

# **48<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Education**

## **25-28 November 2008**

### **SOUTH AFRICA: NATIONAL REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

South Africa is nearing fifteen years since its first democratic election, marking the beginning of its transition to democracy. In this decade and a half, the country has been substantially transformed. The racist and oppressive system of apartheid has been replaced with a system where all are equal before the law and in which the government is elected by the majority in free elections. All enjoy political, social and economic rights set out in a negotiated and democratic Constitution. A Bill of Rights, entrenched in the Constitution, establishes freedom for all residents from discrimination on the basis of 'race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language [or] birth'. The Bill of Rights confers on all the right to life, to human dignity and security. It also guarantees freedom of expression, of assembly, belief, association, language and culture, and a range of other political and social rights and freedoms.

Among the rights conferred on South Africans by Chapter 2 of the Constitution (the Bill of Rights) are those associated with education. It gives all South Africans the right to basic education, including adult basic education. It also gives them the right to further education, although it implicitly acknowledges that the state's resources are not immediately sufficient to do this: the state, it declares, must make further education progressively available and accessible. Later legislation defines basic education as the equivalent of the first nine grades of school and further education the equivalent of grades ten to twelve. The Bill of Rights also gives South Africans the right to receive education in the official language(s) of their choice wherever this is reasonably practicable. Furthermore, anyone has the right to establish an independent educational institution as long as it does not discriminate on the grounds of race, is registered with the state, and maintains standards that are not inferior to those of comparable public institutions (Section 29).

Despite working in this favourable legal environment, the South African education system faces serious objective difficulties which have presented great challenges to meeting the high expectations of the population – and especially of the poor and disadvantaged. Though the current government has undertaken a large number of reforms to policies, practices and institutions, the burden of the past continues to weigh on the present and will inevitably take years to overcome completely. This is particularly true of the legacy of a racially divided and extremely unequal education structure, created systematically through years of white minority rule, particularly the abject underdevelopment of those sections of it catering to Africans. The struggle against racist education also created problems associated with the breakdown of a culture of learning and teaching which have not been completely overcome. The success of the education system will ultimately be judged by

the extent to which it erases the legacy of inequality and of the poor quality of education provided to the majority.

## **2. INCLUSIVITY AS A BASIC PRINCIPLE**

Inclusivity is one of the basic principles of the South African education system. An inclusive approach is necessary in order to meet the requirements of the Constitution by eliminating discrimination, providing universal access to basic education and progressively extending access to further education. Inclusivity is considered by the South African government as essential for promoting nation building and national development and overcoming the legacy of the apartheid past.

South African policy and legislation understands inclusion broadly and emphasises the need to address and ultimately to eliminate all forms of discrimination and disadvantage in the area of education. It aims to bring all disadvantaged groups into the mainstream of educational opportunities. These include all those against whom the Bill of Rights specifically forbids discrimination (see above). Education policies are also aimed at bringing into the mainstream of educational opportunities various vulnerable groups and individuals who are in danger of marginalisation and exclusion. These include orphans and vulnerable children, those infected or affected by HIV and AIDS and other serious diseases, those living in poverty, those in deprived rural and urban areas, adults who have missed out on educational opportunities and schoolgirls who fall pregnant.

Despite the strong and explicit constitutional and legislative commitment, however, problems of exclusion have not yet been fully overcome. This is the case because social forces other than the law play a powerful role in influencing patterns of social behaviour and opportunity. The most significant of these are the inherited patterns of poverty, racism, sexism and negative attitudes to disability in South African society. These patterns are deeply entrenched and often more resistant to change than initially expected. Nonetheless, the South African government, including the Department of Education (DoE), is determined to persevere in its efforts to build a just and inclusive society.

In education, inclusivity must be pursued through a wide range of strategies and in all sub-sectors of the education system. The focus of this report is on presenting a portrayal of the South African education system and its achievements and challenges with regard to making it more inclusive.

## **3. GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE OF EDUCATION**

South African education is governed by a system of co-operative governance, with power shared by the national and provincial governments. Schedule 4 of the Constitution states that 'education at all levels, excluding tertiary education,' is an area over which national and provincial governments have concurrent powers. This means that both national and provincial governments can legislate on any matter concerning non-tertiary education. Where there is a conflict between national and provincial legislation, national legislation prevails only if it is aimed at preventing unreasonable action by a province that is prejudicial to the maintenance of national or economic unity, the protection of a common market, the promotion of economic activities across provincial boundaries, the promotion

of equal opportunity or equal access to government services, or the protection of the environment.

The national government has sole competence over tertiary – that is, higher – education. In practice, tertiary education institutions have a high degree of autonomy and are controlled by their own councils, each of which are established by statute. Since the passage of the Further Education and Training Colleges Act, 2006, a similar level of autonomy is now enjoyed by further education colleges. Although schools do not have this same level of autonomy, the South African Schools Act, 1996, has devolved considerable powers to school governing bodies (SGBs).

The division of powers between the national and provincial governments is reflected in the way that education (and other functions) are financed. The overwhelming portion of income in the provincial budgets – on average over 95% – comes in the form of transfers from national government (Ajam, 2001:130-31). The transfers take two main forms.

By far the largest proportion of the transfer from the national to a provincial government takes the form of the province's 'equitable share' of nationally collected revenues. Once received, the equitable share grants (or 'bloc grants') may be allocated by the provinces in whatever way that they wish. The national Minister of Education (or anyone else in the national government) does not, therefore, have any control over the amount allocated to provincial departments of education, as these allocations are made by provincial legislatures.

A smaller source of provincial revenue – a little over 10% in 1998/1999 – comes in the form of conditional grants transferred from national government. These grants are allocated to provinces for specific purposes and may only be used for those purposes (for example, academic hospital services, the national school nutrition programme, and so on) (Ajam, 2001:133-4). On average, each province spends one-third of its annual budget on education (Wildeman, 2005:14).

Education is the largest category of government spending, at R105.5 billion for 2007/2008 (National Treasury, 2007:3,19). Of this, only R16 billion went to the direct budget of the national Department of Education and most of that (R13.3 billion) was for the universities. Total education expenditure, after modest growth from 1995 (R31.1 billion) to 2002 (R59.6 billion), grew rapidly to R105.5 billion in 2007. Despite this growth, though, real expenditure on education declined as a share of total government expenditure from 19.2% in 1996 to 18% in 2007. This is a reflection of a period of fairly high economic growth and revenue collection as well as the competing needs of other social services such as health, social welfare and housing.

Provincial expenditure for the financial years 2003/2004 to 2009/2010 is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Provincial education expenditure, 2003/2004 to 2009/2010 (in R millions)**

Province	2003/2004 outcome	2004/2005 outcome	2005/2006 outcome	2006/2007 prelim	2007/2008 estimated	2008/2009 estimated	2009/2010 estimated
Eastern Cape	10 308	10 654	11 523	12 873	14 726	16 616	17 681
Free State	4 087	4 400	4 916	5 346	5 692	6 331	7 013
Gauteng	9 539	9 835	10 406	11 623	14 543	15 967	17 131
KwaZulu-Natal	12 022	13 033	15 030	16 234	18 577	20 385	22 533
Limpopo	8 264	9 610	10 362	11 367	11 948	13 638	15 022
Mpumalanga	4 529	4 871	5 780	6 273	7 956	8 601	9 373
Northern Cape	1 305	1 397	1 563	1 643	2 267	2 535	2 771
North West	4 896	5 179	5 951	6 686	5 324	5 936	6 462
Western Cape	5 305	5 691	6 449	6 920	7 685	8 497	9 341
<b>Total</b>	<b>60 255</b>	<b>64 670</b>	<b>71 980</b>	<b>78 965</b>	<b>88 718</b>	<b>98 506</b>	<b>107 327</b>

Note: These figures include the National School Nutrition Programme (funded by conditional grant).

#### 4. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

The largest section of the education system is the *schools* which provide a general academic education from Grade 1 to Grade 12 for children aged between 6 and 18 years, which includes nine years of compulsory education. Grades 1 to 9 are part of the general education and training (GET) band of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), while Grades 10 to 12 fall under the further education and training (FET) band. Most schooling is provided in public schools, although a small independent schools sector also exists; the latter caters for under 3% of all learners. The schools, both public and independent, accounted for 88.4% of learners in all educational institutions in 2006.

*Early childhood education*, or early childhood development (ECD), for pre-school children is provided by a mix of public schools, non-profit organisations and private sector for-profit institutions. *Vocational and vocationally-oriented further education and training* is provided for learners from the equivalent of Grade 10 and takes place in both public and private FET colleges. This sector offers mainly vocationally oriented courses. *Adult education* is offered by both public and private providers and includes both adult basic education as well as workplace skills training. *Higher education* takes place in public universities as well as private higher education institutions – mainly specialised career-oriented colleges. Each of these sub-sectors is discussed in more detail below.

The National Qualifications Framework has undergone substantial revisions in the recent past. The review of the NQF which was started in 2001 was finally completed in 2008. This led to a National Qualifications Framework Bill which was passed by the National Assembly in August 2008 and expected to become law later in 2008. The NQF Bill requires consequential amendments to the Higher Education Act, 1997, the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, 2001, and the Skills Development Act, 1998. It was expected that these would be passed before the end of 2008.

The NQF Act radically simplifies the NQF. It does this by rationalising the many sub-structures of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) which could design

standards and qualifications and undertake quality assurance. The result of this was that NQF processes were complicated by the proliferation of sub-structures with overlapping mandates. The Bill now gives the responsibility for implementing the NQF to only three sectoral Quality Councils, which will act in close co-operation with each other and with SAQA. These are:

- \* Umalusi. Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training;
- \* Council on Higher Education (CHE);
- \* Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

The first two of these Councils are existing statutory bodies with original powers and responsibilities under their founding Acts; they are accountable directly to the Minister of Education. The sectors they are responsible for consist of formal education institutions (schools, adult education centres, FET colleges and higher education institutions). The QCTO is to be established by the Skills Development Amendment Bill under the Minister of Labour; it will be responsible for education and training in and for the workplace.

The functions of the Quality Councils will include, *inter alia*, to:

- \* Advise the Ministers of Education and Labour respectively on their areas of jurisdiction.
- \* Define the structure and nature of national qualifications and recommend the criteria for national qualifications, unit standards (and modules) to the respective Ministers for approval as policy.
- \* Submit to SAQA qualifications, unit standards or modules that meet the relevant national criteria for registration on the NQF.
- \* Undertake responsibility for the quality assurance of qualifications, learning achievements, providers or workplace learning sites and quality promotion within its scope.
- \* Track, monitor and report on the effectiveness and impact of learning interventions.

## **5. SUB-SECTORS**

### **5.1 Early Childhood Education**

The 2001 White Paper on early childhood development defined ECD as the provision of physical, emotional, social, spiritual and moral development for children aged between zero and nine years. Provision is consequently a responsibility of a number of sectors in society, including various government departments – Education, Social Development and Health – as well as the community (DoE, 2001a:5).

The White Paper on Early Childhood Education established a target of universal access to ECD, and specifically to a pre-Grade 1 reception year (Grade R) by 2010 (DoE, 2001a). Progress has been made in improving access to ECD provision, especially for children aged five (the appropriate age for Grade R). ECD is provided by both the state (at ECD centres, mainly located at primary schools) and by non-state actors – mainly communities

and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) – in stand-alone sites. The data from 2001 to 2005 suggest that there has been a steady increase in the number of Grade R children in school-based ECD sites from 241 525 to 441 587 (DoE, 2001a, 2008a).

Nevertheless, challenges remain with regard to the implementation of the ECD roll-out plan. The Minister of Education, during her speech at the tabling of the Departmental Budget Vote for the 2007/2008 Financial Year, stated:

*Our performance in the ECD domain is one of our poor performance areas. We need to speed up implementation of the integrated plan and consider a sharper review of the current allocation of responsibility for this important part of education. We will strengthen our collaboration with health and social development in an effort to give effect to wider access to quality ECD opportunities (Pandor, 2007).*

The Department of Education's strategic goal is to enrol 950 000 learners in publicly funded (and poverty targeted) Grade R places by 2010, mainly in public schools. It is expected that by the year 2010, 85% of all five-year-old children will be reached, largely by school-based Grade R provisioning. The remaining 15% will be attending community or NGO-provided Grade R programmes so that all learners entering Grade 1 will have participated in an accredited Reception Year programme.

With regard to children below five years of age, the role of the national and provincial departments of education is mainly to promote quality ECD programmes within the NGO and private sector, and there are no plans to bring such provision into the formal sector. The policy levers to improve non-state ECD are mainly the allocation of grants and subsidies and the holding of recipients to account for spending. Progress has been made in increasing provision for children under five. An announcement by the Directors General of the Social Cluster departments (Education, Health and Social Development) in November 2007 revealed that 314 000 children from poor households had received subsidies in the 2006/2007 financial year, and that an additional 435 000 had received subsidies in 2007/2008 ([www.pmg.org.za/briefings/briefings.php?id=387](http://www.pmg.org.za/briefings/briefings.php?id=387)).

## **5.2 Schooling**

As can be seen from Table 2, in 2006 there were 26 269 schools of which 25 139 (95.7%) were public schools; the rest (1 130 or 4.3%) were independent schools. In the same year, the public school system accounted for 11 941 822 (97.1%) of the 12 293 785 learners, and 365 567 (94.7%) of the 385 860 educators. Between 2001 and 2006 there was a net increase of 4.7% in the number of learners and an increase of 8.9% in the number of educators. The number of schools decreased by 4.3% for the same period, probably due to the consolidation of small schools and demographic shifts resulting from the movement of learners to urban areas where schools tend to be larger (DoE, 2008a).

The number of independent schools grew modestly from 971 to 1 130 schools in 2000 (DoE, 2002). Growth is also reflected in learner numbers: from 2001 to 2006 the percentage of independent learners in ordinary schools increased from 2.1% to 2.9%. The distribution of the independent schools among provinces is uneven, ranging from 16.3% of schools in Gauteng, the most urbanised province, 1.8% of schools in Eastern Cape (DoE, 2008a).

**Table 2**  
**Learners, educators and institutions in the schooling system in 2006**

<b>Types of Institution</b>		<b>Learners</b>	<b>Educators</b>	<b>Institutions</b>
Public Schools	Primary	6 202 372	186 075	15 295
	Secondary	3 766 520	120 529	5 295
	Combined	1 608 557	47 020	3 509
	Intermediate	364 373	11 943	869
	<b>Total (Public)</b>	<b>11 941 822</b>	<b>365 567</b>	<b>25 139</b>
Independent Schools	Primary	87 158	4 314	381
	Secondary	54 796	2 973	171
	Combined	206 717	12 853	559
	Intermediate	3 292	153	19
	<b>Total (Independent)</b>	<b>351 963</b>	<b>20 293</b>	<b>1 130</b>
<b>Total (Public and Independent Schools)</b>		<b>12 293 785</b>	<b>385 860</b>	<b>26 269</b>

Source: Department of Education, 2008a

In 2006 the learner-to-educator ratio for the country's ordinary schools (both public and independent) was 31.9 to 1. It ranged from 29.3 to 1 in Free State to 34.1 to 1 in Mpumalanga (DoE, 2008a). The Gross Enrolment Ratio for female learners was 98% and for male learners it was 97% in 2006, compared to 97% and 96% respectively in 2001. The statistics for the total number of learners in ordinary schools in 2006 reflect that females accounted for 49.9% and males for 50.1%. There were more males in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of the GET band, but in the FET band (Grades 10-12) females were in the majority, accounting for 53.1% of learners (see Table 3). Of the teachers, 70% were female.

**Table 3**  
**Percentage of school learners by phase and gender in 2006**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Foundation Phase of GET Band (Grades 1 to 3)</b>	<b>Intermediate Phase of GET Band (Grades 4 to 6)</b>	<b>Senior Phase of GET Band (Grades 7-9)</b>	<b>FET Band Grades (10-12)</b>
Female	48.5%	49.2%	49.8%	53.1%
Male	51.5%	50.8%	50.2%	46.9%

Source: Department of Education, 2008a

In order to ensure the development of the education system and to expand its inclusivity, the Department of Education has undertaken a wide range of initiatives over the past few years. These have been aimed both at improving access to education and improving the quality of the education, especially for the poor and disadvantaged. Some of the most important are outlined below:

### *School fees policy*

The South African Schools Act of 1996 provides for school governing bodies of public schools to charge school fees. The original rationale for this was that allowing parents in wealthier neighbourhoods – that is, middle-class parents – to pay fees would bring resources into public schools. This in turn, it was thought, would allow more state resources to be applied to the schools serving poor children. In addition, the state wanted to keep the middle classes within the public school system, and it was clear that equalising funding across the school system and then tilting it in favour of the poor would result in the lowering of educational quality at the country's best-performing schools – that is, those previously serving the white community only. The state therefore adopted a strategy of allowing elected school governing bodies to charge fees while at the same time de-racialising the schools and requiring them to use means-testing to give fee exemptions to parents who not could afford them.

While this policy has largely succeeded in keeping the middle classes in the public school system, it did not solve the problems facing poor parents. Schools in poorer neighbourhoods still felt that their resource allocations from the state were inadequate and most opted to supplement them by charging fees. Although these fees were generally very low, they still caused hardship and resentment among poor parents. With a decade of economic growth having somewhat eased the burden on the fiscus, the Minister of Education has been in a position to declare as 'no-fee schools' all schools in the lowest two quintiles (i.e. schools with the poorest 40% of learners as measured by the socio-economic conditions of surrounding communities). This policy has been widely welcomed and will be extended to schools in the third quintile in 2009. In addition, new regulations regarding exemption from school fees have strengthened the obligations of fee-paying schools to grant fee exemptions to parents who qualify (DoE, 2006a,b).

### *Measures aimed at improving rural schooling*

In order to address the inequalities between urban and rural schooling and to create a better understanding of the challenges facing schools in rural areas, the Minister of Education appointed a Ministerial Committee on Rural Education. The Committee's report was presented to the Minister in June 2005 (DoE, 2005c). Acting upon the Committee's recommendations to enhance schooling in rural areas, the Department of Education has established a Directorate of Rural Education to facilitate the process. A National Framework for Quality Education in Rural Areas has been formulated and focuses on: improving the quality of teaching and learning in rural and farm schools; attracting and retaining learners; planning, restructuring and improving infrastructure; building effective school governance and management; advocacy; and promoting sustainable partnerships to implement programmes directed at broader rural development and community participation (DoE, 2006g). The Directorate has developed guidelines on rationalisation of schools in rural areas and the signing of agreements between provincial education departments and land-owners (mainly commercial farmers) regarding public schools on private property. The latter incorporates procedures pertaining to the expropriation of land, development of multi-grade teachers and a hostel strategy.

Several provinces have embarked on a strategy of building hostels to alleviate the problems of transport and of small, scattered schools. The learners receive board and

lodging and, in some cases, are clothed for free. They go home only once a quarter owing to the cost factor, but reports from provincial education departments suggest that most learners in hostels appear to be content. The hostel strategy is envisaged to also serve orphans and vulnerable children. It is, however, costly and this is a limiting factor in its expansion.

#### *Transport costs*

Access to education for all suggests that learners who live far from schools should be able to get to school without great difficulty. This is still not always the case in South Africa, especially in rural areas and other areas where public transport is unavailable. For some learners who walk to school, distances are so long that they often arrive at school late and tired (and often hungry) and are consequently unable to concentrate fully on their schoolwork. Some areas are unsafe and learners may be exposed to possible attack (including sexual harassment) or injury as a result of traffic accidents. Special transport difficulties are faced by disabled learners (DoE, 2006c).

While policy and legislation broadly support the provision of learner transport, a detailed National Learner Transport Policy has yet to be developed. Currently, it is up to the provincial and municipal transport authorities to develop implementation strategies for learner transport based on the existing broad national policy statements.

A 2006 Department of Education study of learner transport schemes found that the situation was less than satisfactory in that transport was not available to all who needed it, and that there was widely varying access to transport for learners in different provinces. Eight of the nine provinces had learner transport schemes and only five provinces had formal learner transport policies. Annual provincial budgets for learner transport ranged from R1 million to R107 million. The study found that over 193 250 learners in the country benefited from transport schemes. Modes of transport provided by provincial education departments were mainly buses and mini-buses but also included schemes using bicycles, cars and donkey carts. The study suggests that where they did exist, transport schemes played an important role in assisting learners to access schools and education in general (DoE, 2006c).

As a result of this situation, the Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Transport, has initiated a process to develop a national learner transport policy. This policy will seek to develop a uniform learner transport framework across provinces and the different and unequal subsidy schemes that prevail in the various provinces. The policy will serve as a guide for all spheres of government in the provision of learner transport (DoE, 2008b).

#### *National School Nutrition Programme*

The Department of Education believes that access to good nutrition for primary schoolchildren is crucial in ensuring universal primary education. The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) is an important means of ensuring that the impact of poverty on children is mitigated. It not only promotes good health by addressing certain micronutrient deficiencies, but also has an impact on learning by enhancing children's active learning capacity, alleviating short-term hunger and providing an incentive for children to attend school regularly.

The NSNP is funded by a conditional grant distributed by the national government to the provincial departments of education. In terms of the Division of Revenue Act 2008/2009, the programme has a budget of approximately R1.6 billion. The programme is not universal but is targeted at schools with the poorest learners. It provides meals to about six million learners in approximately 18 000 schools nationally. The number of learners benefiting from the project is well above the Department's target of 60% of the poorest learners (DoE 2007a).

The NSNP has contributed towards local economic development and job creation. A total of 1 709 service providers, 572 community-based small, micro and medium enterprises, and 1 059 community-based co-operatives are contracted throughout the nine provinces. Schools each employ at least two food handlers per 200 learners, amounting to 39 417 people.

All schools participating in the National School Nutrition Programme are encouraged to keep a vegetable garden, no matter how small it is. At the end of the 2006 school year, 7 429 vegetable gardens had been established to supplement the school meals provided in the programme (DoE 2007a). Provincial departments of education work in close co-operation with Departments of Agriculture, Water Affairs and Forestry in training school communities to establish and manage vegetable gardens as well as to plant fruit trees. Nutrition education booklets and charts have been produced to assist in promoting health and hygiene among learners.

#### *Health measures at schools*

HIV and AIDS is a major problem affecting the safety, security and well-being of both learners and educators in South Africa. HIV infection is significant among school-age children: among children aged two to eighteen, HIV prevalence is around 5.4% (Motala *et al.*, 2007). School attendance may be disrupted by illness, both among children themselves and their care-givers. Not only those personally infected by HIV feel its impact, as many children are AIDS-orphans and many more have been affected by the suffering or death of family members and friends. Many children who are not personally infected find themselves as heads of households or are required to miss school in order to care for parents or siblings.

The impact of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases like tuberculosis and cholera can be partially judged in terms of the increasing number of orphans. In 2003, 17.4% of children (over 2 million children, predominantly African) had lost one parent, while 3% (371 000 children) had lost both parents (DoE, 2007d).

According to a 2004 study, 12.7% of teachers were HIV-positive, with the highest HIV incidence found among younger (ages 25-34), African, non-degree-holding, females in rural areas, especially KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga (Shisana *et al.*, 2005: Chapter 4). This of course has an impact on teacher absenteeism and ultimately the death of teachers in the prime of their careers.

HIV/AIDS is addressed extensively in the formal school curriculum as part of the subject Life Orientation. The percentage of schools that provided life-skills-based HIV and AIDS education in the last academic year increased from 96% in 2006 to an estimated 100% in

2007 (RSA, 2008b) In addition, peer education programmes are used to educate youth about HIV and AIDS prevention, care and treatment and to promote a caring attitude towards people living with AIDS. In addition, training materials and courses have been provided for teachers, school managers and parents.

Although HIV/AIDS remains an enormous problem, there are signs that some progress has been made among the youth. Results of national HIV surveys among pregnant women show a decline from 15.9% in 2005 to 13.5% in 2006 among women younger than 20 years of age, as well as from 30.6% in 2005 to 28.0% in 2006 among those between 20 and 24 years of age. The preliminary results of the 2007 HIV Antenatal Survey show that HIV prevalence decreased from 29.2% in 2006 to 28.0% in 2007. The decrease is mainly among teenagers. The results show HIV prevalence in the 15-19 year age group dropping from 13.7% in 2006 to 12.9% in 2007. In the 25-29 year age group, prevalence decreased from 38.7% in 2006 to 37.9% in 2007. The rate in the 20-24 year group was stable between 2006 and 2007. The Minister of Health believes that these figures suggest a trend of decreasing prevalence overall. In the younger age cohort, she believes that this is because of intensive prevention campaigns targeted at young people which seem to be making a difference (Minister of Health, 2008).

#### *Safety measures at schools*

In order to combat an apparent increase in the incidence of crime at schools, the Department of Education has undertaken various initiatives. Training materials for educators have been developed on the prevention of drug abuse, and training sessions have been held.

In addition, guidelines for drug testing and searches in schools have been developed in response to evidence that drug use by learners has become a serious problem in parts of the school system. The Guidelines seek to address prevention, awareness, early intervention and the management of specific incidents. They are used as the basis for developing a drug management strategy for each school. The Guidelines provide guidance for educating and assisting learners who are not involved in drug abuse as well as intervention and support for those who need help. They encourage a holistic approach to counteracting the drug problem, involving the community, traditional healers, non-governmental organisations, the South African Police Service and the Departments of Health, Social Development and Justice.

New *Guidelines on Drug Testing and Searches at Schools* emphasise that searches of learners must be implemented with due regard to human dignity, privacy and the right to property of the learners concerned. The focus is on identifying drug abuse problems, preventing their spread and ensuring that learners who are victims of a dependency are assisted. The overall purpose of the drug abuse policy is to establish a healthy, disciplined and purposeful school environment dedicated to quality education as well as to assist individual learners.

The reduction and prevention of violence at schools is also the subject of specific interventions. The Department of Education has produced and distributed to all schools *Opening our Eyes*, a manual for addressing gender-based violence in schools. Drug abuse, violence and other issues associated with crime, safety and security are also addressed in the formal curriculum.

### *Specific interventions to promote gender equity*

The government has introduced a number of innovative programmes that seek to improve women's vocational choices, with special attention given to accelerating their participation in science and technology. The 2001 National Census revealed that for the population twenty years and older there were twice as many women than men in the social sciences, while there were ten times as many men than women in the engineering and the natural sciences.

In response, the Girls Education Movement (GEM) was initiated to encourage girls to study science and technology. The 'techno-girl programme' was initiated with national and provincial departments of education providing career guidance and life skills support, particularly in mathematics and technology. The Boys Education Movement (BEM) was also established in schools to complement the GEM, as a vehicle to empower both girls and boys in curriculum and socially related skills. GEM was started in 2002 in Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and Eastern Cape provinces, and launched nationally in 2003.

*Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Violence and Harassment in Public Schools* have been developed by the Department of Education. These are intended to support schools and school communities in responding to cases of sexual harassment and sexual violence against learners. The guidelines suggest methods of identifying, intervening in and reporting such cases.

To mitigate the impact of psycho-social factors on gender-based violence, learner pregnancy and sexual harassment, the Department of Education continues to train peer educators as mentors and counsellors to support fellow learners. This is done through programmes such as the GEM and BEM clubs, and through those programmes offered in the Life Orientation Learning Programme in the National Curriculum.

The South African Schools Act prohibits discrimination against learners on the basis of pregnancy. Learners are educated about the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and about positive lifestyle choices through the formal curriculum. Peer education prevention and support programmes have also been developed by the Department of Education. A policy document, *Measures for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy*, provides support to educators to manage pregnancy in schools and to contribute to the reduction of girls dropping out of school.

### *Education for learners with special needs*

White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education defined learners with special education needs (LSEN) as not only those with physical, mental or neurological impairments but also those experiencing learning difficulties as a result of socio-economic deprivation (DoE, 2001b). The policy envisaged an inclusive education and training system, providing support within public ordinary schools for learners with mild to moderate disabilities. In addition, there are supposed to be approximately 500 converted primary schools ('full service schools') which will be phased in over a twenty-year period. These will provide for learners with moderate or severe disabilities while also acting as a resource for teachers and schools in the area. Professional support personnel are appointed to the school district and deployed from there, rather than being appointed to specific schools.

There are currently about 88 000 disabled learners in around 400 special schools. This amounts to about 0.64% of the learner population, ranging from 0.28% in Limpopo and Mpumalanga to 1.65% in Gauteng. (DoE, 2007d) The number of (disabled) learners with special education needs in public ordinary schools in 2006 and 2007 is much lower. Table 4 shows not only that the number of such learners is very low but that it declined from 18 253 in 2006 to 16 506 in 2007, and also that there are significantly higher numbers of male than female disabled learners in public ordinary schools.

**Table 4**  
**Number of learners with special needs in public ordinary schools in 2006 and 2007**

Schools	Gender	2006	2007
Independent	Female	166	148
	Male	178	230
	<b>Total</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>378</b>
Public	Female	6 766	6 242
	Male	11 143	9 886
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17 909</b>	<b>16 128</b>
Both	Female	6 932	6 390
	Male	11 321	10 116
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18 253</b>	<b>16 506</b>

Source: DoE (2007)

Clearly progress has not been as fast as may have been hoped for, and there must be significant numbers of disabled children out of school. This shows a disjuncture between policy and reality that the Department of Education needs to address urgently. A recent bid by the Department for additional funding for special needs education puts the case as follows:

*There is an urgent need to put funding of support for learners with disabilities and those experiencing barriers to learning, on a more sound and adequate footing. Currently there is too little support available for disabled learners and too few appropriate school places, whether in special schools or mainstream schools. Learners are also inappropriately accommodated in special schools because of absence of alternative support and models of provision. As a result of funding pressures a number of anomalies have also been developing, such as special schools reluctant to accept the most severely disabled or inappropriate mixes of learners with different types of disabilities in the same schools. In many special schools resourcing (facilities, equipment, educators and specialist and support staff and transport and hostel facilities) is also totally inadequate (DoE, nd).*

#### *Education quality*

A number of assessment studies in recent years have shown that the educational achievements of learners in South African schools is unacceptably poor. The Department of Education's systemic evaluations, conducted in Grade 3 (in 2001) and Grade 6 (in 2004) show very low levels of literacy and numeracy among learners. Scores for the Grade 3 learners averaged 68% for listening comprehension but only 39% for reading

comprehension and writing, 30% for numeracy, and 54% for life skills (DoE 2003). The achievement rates of learners in the Grade 6 evaluation were even poorer. Learners averaged 38% for language (the language of learning and teaching), 27% for mathematics and 41% for natural sciences (DoE 2005a). Four international studies confirm the poor performance of South African learners. These are the Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) Project, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), the Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) study and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). All show South African learners having exceptionally low levels of basic literacy and numeracy skills compared to learners in the other countries that participated. In addition, the past three years have shown no improvement in the pass rate in the senior certificate examinations for secondary school leavers (although there has been an increase in the total number of learners passing). The PIRLS study also shows that the range on scores among South Africa's children is far greater than the average, indicating high inequalities in learner performance.

One result of this situation is that the improvement of educational quality in schools – especially schools serving the poor – has become one of the most important drives of the Department of Education. A number of interventions have been developed to tackle the issue, and especially to target the foundational skills of early literacy and numeracy. The most important of these are:

- \* The Quality Improvement, Development Support and Upliftment Programme (QIDS UP) which provides support for the provision of resources to support learning and teaching, improved learner competencies in literacy and numeracy, improved management and leadership of schools, improved support for learning by district offices, and strengthened monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes. It is targeted at 3 500 low-performing primary schools serving 1.2 million learners in poor areas.

- \* The Foundations for Learning Campaign which, the Minister of Education said at its launch, 'is a call to schools and communities to focus on reading, writing and calculating'. The campaign sets out the government's expectations for teaching and learning in the years from Grade R (the pre-Grade 1 reception year) to Grade 6. It indicates and provides the resources needed for effective teaching and gives guidance to teachers, principals and district education officials on how to promote the literacy and numeracy skills. It also spells out the testing required to check that learners are reaching the required standards from year to year.

- \* The National Reading Strategy which is intended to promote reading across the curriculum, and to encourage reading for enjoyment. It focuses on support to schools, increasing access to books, providing support to teachers through provision of resources and techniques for inculcating a love for reading, scheduling time for reading within the school timetable, and developing reading skills in learners.

- \* The Dinaledi Schools project, which was established in 2002, is a strategy to promote mathematics, science and technology education. Originally there were 100 designated Dinaledi schools and this has since been steadily increased to the current number of 500 designated schools, mainly in rural and township areas, which are being groomed as centres of excellence in mathematics and science (DoE, 2007b).

In addition to the above, the Education Ministry has announced its intention to establish a

schools inspectorate – the National Education Evaluation Development Unit – to oversee the measurement and improvement of teacher performance. It has also announced plans to place greater emphasis on the provision of sufficient, high-quality textbooks in all schools, as well as to introduce better remuneration of and training for school principals and to deploy more trained district support and school support personnel (DoE, 2007a).

### *Curriculum development*

South Africa's major curriculum reform – first introduced for basic education in 1997 under the name *Curriculum 2005* and revised in 2002 – was finally in use throughout the entire twelve years of schooling in 2008. The last stage of implementation began with the introduction of the *National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 to 12* in 2006. For the first time, at the end of 2008, Grade 12 learners will write the new National Senior Certificate examinations. There will be a reduced number of subjects from which to choose – 29 instead of the previous 124 – and the cognitive demands are said to be higher than those for the previous provincial senior certificate examinations. Learners will have to take at least seven subjects which must include two official languages, mathematics (or mathematical literacy) and life orientation.

### *Schools infrastructure*

The national and provincial education departments have made progress in overcoming the backlogs in school infrastructure, although many challenges still remain. For schooling, infrastructural development has included building new schools, refurbishing existing schools and ensuring the expanded provision of services such as electricity, water, toilets and telecommunication connections to schools.

One of the most important developments has been the establishment of the National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS). The study which established NEIMS has provided a comprehensive database and technical assessment of all public schools, public ECD centres, public ELSEN centres, public adult basic education and training (ABET) centres and education offices operated by the departments of education in South Africa. It has provided a means to more effectively manage and monitor school infrastructure. NEIMS has superseded the School Register of Needs (developed first in 1996 and updated in 2000) which failed to provide adequate information to deal with continual changes in schooling and education provision.

The 2006 assessment of infrastructure showed that schools with no water supply on or near the site had decreased from 33% in 1996 to 28.8% in 2000 to 11.5% in 2006. Schools without toilets had decreased from 12.2% to 9.2% to 5.2% over the same period. Those with no source of electricity had been reduced very significantly from 57.1% to 44.6% to 16.1%. An even more impressive improvement has been the increase in the proportion of schools with telephone services: from 48.9% to 67.8% to 97.5%. This has been largely due to the rapid expansion of cellular telephone use in South Africa over the past decade: in 2006 only 46.1% of schools had landline access but another 51.4% had access to cellular phone service (DoE, 2007b).

However, with other forms of infrastructure, progress was less satisfactory. The percentage of schools with no computers for teaching and learning remained virtually unchanged (68.6% in 1996, 67% in 2000 and 67.9% in 2006). The same goes for the proportion of

schools with no library space (82.1%, 81.2 % and 79.3%). In 2006, 88.4% of schools had no functional laboratories. The security of school property remained poor with 41% of schools having no fencing or having a fence in poor condition (there are no comparative data from earlier years). Public ordinary schools with no wheelchair access and no appropriate toilet facilities for the disabled comprised 97% of all schools in 2006 (DoE, 2007b).

Although the building of new schools was slower than anticipated in the 2007/2008 financial year for various reasons, this was against the trend. Plans of provincial education departments show a projected growth of real average expenditure on school buildings of 13.6% per annum from 2003/2004 to 2009/2010.

### **5.3 Teacher Education**

A 2005 report on teacher shortages indicated that there were no quantitative shortages of teachers in the country. At the same time, the report indicated that 'attrition and turnover issues, largely related to HIV and AIDS and other factors could prove a challenge for the provision of quality teachers to the education system' (DoE, 2005b). Major challenges related to the geographic distribution of teachers and the quality of teachers, with rural areas experiencing both qualitative and quantitative shortages. There are also shortages related to specific learning areas, especially Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Languages.

During the period under review, ensuring an adequate supply of teachers has received major attention from government, especially following the findings that there are challenges around attrition and turnover, and the fact that only a small proportion of students in higher education institutions were studying in the field of education (DoE, 2005b). The Department's statistics point to a massive gap between the natural attrition rate (5-6% per annum, equal to approximately 20 000 teachers lost to the system annually) and the fact that only around 6 000 new teachers are graduating each year. Also, a survey of future plans for newly qualified teachers in South Africa indicated that only 65% were planning to teach in South Africa. Of the remainder, 28% were planning to teach abroad and 7.4% were not planning to pursue a teaching career (DoE, 2005b).

With regard to teacher qualifications, one of the measures of quality, approximately 8.3% of teachers were regarded as under-qualified in 2005. Major initiatives have been put in place to improve the qualifications of teachers, including the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) and the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) programmes. In 2008, the Department of Education is funding 1 600 teachers on mathematics, science and technology ACE programmes, and a further 3 000 teachers on NPDE programmes at various universities. Additional professional development programmes are planned to improve the information and communication technology (ICT) capabilities of teachers and to support the Foundations for Learning campaign.

Systematic recruitment programmes for teacher trainees have been established, especially for those in learning areas where there is a particular shortage of teachers. These programmes include a bursary programme (known as Fundza Lushaka – or 'Educating the Nation') which covers study and living expenses for students who choose teaching as a career. On graduation, students receiving Fundza Lushaka bursaries must work for a provincial education department for a number of years equal to the years for which they

received the bursary. If they decide not to do so, they must repay the assistance that they received. In 2008, R180 million is being disbursed through approximately 5 000 bursary awards to new and returning students in critical focus areas. The first 800 beneficiaries of the bursaries were placed in schools at the beginning of 2008.

In 2003, the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education was appointed. The committee reported to the Minister in 2005 and, following extensive deliberations on the findings and recommendations of the policy, a National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa was adopted in 2006 (DoE, 2006f). The policy provides for an integrated system of initial teacher education and continuing professional development, together with appropriate support systems for both initial and continuing professional development.

With regard to initial teacher education, the policy proposes two routes through which teachers can qualify professionally. These are:

- \* a 480-credit Bachelor of Education degree which includes a practical component of 120 credits; or
- \* an appropriate first degree followed by a one-year Advanced Diploma in Education, which also includes a practical component.

The inclusion of a 120-credit practical component is a significant development in terms of ensuring a balance between theoretical and practical elements in teacher education. While the norm for a qualified teacher will remain as Required Education Qualification Value 13 (REQV 13, formerly known as M + 3, equivalent to three years of study after matriculating from secondary school), the initial teacher education routes described above will carry a REQV of 14. Furthermore, the policy calls for strong collaboration between provincial education departments and providers of teacher education (i.e. higher education institutions) in initial teacher education, including appropriate placement, training and supporting teacher mentors in schools.

Continuing professional teacher development (CPTD) is seen as vital in developing, maintaining, encouraging and ensuring the highest professional ethos in the teaching profession, as well in improving the quality of education in schools. A national system of CPTD that will design, implement and manage the system under the leadership of the South African Council for Educators (SACE) is currently being developed jointly by the Department of Education and SACE. This system promises to be one of the significant developments in ensuring continuing professional development for teachers. Of significance also is its attempt to discourage a 'paper chase' by encouraging professional development activities that directly impact on teacher competence, commitment, content knowledge and understanding, as well as professionalism.

In April 2008, an agreement called *A Framework for the Establishment of an Occupation Specific Dispensation for Educators in Public Education* was signed by the Department and the teacher unions. The agreement develops a career path for teachers which seeks to retain teachers in the classroom. This is a radical departure from a system in which career progression meant promotion to a management post within a school. The new career paths allow a teacher to progress and develop, but without going into management posts. The framework also deals with improvements in teacher salary structure. This, too, will inevitably have implications for CPTD, though these have not been elaborated yet.

## 5.4 Further Education and Training Colleges

The main role of FET colleges is to provide artisan and vocational training programmes to youth and adults who have completed Grade 9 (Level 1 on the NQF) or higher. The colleges provide education at the post-compulsory but pre-higher education level. Their emphasis on vocational and artisan training is aligned to the key areas of economic intervention highlighted in the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA) and its associated programme, the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition (JIPSA). Skills development for these initiatives is focused around four main economic sectors which are considered as the spearhead of employment generation: infrastructure development, agriculture, tourism and business process outsourcing. AsgiSA identifies the current skills shortage as the single greatest impediment to economic growth. It attributes this both to the legacy of apartheid and to 'the slowness of our education and skills development institutions to catch up with the current acceleration of economic growth' (AsgiSA, 2007:9).

Another important role that the FET colleges play revolves around accessibility. Many of them, both public and private, are located in areas which are easily accessible to people in poor rural and urban communities.

South Africa's public FET college sector was formed through a process of institutional rationalisation by means of which 152 technical colleges were merged into 50 multi-campus FET colleges, a process completed in 2003. Since the advent of democracy in 1994, there has also been a growth of private FET institutions of variable quality and these are in the processes of being registered. By August 2008, 77 had been registered and a further 615 had applied for registration but were still being processed. It is expected that the process will be finalised by the end of 2009.

As of 2006 there were approximately 361 386 students registered in the 50 public FET colleges. They are serviced by 7 096 educators. It is expected that student numbers will double by 2010, prioritising areas where skills will meet specific labour market needs. Key arguments for rapid expansion are the high youth unemployment rate, low education participation rates of those in the 16-24 age group, and the need to rebalance the relative enrolments in vocational further education in relation to higher education enrolments. In addition, it is estimated that in 2006 there were over 700 000 learners enrolled in private FET institutions, although it is not clear whether this figure is for full-time equivalents or whether it included students doing short courses for a few weeks or even less (DoE, 2006d, 2008a).

In order to make the public FET colleges more effective as developers of high-level skills suitable for modern industry, it was necessary to improve the facilities of the newly-merged colleges. As a result a conditional grant from the national treasury of R1.9 billion was made available to recapitalise the colleges. These funds are being used to upgrade infrastructure, teaching equipment and materials, administrative systems, and information and communications technology.

Infrastructure development aside, there are three distinct channels of funding for these colleges. Firstly, bursaries are granted to students studying for the National Certificate (Vocational) via the Department of Education. Secondly, learnerships and specialised skills

programmes are financed via the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the Department of Education. A third source of funding is from private industry and is dedicated to customised programmes aimed at industry-specific skills requirements.

In January 2007, the new National Certificate (Vocational) or NCV was introduced into the FET colleges and began to replace the old NATED (N) technical qualification courses which had been used for decades. The NCV is being introduced at FET colleges in stages. In 2007, it was introduced at NQF level 2 (equivalent to Grade 10 in schools), in 2008 at NQF level 3, and next year (2009) it will be introduced at NQF level 4. The NCV is more in line with the new school curriculum. Such overlap aims to improve mobility between the school National Senior Certificate (NSC) and the NCV. The underlying rationale in the NCV is the development of both cognitive and practical skills as well as an integrated approach to learning. It consists of three compulsory subjects – language, mathematics or math literacy, and life skills, (with an emphasis on IT) – and four vocational subjects which depend on the programme they choose. Students undertake one-year-long programmes, and on completion are awarded a certificate at three levels, these being Levels 2, 3 and 4 on the NQF. There are currently twelve programmes on offer. These are:

- \* Civil Engineering and Building Construction;
- \* Electrical Infrastructure Construction;
- \* Engineering and Related Design;
- \* Finance, Economics and Accounting;
- \* Hospitality;
- \* Information Technology and Computer Science;
- \* Management;
- \* Marketing;
- \* Office Administration;
- \* Primary Agriculture;
- \* Tourism;
- \* Safety in Society.

Although it is possible for students completing their NCV to enter universities, this is often difficult due to differences in the alignment of programmes at university and FET colleges. Thus the NCV works mainly to equip students with trade and vocation skills so that they may obtain formal employment in the work environment or become self-employed.

The Further Education and Training Colleges Act was promulgated in 2006 to provide for the regulation of further education and training, the establishment, governance, funding and employment of staff for public FET colleges, and the registration of private FET colleges. The Act also makes provision for the promotion of quality in further education and training. All registered FET colleges become autonomous bodies with their own Councils rather than being the direct responsibility of the provincial departments of education. The educators at FET colleges who used to be employed by the provincial departments of education are now to be employed by the individual colleges.

## **5.5 Higher Education**

The development of the higher education system is crucial for the establishment and advance of democracy and human development. It is also essential for the production of high-level skills to sustain a growing economy and to ensure a growing standard of living

for all. The growth and development is still being guided by the national Plan for Higher Education, adopted in 2001.

The higher education system has grown steadily since South Africa's transition to democracy in 1994. The growth in student numbers in the public universities is shown in Table 5. It shows a growth of total enrolments, entailing an increase for all race groups except whites. Although reliable statistics are not available, it is likely that there has been a migration of white students to the 91 registered (or provisionally registered) private higher education institutions. The largest growth has been among African students, whose numbers have more than doubled between 1994 and 2006. There has also been faster growth in the total number of female as compared to male students, from 45.3% females in 1994 to 55.1% female in 2006.

**Table 5**  
**Headcount enrolments in public higher education institutions by race and gender, 1994 and 2002-2006**

ENROLMENT		1994	2002	2003	2004	2005	2 006
Race	Gender						
African	Female	105756	220 601	230 843	249 399	246 759	250 640
African	Male	106286	179 314	192 522	204 227	200 186	200 466
African	Unknown		9	1	4	1	0
<b>African</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>212042</b>	<b>399 924</b>	<b>423 366</b>	<b>453 630</b>	<b>446 946</b>	<b>451 106</b>
Coloured	Female	11407	20 304	23 038	25 107	26 000	27 895
Coloured	Male	16067	18 025	19 742	20 982	20 302	20 643
<b>Coloured</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>27474</b>	<b>38 329</b>	<b>42 780</b>	<b>46 089</b>	<b>46 302</b>	<b>48 538</b>
Indian	Female	15670	25 444	27 938	29 666	30 250	30 967
Indian	Male	18340	22 262	23 713	24 648	24 361	23 892
Indian	Unknown		0	0	1	0	0
<b>Indian</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>34010</b>	<b>47 706</b>	<b>51 651</b>	<b>54 315</b>	<b>54 611</b>	<b>54 859</b>
White	Female	91396	91 897	95 847	98 359	97 279	97 917
White	Male	130433	87 483	89 380	90 328	88 568	86 750
White	Unknown		1	0	0	0	0
<b>White</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>221829</b>	<b>179 381</b>	<b>185 227</b>	<b>188 687</b>	<b>185 847</b>	<b>184 667</b>
Unknown	Female	1	1 004	1 294	923	754	1 299
Unknown	Male	0	838	937	834	613	911
Unknown	Unknown		0	0	0	0	0
<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1 842</b>	<b>2 231</b>	<b>1 757</b>	<b>1 367</b>	<b>2 210</b>
All Races	Female	224230	359 250	378 960	403 454	401 042	408 718
All Races	Male	271126	307 922	326 294	341 019	334 030	332 662
All Races	Unknown	0	10	1	5	1	0
<b>All Races</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>495356</b>	<b>667 182</b>	<b>705 255</b>	<b>744 478</b>	<b>735 073</b>	<b>741 380</b>

(Data source: HEMIS database, downloaded August 2008.)

Despite the relatively high number of African students and the decline of white students in public universities, Table 5 shows that white youth still enjoy the highest graduation rates in public higher education: 20.9% as opposed to 15.5%, 16.1% and 14.8% for Africans, Coloureds and Indians respectively (see Table 6). Participation rates (see Table 7) show similar disparities even more markedly.

The continuing inequalities are also reflected in university staffing. For example, in 2006 black (African, Coloured and Indian) staff constituted only 37.7% of permanently employed academic staff (6 057 staff members in instructional and research posts), while women had 43.7% of these posts (6 791 academics). The situation for administrative staff was somewhat different, with 59.6% black staff and 62.4% female staff. The official statistics do not make it clear, but it is likely that the vast majority of these were in clerical or unskilled rather than managerial positions (DoE, 2007a).

This state of affairs reflects South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid as well as the relatively privileged socio-economic status and better schooling quality still enjoyed by the white community in South Africa. For these reasons, national policy continues to strive for greater equity and representivity in higher education institutions, although progress has obviously been made in this regard. It also plans to increase the total number of students from approximately 741 000 in 1976 to 820 000 in 2010, reflecting a 2010 participation rate of 17.5%. There is a target higher education participation rate of 20% for 2015.

A well-publicised and rather shocking racist incident at the University of the Free State in early 2008 focussed attention on the persistence of racism in higher education. One result was that the Minister of Education appointed a committee to investigate progress with transformation in higher education. Another was that individual universities and the sector as a whole became more aware of the need to do more to promote non-racism, respect and tolerance, and a number of initiatives have been undertaken in this regard.

**Table 6**  
**Graduation rates**

		Graduation Rate by Race and Gender					
GRADUATION RATE		1994	2002	2003	2004	2005	2 006
Race	Gender	%	%	%	%	%	%
African	Female	12.2	14.9	15.0	15.7	16.4	17.0
African	Male	9.8	11.7	12.0	12.7	13.1	13.7
<b>African</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>15.5</b>
Coloured	Female	16.4	14.6	16.6	15.0	16.6	17.4
Coloured	Male	12.1	12.7	13.6	14.0	14.5	14.3
<b>Coloured</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>16.1</b>
Indian	Female	15.5	15.0	15.3	15.5	15.4	15.5
Indian	Male	12.0	14.1	13.8	13.3	14.0	13.8
<b>Indian</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>14.8</b>
White	Female	20.8	20.5	20.3	20.7	21.9	22.0
White	Male	17.9	18.3	18.6	18.7	19.1	19.6
<b>White</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>20.9</b>
All Races	Female	16.1	16.3	16.5	16.9	17.7	18.1
All Races	Male	14.0	13.8	14.1	14.4	14.8	15.2
<b>All Races</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>16.8</b>

(Data source: HEMIS database, downloaded – August 2008).

**Table 7**  
**Participation rates**

		<b>Gross Enrolment Ratio (For Ages 20 to 24 years)</b>					
<b>Race</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
African/Black	Male	9.1	9.6	10.1	10.6	12.8	10.3
	Female	11.3	11.8	12.2	13.0	12.9	13.0
Coloured	Male	8.3	9.3	10.2	11.0	10.9	11.2
	Female	8.7	10.4	11.9	13.1	13.9	15.1
Indian/Asian	Male	40.2	42.8	45.0	46.2	45.1	44.1
	Female	44.3	48.7	52.8	55.5	56.1	57.2
White	Male	57.9	59.9	61.1	60.7	57.5	55.4
	Female	59.9	63.5	66.0	66.6	63.6	63.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>14.3</b>
	<b>Female</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>17.6</b>
	<b>Both</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>15.4</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>15.9</b>

Data source: HEMIS database, downloaded August 2008.

In line with the National Plan, institutional mergers were used to reduce the number of higher education institutions from 36 to 23. The first mergers took place in January 2004 and the rest in the following year. The new institutional landscape includes:

- \* eleven ‘traditional’ universities that offer discipline-based and traditional degrees, combined with a research focus;
- \* seven universities of technology which offer technological, career-oriented and professional programmes;
- \* five comprehensive universities which combine the above two functions.

In addition, two National Institutes of Higher Education have been established. These offer programmes through contractual arrangements with other higher education institutions in two provinces (Mpumalanga and Northern Cape) where there are no other higher education campuses.

The higher education institutions vary greatly in size. For example, in 2006 the University of South Africa, offering distance education, had an enrolment of 227 500 students while the mainly contact universities ranged from almost 51 500 students at Tshwane University of Technology to under 6 000 students at Rhodes University. Most of the universities are multi-campus institutions. Private higher education institutions tend to be much smaller. There were 80 registered (and eleven provisionally registered) private higher education institutions – mainly specialised career-oriented colleges – in South Africa in August 2008.

Students pay fees to attend higher education, but government has established a National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to provide assistance to needy students and thus to improve access to higher education. Although the NSFAS provides some bursaries (for example, the Fundza Lushaka bursaries for teacher education referred to above), most financial assistance is in the form of loans which must be repaid once recipients have completed their education and get a job. The repayments are ploughed back into the scheme, thus helping to increase the amount available for new loans and strengthening the scheme’s sustainability. The financial assistance to students provided by NSFAS has grown considerably over the years, from R200 million in 1997/1998 to R1.5 billion in 2008 (Nzimande and Mathieson, 2004:14; Pandor, 2008).

In recent years the government has increased assistance to infrastructure development in public higher education institutions. Since 2004 higher education (excluding NSFAS) has received additional allocations of R6.294 billion. These funds have been used for various projects including refurbishing existing facilities and constructing new academic and support buildings and student residences, improving teaching and learning equipment, library facilities and information technology infrastructure, particularly at newly merged historically disadvantaged institutions (Pandor, 2007, 2008).

## 5.6 Adult Education

The level of education among adults is improving significantly. For example, 17% of those between 20 and 29 years have completed less than Grade 7 schooling, whereas the figure for those between 30 and 39 years is 29% and for those 70 years and over it is 65% (DoE, 2008a). However, this is largely the result of the expanding schooling system rather than of specific adult education interventions. The levels of illiteracy still remain high and it is estimated that there are still 4.7 million South Africans who have never been to school (and are mainly illiterate) and 4.9 million South Africans who left school without completing Grade 7 (and may be functionally illiterate) (Pandor, 2008).

ABET provision was negligible under apartheid and, until very recently, the post-apartheid government has not been able to give it the attention demanded by the Constitution, as other areas such as schooling have received a higher priority. This situation is now changing with the introduction of the *Kha Ri Gude* adult literacy campaign, details of which are given below.

The Adult Basic Education and Training Act of 2000 provides for the establishment of both private and public adult education and learning centres. In 2006, the Department of Education spent over 90% of the 1% of the national education budget allocation for ABET to provide Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs). These Centres are usually located in schools and offer after-hours instruction up to ABET Level 4, which is equivalent to Grade 9 in the schooling system. In 2006, there were 2 176 PALCS with 18 608 educators and 251 610 learners. (DoE, 2008a). Until recently, some provinces offered separate basic literacy classes at sites outside the PALCs for learners deemed to be totally illiterate. These are now being incorporated into the *Kha Ri Gude* mass adult literacy campaign.

A new and highly significant intervention by the South African government – and steered by the Department of Education – is the mass literacy campaign that was launched in April 2008. Called *Kha Ri Gude*, which means ‘let us learn’ in TshiVenda (one of South Africa’s official languages), this campaign has set out to offer programmes of basic literacy in the learners’ mother tongue (all eleven official languages as well Braille and sign language) plus some basic mathematics as well as spoken functional English for non-English speakers. The government has committed over R6 billion to this campaign.

The operational plan sees this as a collaborative mobilisation of society to eradicate illiteracy and uses a single, research-validated method that stresses meaningful reading in the learner’s own language. Over 100 co-ordinators have been recruited and trained. Unemployed youth are being recruited and trained to work with high-quality teaching materials. Over 20 000 facilitators have been recruited and are teaching.

The campaign is aimed initially at enliterating 4.7 million of the 9 million functionally illiterate adults by 2012, and provides a six-month course with 85 planned lessons, designed with the learner and educator/tutor in mind. A bag, large and colourful books, writing materials and tuition are provided for less than R1 300 per learner. The Cabinet released funding for 300 000 learners (20% of whom are younger than 30 years) in 2008/2009, at a norm of 15 learners per educator. In May 2008, the Minister of Education announced in the National Assembly that the campaign had already exceeded the target of 300 000 enrolments. She went on to state:

*In addition to providing adults with the skills of reading, writing, and numeracy (up to Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) level 1), a successful campaign will also mean that South Africa will meet the commitment made at Dakar in 2002 to reduce illiteracy by at least 50%. Thus, we will be declared illiterate free in the context of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) global strategy to eradicate illiteracy (Pandor, 2008).*

Other ABET programmes are also offered through Sector Education and Training Authorities, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations and private ABET providers. It has been estimated that a further 300 000 learners have been reached through these other programmes (DoE, 2007c). While NGOs played a relatively important role in providing literacy classes during the apartheid era, there has been a drastic decline in this sector since the early 1990s and only a few NGOs remain in the field, financed mainly by contracts from the departments of education or SETAs for providing formal certificated ABET. The business sector also funds some ABET, mainly via outsourcing to commercial ABET providers and NGOs. Currently 123 private and NGO providers are formally registered with Umalusi.

Adult education, of course goes beyond literacy training. The National Skills Development Strategy, 2005-2010, envisages the expenditure of over R20 billion to identify scarce or critical skills and to train at least 60 000 workers in these areas, as well as 700 000 workers to ABET level 4 (equivalent to Grade 9), 450 000 unemployed people and 10 000 young entrepreneurs through special programmes, internships, learnerships and apprenticeships (DoL, 2005). These funds – raised through a skills levy of 1% of the payroll of employers – are largely administered by the 24 statutory Sector Education and Training Authorities covering all sectors of the economy, private and public.

## **6. PRIORITY AREAS INTO THE FUTURE**

The Department of Education has been guided by the following five broad priorities set by the Minister at the beginning of the current term of government (mid-1994):

### **A. Dealing with poverty, with special attention given to:**

- A1 the cost of education and the declaration of “no-fee” schools;
- A2 the National Schools Nutrition Programme; and
- A3 rural education.

**B. Skills development, with particular focus on:**

- B1 recapitalisation of FET institutions;
- B2 improving the teaching of Mathematics and Science;
- B3 role of higher education in addressing skills shortages;
- B4 adult education and training; and
- B5 human resource development.

**C. Quality improvement**

**D. Health education**

**E. Institutional development**

As can be seen from this report, considerable progress has been made in most of these areas. The Department of Education is proud of the progress that it has made, but is not complacent. This report has highlighted some of the challenges facing South Africa in meeting these priorities and in working diligently and intelligently in pursuit of an excellent and truly inclusive and system of education that serves all South Africans.

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