGENDA

**Date:** 24 October 2012  
**Time:** 08H00 to 16H15  
**Venue:** Department of Basic Education, Conference Centre, Room B

**Chairperson: To be finalised (DDG or CD)**

NO.	ITEM	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBLE	ORGANISATION
<b>Registration &amp; Tea</b>		<b>08h00-08h30</b>		
1.	Welcome and introduction	08h30 - 08h35	Chairperson	DBE
2.	Opening remarks	08h35 - 08h45	Dr T Mabogoane	DPME
3.	Presentation: Early educational inequalities and the impact of Grade R	08h45 - 09h45	Dr S Taylor	DBE
4.	Discussion	09h45 - 10h15	All	
5.	Presentation: Poverty and Privilege: Primary School Inequalities in South Africa	10h15 - 11h15	Mr N Spull	University of Stellenbosch
6.	Discussion	11h15 - 12h00	All	
7.	Education: Analysis of NIDS Wave 1 and 2 Datasets	12h00 – 12h30	Mr Reza Daniels Dr Nicola Branson	Southern African Labour Development Research, UCT
<b>Lunch</b>		<b>12H30 - 13H00</b>		
8.	Presentation: The Annual National Assessments 2011: Public Expenditure Analysis	13h00 - 14h00	Mr N Spull	University of Stellenbosch
9.	Discussion	14h00 - 14h30	All	
10.	Presentation: Grade 12 Mathematics results: Did the 2006 provincial boundary changes have an impact?	14h30 - 15h30	Mr M Gustafsson	DBE
11.	Discussion	15h30 - 16h00	All	
12.	Closing and Way Forward	16h00 - 16h15	Chairperson	DBE

**TARGET AUDIENCE:** Senior Managers, Provincial officials, Programme Managers, Middle Managers, J-PAL, researchers and practitioners responsible for monitoring and programme implementation. Researchers who responded to the Education Research Indaba Call for Research Papers on Literacy and Numeracy

# ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES OF PRESENTERS

## DAY 2

### 1. OPENING REMARKS

**Dr Thabo Mabogoane, DDG: Outcomes Facilitation, The Presidency, Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation**

Thabo Mabogoane has a PhD in the Economics of Education from Syracuse University. He has been a teacher of maths and science and spent four years as Policy Analyst in South Africa's national Department of Education, before joining JET Education Services as Senior Research Specialist in 2007. He was recruited to the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Unit in the Office of the President in August 2010.

### 2. EARLY EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITIES AND THE IMPACT OF GRADE R

**Presenter: Dr Stephen Taylor, Researcher & Policy Advisor, Department of Basic Education**

*Wide inequalities in educational outcomes between children of varying socio-economic status in South Africa are becoming well known. This paper demonstrates that these inequalities are observable by early primary school. Moreover, there is no evidence of narrowing of gaps in educational achievement as children progress through school; if anything gaps based on socio-economic status appear to widen. One implication of this is that early interventions, including prior to school entry, should be considered. The paper estimates the impact of pre-school attendance, where possible focusing on Grade R, on educational outcomes. There is widespread interest amongst policy-makers in the impact of Grade R, but the possibilities for identifying causality are limited as this programme has been rolled out in a non-random way. Nevertheless, the paper draws on various techniques and data sources to piece together preliminary conclusions. Perhaps the most compelling result is from a school fixed-effects model, which because of the high level of homogeneity within South African schools controls for many unobserved potential sources of endogeneity. This model suggests that moderate effects of having attended preschool on cognitive achievement persist at least until Grade 6.*

Stephen completed a Bachelors Degree in Political Science, Philosophy and Economics at the University of Stellenbosch in 2004, cum laude. He then pursued postgraduate studies in Economics, culminating with a PhD, which he completed in 2010. Stephen's PhD dissertation analysed the educational outcomes of poor South African children and considered how these outcomes relate to economic development within the country.

Stephen worked for the Research in Socio-Economic Policy group (RESEP) at the University of Stellenbosch during his doctoral studies and after that a post-doctoral fellow. Since September 2011 he has been working in the Department of Basic Education as a researcher and policy advisor. In his PhD research and other work-related research, Stephen has worked extensively with large sample surveys of educational achievement. These surveys include the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), the Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality surveys (SACMEQ), the National School Effectiveness Study (NSES) as well as other Stats SA household surveys.

### 3. POVERTY AND PRIVILEGE: PRIMARY SCHOOL INEQUALITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

**Presenter: Mr Nicolas Spaull, Researcher & Lecturer, Economics Department, University of Stellenbosch**

*The strong legacy of apartheid and the consequent correlation between education and wealth have meant that, generally speaking, poorer South African students perform worse academically. Although racial segregation has been abolished for 18 years now, schools which served predominantly White students under apartheid remain functional, while those which served Black students remain dysfunctional and unable to impart the necessary numeracy and literacy skills students should be acquiring by this level. The present study provides an overview of this dualistic nature of the primary education system in South Africa, with special attention paid to the bimodality of student performance. It argues that there are in fact two different education systems in South Africa and thus two different data-generating processes. These two sub-systems can be seen when splitting student performance by former-department, language, or socioeconomic status. The implications of such a dualistic schooling system are also elucidated, with special emphasis on government reporting and econometric modeling. The recently released SACMEQ III dataset is used for the econometric modeling. The study finds that when modeling student performance separately for the wealthiest 25% of schools on the one hand, and the poorest 75% of schools on the other, there are stark differences in the factors influencing student performance. Only 5 of the 27 factors are shared between the two models for mathematics, and 11 of the 30 factors for reading. This suggests a bifurcated system where the process which converts inputs into outputs is fundamentally different for each sub-system. Ultimately the paper has two logical conclusions: 1) Observing averages in South African education is uniquely misleading and overestimates the educational achievement of the majority of students, and 2) Modeling a single schooling system when there are in fact two school systems can lead to spurious results and misleading policy conclusions.*

#### **4. REPORT ON THE ANNUAL NATIONAL ASSESSMENTS 2011: PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS**

**Presenter: Mr Nicolas Spaull, Researcher & Lecturer, Economics Department, University of Stellenbosch**

*The widespread implementation of the Annual National Assessments (ANA's) in 2011 was an important milestone on the road to improving educational quality in South Africa. Up until this point the only standardised national exams that existed were at the exit-level of the schooling system (matric). All other exams were either provincial (Systemic Evaluations in the Western Cape), limited to a nationally representative sample (Systemic Evaluations, TIMSS, PIRLS, SACMEQ), or more commonly, decided at the school or classroom level. Without a nationally comparable (standardised) exam at the primary school level, one could not compare schools across provinces, districts, or over time. Consequently it was not possible for policy makers or parents to determine if a primary school was underperforming or not, at least not with any measure of certainty. Furthermore, it was not possible to hold schools accountable for student learning or to target support to where it was needed most since student learning was imperfectly measured and thus of limited comparative value.*

*The aim of this report is to discuss the role of ANA in the improvement of the South African primary education system, and, to this end, to provide analysis of the ANA 2011 data.*

Nic Spaull completed his undergraduate degree (Bachelor of Business Science in Economics *cum laude*) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2008. After lecturing undergraduate Economics at UKZN in 2009, he completed his Masters in Economics *cum laude* at Stellenbosch University in 2010. The title of his thesis was "Equity and Efficiency in South African Primary Schools: A Preliminary Analysis of SACMEQ III South Africa." He is currently completing his PhD in Economics at Stellenbosch University under Prof Servaas van der Berg. He is part of the RESEP (Research on Socio-economic Policy) team, and also teaches the course Economic and Development Problems in Sub-Saharan Africa which is offered to second year international students at Stellenbosch University.

He has been involved in a number of local and international research projects revolving around the quality of education in South Africa and Africa. These include a cross-national comparison of educational performance across Southern Africa for UNESCO (2011), a contributing author for the report "*Low quality education as a poverty trap*" commissioned jointly by The Presidency and the European Union (2011), a contributing author for a report "*Improving Quality education in South Africa*" which was commissioned by the National Planning Commission (2012), and wrote a report on the Annual National Assessments (ANA) of 2011 for the Department of Basic Education and UNICEF.

## 5. EDUCATION: ANALYSIS OF NIDS WAVE 1 AND 2 DATA SETS:

**Presenter: Mr Reza Daniels, Lecturer, School of Economics, University of Cape Town and Dr Nicola Branson, postdoctoral research fellow at the Southern Africa Labour Development Research, University of Cape Town**

*Education is a major focus of attention in the National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS). With the release of Wave 2 NIDS provides the first longitudinal data ever collected on education in a national household survey in South Africa. This makes it possible to study transitions in and out of school, across grades and into work in ways that have never before been possible. This report analyzes NIDS Wave 1 and 2 data specifically related to education and illustrates how the NIDS can be augmented with external administrative data from the Department of Basic Education.*

Nicola Branson is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Southern Africa Labour Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town (UCT). She holds a Ph.D in Economics from UCT and engages in quantitative research using South African survey data. Her current topics of interest include education inequality, the links between education and the labour market and the intergenerational consequence of teenage childbearing.

Reza Daniels is a Lecturer in the School of Economics at the University of Cape Town and a Co-Principal Investigator of NIDS. He has submitted his PhD in Economics at UCT, and plays both a management and methodological role in the NIDS project. His research interests are in survey methodology, micro-econometrics and development economics.

## 6. GRADE 12 MATHEMATICS RESULTS: DID THE 2006 PROVINCIAL BOUNDARY CHANGES HAVE AN IMPACT?

**Presenter: Martin Gustafsson, Advisor to the Department of Basic Education, Researcher, University of Stellenbosch**

*Pockets of mathematics excellence are first identified with respect to just the 2011 Grade 12 examinations data. Pockets of excellence amongst historically disadvantaged schools are often found concentrated in unexpected places, for instance in a province with a poor record of primary school mathematics performance, namely Limpopo. The 2006 provincial boundary changes are used as a means to establish whether provincial authorities make a difference to Grade 12 mathematics performance between the 2005 and 2011 examinations. The evidence suggests that the province may influence the trend over time and that certain provinces pursue better practices than others.*

Martin is a researcher with the Department of Economics at Stellenbosch University, from which he obtained his Masters degree in 2006. Currently he is completing a PhD on assessing the role of education in economic development. Martin is a part of the RESEP team, but is based in Pretoria, where he works as an Advisor at the Department of Basic Education. His areas of specialisation include the use of economics in education planning, the design of school funding policies, the economics of teacher pay, the demographics of schooling systems and cross-country comparisons of educational policy and performance.