

EDLS018

Educational Leadership in South Africa Lecture 2 Issues in education provision

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SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND PERFORMANCE continued ...

Figure 4: Distribution of school matric pass rates by previous education department, 2000

Source: SRN 2000, MR 2000 and Census 2001.

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Drop-out Rates

According to Crouch, compared to other middle-income countries, it would be entirely unreasonable to classify South Africa's dropout problem as 'huge.' Although there are some dropouts, South Africa does 'a little better than other middle income countries, and certainly better than its SADC neighbours.' He attributes the reason why dropouts do not show earlier than the last grades to the fact that the only 'meaningful measurement and accountability' in the system is faced at the end of Grade 12.

Calculations by Crouch based on the General Household Survey of 2003 indicate that, in the compulsory age range (between ages 7 and 14), enrolment is nearly complete (97%). After about age 15 more Coloured and Indian youth do drop out than White and African youth. Because of both under- and over-age enrolments, the enrolment or participation rate is actually in excess of 100%. There is now policy to control age at admission but it has not cleansed the system of over- and under-age enrolments yet. Figure 1 captures the enrolment ratios by age and race group in 2003.

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EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

Table 3 : Reasons for drop-outs and absenteeism as reported by teachers

Reason	% of females who have dropped out	% of males who have dropped out
Care of siblings	22	7
Helping parents with domestic work	41	22
Helpings parents with cultivation and livestock	21	41
Wage labour	4	9
Lack of parental interest in education	51	48
Lack of learner interest in education	30	42
Schooling is too expensive	7	8
Looking after sick family members	16	12
Pregnancy	29	

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EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

Table 3 : Reasons for drop-outs and absenteeism as reported by teachers (cont)

It seems that all the reasons can be linked to poverty. It also seems that wage labour and the cost of schooling are the reasons least often cited in this regard. Louw et al. make the same observation. The lack of parental and learner interest in education can perhaps be most strongly linked to poverty, parents and learners not appreciating or seeing the possibility of education leading to an improvement of their financial situation and living conditions as well as other factors such as parents' level of education and the structure and socio-economic circumstances of the family (Grant and Allman; Anderson and Lam; the Nelson Mandela Foundation). In addition, Coetzee points to lack of departmental interest in schools as a factor negatively influencing motivation and contributing to dropouts.

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EQUALITY IN EDUCATION

Crouch presents a table which contains self-reported reasons for dropping out by 16 to 18 year olds in 2003.

Reason	Male dropouts	Female dropouts
Too old/young	1%	0%
Has completed education	7%	5%
School too far away	4%	3%
No money for fees	42%	41%
Has to work (at home or job)	9%	4%
Education is useless or uninteresting	17%	7%
Illness	8%	5%
Pregnancy	0%	13%
Failed exams	7%	4%
Got married	1%	3
Family commitments	0%	10%
Other	3%	5%
Total	100%	100%
Percentage not attending	14%	19%



Table 4 : Self-reported reasons for dropping out, 16 – 18 age group, 2003.

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Strategies, policies and activities to counter dropouts

There is a multitude of strategies to counter poor learner performance in general and dropouts in particular. We will list some of them and will not elaborate on all of them since they are mostly self-explanatory:



- White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education provides that by 2010 all children entering Grade 1 must have participated in an accredited Reception Year Programme (Grade R) offered at primary schools or stand-alone community-based sites.
- A learner who failed Grade 11 in 2006 is allowed to continue with Grade 12 as a part-time learner in 2007 and will be able to obtain the senior certificate at the end of 2007. Learners who fail Grade 11 (the penultimate secondary school grade) do not necessarily need to repeat and become bigger dropout risks.
- Learners who failed Grade 11 in 2006 and repeat the Grade in 2007 will encounter two new subjects (mathematics literacy and life orientation) that they have not been taught before. Additional support is available to assist learners to cope with these two new subjects.



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Strategies, policies and activities to counter dropouts continued ...



- Learners can be failed only one per school phase and if that renders them too old to enrol in a new phase, special enabling measures that may allow them to still access education apply.
- The marks of learners who sit for examinations in a language which is not their mother tongue are adjusted upwards.
- There is now provision for mother tongue education up to Grade 3 to lay a more solid foundation for further grades where the learner will not necessarily choose mother tongue as the medium of education.
- There is a concerted drive to recruit more and better prospective teachers and to upgrade educators and the quality of leadership and governance in the system.



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Strategies, policies and activities to counter dropouts continued ...



- The improvement of school and classroom management
- The provision of additional curriculum support for educators, including formal in-service training programmes
- Learners attending Saturday classes and holiday schools
- Senior Certificate Intervention Programmes (SSIP). This programme targets Grade 10 to 12 learners from poorly performing schools (identified on the basis of results of the national Grade 12 examinations) and offers them extra classes in the afternoons, on Saturdays and during the winter and spring vacation.
- Role Model Intervention Programmes (RMIP). This strategy aims at improving the performance of "above average" learners to increase their chances to access higher education. Specific attention is given to girl learners.



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EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) AND INCLUSIVENESS

- 1.3% of the South Africa learner population is at ECD sites.
- This is one of the major reasons why the system is under-performing and learners are not performing well. They come out of deprived and poor families and ECD should compensate for poor circumstances and prepare them for school.
- Grade R (reception year) before grade1 will become compulsory soon (2010) but is not funded in terms of the education funding formula.
- The care and education offered to pre-schoolers is generally not well regulated and is not very effective and is often given by grandparents, aunts and uncles and even other siblings.





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CHALLENGES THAT CHILDREN (STUDENTS / SCHOLARS / LEARNERS) FACE: SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION, TRADITIONALISM

Nature and extent of sexual abuse in schools (Input by the Department for Education, 2002)

Although reliable data on the extent of sexual abuse in schools is hard to find, there is compelling evidence to indicate that both the nature and levels of abuse require immediate and urgent action from all of us.

From the information available to the Department it is obvious that sexual abuse takes various forms and is perpetrated by both learners and staff in schools. It ranges from sexual harassment, touching and verbal degradation to rape and other forms of sexual violence. This abuse takes place in dormitories, in empty classrooms, in hallways and in school toilets. And while all learners may be victims to abuse, girls and disabled learners are particularly vulnerable.





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Nature and extent of sexual abuse in schools (Input by the Department for Education, 2002) continued ...

A recent study sponsored by UNICEF entitled A Study of School Response to Violence and Harassment of Girls shows that sexual abuse is not limited to 'dysfunctional' schools but cuts across society. It is found in former Model C schools as well as in schools in poor communities. The report also captures the very real fear with which many of our children go through school.

There is gross underreporting of incidents of sexual abuse for a range of reasons:

- Many learners find it difficult to speak out for fear of the stigma that may be attached to them
- Fear of not being believed





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Nature and extent of sexual abuse in schools (Input by the Department for Education, 2002) continued

There is gross underreporting of incidents of sexual abuse for a range of reasons (continued):

- Fear of being blamed for the abuse
- Where a teacher is the abuser, the power relations often intimidate learners into silence.
- Learners who abuse others are also often school bullies, and again victims are intimidated into not reporting.
- The inability of most learners to talk about sexual matters with adults, for cultural or other reasons.





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Nature and extent of sexual abuse in schools (Input by the Department for Education, 2002) continued ...

There is a tendency by many schools to either fail to acknowledge or play down incidents of sexual abuse for fear of tarnishing the 'reputation' of the school.

There is confusion amongst some in our school communities about what is socially acceptable, unacceptable and criminal both in relation to abuse and to sexual harassment.

- For decades society has condoned and in some cases even encouraged relationships between teachers and school children. Cases of these 'inappropriate' relations between learners and teachers are therefore fairly common and are never reported as abuse, unless something goes wrong with the relationship.
- There is no common understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment.



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Nature and extent of sexual abuse in schools (Input by the Department for Education, 2002) continued ...



- For example: Some parents see girls falling pregnant as a way of getting money from a social grant.
- Some parents are happy if teachers have sexual relationships with their daughters as these teachers generally take care of the girls.
- Girls sometimes abuse boys and teachers calling them "Ministers of Finance" and "Ministers of Education" if they give them money for sexual favours and make them pass examinations respectively.
- Although the Code of Conduct of the South African Council for Educators makes provisions for sanctioning teachers who have sexual relationships with learners, very little seems to be done in this regard.



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Nature and extent of sexual abuse in schools (Input by the Department for Education, 2002) continued ...

- Some traditional communities are very paternalistic and respect for women and girl children is not common. Some men believe that having sex with a virgin can cure HIV Aids and some initiation schools require boys who have been circumcised at the school soon after the circumcision to have sexual relations with girls who are not their regular girl friends.
- The Human Rights Watch found that it was possible that one in three South African girls will before the age of fifteen or sixteen be sexually molested by either a fellow learner or a teacher.

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SUMMARY

In this Report we set out to show that -

- race or associated factors still constitute a major determinant of differential matriculation pass rates, complemented by economic status.
- resources are not the major determinant of the systematically poorer performance of black schools.
 - even the large shifts in school level resources still leave mainly black schools performing much worse than white schools.
 - on their own, further educational resource shifts may have a limited effect in improving educational outcomes. Particularly in rural areas as a result of-
 - socio-economic status
 - the associated educational status of parents
 - good teachers harder to come by.

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Summary (cont)

- Greater resource inputs alone cannot much improve this situation unless accompanied by a fundamental reorganisation in how schools function.
- The Republic of South Africa is one, sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values:
 - Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms.
 - Non-racialism and non-sexism.
- There is no need to discuss individual grounds of discrimination in education as such, since the Bill of Rights contained in the Constitution of the RSA, 1996 and related legislation such as the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, 4 of 2000 (the "Equality Act") dealing, *inter alia*, with the prohibition of unfair discrimination, apply equally to education. Similarly, Section 36 of the Constitution dealing with the limitation of rights applies to education and the principle of the prohibition of unfair discrimination.

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