



SCHOOL SAFETY IN SOUTH AFRICA

In the pursuit of a safe and secure learning environment: The extent of the safety crisis and the interventions in place to reduce it

Presentation Outline

- Equal Education: Who We Are
- Safety and Violence: The Social Context
- The 2012 National School Violence Study
- Case Study: Equal Education's Western Cape Safety Audit
- The National School Safety Framework
- Conclusion

Who We Are

- Equal Education (EE) is a membership-based, democratic movement of learners, parents, teachers and community members. We work towards achieving quality and equality in the South African education system.
- EE is led by high school youth whose lived realities form the basis of our campaigns- this is how campaign mandates are informed.
- EE also engages with parents in organised branches, teachers and teacher unions.
- Our campaigns focus on issues that are both local and systemic**

Who We Are

EE's provincial campaigns and their relation to school safety

Eastern Cape:
Government's compliance with
the Regulations Relating to
Minimum Uniform Norms and
Standards for School
Infrastructure

Gauteng:
Sanitation Campaign

Limpopo:
School Infrastructure

KwaZulu-Natal
Scholar Transport

Western Cape:
Safety

Safety and Violence: The Social Context

- ❑ Schools are directly and indirectly affected by the communities in which they are situated, and they often reflect the characteristics of these communities.
- ❑ Education outcomes are negatively affected by, amongst other factors, high levels of violence in school communities.
- ❑ Criminal activity in schools is dependent on broader social and systemic factors, such as poverty and unemployment.
- ❑ Schools that are not effectively managed or governed are found to have higher incidents of crime and violence.
- ❑ A blanket solution cannot be adopted when developing approaches to reducing structural violence across schools in South Africa, differing contexts must be considered. E.g. Bulletproof windows in Hanover Park vs adequate fencing in Khayelitsha.

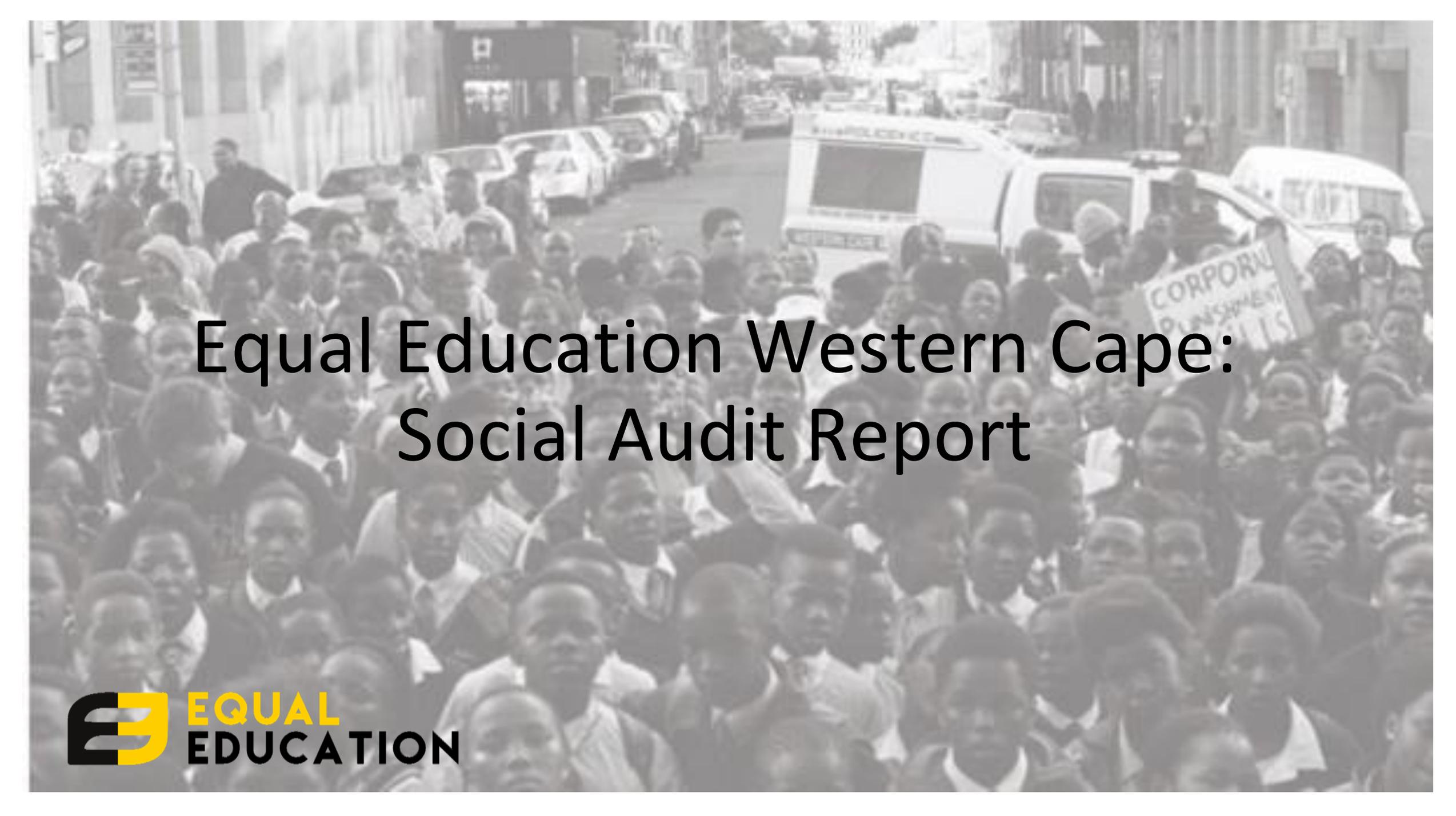
The National School Violence Studies

- The 2012 National School Violence Study (NSVS) by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) explored four specific types of violence among secondary school learners occurring within the school grounds.

- The four types of violence identified were:
 - experiences of threats of violence
 - assault,
 - sexual assault
 - robbery

- The FS and WC are the provinces with the highest frequency of incidents across all the crime categories assessed in both 2008 and 2012.

- Violence was significantly more prevalent in schools located in urban areas.



Equal Education Western Cape: Social Audit Report

EE Western Cape: Social Audit Report

- A lack of security at and on the way to and from school are realities for an overwhelming number of learners in schools across the Western Cape.
- In an effort to understand the nature and complexity of these problems and building on previous research, EE Western Cape undertook a social audit between September and November 2015.
- A trained team of auditors audited 244 schools serving 217,388 learners.

EE Western Cape Social Audit: Key Safety Findings

- ❑ Less than half (47%) of schools have a full-time security guard.
- ❑ Corporal punishment takes place at 83% of schools in the sample.
- ❑ 4 out of 5 learners report that teachers use sticks, batons, pipes, and other objects to hit them.
- ❑ While 98% of schools were fenced, 42% of schools have holes in their fences.
- ❑ Learners reported incidences of sexual assault at 16% of schools in the sample.

Western Cape School Safety Interventions: The Safe Schools Programme

- In tackling school safety issues in the province, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has a provincial education Safe Schools Programme (SSP).
- The SSP is intended to undertake a number of activities to create safe schools which includes, addressing physical infrastructure related to proper fencing, alarm systems, and burglar proofing.
- The SSP also issues guidelines for schools and district education departments on how to develop and implement safety regulations outlined in national policies and legal frameworks.

Western Cape School Safety Interventions: The Safe Schools Programme

- The SSP has a Safe Schools Call Centre which is intended to provide a contact point for learners experiencing any form of abuse.
- Despite reports from the WCED that the centre averages 10,000 to 14,000 calls a year, call centre statistics provided to Equal Education in November 2015, show that the call centre received only 4,009 calls in 2014/15, and 2,117 calls by the end of the second quarter in 2015/16.
- In April 2018, the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of SA (Naptosa)'s members expressed that schools do not report all incidents.

The National School Safety Framework

- The objective of the NSSF is to provide an all-inclusive strategy to guide the national department as well as the provincial education departments in a coordinated effort to address the violence occurring within schools.
- The comprehensive framework is aimed at addressing issues pertaining to school safety. It is intended to be a tool through which minimum standards for school safety can be established, implemented and monitored.
- It is also intended to be used as a tool for which schools, districts and provinces can be held accountable.
- In October 2017, the DBE reported that the training of NSSF master trainers was rolled out in all provinces and that school based NSSF training was currently being rolled out in districts.

Concerns on the NSSF

- The extent to which the intentions of the NSSF are realised depend on the degree to which it is implemented, monitored and evaluated over time.
- The NSSF can only be properly and effectively implemented in well-run and appropriately-resourced schools.
- The DBE and other government stakeholders identified in the NSSF must provide feedback on the measures taken to ensure that the NSSF is workable, and that it reaches all relevant stakeholders and its potential to address potential gaps in policy relating to safety.
- The nature of the framework as a guideline does necessarily allow for the responsible departments to account for their role with respect to school safety.

CONCLUSION

- School safety is a national crisis and requires urgent intervention of all stakeholders to ensure the safety and security of all learners.
- For interventions to be truly effective, it is necessary for them to be tailored to each given community/province within which schools are located, and the specific safety concerns within the schools must be considered.
- The NSSF as a guideline provides a critical, integrated approach to safety. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the framework should be prioritised.
- Outcomes of this process of monitoring and evaluation must be accessible to the public and civil society for transparency so that stakeholders can be held to account.