HOME EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This report provides an account of the nature and scale of home education in South Africa in order to judge the appropriateness of the present policy. Home education is a practice where parents take responsibility for educating their children at home rather than in schools. Since education is a Constitutional right, government has a duty to ensure that children who do not attend a public or independent institution nevertheless are educated. This places an administrative burden on the Department of Education to register and monitor individual households. Home education also creates an ideological problem of managing parents' rights over the care of their children with the rights of the child to be educated within the precepts of Constitutional principles. Home education is therefore most controversial when parents withdraw their children from school because they are opposed to the non-racist, non-sexist and democratic ethos schools are expected to inculcate.

This report presents available statistics on home education in South Africa, reflects on curricula followed and reasons given by parents for pursuing home education. It offers an overview of policy and current practice in the nine provincial Departments of Education in relation to registering, monitoring and supporting home education. It concludes by analysing gaps in home education policy, and makes several recommendations for policy and practice. Findings are based on a review of literature and a series of interviews (conducted between April and July 2007) with provincial officials responsible for home education, home schooling associations and two home educators in each of the nine provinces. Website searches of curriculum providers provided further information on curricula.

The legislation on home education allows parents to opt out of the schooling system but does place demanding conditions on them to ensure that the child's right to education is not discounted. Section 51 of the South African Schools Act (SASA), 1996 (RSA 1996b) allows the head of the provincial Department of Education to register a learner in Grades 1 to 9, or aged 7 to 15, for education at home if he or she is satisfied that (a) the registration will be in the interests of the child; (b) the minimum requirements of the curriculum in public schools will be met; and (c) the home education will at least match the minimum standard of education in public schools. This provision was supplemented by a policy statement on home education (DoE, 1999) gazetted on 23 November 1999 (effective January 2000), which sets out national norms and standards which apply uniformly across all provincial Departments of Education. Parents of learners of compulsory school-going age must apply for registration to the provincial Head of Department and submit a prescribed application form along with a birth certificate, a transfer card and a report from the last school the learner attended. Parents of home schoolers are required to keep records of attendance,

a portfolio of the learner's work and records of continuous assessment and annual progression assessments. Parents who have not registered for home education or who do not enrol their child (who is of compulsory school-going age) in school after a withdrawal of registration may be charged in terms of section 3(6) of the South African Schools Act (RSA 1996b).

The South African home education sector appears to be small. Available statistics from provincial Departments of Education show that 2164 learners are currently registered. This is probably an undercount. Home schooling was illegal under apartheid and there is a lingering perception that government is intent on suppressing home education so discouraging registration. In addition, in four provinces, procedures for registration have only recently been functional.

While families usually have a number of reasons for home schooling, three stand out: religious (usually Christian) motivations; children with special needs and poor quality of public schools. Most curriculum providers offer Christian based materials. Most curriculum providers have had their qualifications provisionally accredited by Umalusi, though Pestalozzi Trust has objected to the Revised National Curriculum Statement on the grounds that it "requires children to adopt and confess values prescribed by the state" (Pestalozzi Trust, 2001). At least one provider offers a curriculum explicitly geared to promoting Afrikaner nationalism.

While parents interviewed for this report spoke of the benefits of home education, including improved academic performance and independent learning, more detailed studies suggest that home education can create stress in the family, especially where the role of mother and educator are blurred. Children may also miss the daily company of peers and develop emotional problems in seeing themselves as outsiders or different from their peers.

There appears to be three main approaches to regulating home education sites amongst the provincial Departments of Education:

- A comprehensive approach, with systems in place to register, monitor and provide assistance to home educators, including home visits.
- A regulatory approach.
- A laissez-faire approach, with weak procedures for registration and almost no monitoring.

The approach chosen by provincial Departments of Education was in part dictated by the available resources. Equally important was the degree of sympathy officials in the provincial directorates had towards home schools. Where the directorate was well-disposed to home education, there

tended to be greater support provided to parents (with registration and advice). In cases where directorates expressed reservations towards home education, the emphasis was on regulation.

The main recommendations in this report address the administrative difficulties with registering and monitoring home education. In particular, the load on provincial departments of education would be eased if home education was monitored through associations or via curriculum providers, rather than based on individual household inspections. The question on the extent to which home educators can teach outside the parameters of the Revised national Curriculum Statement is a political difficulty, which may need to be reopened for debate.

Introduction

This report provides an account of home education in South Africa in the light of relevant legislation and regulatory processes. Home education is a practice where parents take responsibility for educating their children at home rather than in schools. In South Africa parents who wish to provide home education to their children of compulsory school age (7-15) must apply for registration with a provincial department of education in terms of the South African Schools Act. The national Department of Education commissioned this study to the Wits Education Policy Unit (EPU), to investigate the state of home education in the country, and report on its compliance with national policy. The investigation was to include information on the scale and nature of home education, the extent to which home education in South Africa serves the interests of home-based learners and the role of provinces in administering, supporting and monitoring home schooling (see annexure A for full Terms of Reference).

An objective of the study was to judge the appropriateness of the present policy in promoting the stated objectives of home education. The Constitution of South Africa allows for public and independent schools. Education is a right which the state must respect and fulfil, and government has a duty to ensure that children who do not attend a public or independent institution nevertheless are educated. The challenge for home education legislation is therefore to balance the individual rights of parents with the rights of the child (as represented by the state). One of public education's crucial roles is to initiate young people into the political, social and economic life of the country. To allow parents to educate their children outside the system respects individual freedom, but also may do little to deter parents who teach principles counter to the democratic culture enshrined in the Constitution, or content that contradicts the official curriculum. The duty of the state is therefore to monitor and regulate the home education sector. However, this responsibility generates the administrative and logistical problem of how to manage, with limited resources, a system of schooling in individual households.

This report begins with a brief account of international perspectives on home education. After summarising official home education policy in South Africa, it assesses the extent and nature of the home education sector in this country, on the basis of a literature review and a series of interviews (conducted between April and July 2007) with provincial officials responsible for home education (except in Limpopo Province, where the administrator was unavailable), with home schooling associations and with two home educators in each of the nine provinces. Website searches of curriculum providers provided further information on curricula. The report offers an overview of current practice in the nine provincial Departments of Education in relation to registering,

monitoring and supporting home education. It concludes by analysing gaps in home education policy, and makes several recommendations for policy and practice.

International Perspectives on Home Education

Contemporary home schooling, and research on the topic, are phenomena of highly industrialised countries, of which the United States predominates. The roots of home education in the recent modern period lie with American writers in the 1960s attacking institutionalised schooling. Critics from both social libertarian and social conservative perspectives agreed that formal schools were injurious to children's development. The home schooling pioneers John Caldwell Holt, for example, in his book *How Children Fail* (Holt 1964: 175) claimed that the school as a learning institution failed the child in the quest for learning, understanding and creativity. The idea of "unschooling" was conceived by Holt as the best form of learning and teaching, taking place in the home under the guidance of committed parents. Raymond and Dorothy Moore surveyed 8 000 child development research studies and concluded that early formal schooling was damaging to young children. Their book *Better Late than Early* (Moore 1977) summarised their findings and inaugurated their influential lifelong advocacy of home schooling.

From the 1970s home education in the United States received support from organised Christian bodies which viewed state secular education as irreligious. This tendency appears to be influential among advocates of home schooling in several countries and among producers of education materials on a commercial scale for home school learners, but it is not possible to quantify. Parents of American home school learners rate dissatisfaction with public schooling and religious motives as their most important reasons for educating their children at home (Princiotta & Bielick 2006). Viewed in a broader context, the home education phenomenon may be seen as a sub-set of a trend in several industrialised countries towards a diversity of school models and increased freedom of educational choice for parents, including private education (Aurini & Davies 2005).

Home education may also offer an alternative for learners who have been informally excluded from schools as a result of peer or teacher harassment, as well as for those with special educational needs who have not benefited from mainstreaming. Proponents of home education claim that it offers great potential for a creative and original education that honours the individual needs of the learner and accords with the natural pace of that learner's learning process. Opponents argue that home-educated children are not adequately socialised into public culture and are isolated from interacting with a diversity of opinions and ideas. Mixing with learners of different ages, cultures and backgrounds in school is thought to encourage tolerance and empathy.

Home education requires the dedicated time and skills of at least one parent (foregoing an additional income) and tends therefore to be taken up by families with middle-class status. The UK Department for Education and Skills found that almost half (49%) of mothers of home-educated learners had university degrees, though 27% had no post-school education at all. 61.3% of home-educated learners in the UK and 69% in the USA fall in the uppermost income bracket. Home-educated learners of working class parents in the UK make up a very small percentage (2.3%) (Rothermel 2004).

A notable international trend in home education provision, particularly in industrialised countries, is for increasing numbers of parents to employ digital learning programmes, externally supported by diagnostic and assessment tests also conducted electronically.

The high levels of achievement by home-educated learners should be no surprise, given that they come from economically advantaged homes, with parents that have high educational qualifications and who are able to provide additional support and motivation for the education of their children. Figures from a survey of 619 home-educated children by the New Zealand Department of Education show that 90% were taught at least as regularly and well as in a registered school (ERO 2001: 7). Ray (1997) determined that home-educated learners in the USA scored at the 87th and 80th percentile in reading and language respectively, while the national average performance for reading and language was 50. Wartes (1990) found home-educated children at the 66th percentile, concluding in addition that maths performance was substantially above average. Scoggin (1986) assessed 591 learners from 300 families, finding that 73% of home-educated learners were at least a year ahead of their public-schooled peers in reading. Rudner's (1999) study involving 20 760 school-aged learners found that 50% of the 13 year old home-educated learners achieved the equivalent of 4 grades above the public school learner's median scores. He also confirmed above average maths performance, with learners scoring at the 85th percentile for reading and the 79th for mathematics.

Internationally, home education makes up a tiny segment of children, even in countries with a fairly permissive stance (see Table 1 below). The extent of home education in selected countries where the phenomenon has been reported ranges from 0.001% to 2.2% of all children enrolled in compulsory education, the highest being in the USA. Although the proportions of children in home education are extremely small, the trend is typically upward and the scope for growth has by no means been exhausted in countries where it is permitted and regulated.

Table 1: Extent of home education in selected countries

Country	Notes	Estimated number of home educated learners	Learner population in the compulsory age band	Compulsory age band	Percentage of learners being home educated
Australia	Home Education Association 1995	15 000	3 105 617	6 - 16	0.5
Canada	Karl M. Bunday 1995	60 000	6 614 913	6 - 14	1.0
China	Illegal	5 000	273 907 572	6 - 12	0.001
Germany	Illegal; special cases allowed	500	12 500 000	6 - 16	0.004
Ireland	Officially registered 2006	225	90 000	6 - 16	0.25
New Zealand	K.M. Bunday 2006	5 274	885 650	6 - 16	0.6
UK	Home School Association 2005	25 000	12 040 000	6 - 16	0.2
USA	Dept of Education 2005	1 200 000	53 358 000	6 - 16	2.2

Source: National Home School Associations and official Education Department sources used as verification.

Regulation of home education varies widely between countries. While some countries are liberal in their approach to home education, others actively discourage it. In Germany, for example, home education is forbidden for fear of indoctrination: "in order to protect children from harm". German courts remove children being educated at home from their parents and place them in foster care or under the local social service to ensure that children attend public school. There are two exceptions to the law: home education may be allowed if the parents are working in another country; or if the child cannot attend a school because of an illness or disablement. (HSLDA, website, n.d.)

In Scotland, too, home education is only permissible under "extraordinary circumstances". Three categories of learners are covered by the law: those suffering from prolonged ill-health, those required to act as care givers to ill or infirm members of their families and those excluded from school by the education authority. (HSLDA, website, n.d.)

In Australia, the School Education Act of 1999 requires that parents register as home educators. Government responsibility for the monitoring of home education programmes has been delegated to home education moderators. A child's home educator is to arrange for an evaluation of the child's educational programme and progress by a home education moderator within three months of the date of registration and at least once in each twelve month period following that registration. If the moderator has any concerns regarding the educational programme provided, or the progress made by the child, these must be forwarded in writing to the parent within seven days of the visit. Parents do not have to provide written programmes or samples of the child's work, or to test children. A verbal statement or report of what children have done or intend to do is adequate.

In England and Wales, parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their children receive an effective education, and may choose to educate at home. The parent is not required to provide any particular type of education, and is under no obligation to have premises equipped to any particular standard, have any specific qualifications, cover the same syllabus as any school, observe school hours, days or terms or even have regular contact with the local authority. However, the law places a duty upon local education authorities to take certain actions if it appears that a child is not being properly educated. If a local authority chooses to approach a family and informally ask for information, parents may establish that a child is receiving an efficient and suitable education by providing a written report, samples of work or the endorsement of a recognised third party. Local authorities have no automatic right of access to parents' homes. If the local authority remains concerned that the child may not be receiving suitable education, it will explain this to the family and give them further time and opportunity to explain or improve their arrangements. Only after this, if it still appears to the local authority that the child is not receiving suitable education, may it take the first step towards a school attendance order. This step gives parents two weeks' notice to satisfy it about the suitability of their provision. Parents seeking to home-school children registered at a special school must obtain the consent of the local authority to withdraw their child from the school. Consent is required in these cases only to smooth the transition to home education for children with complex special needs. The regulations are not intended to be a hindrance to these children being educated at home and any such suggestion would be considered discriminatory (HSLDA, website, n.d.).

The legal debate on home schooling in the United States of America has shifted since the late 1980s from a focus on the legality of home schooling to whether home schoolers can access state funds, facilities and resources and the degree of control a state can exercise on home schooling families over curricular choice and standardised testing. Home schooling is legal in all 50 states of the USA, though states differ regarding requirements for registration, curriculum and assessment. Furthermore, many states offer more than one option for home schooling, with different requirements applying to each option. The general trend is to ease requirements. Some states do not require home schoolers to register while others require the filing of specified information with local school officials. Only two states, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, still expect parents to obtain approval prior to home schooling. Fewer than half the states now require any testing or assessment. Some states require that a qualified teacher supervise the home schooled child's education. In California, for example, home schoolers must either be part of a public home schooling programme, use a qualified tutor, or enroll their children in a qualified private school. They must offer certain courses of study (generally similar to the content required in public

schools) and must keep attendance records, but are otherwise not subject to any state oversight. Texas, on the other hand, has minimal requirements. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has no authority to regulate home schools, does not require registration or annual filings. Notification of home schooling has to be given to a school district only if a child is being withdrawn from a public school. Texas state law requires that a school curriculum must teach "reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics and a study of good citizenship, but learning may be by textbooks, workbooks, other printed material, or computer-based (including the Internet), Such education resources may be obtained from any source, and need not be approved or shown to the state or the local school district. (Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org).

Home Education Law and Policy in South Africa

The South African Constitution does not grant parents an explicit right to provide home education; however, it does not make it unconstitutional either (Visser, 1998). Because education is a constitutionally established fundamental right, the right of parents to opt out of the public schooling system (in order to be educated at home) is conditional. Section 29(3) of the Constitution grants everyone the right to provide education at his or her own cost at an independent institution subject to certain conditions relating to non-discrimination and the maintenance of standards.

South African education law, however, explicitly recognises and regulates home education, provision for which is made in Section 51 of the South African Schools Act (SASA), (RSA 1996b). Section 51 allows the head of the provincial Department of Education to register a learner in Grades 1 to 9, or aged 7 to 15, for education at home if he or she is satisfied that (a) the registration will be in the interests of the child; (b) the minimum requirements of the curriculum in public schools will be met; and (c) the home education will at least match the minimum standard of education in public schools.

This provision was supplemented by a policy statement on home education (DoE, 1999) gazetted on 23 November 1999 (effective January 2000), which provides for the registration of home learners in terms of Section 3(4)(g) of the National Education Policy Act (NEPA), 1996 (RSA 1996a) and section 51 of SASA. The policy sets out national norms and standards which apply uniformly across all provincial Departments of Education. Heads of provincial education departments are responsible for the registration of learners receiving home education and for the monitoring thereof. Parents of learners of compulsory school-going age must apply for registration and submit a prescribed application form along with a birth certificate, a transfer card and a report from the last school the learner attended. A head of department may set reasonable conditions for

registration consistent with the provisions of SASA relating to home education, but must do so after considering at least the following information provided by the parent (paragraph 8):

- Supporting arguments to substantiate that education at home will be in the interest of the learner, will safeguard the learner's fundamental right to education, and will match the standard and regularity of a comparable public school education;
- The education of the parent concerned;
- The timetable, comprising at least three hours' contact time daily, and the learning resources to be available;
- The proposed curriculum, which must suit the age and ability of the learner, meet the minimum standards of the public school curriculum and comply with the official language policy;
- Evidence that the values of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa will be upheld and no contrary values instilled in the learner.

Parents of home schoolers are required in terms of paragraph 13 of the policy to:

- Keep records of attendance for at least three years for monitoring by the provincial education department;
- Keep a portfolio of the learner's work and records of continuous assessment and annual progression assessments for at least three years for the same purpose;
- Ensure that the learner is assessed at the end of each school phase by a qualified, independent assessor approved by the provincial education department, and provide a statement to the head of department confirming that such an assessment has been undertaken and that the learner has achieved the required learning outcomes for the phase.

A head of department may withdraw registration if false information is contained in the application, or if the conditions of the legislation or the monitoring criteria are not adhered to. Parents must be informed in writing if registration is withdrawn and provided with reasons for the withdrawal. They must also be informed of their right to appeal against the decision to the provincial Member of the Executive Council for education and must be given an opportunity to make representations against the withdrawal of registration. Parents who have not registered for home education or who do not enrol their child (who is of compulsory school-going age) in school after a withdrawal of registration may be charged in terms of section 3(6) of the South African Schools Act (RSA 1996b).

Provincial education departments have published policies or regulations based on the national template. There are a few additional clauses. For example, both the KwaZulu-Natal and North West Departments of Education prescribe that separate registrations be made for each compulsory school phase. Home learning sites in KwaZulu-Natal must be linked to a "liaison school" which is responsible for quarterly evaluations of home-educated learners, with annual reports to be submitted to the department (for which a school governing body may levy a fee from the home educator). The North West's regulations permit a parent to pay a local public school to moderate tests or examination papers. The North West Department of Education also requires that home school curriculum programmes must be accredited by Umalusi, the Quality Assurance Council for General and Further Education and Training.

The legislation on home education allows parents to opt out of the public education system but does place demanding conditions on them to ensure that the child's right to education is not discounted. Van Oostrum and Van Oostrum (1997) have objected to the South African Schools Act's condition for registration that home education be in the 'interests of the learner'. They argue that this allows for parents' authority over children to be superseded by the state. "For the Head of Department to decide on the interest of the child is a clear infringement of the child's right to family and parental care under the new constitution" (Van Oostrum & Van Oostrum 1997: 33).

The home education resource and service provider Nukleus Onderwys argues that the Minister of Education's 1999 policy on home education is an attempt to strengthen state regulation over home education and that in many respects it is in conflict with SASA and the Constitution (though it does not provide detail on how this is so). Nukleus points out that the policy is not law and does not replace or supersede the law, and accuses the education bureaucracy in many provinces (though not the Free State) of blatantly disregarding the provisions of SASA with respect to home education (Nukleus Onderwys 2002). Nukleus nevertheless affirms that registration is required by SASA and refers home educators to the Pestalozzi Trust for legal advice and protection.

Home educators still express uncertainty about aspects like the minimum requirements of the curriculum in public schools and the standard of education in public schools with which they are required to comply. The Pestalozzi Trust, a legal defence fund for home educators, has protested against the Ministry of Education's Revised National Curriculum Statement, arguing that

> in as far as the curriculum requires children to adopt and confess values prescribed by the state, the curriculum is unlawful. The only value that the state may enforce is that of abidance by the law (Pestalozzi Trust, 2001).

The Trust argues that the Revised National Curriculum Statement is based on "Marxist theory", that it "forces" children "to take part in spiritual practices from other cultures", that "many children become dependent personalities craving totalitarian power to identify with", and that "all loyalties will be replaced with loyalty to the state alone" (Pestalozzi Trust, n.d.). While the Trust's response is rather eccentric, it points to a larger debate on whether the state or parents have final authority over the education of children and the nature of this education. The Constitution places obligations on the private educator not to discriminate on racial grounds, to register with the state, and to maintain standards that are not inferior to the standards in comparable public schools. The Constitution places a duty on the state to ensure that such obligations are observed.

Apart from differing philosophical interpretations of the legislation, there may be administrative hurdles in its implementation. While the policy is rigorous in requiring parents to provide evidence of learner progress and in expecting provincial Departments of Education to evaluate home education, it does not spell out how such evaluation is to be done or whether home visits by Departmental officials are required. The meticulousness of the legislation needs to be balanced with the feasibility of administering such a system. Where budgets are small and Departmental capacity limited, the possibility of implementing and policing the legislation is compromised. While there are stringent administrative requirements for monitoring in the UK and New Zealand, moderate requirements in Australia and a *laissez-faire* attitude in the USA, the South African policy and regulations do not define the state's duty to monitor home education (other than that learners' records must be available for inspection) but place the onus for compliance on the home educator.

The Scale of Home Education in South Africa

It is difficult to provide an accurate assessment of the number of home-educated learners in South Africa. Home education was illegal under the apartheid government and, according to interviews with officials in the Free State provincial Department of Education, many home educators are still afraid to register their learners in fear of recriminations from the state. Education officials noted that the Pestalozzi Trust propagates this fear by warning parents that the state will take legal action against home educators and may even remove children from the household. On its website, the Pestalozzi Trust states: "In accordance with legal advice, the Trust can no longer recommend the registration of members of the Trust with education authorities as provided for by legislation" (www.pestalozzi.org). In at least four provincial Departments of Education registration of home education has not been functional or has been erratic since 2000, making it still more difficult to get accurate figures.

Malan (1999: 4) estimates that there are between 6 000 and 10 000 learners receiving education at home, while Van Oostrum, director of the Home School Legal Defence Association, suggests that the number is as high as 15 000. The various home schooling associations estimate the number to be 2738 in six provinces: Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Western Cape. Currently, there are 2164 individuals and 1338 families registered for home education with provincial Departments of Education. Table 2 below indicates the provincial breakdown according to the most recent database.[1]

[1] There is an additional list for the North West which contains 68 names, but this appears to be outdated and provincial officials were unaware of it. The Eastern Cape list is also somewhat outdated. KwaZulu-Natal provided two lists with overlapping names. We have used the longer of the lists, and slightly cleaned it up. The second list had an additional 50 names recorded.

Table 2: Number of learners registered in 2007 to receive home education[2]

Province	Number of home education learners (PED figures)	Number of families on list*	Number of home education learners (Home Education Associations figures)**
Eastern Cape	36	23	ECHSA 100
Free State	490	230	
Gauteng	307	185	GHSA 750
KwaZulu-Natal	513	332	KZNHSA 650
Limpopo	15	7	LPHSA 397
Mpumalanga	493	338	MPHSA 491
North West	5	4	
Northern Cape	9	7	
Western Cape	**306**	212	WCHSA 350
Total	**2174**	1338	2738

Source: Provincial estimates from the Departments of Education and Home Education Associations, 2007.
* Estimate based on common surname and addresses of individual learners, PDE databases.
** Figures provided by the Pestalozzi Trust.

Nationally, on average, there are 1,6 home learners per home schooling family. KwaZulu Natal appears to have the highest number of home learners, according to departmental figures. The table suggests that there are probably large numbers of unregistered home educated learners residing in the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, North West and Northern Cape, while the numbers of unregistered learners in the other provinces can only be speculated upon.

The databases of the Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape provide additional information on home-learners, such as names of parents, addresses, telephone numbers, and learners' dates of birth and grades. Only the Free State and Gauteng have statistics on gender: boys and girls are split evenly in Gauteng (150 male and 150 female), and in the Free State the ratio is approximately 56% boys: 44% girls (420 male and 331 female). Learners are spread fairly evenly throughout the basic education grades, though the numbers drop off slightly in

grades 8 and 9 (especially in Gauteng). This could be an indication either that the home education sector is growing or that learners return to school for secondary education.

Table 3: Grade distribution for home education in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape

	Gr. 0	Gr. 1	Gr. 2	Gr. 3	Gr. 4	Gr. 5	Gr. 6	Gr. 7	Gr. 8	Gr. 9
GP*	18	60	43	44	31	31	23	13	5	2
KZN		60	52	45	58	43	50	41	49	23
MP	8	72	47	55	68	63	75	45	44	34
WC		53	18	29	49	29	28	50	24	14
Total	26	245	160	173	206	166	176	149	122	73

*In Gauteng, the current grades of 19 learners are unknown, and 1 is listed as "special class".

The home education sector is almost entirely white. In the Free State, 96% of relevant households were classified as white. Although 79% of Free State home-schoolers speak Afrikaans as mother-tongue, as many as 92% of parents claim to instruct in English, most probably because the teaching and learning materials they use are in English (though at least one provider offers its wares in "sprankel Afrikaans", or alternatively "sprankel onderwys in Afrikaans"). In Gauteng, 45 learners were Afrikaans speakers, 222 were English speakers and 4 were either Sotho or Zulu speakers.

In a survey of 422 home-schoolers, de Waal and Theron found that their basic income is on par with "an average white South African family" (2003, p. 151). Most parents in their study had a matric or tertiary diploma. Nine parents in Gauteng had a teaching qualification and 45 parents had no post-secondary school education (GDE database, 2006).

The Nature of Home Education in South Africa

Various explanations are provided in the literature for why parents choose to home school. Our interviews with 18 home-educators in the nine provinces likewise confirm that motives are diverse. Often the same parents had a mix of reasons for schooling at home.

- Religious convictions

The main motivation appears to be religious (Christian in particular) and the majority of home education programme providers in the country are Christian-based. Schools are thought not to provide a sufficient basis for embedding Christian values in children. Brynard (2007), in her study of home education in South Africa, points out that parents were concerned that "topics, such as evolution, sex education and moral relativism, were approached in a secular fashion in school"

(2007, p. 89) and wanted to ensure that their children were guided by Christian beliefs. In addition, parents want to promote the ideal of close-knit Christian families. As one Free State mother explained, "I like the dynamics of a mom with her children growing together and having the same morals and principles. It's a romantic picture".

- Children with special needs

A second group of parents have children with special needs, either physical or cognitive. For example, a Free State child had Sauerman's Disease (a condition affecting the spine) and was unable to sit for any length of time. Four of the 18 parents interviewed mentioned that their children had learning difficulties. A Limpopo mother explains: "Due to his heart operation at 2 years of age, this [home education] programme has worked really well for him. Working at his own pace has also benefited him in that he is not rushed and he has really understood the basic foundation phase". Brynard (2007) includes in this category gifted learners, "who benefit fully from the advantages of not having a rigidly applied curriculum" (2007, p. 92).

- Dissatisfaction with public schooling

A third reason for removing learners from public schools was dissatisfaction with the quality of education provided in public schools. Bester (2002) has argued that the origins of home education in South Africa follow from the perceived deterioration of white public schools. This may be related to large classes and limited individual attention, or due to an irrevocable break-down of relations with a teacher. One Limpopo household wanted their children to have a "Christian-based education", and argued that "outcomes-based education was not working and classes are far too large for teachers to be able to assist each child. Discipline in schools is also non-existent". Other children were removed after being excessively bullied at school by peers or teachers. One parent, speaking of her son, said that, "The teacher teased him – called him 'brilletjies'. He is a quiet, introverted child. The teacher yelled at him, made him more introverted". This parent had approached the school on a number of occasions to discuss her child's lack of progress (he was unable to read in Grade 2), but had had no response. She noted: "It was a big decision to take [i.e., to choose to home-educate], but I realised if I don't do something about it, then no-one is going to do anything".

Parents may also want to protect their children from the negative influences of peer group pressure in schools, a perceived breakdown in moral standards and lack of discipline (Brynard, 2007, p.92).

- Distance to school

For families living in isolated communities, such as on farms, the long distance to (mother-tongue/Afrikaans) schools may induce home education. The exponential increase in hostel fees, after subsidies were withdrawn, impacted heavily on the farming communities of the Free State, Northern Cape and North West provinces and parents may have been motivated to home-educate to save on costs (Bester, 2000). In smaller towns, where there is no alternative mother-tongue school, or independent schools are too expensive, parents may feel they have no option but to home-educate.

- Nomadic lifestyles

Where families are frequently travelling, and want to avoid disruptions to their children's education, home schooling may be an option. Two families interviewed from the North West and the Eastern Cape are missionaries who travel extensively with their children, and home education is seen as more practical. Brynard (2007) interviewed a home-schooler who competed in international sporting events and found the flexibility of home-education advantageous.

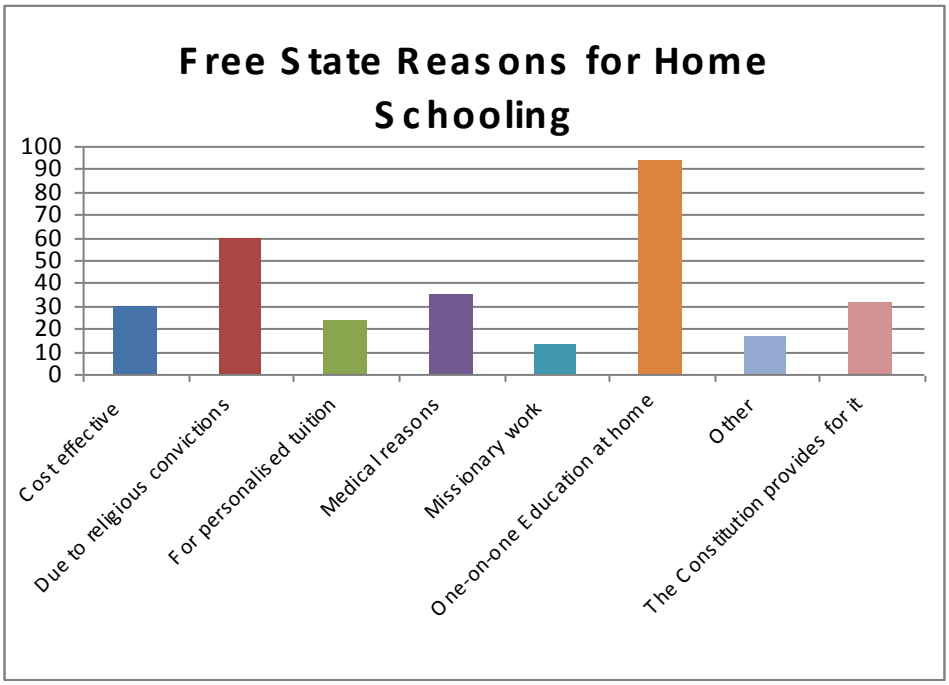
- Financial considerations

Only one parent interviewed in KwaZulu-Natal said that school fees were unaffordable, though this was after she had relocated and become unemployed. In addition, one of her daughters was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder and reading problems.

The provincial departments in Gauteng and Free State (and, to a lesser extent, KwaZulu-Natal) provide data on the explanations parents give for home education. These rationales must be treated cautiously since parents may want to give the Department reasons that will be least likely to have their applications turned down. They do, however, offer some insight into why parents withdraw their learners from public school. Of the 306 children listed on the Gauteng database for 2006, parents of approximately 26 learners claimed that they home-educated for medical reasons or because they had special educational needs. As many as 35 learners were home-educated because their families were often travelling or relocating. Only one parent explicitly mentioned the poor quality of schools: "the standard of education has dropped in private and public schools, so my son won't get individual attention". Of the 513 learners on the KwaZulu-Natal list, 27 learners claimed to have special needs (varying from "emotional problems" to health concerns and Attention Deficit Disorder). Two families on the KwaZulu-Natal database said their children had been molested at school. Graph 1 below, showing proportionately the reasons given to the Free State Department of Education for why parents home-educate, indicates that the opportunity to give "one-on-one"

teaching is an important motive for home education with religious convictions the second most frequent explanation given.

Graph 1: Reasons given by home educators to the Free State Department of Education for why they home-educate



On the whole, the home education sector appears to be well organized through the National Coalition of Homeschoolers, which has provincial branches. The Coalition represents the interests of its member organisations at a national level. The Home School Legal Defence Fund, a branch of Pestalozzi Trust, promises to defend parents in court should there be a dispute with a Department of Education.

Parents have a number of curricular providers to choose from offering pre-planned, packaged learning programmes and resources on learning and teaching methodologies (listed in Annexure B). While most providers claim to follow the RNCS, Brainline and Theocentric Christian Education offer international qualifications. The number of families following international curriculum is unknown. Six of the nine largest providers offer Christian-based materials. Nukleus Onderwys supplies a programme explicitly to promote Afrikaaner nationalism.

Most curriculum providers offer access to materials via password-protected websites or parents buy CDs or textbooks. All supply materials from grade 1 to grade 12. Clonard Home Education,

however, advises that: "In Grade 4 children become quite sociable and might well develop a desire to be at school with their friends because they want to see what it is like. Perhaps this is the age when children should be sent to school, if they are going to be sent at all. By Grade 4 they have their basic skills (reading, writing, number work) in place and will benefit from a school environment. They will be able to play sport, learn team work and develop a wider circle of friends."

Parents paid between R700 and R7 000 for access to programme materials. Eight of the 18 parents interviewed thought home education was not cheaper than public schooling. Some households hired tutors, especially for subjects such as mathematics and science. A parent in Limpopo paid approximately R16 000 per annum to a tutor.

Assessment has been a problem in the past but programme providers are increasingly having their certificates accredited by Umalusi. Accelerated Christian Education, for example, had to make changes to their curriculum, particularly around languages, in order to get Umalusi accreditation. In her research, Margie Carter (2008) found that current assessment practices were not in line with the curriculum. Parents were unsure on departmental regulations relating to who must do the assessment and what must be assessed. There was also little information on where to find a credible assessor (Carter, 2008). Those writing the national matric exams have sometimes faced practical problems travelling to centralised exam centres. Before Brainline opened their regional exam centres, students had to write their exams in Pretoria. Nukleus Onderwys (2002) note that they would prefer to accredit their students outside of South African state control and prepare them for international certification. In the meantime, Nukleus students write their Senior Certificate exams as independent candidates at Bergvesting Independent School in the Northern Cape. Students of Theocentric Christian Education write the Cambridge International Exams and Brainline also offers this route for school leavers.

The table below shows the curricular choices of learners registered with the provincial departments of the Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape. The majority of registered learners follow the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) programme, but this is because ACE requires registration before learners can start its home education programme.

Table 4: Curricula used by home schools in the Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape

	FS	GP	KZN	MP	WC	Total
ACE	254	150	277	340	35	1056
All-in-One		4	10	6		20
BCVO	5			1		6
Breinlyn/Brainline	86	22	40	24	11	183
Cambridge	5			4		9
Clonard		3	19	18		40
Impak	49	1	1	12	8	71
INTEC	6			0		6
Kenweb	52	1	3	10	1	67
Le-Amen	16	2	6	3		27
Love 2 Learn		10	10	4		24
Moria	29	1		0	2	32
Nukleus	29			1		30
OIKOS	51	9	29	0	5	94
Remedial	2			1	1	4
TCE	22	12	7	7	27	75
Waldorf	2			0		2
RNCS	67	80	85	25	113	370
Unknown	20	11	10	37	7	85

All the home educators interviewed felt that their children had benefited from home education. Many cited individual attention as having improved academic performance, and saw lack of peer pressure as an advantage. A parent interviewed in KwaZulu-Natal said that her daughter's "confidence had improved, she's more out-going, can communicate out of peer group and her academic level has improved greatly". One parent, whose daughter returned to a public school for her secondary education, explained: "my daughter was the only girl to choose woodwork in high school". A number of parents noted that their children could work independently and had become computer literate. Parents were loyal to the learning programmes they were using and impressed the point that they could get assistance if they asked for it. However, some parents expressed anxiety about wanting to compare their child's progress against children in public schools.

A few parents noted that they had a hard time convincing friends or grandparents that their decision to home-school was a good one. As one parent explained:

> The general public have a very negative attitude to home schooling. They think the child does nothing. I hear the neighbour's daughter say to my son: 'you watch TV all day'. But that's not true. He has to do his work. How would he write his exams?

An ethnographic study of one home-schooling family (Moore et al, 2004), found that while there were several advantages to home-schooling, including that the environment was "highly conducive to positive learning experiences" (p. 22), the family encountered several difficulties. The boundaries between family life and the home school were difficult to maintain, with social events evaluated for their educational contributions. The parent educator was placed under increasing stress in juggling her roles as mother and teacher. She did not enjoy the relative degree of emotional neutrality towards her children that classroom teachers have and felt insecure about her ability to teach. The children missed the company and competition of peers and sibling rivalry was magnified. The two children eventually returned to public school, though the mother remained convinced that "home schooling is good, but not in every situation" (Moore et al., 2004, p. 23). The researchers conclude that home schooling is "not always an easy option. Families who homeschool, elect to depart from the norms of mainstream society … it does require extensive commitment, preparation, emotional involvement and stamina" (Moore et al., 2004, p. 24).

Margie Carter's (2008) research similarly suggests that home education adds emotional stress to families. The inability to distinguish between the role of parent and educator creates family tension, which is exacerbated when the focus of their lives is on academics. For example, family outings were planned for their educational value (e.g. to museums) rather than for relaxation and fun. Carter (2008) also points to children suffering from emotional problems as they see themselves as "different" to others, as functioning outside of the norms of society.

In sum, the home education sector in South Africa is very small and almost entirely white. Many parents choose to home-educate for Christian reasons, because they relocate often or because they wish their children to have individualised attention, with a smaller number being 'pushed' from schools either because of distance from schools or because their children have special needs, are being bullied or the quality of education is perceived to be poor. Opting out of public schools allows parents to provide individualised attention and flexible timetabling. However, it may also add stress to the teacher-parent (normally the mother), especially when she has no teaching experience, and isolate children from interacting with peers and from engaging with a variety of ideas and opinions.

Provincial Regulation of Home Education

Officials in each of the nine provinces were interviewed on current practice related to the registration and monitoring of, and support provided to, home education sites. The study identified three main approaches to regulating home education sites amongst the provinces:

- A comprehensive approach, with systems in place to register, monitor and provide assistance to home educators, including home visits.
- A regulatory approach.
- A laissez-faire approach, with weak procedures for registration and almost no monitoring.

The approach chosen by provincial Departments of Education was in part dictated by the available resources. The Northern Cape, for example, cited the long distances between homes as a reason why there was no monitoring of individual households. Equally important was the degree of sympathy officials in the provincial directorates had towards home education. Where the directorate was well-disposed to home education, there tended to be greater support provided to parents (with registration and advice). In cases where directorates expressed reservations towards home education, the emphasis was on regulation.

All nine provinces have home education policies, which on the whole relate to national policy and are fairly similar in content. (In the Eastern Cape, the policy was still in draft form.) However, a Northern Cape official argued:

> Although we have policy, it is only a policy for registration. It is not a policy that assists – nowhere is it indicated what the responsibility of the Department is. Cancellation of registration implies inspection responsibility – but is inspection practical and feasible?

The regulation and monitoring of home education tends to fall under directorates also charged with responsibilities for independent schools. In each of six provinces there was just one person in charge of registering and monitoring the home education sector as an add-on function. In Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, two people have home education monitoring responsibilities as an add-on function. The Free State has one full-time person in charge of registering home education learners and two staff members monitor home education as an added responsibility to overseeing independent schools.

In five provinces, systems for regulating home education were either non-existent or in their infancy. Regulations and staff were generally newly in place in the Eastern Cape, North West and Northern Cape. There appears to have been a hiatus after the promulgation of the November 1999 national policy and its implementation in these provinces. In the Eastern Cape, for example, the Scholar Support Service and Special Schooling Management Directorate was established after restructuring in 2006 and began working at the beginning of 2007. At the time of the interview, the directorate had no administration capacity, no computers and insufficient office furniture. There was no historical memory of home schooling processes, though there were hard copies of home-education application forms, a draft policy and an outdated electronic database. The directorate started out by asking districts for information on home education and between January and May 2007 had managed six home school visits.

In the North West, a provincial moratorium was in place on the registration of home education (and independent schools) between 2004 and 2006 because there were no regulations for registration and monitoring. The regulations were drafted towards the end of August 2005, distributed to the different Chief Directorates and the Member of the Executive Council for Education's offices for comment. The regulations were published for public comment on 7 February 2007. Public inputs (mainly raised by independent schools) were given to the Director of Legal Services in the Superintendent General's office and at the time of the interview with provincial officials (May 2007), the regulations were being finalised. However, in the interim, registrations began to be processed from the beginning of 2007, following the Member of the Executive Council's instruction on 18 October 2006.

The Gauteng official noted that there had been an antagonistic relationship between the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) and home education associations, particularly the Pestalozzi Trust, and as a result the GDE resisted registering home education for some years.

Registering Home Education

None of the provinces advertised through a public campaign the requirement or procedures for registration of home education. It is assumed that home educators are aware of the legislation. Yet one Free State official said that "very often families say they were not aware they had to register. There is an urgent need for a public awareness campaign". Principals in the Free State have been asked to alert the Department if a learner leaves a school to be home educated, but this rarely happens.

No action has been taken against unregistered home educators to date. In the Free State, an official, when made aware of an unregistered school, will visit the parents and explain the registration procedure and be provided with an application form:

> If the family still prefers not to submit the form and register, the question is: what next? Quite a number of parents, after receipt of the form, still choose not to register with the Provincial Department of Education. Departmental officials do not have clear guidelines as to what procedures to follow in such a case. Sending out the police to an unregistered site seems too confrontational and could lead to intervention by the Pestalozzi Trust. Some families are really fearful of Departmental officials to such an extent that they will not allow an official to even enter their home. Apparently they were brought under the impression that officials have the authority to remove children from those parents who do not wish to register (interview with Free State official, May 2007).

In all provinces procedures for registration were in place (when the fieldwork was undertaken in May-July 2007). Certificates of registration were handed to parents, albeit late in three provinces. Accelerated Christian Education is the only association which expects parents to register (or show evidence that they attempted to register) with the Department. Some of the other programme suppliers carry Pestalozzi Trust adverts, the organisation that warns against registration. Brainline's website states "It is advisable that parents consider becoming members of the Pestalozzi Trust, before making contact with any government institution." Nukleus gives similar advice.

The criteria used to register learners for home education includes the following for all provinces: a completed application form, a certified copy of the learner's birth certificate, and copies of the learner's report and a transfer certificate from the last school s/he attended. In addition, most provinces requested certified copies of parents' identity documents, and in KwaZulu-Natal parents had to provide copies of their educational qualifications. Medical certificates were requested in the Free State and North West if the application to home-educate was made on medical grounds. In addition to these administrative requirements provinces should collect qualitative information from parents for choosing to home-educate their children.

In Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape, families were visited at home for counselling and advice before approval. In addition to the application form, the conditions for withdrawal of approval are provided as well as a copy of relevant legislation. In Gauteng, parents are given information on resources for the home educator and the contact details of the two responsible officials in the provincial Department of Education.

In the Free State, parents apply at the office of the provincial official who offers advice and guidance on home teaching and on the various learning programmes. A family file is opened for each application and includes all the children being home-educated by the family. An annual return form has to be submitted at the beginning of each year to update records. The provincial official explained that if a family cancels their registration or moves away, then a 'dormant' sticker is attached to the file and it is stored away. Should the family return, the file is moved back into the active system. The file includes:

- the initial application form, motivating why the family chose to home-educate;
- travel routes to the house address;
- green form filled in for the 10th Day Snap Survey;
- reports on the learners;
- Departmental official home visit reports; and
- an undertaking that the family will abide by provincial norms and standards.

In Limpopo, applications are processed by the circuit manager and forwarded to the district and then the provincial head office. The circuit manager will visit the home for a pre-registration visit. Similarly, in the North West, requests for registration must come through the regional office, which has to sign approval after a pre-inspection visit. The Eastern Cape also receives applications through the district office.

In some provinces, requests for registration are not automatic and applications have been declined. The Northern Cape, for example, has a list of 33 learner applicants (from about 23 families, as estimated by surnames) between 1998 and 2005 of which 24 were not approved. Because of staffing changes in the province, it could not be ascertained why so many applications were rejected. In the North West, a family with two children were denied registration for home education in 2007 because the family was leaving the country and the province argued that they should apply for a home education certificate in the country of destination.

There is some slippage in the legislation between home education and independent schools (which, by definition, are no smaller than 20 learners). The practice of a few families teaching together under one roof is informally termed "cottage schooling" or "micro-schooling" (a term developed by Brainline). The Western Cape reported that it discovered a number of home school learners being educated in a group, and as a result one of the check points in the home school visit is that only the parent as indicated in the application is allowed to do home education. The Free State also had a case, reported to the Department as an illegal school, where a number of learners from

different families were being taught by one parent. The officials requested that each family be individually registered or that the group register as a school.

Perhaps because procedures for registration are being re-established in some provinces, a few parents interviewed noted that they battled to find out how and where to register, or they had to travel to provincial offices to fill in forms and pick up registration certificates. Registration took between two months (in Gauteng, Free State and Mpumalanga) and six months (in the Western Cape). In those provinces where procedures are still being set up, some parents had had no response to applications. A parent in Gauteng who had been advised not to register by the Pestalozzi Trust but who applied because it was a requirement for the Accelerated Christian Education programme, said she found the service from the Gauteng Department of Education to be efficient. A Western Cape parent said she experienced "great mistrust" and "was sent from pillar to post".

Provincial officials expressed need for clarification from the national Department on three main aspects of the registration procedures:

- whether application forms should be processed by district offices or the provincial office;
- whether registration can continue throughout the year, or only at the beginning of the school year; and
- on what grounds a Department can refuse registration (one provincial Department, for example, would deny registration if parents claimed that the reason they were home-educating was because they were unhappy with the quality of public schools).

Table 5: Applications for registration by province, 2002-2006

	2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		2007	
	No. appl.	No. deny	No. appl.	No. deny	No. appl.	No. deny	No. appl.	No. deny	No. appl.	No. deny	No. appl.	No. deny
EC											6	-
FS	62	-	60	-	60	-	104	-	78	-	71	-
GP					343	0	116	0	83	0		
KZN							58	-	50	-		
LP												
MP	44	0	39	0	37	1	60	2	46	0		
NW												
NC	9	4	4	2 (cancel)	1	0	3	0	-	-		
WC	63	0	77	1	**80**	4	**103**	2	**46**	1	**62**	2
Total	178	4	180	1	588	5	526	4	346	1	139	2

Source: PDE survey form. No information was obtained from Limpopo Province.

Monitoring Home Education

Although the national policy on home education (DoE, 1999) places the onus on parents to monitor their child's performance and to provide evidence to the head of the provincial department of their child's progression, all the provinces assumed that home visits were a part of their duty. Nevertheless, the Eastern Cape's draft policy, for example, which specifies the "duties of the parent for the monitoring of the home education", does not stipulate the province's responsibilities or how often home visits should take place except to state that "such records [daily attendance register and portfolio of work] should be made available for inspection by a duly authorised official of the provincial Department". The Northern Cape official pointed out that the vast distances between towns and farms made home visits impractical.

Four provinces (Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape) indicated that they intended to do an annual visit to each home, but in practice were unable to do so because of insufficient staff members. In the Free State, 43 home visits were conducted in 2006 and in KwaZulu-Natal 25 homes were visited in 2006 and early 2007. Both parents interviewed in Gauteng reported being visited by provincial officials. The schedule of visits coincides with the timetable for visiting independent or special schools. Visits were less regular in the other provinces. No visits had taken place for the past three years in the North West and Northern Cape.

In the main, officials expected parents to show evidence of timetabling, a portfolio of work and continuous assessment. In Gauteng, the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, independent

assessment was required at the end of grades 3, 6 and 9. Both the Mpumalanga and Gauteng officials said that 20% of assessment reports from home educators are randomly selected and moderated by Departmental officials (in the curriculum section). The Free State official reported that they advised up to six families a year to terminate home education because it was proving not to be in the best interests of the learner. These learners normally returned to public schools. In the Eastern Cape, each home school is required to be attached to a 'mother school' (public or independent) which is responsible for monitoring and assessing the learner twice a year. (However, since the directorate had only recently been established, this monitoring strategy was not yet effective).

Professional Support for Home Education

The national policy (DoE, 1999) does not require Departments of Education to provide home education with support. However, the Free State allows for home educators to be 'hosted' by a public school and this is regulated by the Free State Education Act. A child may receive academic support, or be included in the cultural and sporting activities of a public school. Parents pay a monthly fee to the school for such support. Home educators may be afforded such support from any school in the province (not necessarily their closest school). For example, home-educating parents in Vredefort chose to be hosted by a public school in Bloemfontein. They received all the assignments and tests by post and the assessment would be done by the teacher in Bloemfontein. The child received a report at the end of each year bearing the logo of the school in Bloemfontein.

The National Schools Governing Bodies Association has argued that cultural and sporting activities fall under the prerogative of School Governing Bodies and not the provincial Department of Education; but academic support is still officially offered. The Free State has had cases of School Governing Bodies refusing home educators support, but, explains an official, "this [refusal] is against the Free State Education Act". The Free State officials argued that the provision did not add additional costs to the school. Their biggest problem was "calming the tempers of full-time parents who said 'the home-schooler is keeping my child out of the team'".

The Free State also hosts an annual conference for home educators, where information on different home education programmes is provided. Parents are also given a self-evaluation form. In Mpumalanga, the official was invited to address a conference of home educators called by the home school association. Other provinces allow home educators to get support from a teacher in a public school but they are expected to arrange this themselves.

Conclusion

At the heart of the debate on the benefits of home education lies a normative question on whether the weight of responsibility for educating children lies with the state or with parents. Home education increases parental control over the life chances and choices of their offspring. Public schools induct children into the values and culture of democratic society - and may do so in conflict with parents' norms. Home education is, therefore, most controversial when parents withdraw children from schools to be educated at home because they disagree with Constitutional values or do not want their children to mix with other races or cultures. Such motives would almost certainly place home educators in contravention of the Minister of Education's 1999 policy, but their legal right to do so would necessarily be tested against the Constitutional injunction that, "A child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child" (s.28(2)).

The findings from this study do not show substantive evidence that ideological objections are the main motivation for home education in South Africa, although the campaign by the Pestalozzi Trust against registration of home schools does suggest that some parents may home school in protest against or defiance of the values of the state. Research indicates that, in the main, parents choose to home school for religious reasons, as a result of dissatisfaction with the quality of schools, or because their child has special needs. While some Christian families may object to topics in the Revised National Curriculum Statement that challenge fundamentalist beliefs, such as evolution, there is little evidence that there is a groundswell of opposition to the core values of RNCS.

The primary challenge for the Department of Education in relation to home education is therefore administrative, rather than an ideological dispute with home education. Legislation places conditions on home education to ensure that it is in the best interests of the child, which the state is obliged to enforce. The danger with home education is that children outside the institutional gaze slip through the cracks and do not enjoy full constitutional rights. Although home educated learners make up a very small sector, the fact that they are scattered geographically in individual households makes registration and monitoring difficult with limited resources. The capacity of provincial departments of education to fulfil their task has been uneven. In four provinces systems for registration have only recently been set up. While some provinces have provided support, others have stressed regulation or have opted for a *laissez-faire* approach.

The recommendations which follow address the administrative difficulties with registering and monitoring home education.

Recommendations

- Home education is a very small sector and serves a community of interest related to factors ranging from religion to special needs to accessibility. Given the small scale of home education in South Africa and the nature of the demands from the public school system, it has to be acknowledged that there will be limited resources to address the needs of regulating such a sector. The emphasis should be on better information gathering, a clear regulatory framework through legislation, and limited monitoring.

- The home education databases in the provincial Departments should be updated. Annual school surveys should be completed by all home educators, including basic data on grade, age, gender, home education association membership and learning programme being followed. These reports should be submitted to the EMIS directorates in provincial Departments of Education for record keeping and monitoring by officials from the national Department. Children who cease to be home-educated and enter public or independent schools must be removed from home education databases.

- Given limited resources; provincial Departments of Education cannot be expected to monitor individual households. It is recommended that, as a condition of registration, home-learners be requested to join an association and/or be linked to an independent or a public school. The association or school ought to be responsible for monitoring the quality of education of the home education site. The national Department of Education together with its provincial counterparts should monitor and evaluate the home education associations and programmes, rather than conducting home visits.

- It is not a national policy requirement for provincial Departments to provide support to home education. No Departmental resources should be spent on assisting home schools. However, a public school's School Governing Body may permit home-educated learners to be included in cultural or sporting activities and may demand reasonable payment for such services.

- The gap in the legislation between home education and independent schools for home education (that is where a number of home educators are grouped together but do not make up the requisite numbers to be considered an independent school) should be clarified.

- There ought to be a public awareness campaign to inform parents of the requirements for registering home education.

- Procedures for prosecuting parents of compulsory school-age children who refuse to register for home education should be clarified.

- The question of whether home educators ought to strictly follow the guidelines of the national curriculum (as is current policy) should be re-opened for debate. The only option for parents who do not want their children to be taught the national curriculum is to leave the country or send their children for education abroad. However, other accountability measures to monitor home education may be available without having to insist that parents teach within the bounds of the national curriculum. Until the conditions related to the curriculum are resolved, home educators (such as those associated with the Pestalozzi Trust) will remain at loggerheads with the Department of Education and will continue to work outside the law.

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Annexure 1: Terms of Reference

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION: SYSTEM PLANNING AND MONITORING BRANCH

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A STUDY ON HOME EDUCATION

1. AIM OF STUDY

To investigate the state of home education in the country, and report on it's compliance with national policy.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 In terms of policy stipulations in the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (NEPA) and the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA), learners may receive home education should this be in their interest. In cases of learners that are within the compulsory school-going age, parents must apply to provincial Heads of Departments (HODs) for registration of learners for home education. Provincial HODs are responsible for the registration of learners involved in home education as well as the monitoring of home education. For learners to be registered in home education, parents have to meet the terms and conditions set out in the home education policy.

2.2 A number of parents have registered their children for home education, however little is known about the occurrence and nature of home schooling in South Africa.

2.3 It is important for the Department of Education to understand the state of home schooling in South Africa as it is mandated, in terms of SASA and NEPA, to ensure that the registration of learners for home education is in the best interest of the learners and reflects the values contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

3. DELIVERABLES

3.1 The service provider will deliver a full report on the state of home education in South Africa.

3.2 The full report must be accompanied by an executive summary.

3.3 The report must include all research instruments used in the study.

3.4 Four printed and bound copies of the final report must be submitted to the Department. The electronic version of the report must be provided in MS Word, on a CD-Rom.

4. SCOPE OF STUDY

4.1 The study should include the following:

- a summary of the key findings from the South African literature on home schooling;

- the incidence of home education in the country (disaggregated by province, race, urban/rural, language of learning and teaching, gender). This information can be obtained from provincial education departments;

- compliance to policy stipulations on home education focusing on a) conditions for registration for home education, b) compliance with curriculum requirements of public education, c) suitability of learner programmes, d) consistency with values contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, e) role of parents in home education

- the role of provincial education departments in administering, supporting and monitoring home schooling;

- reasons why parents opt for home education;

- local and international lessons on home education (the pros and cons of home education);

- the extent to which home education in South Africa serves the interests of home-based learners, both as individuals as well as members of society;

- the appropriateness of the present policy on Home Education in promoting the stated objectives of home education

4.2 Information on the extent of home education and the role of provinces in home education must be obtained from all 9 provincial education departments.

4.3 The service provider is expected to visit a minimum of 18 home school sites in about five provinces, and communicate telephonically with the other four provinces. The sites visited should be in both urban and rural locations. The selection of the sites to be visited will be undertaken in conjunction with the officials of the provincial Department of Education. The number of home school sites visited should be sizeable enough to obtain insights into the phenomenon of home schooling, and not be a statistically representative sample. Staff members from the Department of Education will accompany service providers to several provincial and home education sites.

4.4 Interviews with stakeholders (such as Home Schooling Associations, Publishers etc) should be undertaken to obtain insight into numbers of "unregistered" home learners, as well as the type of curriculum exposed to home learners.

5. LEVEL OF EFFORT

The level of effort is budgeted at approximately 45 days.

6. TIME FRAME

The service provider is expected to complete the research within a period of six months upon signing the contract with the Department of Education.

7. EXPERIENCE, EXPERTISE AND SKILLS REQUIRED

a. Extensive proven experience in education research.
b. Excellent knowledge of education policy and legislation.
c. Excellent report writing skills.

d. Proven project management expertise.

8. CONDITIONS

a. Copyright of the report submitted by the successful service provider will reside with the Department of Education.

b. Payment will be effected upon receipt of an invoice to the satisfaction of the Department of Education according to a payment schedule specified by the Department of Education.

c. An invoice should be submitted to the Department of Education project manager for approval and certification upon completion of the intermediate and final deliverables

d. The successful service provider/s should have a meeting with the project manager to clarify the brief at the start of the project.

e. The successful service provider/s should make verbal presentations of the draft report to the Department and finalise the report taking into account recommendations from the Department of Education.

9. CONTRACTUAL ARRANGEMENTS

The performance of the service providers, the outcomes achieved and impact of the programme will be audited based on: "Audit Criteria: Performance Audit of Consultants" Auditor-General's Office July 2000.

10. TERMS OF PAYMENT

Payment will be effected after satisfactory delivery of services in accordance with the budget per phase. Comprehensive detailed invoices with attachments should be submitted for the project manager's approval.

ENQUIRIES

Mr Moses Simelane
Directorate: Monitoring and Evaluation
Department of Education
Room 107C Waterbron Building
191 Schoeman Street
Pretoria, 0001
Tel: 012 312 5942

Annexure 2: Learning Programmes

The information on curriculum providers presented here has been gleaned from websites, unless otherwise referenced.

- **Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) Ministries (Africa)**

  13 Glen Anil Street
  Glen Anil
  Durban

  P.O. Box 22072
  Glenashley
  4022
  Durban

  Tel: 031 573 6500
  Fax: 031 569 1862
  Email: info@aceministries.co.za
  http://www.aceministries.co.za

  The largest provider of home education programmes in South Africa, ACE is a Christian-based programme imported from the USA and linked to the School of Tomorrow. ACE South Africa headquarters are based in Durban.

  The programme is available electronically or book-based. ACE has four certificates all accredited by Umalusi:

  - Vocational certificate
  - College entrance with exemption
  - College entrance without exemption
  - General certificate

  Parents are required to register with one of several regionally-located ACE academies. ACE home schools cannot be registered with the academy unless they can first prove that they have registered (or attempted to register) with the Department. The academy screens families before registration, provides support in setting up home schools and monitors progress. Parents are also required to attend a training session. The academy may put a hold on an ACE account (preventing parents from ordering books) if a family has not paid the academy for three months, if they have not submitted a progress card for six months or if they keep making excuses for delaying a home inspection by the academy (Interview with Dr Burger, Dunamai Home-Educators Academy, Free State).

- **Breinlyn/Brainline**

  http://www.brainline.co.za
  215 Veronica Street
  Montana, Pretoria
  0001
  Tel: +27 12 543 5000

Brainline is a distance education school, offering an international and South African school curriculum on compact disc and the internet, from Grade 0 to 12, which culminates in a National Senior Certificate in SA or an international grade 12 issued by Cambridge University International Examinations. The South African curriculum is available in English and Afrikaans. Brainline has been provisionally accredited with Umalusi, number SCH00223PA.

Parents and learners can get support online through www.brainonline.com an e-learning interface where communication with other students, Brainline and the subject advisors is possible. There is a "lounge" for socials, chatrooms etc. Specialised workshops, prize-giving events and social activities are organised throughout the year.

- **Clonard Home Education**

PO Box 393
Kloof
3640
South Africa

Tel: (+27) 031-764 6480
Fax: (+27) 031-764 7586
E-mail: info@clonard.co.za
Website: http://www.clonard.co.za/

Clonard provides curricula for children from pre-school to Grade 10. The course is advertised as being closely aligned to the Revised National Curriculum Statement. Parents are provided with weekly schedules of work along with school textbooks, support material and answer books. Everything is provided in one box (weighing about 9 kilograms in the foundation phase), which can be collected or posted. The Parents Guide for the Foundation Phase deals with topics like socialisation, sport, music, artwork, crafts, poetry, baking, sewing, woodwork, etc. Parents fill in a daily record book documenting the child's progress throughout the year. This book is sent back to Clonard, together with the completed tests in reading, writing and number work. Clonard teachers will assess the pupil and send parents a report and a certificate of achievement. There is also a helpline direct to each of the teachers.

Clonard's website explains: "The children using our curriculum are drawn from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds. Religion is an integral part of a child's daily education, but we believe that it is a private family matter and that the parents are the true spiritual leaders in the family. For this reason we do not presume to advise parents on the religious education of their children. All parents want to impart their own beliefs to their children in whatever way they see fit. We, as teachers, are here to assist parents with the academics, not to advise them on religious matters. Our policy is to work together with the parents to give the children an all-round education."

- **Kenweb**

http://www.kenweb.co.za/
Kenweb is a computer-based curriculum in Afrikaans that is in line with Curriculum 2005. The programme offers weekly schedules, textbooks, a computer programme, teaching courses and twice-yearly exams. Its office is in Orania.

- **Nukleus Onderwys**

  www.nukleusonderwys.co.za/
  e-mail: nukleus@wol.co.za
  Tel / Fax: (044) 878 2944 / (044) 878 2680

  Posbus 10113
  George
  6530

  Nukleus was founded in 2001. It offers Christian-based learning materials and home education support services in Afrikaans. One of its stated aims is to provide curricula that supports Afrikaans nationhood: "om 'n unieke alternatiewe onderwysstelsel te skep wat die aard en wese van die Afrikanervolk adem, maar party-polities onverbonde is en nie diskrimineer teen enige Afrikanerkind a.g.v. sy/haar ouers se Godsdienstige voor-of afkeure nie."

  The organisation is headed by five directors who are elected on a yearly basis. Curricula is developed by 40 subject specialists and the organisation has links with Hoërskool Bergvesting in the Northern Cape.

- **IMPAK Onderwysdiens BK / Delta Education (English edition)**

  Lyttelton
  0157
  P.O Box 15132
  Lyttelton
  0140

  Tel: 012 664 8552
  Fax: 012 664 2618/012 664 2318/086 679 3807/086 679 3859
  E-mail: info@impakonderwys.co.za
  Webaddress: www.impakonderwys.co.za

  Impak was started in 2001 and is owned by: P.B. Botha 24%, E. Botha 24%, H. Janse van Rensburg 24%, R. Cronjé 24% en L. Foulds 4%

  A biblically-orientated programme, Impak Onderwysdiens BK claims to combine the best elements of the RNCS, the 1985-1993 curriculum and Flemish and British curricula. Materials are available on CD or in print. The programme also offers adventure and leadership camps and a winter-school.

  Princes range from R3370 for Grade 0 to R4450 for Grade 12 materials.

- **Le-Amen Education Centre**
  Vincent Willems
  Plot 12, Totius street, Amorosa
  P.O. Box 1252, Ruimsig, 1732
  le-amen@fnbisp.co.za
  Tel: (011) 958 0366 / 958 0532
  Fax: (011) 958 1945

This religious, book-based programme covers all grades and matriculants write the Independent Examinations Board exam.

- **OIKOS**

OIKOS is a Christian home-education programme from America, distributed by Sonja and Greg Wood in Howick, KwaZulu-Natal. Parents buy learner books and parent support materials (it is not computer-based). The programme is organised around "character-building traits" and based on the idea of experiential learning. It is not aligned to the Revised National Curriculum Statement but attempts are being made to assess learners more systematically (using the services of Jacqui Baumgardt, an independent assessor).

- **Theocentric Christian Education (TCE) Association**

Graham Shortridge
Bloubergrand, Western Cape.

Tel: (021) 557-2612
email: tcecc@mweb.co.za
Fax: 2721 556 1277

TCE is non-denominational, but based on biblical Christian philosophy. According to the website it, "is centred around 27 character qualities of God. God's character qualities are studied within the context of each subject, thus ensuring that the child grows up understanding that God is in control of every area of life, and must be honoured and obeyed in everything." TCE uses Christian textbooks (imported from America) with additional notes on South African history and geography. Learners write the Cambridge HIGCSE exams (Higher International General Certificate of Education), or the British A Levels. The programme is fairly flexible and parents are provided with a scheme of work, a suggested timetable, continuous evaluation procedures and formal exams set twice a year. A telephone helpline is available to parents.