

Issue
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Trends in Education Macro Indicators Summary Report

2009 South Africa



education

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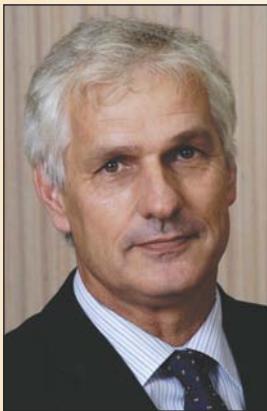
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**Trends in Education Macro Indicators
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Duncan Hindle
DG: Basic Education

The overall objective of this report is to provide a summary of key trends in macro indicators for the education sector in South Africa. It aims to give policy-makers, researchers and education practitioners an overview of the system over the past decade, with the intention of providing both a summary of the past and a guide for the future.

The selection of indicators is guided by international norms and standards. These measures tend to have a solid tradition behind them and they reflect international commitments made by the South African government. The indicators are “macro” in the sense that they generally do not pertain to classroom processes or school-level service delivery issues. They are meant to provide a broad overview of performance. While the report fills a major gap in terms of providing an extensive presentation of indicators and trends, it is not intended to

provide in-depth policy analysis and research. Where relevant, the report indicates the need for more research, or refers the reader to research that has already been undertaken.

There are three groups of indicators that constitute the basis of this report. Firstly, indicators of access describe the levels of participation across different levels of education. Secondly, indicators of efficiency refer to efficient progress through the education system. Finally, indicators of quality describe the progress made in improving the quality of educational inputs. These indicators also depict South Africa's academic standing, based on local and international assessments.

The report shows that substantial progress has been made in education since 1994, particularly with regard to access, but that there are still numerous areas of concern. It must be emphasised that accurate and reliable information is an essential requirement for monitoring education indicators. A serious challenge that was encountered in developing this report, was the validity and reliability of the data.

Improvements to the report will continue, but data problems still need to be addressed. This summary report should be read in conjunction with the comprehensive Macro Indicator Report. The full report will be available at the department website (www.education.gov.za). The contents of the report were endorsed by an international panel of experts, comprising Dr. Luis Crouch (RTI International), Prof. Juan Prawda and Prof. Noel F. McGinn (Professor Emeritus at Harvard Graduate School of Education).

Professor McGinn had the following to say, after reading the report:

"I am grateful for the opportunity to have read the South Africa indicators report. This document not only compiles a great deal of information that will be helpful to policy makers, planners and researchers, but also poses a series of critical questions that should be very helpful in framing and guiding public debate about the status of education in South Africa. The document could serve as the foundation for an education sector assessment, and

certainly will be used in university teaching, not only for the data it contains but especially for how it addresses issues of methodology and interpretation. I have read a number of national reports on the status of education ... this report is clearly the best I have ever read. Even though there are legitimate concerns about the accuracy of some of the report's data, I am convinced that the report provides a comprehensive discussion of issues of interpretation. In this as in many cases, the questions posed are more important (for decision making) than the specific data available."



Duncan Hindle

DG: Basic Education

Access to Education

- Participation levels in the South African education system are high. Indicators of access show that in 2007, some 94% of young people, aged 7 to 18, were involved in education programmes.
- Progress in primary school completion is also positive and suggests that, at the current pace, 98% of appropriately-aged learners in South Africa will complete the primary school cycle by 2015.
- Evidence from household surveys confirms that by 2007, as many as 88% of 6-year-olds and 62% of 5-year-olds, participated in some form of Early Childhood Education. Admittedly, the quality of such education varies, but progress in this area has been steady.
- South Africa's participation rates at tertiary level were lower than had been the case at earlier phases of the education system. Although an increase from 13%



to 16% was recorded between 2000 and 2005, by international standards this is still relatively low. Estimates for tertiary level participation used in this report are based on the age group 20 to 24.

Efficiency

- While 81% of the group born between 1980 and 1984 had reached Grade 9, the survival rates of the same group in reaching Grade 11 and Grade 12 declined to 60% and 46% respectively.
- Between 1995 and 2007, the completion rate up to Grade 7 (the end of the primary school cycle) increased from approximately 88% to 93%, and the completion rate up to Grade 9 (the end of the general education cycle) increased from 75% to 83%.
- Drop-out rates increased sharply from Grade 9 upwards. Regarding the group born between 1980 and 1984, the drop-out rate increased from 11% at Grade 9-level to 24% at Grade 11-level. It is of particular concern that the drop-out rates at Grade 11-level appear to be on the increase with each successive wave of learners progressing through the school system.

Quality

- South Africa's record pertaining to academic achievement has been less than remarkable when compared to the advances made in improving access. Whether local or international benchmarks are used, study upon study showed that South African children were lagging behind. South Africa is a middle-income country. Yet, student performance is poorer when compared to countries with less affluence in their education systems.
- The percentage of qualified educators increased by 30 percentage points between 1994 and 2008. These gains took place largely among black educators, implying that equity in the distribution of qualifications has increased. In 1994, the difference between African and White educator qualification levels stood at 45 percentage points. By 2008, this gap had narrowed to 6 percentage points. It is important to note that these figures refer to formal certification courses and exclude any measuring of classroom competency and subject knowledge – an issue that remains a serious concern for many analysts.

- Youth literacy (defined as those in the 15-to-24 age group, who had completed at least seven grades of education) stood at 90% in 2007, which was 9% above the average for developing countries. Literacy rates amongst adults aged 20 and older increased from 69.6% in 1995 to 76.3% in 2007. This places South Africa in line with the average for developing countries.
- Some areas in the financing of South African education, experienced a decline over the past ten years. Public education expenditure as a percentage of GDP, and as a percentage of total government expenditure, declined in both cases. Budget allocations for capital spending and materials doubled between 2000 and 2005. There was also a substantial improvement in terms of equity of distribution between provinces. In 2000, the province with the highest expenditure spent some 56% more per learner than the province with the lowest expenditure. By 2007, this gap had narrowed to 17%.

The DoE's approach to ECD provisioning, targets children from birth to age six, with particular emphasis on education provisioning for Grade R.

The DoE plans to phase in the public provisioning of Grade R gradually, as part of the primary education level, so that by 2010, all children entering Grade 1 would have participated in an accredited reception-year programme, mainly in the public sector.

(DoE, 2001a)

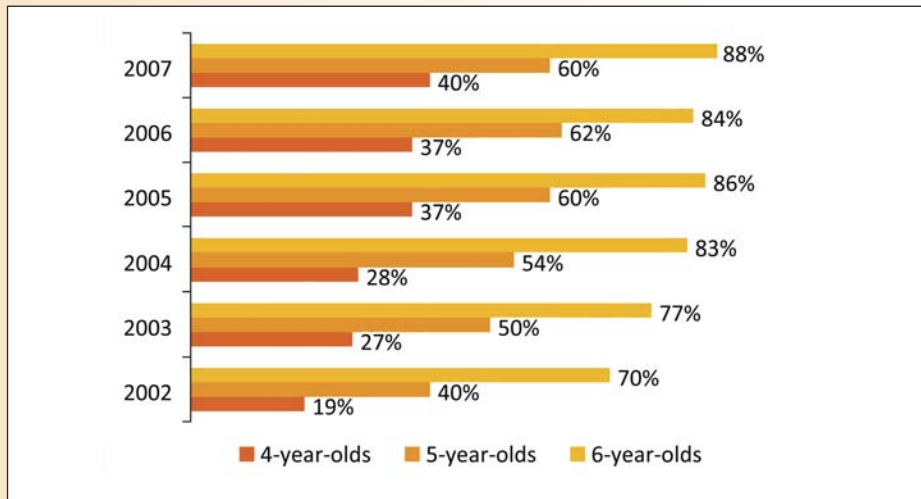
Participation in education programmes amongst 4-to-6-year-olds

Figure 1 indicates that the percentage of 5-year-olds enrolled in an educational institution, increased from 40% in 2002 to 60% in 2007.

Over the same period, the proportion of 6-year-olds in the population, who were enrolled in an educational institution, increased from 70% to 88%.

As of 2004, children who were four-turning-five by 30 June in the year of admission, could enrol for Grade R. This change resulted in a considerable increase in the proportion of 4-year-olds enrolled in an educational institution in subsequent years. By 2007, some 40% of 4-year-olds were enrolled in an educational institution.

Figure 1: Participation in education programmes amongst 4, 5 and 6-year-olds: 2002 to 2007



Source: General Household Survey, Statistics SA (2002 to 2007)

Since 2004, children who were four turning five by 30 June in the year of admission, could enrol for Grade R, and those who were five turning six by 30 June in the year of admission could enrol for Grade 1. Because parents could choose to enrol their children in Grade 1 at either five-turning-six or six-turning-seven, there has been a theoretical dual age grade norm for both primary and secondary education levels. The primary level caters for learners between six or seven and 12 or 13 years of age, and the secondary level caters for learners between 13 or 14 and 17 or 18 years of age.

Participation in education programmes amongst 7-to-13-year-olds

The appropriate age range for primary school is 7 to 13. According to the General Household Survey, between 2002 and 2007, more than 97% of children of primary school age (7 to 13), were enrolled in an educational institution. There was an even gender distribution amongst learners throughout the period. This is reflected by a GPI of at least 1.00 across the years.

Table 1: Participation in education programmes amongst 7-to-13-year-olds: 2002 to 2007

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Male | 96.41 | 96.92 | 97.93 | 98.06 | 97.92 | 99.00 |
| Female | 97.05 | 97.87 | 98.53 | 98.37 | 98.42 | 99.00 |
| Total | 96.72 | 97.36 | 98.21 | 98.21 | 98.16 | 98.00 |
| GPI | 1.01 | 1.01 | 1.01 | 1.00 | 1.01 | 1.00 |

General Household Survey, Statistics SA (2002 to 2007)

An interesting pattern emerges when data is aggregated into single years.

Table 2: Participation in education programmes amongst 7-to-13-year-olds in single years

| | Age | Age | Age | Age | Age | Age | Age |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year | 7yrs | 8yrs | 9yrs | 10yrs | 11yrs | 12yrs | 13yrs |
| 2002 | 90.8 | 96.6 | 97.5 | 98.0 | 98.3 | 98.4 | 97.1 |
| 2003 | 92.5 | 97.3 | 98.3 | 98.1 | 98.8 | 98.5 | 98.3 |
| 2004 | 96.8 | 98.4 | 98.7 | 98.9 | 97.9 | 98.9 | 97.9 |
| 2005 | 96.0 | 97.7 | 98.4 | 98.8 | 99.3 | 99.0 | 98.1 |
| 2006 | 96.5 | 98.3 | 98.6 | 98.6 | 98.4 | 98.4 | 98.1 |
| 2007 | 96.7 | 97.2 | 98.6 | 99.1 | 98.6 | 98.9 | 98.8 |

Source: General Household Survey, Statistics SA (2002 to 2007)

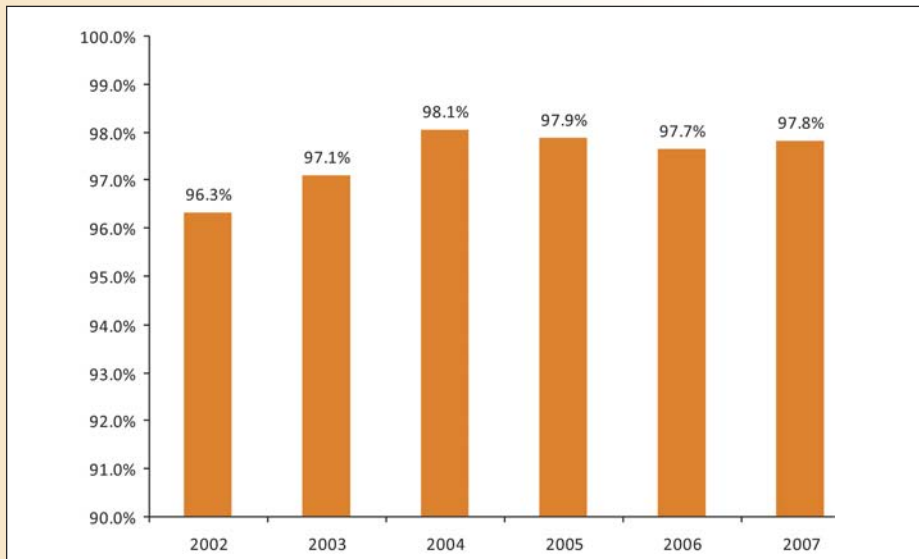
The participation of 7-year-olds was noticeably lower at the beginning of the reporting period, but improved as from 2004 (see Table 2). One likely explanation for this change, was the rapid expansion of early childhood development programmes and the greater number of learners entering the education system via Grade R.

Participation in education programmes amongst 7-to-15-year-olds

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, makes education compulsory for children between the ages of seven and 15 years. The figure 2 represents attendance at educational institutions for this age group, based on General Household Surveys. An estimated 96.3% of this population group attended an educational institution in 2002, and the participation rate increased to 97.8% in 2007 (Figure 2).

Correspondingly, the out-of-school proportion of the 7-to-15-year-old population decreased steadily from 3.7% (336 059 children) in 2002 to 2.2% (199 966 children) in 2007.

Figure 2: Percentage 7-to-15-year-olds attending an education institution: 2002 to 2007



Source: General Household Survey, Statistics SA (2002 to 2007)

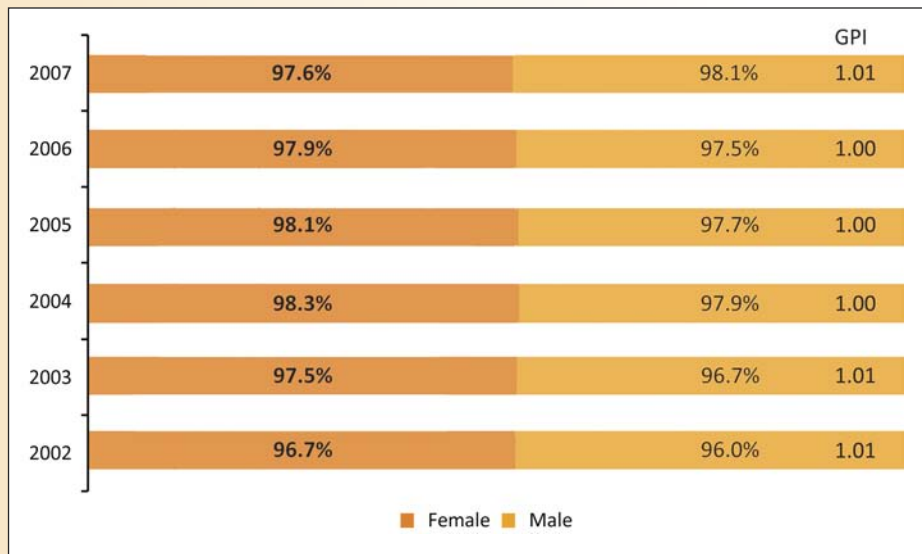
Participation in education programmes amongst 7-to-15-year-olds

An analysis of the Gender Parity Index (GPI) (i.e. the ratio of female to male learners) for the reporting period, indicates that, between 2002 and 2007, there was little disparity in the gender distribution of attendance in an educational institution within the 7-to-15-year-old population (see Figure 3).

A GPI of 1 indicates that parity between females and males was achieved. A GPI between 0 and 1 indicates a disparity in favour of males, while a GPI greater than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of females.

However, according to UNESCO, a GPI of between 0.97 and 1.03 is considered as reflecting gender parity (UNESCO, 2004, 93).

Figure 3: Percentage 7-to-15-year-olds attending education institutions by gender



Source: General Household Survey, Statistics SA (2002 to 2007)

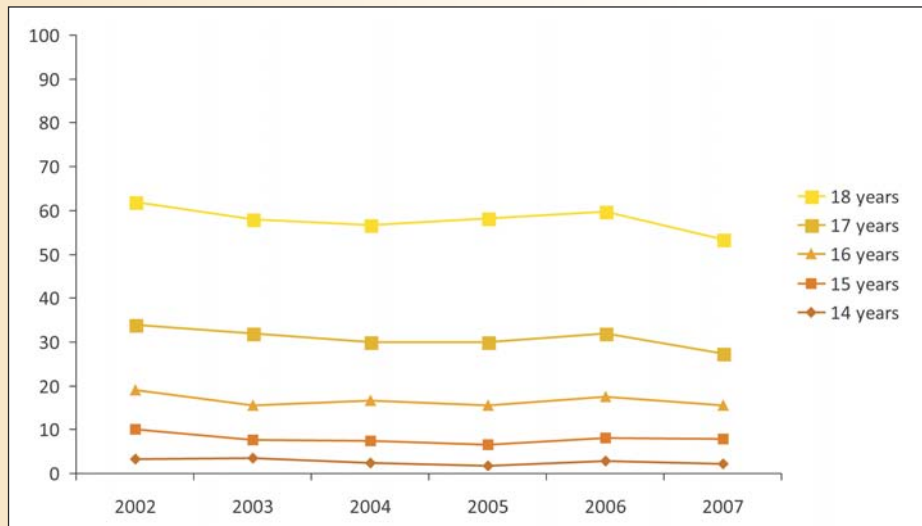
Participation in education programmes amongst 14-to-18-year-olds

The age group 14 to 18 is considered suitable for enrolling in secondary school (Grades 8 to 12). The data reveals a rapid decline in enrolment after age 14, and again after age 16.

For example, in 2007, while 98% of 14-year-olds attended an educational institution, only 74% of 18-year-olds did so.

These figures reflect a systematic drop-out process and cannot be entirely explained by a transfer to other sub-systems, such as Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) or Further Education and Training (FET).

Figure 4: Percentage 14-to-18-year-olds out-of-school: 2002 to 2007



Source: General Household Survey, Statistics SA (2002 to 2007)

Throughout the reporting period, the percentage of children out of school increased from less than 4% amongst 14-year-olds, to more than 25% for 18-year-olds.

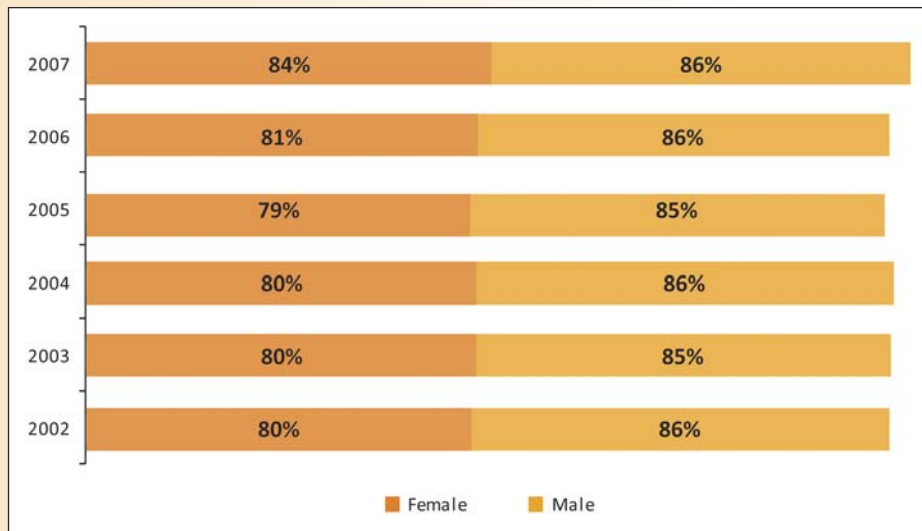
The enrolment gap widened noticeably between the ages of 17 and 18. In total, during the period 2002 to 2007, between 560 000 and 611 000 children between the ages of 14 and 18 were out of school.

Participation in education programmes amongst 16-to-18-year-olds

The age range 16 to 18, is the appropriate category for Further Education and Training (the FET band). As Figure 5 illustrates, a higher percentage of males than females (aged 16 to 18) were enrolled in educational institutions for the period 2002 to 2007, implying that, after compulsory education had ended, females tended to drop out at a higher rate than males.

The gap had narrowed slightly by the end of the reporting period. In 2002, the GPI was 0.93 but by 2007 it was 0.97.

Figure 5: Percentage 16-to-18-year-olds attending educational institutions by gender



Source: General Household Survey, Statistics SA (2002 to 2007)

Survival rate by grade refers to the percentage of a group of learners enrolled in the first grade of a given level or cycle of education in a given school year, who are expected to reach successive grades (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, Undated).

Survival Rate

Table 3 indicates that, over time, there were gains in the survival rate through to the end of Grade 6. There was a 10 percentage point increase in the survival rate to Grade 6, when the age group, born between 1985 and 1989, was compared to the 1970 to 1974 group. There was also a strong and steady increase in the survival rate to Grade 9 for the two age groups. While 71.5% of the age group born between 1970 and 1974 completed Grade 9, this figure was 86.2% for the 1985 to 1989 group.

In terms of the survival rate to the end of Grade 12, an increase occurred between the two early groups, with 45.3% of the 1975 to 1979 group completing Grade 12, compared to 42.7% for the 1970 to 1974 group. However, the survival rate to the end of Grade 12 still remained below 50% for all groups.

Table 3: School survival rate of various birth groups by grade, per 1 000 of birth group

| Year of birth | Mean survival rate | Mean survival rate | Mean survival rate | Ultimate survival rate |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | 1970-1974 | 1975-1979 | 1980-1984 | 1985-1989 |
| Birth | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 |
| Grade 1 | 958 | 976 | 984 | 989 |
| Grade 2 | 954 | 973 | 982 | 986 |
| Grade 3 | 946 | 968 | 979 | 983 |
| Grade 4 | 931 | 958 | 972 | 977 |
| Grade 5 | 909 | 942 | 960 | 970 |
| Grade 6 | 863 | 924 | 944 | 958 |
| Grade 7 | 843 | 895 | 917 | 938 |
| Grade 8 | 783 | 848 | 873 | 906 |

Table 3: School survival rate of various birth groups by grade, per 1 000 of birth group (continued)

| Year of birth | Mean survival rate | Mean survival rate | Mean survival rate | Ultimate survival rate |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| | 1970-1974 | 1975-1979 | 1980-1984 | 1985-1989 |
| Birth | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 |
| Grade 9 | 715 | 788 | 811 | 862 |
| Grade 10 | 636 | 705 | 717* | N/A |
| Grade 11 | 536 | 595 | 602* | N/A |
| Grade 12 | 427 | 453 | 456* | N/A |

Source: Department of Education 2008a, pp26-39

*Ultimate survival rate

N/A: Not available. Too soon to tell.

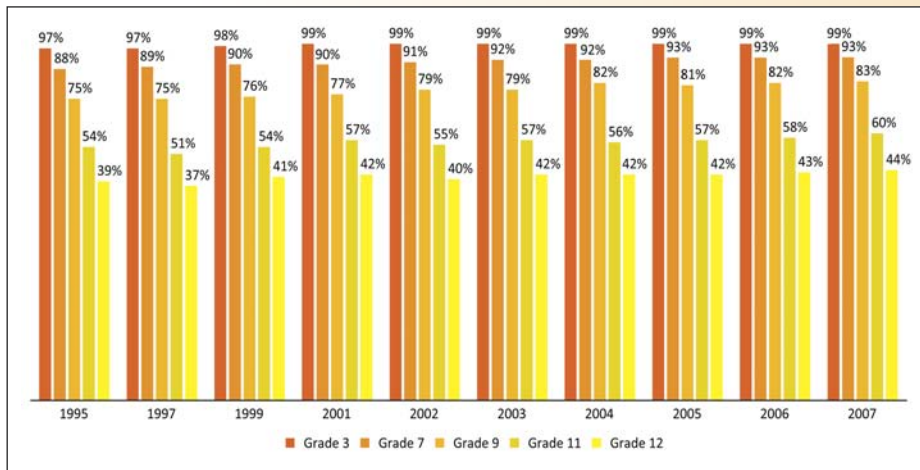
Note: The group in this table is defined by date of birth and not by enrolment in Grade 1. Therefore, the survival rates indicated are of those born, rather than of those starting Grade 1.

Completion Rates

The completion rate identifies the percentage of learners who complete a given level of the education system. The following figure indicates the percentage of 9-to-23-year-olds who completed different grades. There is a steady increase in completion rates across the reporting period, although the percentage of learners completing Grades 11 and 12 did not exceed 60%. Between 1995 and 2007, the completion rates for Grades 11 and 12 increased by 6 percentage points and 5 percentage points respectively. The greatest improvement was found in Grade 9 (an 8 percentage point gain).

Changes at primary level were only marginal. For Grade 3, there was only a 2 percentage point increase and for Grade 7 a 5 percentage point gain. However, this was to be expected, given that the completion rates for the early grades had already been high in 1995. At the current pace, South Africa will achieve 98% primary completion by 2015.

Figure 6: Completion rate: 1995 to 2007



Source: Calculated from 1995, 1997 and 1999 October Household Surveys, 2001 and 2002 September Labour Force Surveys, and 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 General Household Surveys.

Quality and Equity

Educator Qualifications

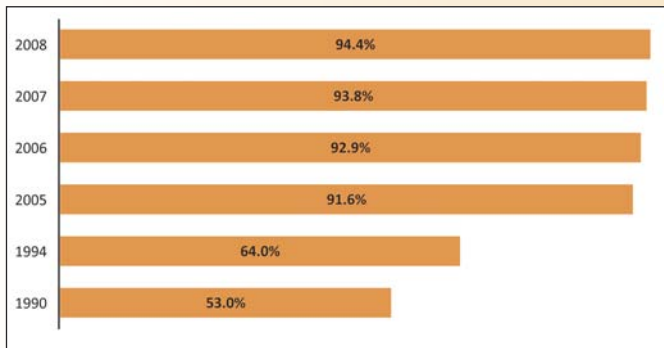
Teacher qualifications are central to education policy in South Africa. Educators in South Africa are considered to be appropriately qualified if they (a) have obtained a senior certificate and(b) have a minimum of three years appropriate training. An educator who has either not obtained a senior certificate, three years of training as an educator, or has received training outside of the field of education, is considered to be unqualified or under-qualified.

There has been a significant improvement in the qualifications of educators since 1990. In 1990, only 53% of educators were appropriately qualified, and by 2008 this had increased to 94.4% of educators (see Figure 7). This means that by 2008 only 5.6% of educators were unqualified or under-qualified.

According to the *Criteria for the Recognition and Evaluation of Qualifications for Employment in Education Based on the Norms and Standards for Educators* (DoE 2000:1), a minimum of REQV 13 (which equates to a minimum of three years professional training) is required in order to be registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE) as a professionally qualified educator. No person can be employed as an educator unless he/she is registered with the SACE. Pass rates in the SCE improved significantly: from 53% in 1991 to 65.2% in 2007. Between 1991 and

1999, the number of learners passing and passing with endorsement, as well as the general pass rate fluctuated. After 1999, the number of passes and the general pass rate improved substantially and there appears to be a correlation between the decrease in candidate numbers and the increase in the pass rate (Perry and Arends, 2004). Between 1999 and 2003, while candidate numbers decreased by 14%, the pass rate increased from 49% to 73% and the edorsement pass rate increased from 13% to 19%. After 2003, as candidate numbers increased, the general pass rate, as well as the pass rate with endorsement, decreased.

Figure 7: Percentage of qualified educators: 1990 to 2005



Source: 1990 data Arnott & Bot, 1993 1994 data from EduSource Data News No. 10/October 1995; 2005 data from Persal July 2005, 2006 data from Persal December 2006, 2007 data from Persal 2007, 2008 data from Persal 2008 January.

The fact that the cognitive performance of learners remains low, even though the number of qualified educators has increased, raises questions about the value of paper qualifications as a measure of the competency of teachers.

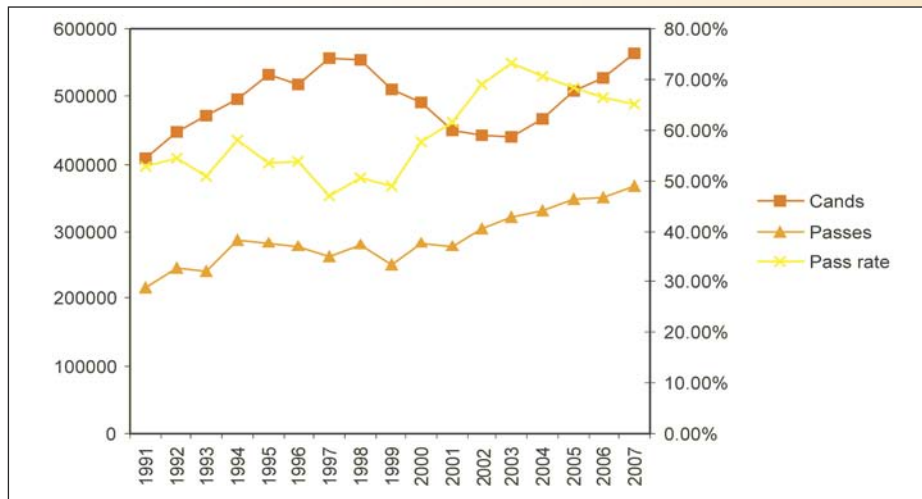
Learner Achievement

The main measure of learning achievement in South Africa is the national Senior Certificate Examination, which takes place at the end of Grade 12. This examination, which is written at the end of a learner's school career, has historically been the single mechanism for assessing the quality of the education system.

Figure 8 indicates the number of candidates writing and passing the SCE between 1991 and 2007. There has been a steady increase in the number of candidates writing the SCE during this period. In 1991, some 409 076 candidates wrote the SCE.

By 2007, this number had increased to 564 775, which represents an increase of 38%. The largest increase in candidates took place between 1991 and 1997, when an increase of 36% was recorded. After peaking at 555 267 in 1997, candidate numbers began to decline, dropping by 15% between 1997 and 2003. However, the number of candidates increased again between 2004 and 2007.

Figure 8: Total number of candidates and total number of passes in the Senior Certificate Examinations from 1991 to 2008



Source: Department of Education 2003b, 2005c and 2007; EduSource Data News No 24/March 1999; EduSource Data News no 32/March 2001; EduSource Data News No1/September 1992; EduSource Data News No 2/April 1993; and Information on 1993 examinations prepared by EduSource, The Education Foundation, 1/11/1994.

Quality and Equity

Systemic Evaluation

Since 1994, South Africa has carried out three national learner achievement assessments and participated in a number of international learner achievement studies. Both the internal studies and the international assessments involved the testing of a sample of learners in a selected grade, as opposed to the Senior Certificate Examination, which tests all learners who reach Grade 12 and sit for this examination. The international achievement studies enabled South Africa to benchmark its learner performance and thus its education system against other countries.

Table 4: Average percentage attained in the Grade 3 and Grade 6 systemic evaluations

| Assessment | Numeracy/Maths | Literacy/LOLT | Life Skills |
|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|-------------|
| Grade 3 systemic evaluation (2001) | 30% | 30% | 54% |
| Grade 3 systemic evaluation (2007) | 35% | 36% | N/A* |
| Grade 6 systemic evaluation (2004) | 27% | 38% | 41% |

*Not Applicable

The results for the Grades 3 and 6 systemic evaluations are indicated in Table 4. The results from all three assessments were poor. Although the results for the Grade 3 systemic evaluation showed an improvement of 6 percentage points in reading and 5% percentage points in numeracy between 2001 and 2007, they remained extremely low in 2007, with an average score of 36% in reading and 35% in numeracy (Department of Education, 2008b). The achievement rates of learners in the Grade 6-evaluation were even poorer than those in Grade 3, with learners obtaining an average of 38% for language (language of teaching and learning), 27% for Mathematics and 41% for Natural Sciences (Department of Education, 2005c).

International Assessments

Several international studies have targeted specific grades at both the primary and secondary school phase. South Africa's achievement in these areas has been poor. South Africa achieved just under the average SACMEQ score in both reading and Mathematics and ranked eighth in reading and ninth in Mathematics in 2000. South Africa achieved the lowest score in Mathematics in the 1999 MLA assessment of Grade 4 learners, as well as in both the TIMSS studies.

Quality and Equity

Table 5: Average percentage attained in international assessments

| Assessment | Numeracy/ Maths | Literacy/ LOLT | Life Skills | Science | SA ranking compared to other participants |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| MLA 1999 (Grade 4) | 30% | 48% | 47% | N/A* | 12/12 in mathematics, 9/12 in literacy, 10/12 in life skills |
| SACMEQ (Grade 6) | 486 | 492 | N/A* | N/A* | 8/14 in reading, 9/14 in mathematics |
| TIMSS 1998 (Grade 8) | 275 | N/A* | N/A* | 243 | Lowest score in both mathematics and science |
| TIMSS 2003 (Grade 8) | 264 | N/A* | N/A* | 244 | Lowest score in both mathematics and science |
| PIRLS 2006 (Grade 4) | N/A | 253 | N/A* | N/A* | Lowest score |

*Not Applicable

Because access to education is limited in some of these countries, large-scale educational studies tend to test a relative elite sample of the student population. In contrast, South African schools are more representative of the school-going population. As universal access to public education expands in developing countries, it remains to be seen how the performance of South African learners will compare. Nevertheless, it is clear that much more needs to be done to improve academic achievement.

The 2006 PIRLS study was the first in which South Africa participated. In South Africa, the assessment was carried out for Grades 4 and 5 learners (although the assessment was aimed at a Grade 4 level) in more than 400 schools in all of the 11 official languages.

Learners were assessed in the language of tuition in which they had been taught in Grades 1 to 3.

The rationale for including Grade 5 learners was to measure the progression in reading ability from Grade 4 to Grade 5, given the transition of learners in the languages of learning in Grade 4.

Consistent with previous assessments, South Africa's score was the lowest of the group of countries involved.

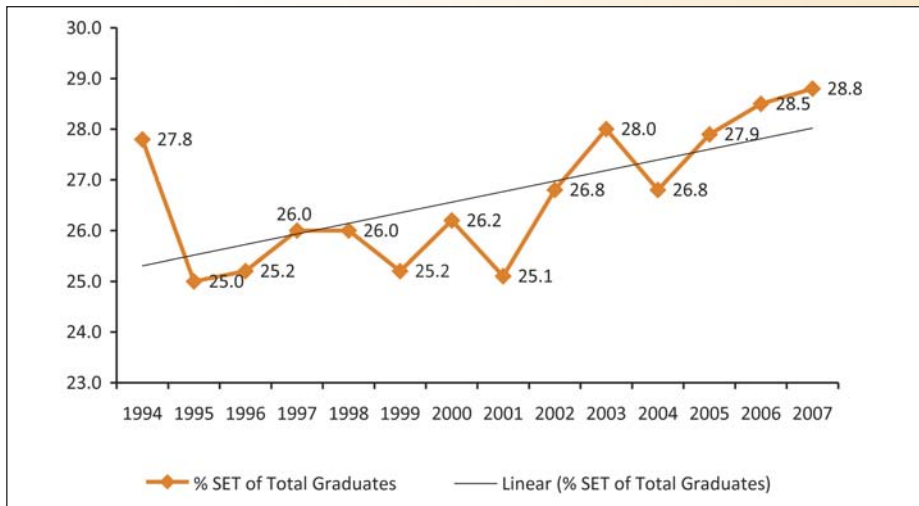
Graduation Rates in Science, Engineering (SET) and Technology in Higher Education

Figure 9 on next page represents the percentage of students enrolled in the Higher Education Sector who graduated in the fields of Science, Engineering and Technology (SET).

Graduates, particularly in the SET fields, contribute to a skills base that supports development. Government's Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA) states that, from 2007, the objective is to increase the number of engineering graduates by 1,000 each year.

Between 1994 and 2007, SET graduates constituted between 25% and 29% of total number of higher education graduates (see Figure 9). While this percentage fluctuated year-on-year during the 1990s and early 2000s, from 2001 there has been an upward trend in the proportion of these graduates.

Figure 9: Graduating Science, Engineering and Technical students as a percentage of total higher education graduates: 1994 to 2006



Source: Higher Education Management Information System, DoE (2008)

Youth and Adult Literacy

Owing to the expansion of the education system and improved access to schooling, there has been a substantial improvement in the literacy rates of young South Africans aged between 15 and 24. The functional literacy rate, which is based on the completion of Grade 7, increased steadily from 86% in 2002 to 90% in 2007 (Table 6).

This represents a 4% improvement in the functional literacy rate of the youth, within a time-span of four years. Conversely, the number of 15-to-24-year-olds, who are not functionally literate, has decreased steadily from 14% in 2002 to 10% in 2007.

In 1996, an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Directorate was established in the Department of Education. This Directorate is responsible for the development of an ABET policy framework and for planning and mobilising resources in support of the large-scale provisioning of ABET. In 2000, the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (Act 52, 2000) was promulgated, which provided the basis for the provision of adult education and training. In 2000, the DoE also launched the South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI), aimed at dramatically reducing illiteracy within five years (Ministerial Committee on Literacy, 2006: 19).

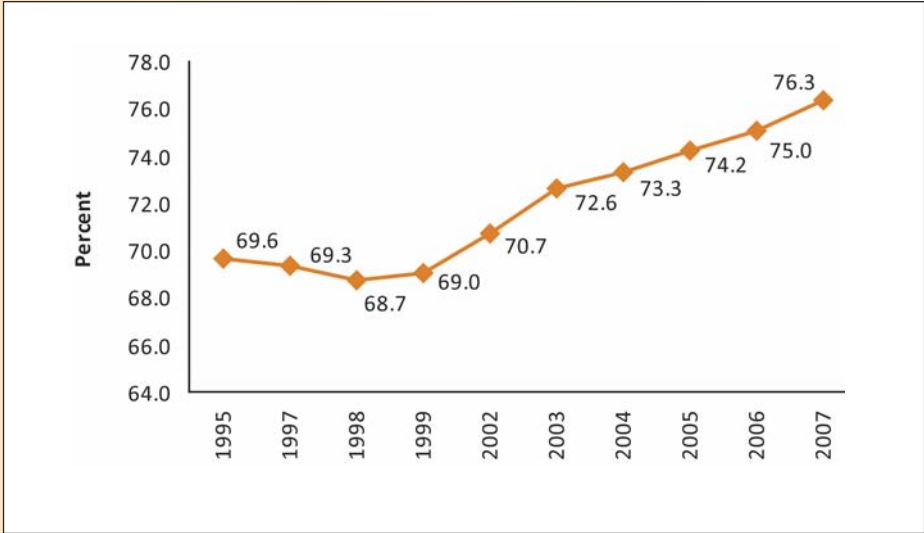
Table 6: Youth functional literacy rates: 2002 to 2007

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Male | 83.3 | 84.6 | 84.8 | 86.9 | 87.7 | 87.6 |
| Female | 88.5 | 89.7 | 90.7 | 91 | 91.6 | 92.4 |
| Total | 85.9 | 87.1 | 87.7 | 88.9 | 89.6 | 90.0 |
| GPI | 1.06 | 1.06 | 1.07 | 1.05 | 1.05 | 1.05 |

Source: General Household Survey, Statistics SA (2002 to 2007)

The literacy rate amongst adults aged 20 years and older, is substantially lower than for the 15-to-24-year age group. This indicates that younger people had greater access to basic education than their older counterparts. Using the definition of functional literacy given above, it may be concluded that, according to the General Household Survey, 76.3% of adults were literate in 2007, compared to 69.6% in 1995 (see Figure 10). South Africa's adult literacy rate was substantially higher than the average rate for sub-Saharan countries (59.7%) and equal to the average rate for developing countries as a whole (76.4%) (UNESCO, 2005, 286).

Figure 10: Adult literacy: 2002 to 2007



Public Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of Total Government Expenditure

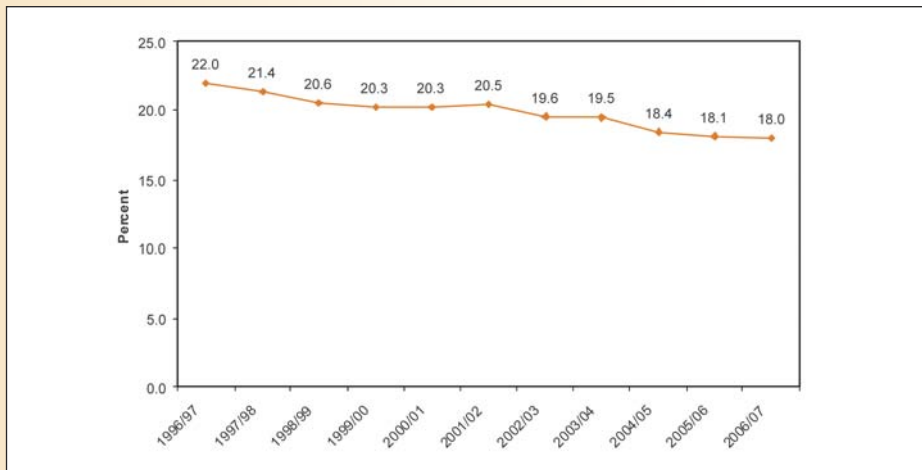
Figure 11 summarises trends in public education expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure. It indicates that education's share of government expenditure has declined from almost 22% in 1996/97, to 18% in 2006/07. The decline in government spending is mainly due to an increased focus on social development and greater spending on child support grants.

In spite of the decline, spending remains in line with education investment targets set out in a recent high-level group meeting on Education for All (UNESCO, 2008).

At this meeting, it was agreed that governments should set aside between 15% and 20% of public expenditure for education.

Quality and Equity

Figure 11: Public education expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure: 1996/97 to 2006/07



Note: The general government sector in SA comprises the national and provincial governments (including national and provincial extra-budgetary accounts and funds) and the non-trading services of local government.

Source: Statistics South Africa 2007, 2006a, 2005b, 2004c, 2003c, 2002b, 2001b, 1999b.

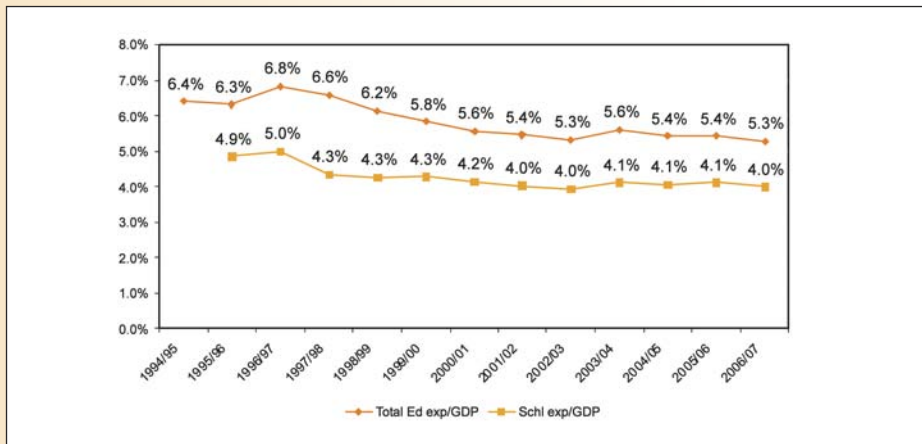
Public Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of GDP*

According to Figure 12, total public education expenditure, as a percentage of GDP, declined from 6.4% to 5.3% between 1994 and 2007.

Total education expenditure, as a percentage of GDP, peaked at 6.8%, in 1996, which was the result of the post-apartheid salary equalisation process and, to some extent, the equalisation of class sizes (Department of Education, 2006). After 1996, the proportion of GDP spent by the State on education dropped steadily, reaching 5.3% in 2006.

This decline can be attributed to several factors, including the rationalisation of educators that was implemented in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and the strong increase in expenditure in other public sectors, such as social welfare and local government (Department of Education, 2006).

Figure 12: Public total education and school expenditure over GDP: 1994 – 2007



Source: National Education Expenditure data from National Treasury, Budget Review Annexure B – 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, 2002, 2001, 2000; School Expenditure: data from National Treasury, Intergovernmental Fiscal Review 1999, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006; GDP data from National Treasury, Budget Review Annexure B – 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, 2002 and 2001

*Gross Domestic Product

Per Capita Expenditure

Between 2000 and 2007, the national per learner expenditure in public ordinary schools increased by 37% in real terms* (see Table 7). The real increases in the provincial per capita expenditure ranged from a high of 49% in KwaZulu-Natal and 47% in Mpumalanga, to a low of 11% in the Northern Cape. The variation in increases in per capita expenditure is partly a result of the equalisation of education expenditure that took place during the post-apartheid period.

This equalisation has resulted in the gap between the provinces, but with the highest and lowest per capita expenditure actually narrowing. In 2000 the gap between the province with the highest per capita expenditure in real terms (Northern Cape: R4 403) and that with the lowest per capita expenditure in real terms (KwaZulu-Natal: R2 820) was 56.2%. By 2007, the gap between the provinces with the highest and lowest per capita expenditure in real terms (the Northern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal respectively) had narrowed to 16.9%.

Quality and Equity

Table 7: Public per capita expenditure on public ordinary school education in real terms (based on 2000 prices) 2000 to 2007

| Province | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 |
|--------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| EC | 3019 | 3318 | 3300 | 3451 | 3539 | 3623 | 4054 | 4290 |
| FS | 3531 | 3595 | 3684 | 4050 | 4176 | 4531 | 4613 | 4636 |
| GP | 3986 | 3592 | 3798 | 3976 | 3916 | 3954 | 3925 | 4755 |
| KN | 2820 | 2851 | 2986 | 3191 | 3453 | 3755 | 3872 | 4199 |
| LP | 2980 | 3073 | 1593 | 3260 | 3490 | 3607 | 4318 | 4243 |
| MP | 3030 | 3068 | 3296 | 3582 | 3614 | 4153 | 3639 | 4460 |
| NW | 3594 | 3609 | 3621 | 3886 | 3951 | 4661 | 5469 | 4752 |
| NC | 4403 | 4322 | 4185 | 4184 | 4280 | 4621 | 3711 | 4906 |
| WC | 3800 | 3798 | 3881 | 4000 | 4052 | 4345 | 4387 | 4703 |
| Total | 3250 | 3282 | 3141 | 3565 | 3689 | 3937 | 4137 | 4439 |

Source: Department of Education, 2001b, 2002, 2003, 2004 2005a 2005b and 2006a, 2007; and Provincial Budget Statements

*Adjusted, based on 2000 prices.

This summary report outlines the progress made in the South African education system over the past decade. Perhaps the central finding is that, while South Africa's education system has achieved significant coverage, actual progression through the system and learning in schools have not kept pace. Education statistics in South Africa are somewhat controversial. There have been important and useful debates around issues related to the measurement of repetition, drop-out and survival rates in particular. The primary sources of data used in developing indicators are data officially reported from schools, and data from household surveys. The former are known to produce less optimistic scenarios, because they tend to under-report certain key data, and to produce unreliably high estimates of drop-out behaviour. The household survey data generally produces estimates that are statistically more stable year-on-year, and also more stable in terms of the internal structure of the data, and therefore seems considerably more reliable. On the other hand, the data reported from schools often contains some interesting detail that is sometimes hard to discern from household survey data. In compiling reports of this nature, sometimes the school-based data is of interest in understanding some of the dynamics of the enrolment patterns, but the household data is more useful for judging overall averages and trends. A challenge for future reports will be to improve the consistency and reliability of data in order to produce more sophisticated indicators of the status of education in South Africa.

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Department: Education
Sol Plaatje House
123 Schoeman Street
Pretoria
South Africa

Private Bag X895, Pretoria, 0001

Tel: +27 12 312 5911, Fax: +27 12 321 6770