SOUTH AFRICAN
Child Gauge
2008/2009

Edited by Shirley Pendlebury,
Lori Lake and Charmaine Smith

Broad overview of the South African Child Gauge 2008/2009

The *South African Child Gauge* is produced annually by the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town to track South Africa's progress towards realising the rights of children.

The *South African Child Gauge* is divided into three parts:

PART ONE: **Children and Law Reform**
Part one discusses recent legislative developments affecting children. In this issue there is commentary on the Child Justice Act, the Criminal Law (Sentencing) Amendment Act, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, policy developments in education, the Regulations to the Children's Act (as amended), the Social Service Professions Bill and Regulations to the Social Assistance Act.
See pages 9 – 15.

PART TWO: **Meaningful access to basic education**
Part two presents a series of nine essays that examine children's right to education and what is required to ensure meaningful access to basic education in South Africa. Essays focus on the right to education, meaningful access, budgetary frameworks and school-fee waivers, children who are out of school, the relationship between poverty and exclusion, partnerships between schools and communities, and what is required to build a strong foundation in numeracy and literacy.
See pages 17 – 65.

PART THREE: **Children Count — the numbers**
Part three updates a set of key indicators on children's socio-economic rights and comments on the extent to which these rights have been realised. The indicators track the demographics of children, care arrangements, and their access to social assistance, education, health-care services, housing, water, sanitation and electricity. The indicators are a special subset selected from the Children's Institute website www.childrencount. ci.org.za. See pages 67 – 104.

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Abbreviations

ABET	Adult Basic Education Training
ACESS	Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
ASSA	Actuarial Society of South Africa
BOD	Burden of Disease
CALS	Centre for Applied Legal Studies
CASNET	Caring Schools Network
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CDG	Care Dependency Grant
COCA	Count One Count All
CROC	UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSG	Child Support Grant
DWAF	Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FCG	Foster Child Grant
FET	Further Education and Training
FFLC	Foundations for Learning Campaign
GET	General Education and Training
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in South Africa
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
LER	Learner-to-Educator Ratio
LURITS	Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System
NEIMS	National Education Infrastructure Management System
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSD	Occupational Specific Dispensation
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother-To-Child Transmission (Programme)
PPS	Probability Proportional to Size
QIDS-UP	Quality Improvement, Development, Support and Upliftment Programme
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SANPAD	South Africa Netherlands Programme on Alternatives in Development
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
SOCPEN	Social Pensions database
UCT	University of Cape Town
U5MR	Under-5 Mortality Rate
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VIP	Ventilated Improved Pit (latrine)

Foreword

Dr Max Price
(Vice-Chancellor, University of Cape Town)

Universities have a critical role in defending democracy and supporting a culture of human rights. Increasingly universities around the world are connecting research and other academic work to the public good through engagement with a range of external constituencies around various kinds of development needs. The work of the Children's Institute is an example of how research and evidence-based advocacy can contribute to this endeavour.

On 1 December 2005, the Children's Institute launched South Africa's first annual review of the situation of the country's children. The *South African Child Gauge*, now in its fourth year of publication, has gained a reputation as an invaluable resource that monitors the country's progress in realising children's constitutional rights. The *Child Gauge* illustrates the situation of children with numbers and policy and legal analysis, but also tells stories of their lives and circumstances, with special emphasis on children in the context of poverty and HIV/AIDS. It is intentionally designed to make academic research and analysis useful and accessible to a wide range of readers, in government and civil society, as a basis for improved policy and practice towards full realisation of children's constitutional rights.

This issue of the *South African Child Gauge* focuses on the right to education, in particular on meaningful access to basic education. The issue goes to press on the heels of President Zuma's announcement of two ministries of education, namely, a Ministry of Basic Education and a Ministry of Higher Education. A critical question is how the new structures will address the failures of South Africa's public school system.

Problems in the public school system range from curriculum design to assessment, number and quality of school teachers, training and quality of principals, infrastructure, security, discipline, career paths, management structures, resources, fee policies and much more. Impediments to meaningful education lie not only within the schooling system but also in school culture and in the multiple conditions of poverty, disease and violence under which many children live in South Africa. The *South African Child Gauge 2008/2009* is a collaborative effort on the part of the Children's Institute and invited contributors to present an analysis of some of these problems and to suggest possible solutions.

In her foreword to the first issue, Mrs Graça Machel commended the Children's Institute for promising to produce a new issue of the *Child Gauge* every year. At UCT we can be proud that this promise continues to be fulfilled and that the Children's Institute continues to play a leading role in promoting children's rights and well-being.

Reflections on meaningful access to education

Prof Jonathan D Jansen
(Rector and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Free State)
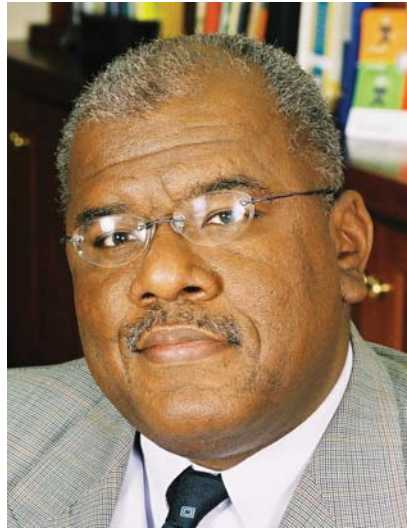
At least since the end of colonial rule in Africa and apartheid in South Africa, the question of access to education has remained central to national policies of African governments and international donor policies of foreign agencies. Yet the attainment of access in schools has proven to be much more elusive in concept and in practice than often claimed in the ambitious policies and plans of governments. Why is this the case?

First of all, the question of physical access alone is not as easy as it appears. While some countries find it easy to get children into school, others do not. Cultural factors continue in many contexts to enable boys to attend but block access to girls, especially in communities where the education of girls enjoys less social priority than that of boys. Economic factors play a major role in the decision of poor parents as to whether they can forego income, as the economists call it, by sending a healthy boy to school rather than to earn whatever meagre (but vital) income on the streets or in the fields. Health factors play a role in that more and more older children are forced into the role of taking care of younger or ill siblings in families where parents are dead or incapacitated as a result of HIV/AIDS.

Second, it has become clear from research that gaining physical access to schools is one thing; keeping children in school is a completely different matter. That is why the focus of more recent educational research has been on the factors that retain or repel children from school after initial attendance. The push-out factors are formidable, and include schools with unpredictable timetables and erratic teaching commitments from educators within those institutions. Time after time evidence shows that especially township schools have very low "instructional time" commitments compared to more established schools. The pull-out factors are no less significant, for the allure of gangs and the attraction of making quick money through drugs or theft are especially powerful in the lives of young black rural and urban township boys.

Third, researchers like the late Professor Wally Morrow have made the point that, even though children might have physical access to schools, the question of epistemological access (that is, access to knowledge) remains highly unequal even in the same school or classroom. Schools do not distribute knowledge equally. Children with domestic access to the internet or to middle-class parents with networks and capital are much more successful in accessing formal knowledge than children whose parents are illiterate and where computers and books are not as common in the home. So, for example, the capacity to do homework or science projects depends very much on things like social class even when simple physical access to schools is achieved for both working-class and middle-class children.

Fourth, schools (and universities), as is the case with the broader society, still grant access to able-bodied children more easily than they do to children with disabilities of various kinds. A blind child, or a child in a wheelchair, or a child with diabetes, struggles much more to gain access to schools than children without special needs. Schools target "the normal child" and while there are some "special schools" for especially severely handicapped children, there is very little to show in practice for integrating children with special needs into mainstream public schools.

Fifth, even though South Africa enjoys one of the highest rates of formal enrolment of any developing country, access

does not result in success for more than 50% of children. Very few children who start school finish the 12 years of formal education. Those who write the final examination at the end of 12 years often do not pass or pass well enough to enter university. Research indicates a massive failure to achieve among young learners in literacy and numeracy in the early grades. The link between access and success is therefore very weak in South Africa's schools, compared to less well-funded school systems in the southern African region, for example.

It follows therefore that access for whom (equity), access for how long (retention), access to what (curriculum), and access for success (achievement) are much more complicated than often suggested in policy and planning. Let me illustrate further.

One innovation on the part of government is to deal with equity of access through "no-fee schools." This is an admirable policy. However, tuition fees are simply one of many costs borne by poor parents. Parents pay for school uniforms, school lunches, school trips, school textbooks, and for many other hidden costs of schooling, including as indicated earlier, paying by foregoing income while the child is at school. It also turns out that in poor schools in South Africa tuition income was low anyway, in large part because of the simple incapacity of parents to pay. From the perspective of the parent, therefore, schooling can never be "free" and therefore the problems of access can never be resolved simply by removing the additional burden of fees.

In short, much has been achieved in gaining formal access to schooling for South Africa's children. Much more needs to be done to ensure they stay in school, and that once there, all our children experience and achieve success inside and beyond the classroom.

Children and Law Reform

Part one examines recent developments in national and international law that affect children in South Africa.

This includes the:

- Child Justice Act;
- Criminal Law (Sentencing) Amendment Act;
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- policy developments in education;
- Regulations to the Children's Act (as amended);
- Social Service Professions Bill; and
- Regulations to the Social Assistance Act.
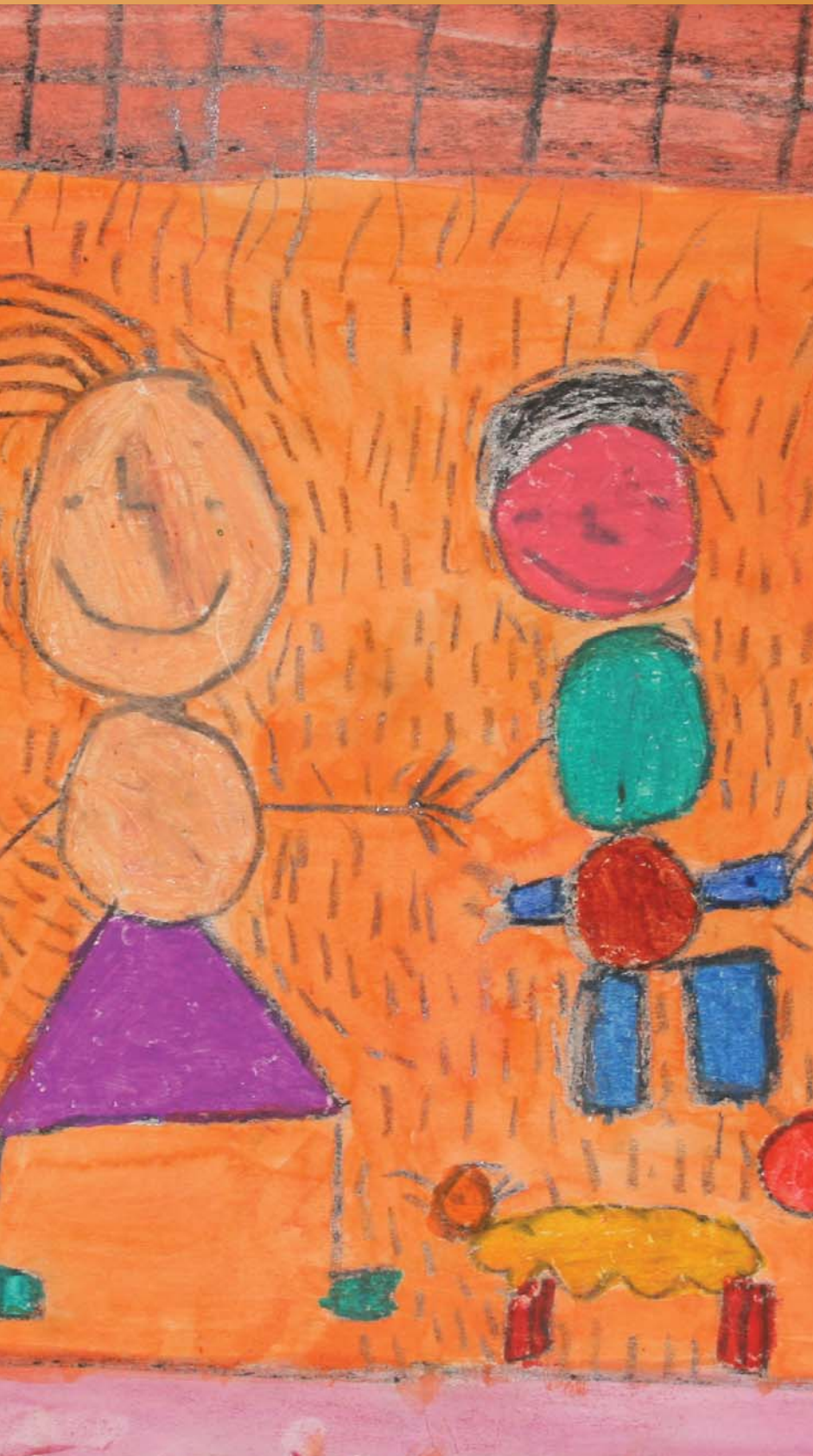
Key legislative developments in 2008/2009

By Lucy Jamieson, Katharine Hall (Children's Institute)
and Daksha Kassan (Community Law Centre, University of the Western Cape)

Following the first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa ratified various international treaties, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Shortly after that South Africa adopted a new Constitution, which includes a dedicated children's rights section that is based on the provisions of the UNCRC. The State is obliged to take legislative and other measures to make all of these rights a reality. This includes passing laws and regulations, developing policies and establishing programmes that "protect, respect, promote and fulfil" the rights of children.

International law is constantly evolving as new treaties are written and states are obliged to bring domestic laws and policy in line with international law when they ratify new treaties. Expert panels established to monitor the implementation of various treaties also publish General Comments that explain how international treaties should be interpreted. Although General Comments are non-binding, they nevertheless set international standards of best practice which states are expected to adhere to.

All laws must be consistent with the Constitution and international law, and laws that do not comply with the Constitution and international law can be challenged in court. Hence, the Constitution, international law and General Comments collectively assist in the drafting and development of new laws and policies for children.

Part one of this publication discusses some of the key legislative developments during 2008/2009 that affect children, reflecting on whether these give effect to children's rights as outlined in the Constitution and international law.

The Child Justice Act

Article 40 of the UNCRC states that every child in conflict with the law has the right "to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child's respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and which takes into account the child's age and the desirability of promoting the child's reintegration and the child's assuming a constructive role in society". In addition, section 28(1)(g) of the Constitution states that children should be: detained only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time; kept separately from adults; and treated in a manner and kept in conditions that take account of the child's age. Parliament passed the Child Justice Bill (B49D of 2002) in November 2008 to give effect to these rights. The Bill was signed by the President in May 2009 and is now called the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008. The Act takes a rights-based approach to dealing with children who are accused of committing a crime. It provides for a criminal justice system appropriate to the needs and protection of children. The Act entrenches the principles of restorative justice and recognises that the offender should work to repair the harm done. The Act also recognises the need for crime prevention and aims to minimise the child's contact with the criminal justice system.

Assessment

All children alleged to have committed a crime will be assessed by a probation officer before appearing in court, and within 48 hours of the arrest. During the assessment, the probation officer must determine the probable age of the child; establish the prospects for diversion; determine whether the child is in need of care; and formulate recommendations for the release of the child that, where possible, will avoid pre-trial detention. Assessment increases the prospects for children's early release and gives children a greater chance to be considered for diversion.

Preliminary inquiry

All children will appear before a preliminary inquiry during which the court must consider the probation officer's assessment report and all relevant factors before making an appropriate order for the future management of the child's case, based on the child's individual needs. During the preliminary inquiry a number of matters will be decided: can the child be diverted; should the case proceed to trial or be transferred to a children's court; and should the child be released or detained during the pre-trial period?

Children accused of less serious crimes should as far as possible first be released into the care of their parents, a guardian or an appropriate adult, or in some instances even on their own recognisance. Where this is not possible, the child may be

detained in a child and youth care centre, or even prison under certain circumstances. The preliminary inquiry procedure safe-guards the 'last resort' and 'shortest possible period of time' principles of child justice through provisions relating to where the child must be detained if he or she cannot be released. The proceedings also allow for child participation and a neutral chair (ie a presiding officer) to ensure a power balance between the interests of the State and the interests of the child.

Diversion

The Act aims to divert cases out of the criminal justice system and into programmes that reinforce children's respect for human rights and that allow children to be held accountable for their actions without obtaining a criminal record. Diversion from the criminal justice system is an internationally accepted best practice which aims to limit children's contact with the criminal justice system and channels them into appropriate intervention programmes aimed at reducing the risks of re-offending. However, the diversion of children who are accused

of committing serious offences will only be considered under exceptional circumstances. This once again illustrates the Act's approach to balance the rights of children in conflict with the law against the interests of society.

Sentencing

For those found guilty, the Act provides various sentencing options to promote the effective rehabilitation and reintegration of children and to minimise the potential for re-offending. These include community-based sentences, restorative justice sentences (such as referring a child to a family group con-ference or victim–offender mediation), correctional supervision and detention in a child and youth care centre (where adequate programmes meeting the needs of the child are offered). For serious offences, children over 14 years may be sent to prison.

These procedures and measures bring South Africa in line with international best practice. However, there are some areas where the Child Justice Act does not conform to inter-national law.

Minimum age of criminal capacity

For example, the Act stipulates that the minimum age of criminal capacity is 10 years, as opposed to the international standard of 12 years, set by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CROC) in General Comment 10. The Act provides that children below the age of 10 years may not be arrested or prosecuted. Children aged 10 – 14 years may be arrested and prosecuted, but the prosecutor must prove to the court that the child had criminal capacity when s/he committed the offence. The CROC has observed that this kind of discretionary age limit can be discriminatory and has recommended that one minimum age is used. Although the Act is not currently in line with this recommendation, it requires the Minister of Justice to report to Parliament in five years as to whether the minimum age of criminal capacity should be raised.

Expungement of criminal record

The CROC has also recommended "an automatic removal" of criminal records upon reaching the age of 18 years for all but the most serious crimes. The Act sets out a procedure whereby the offender or his/her parents may apply for the removal of criminal records after five or 10 years for less serious crimes. However, the Act does not allow for the removal of records of serious offences (namely, schedule 3 offences, such as rape or murder), even when committed by a child.

Criminal Law (Sentencing) Amendment Act

Article 37(b) of the UNCRC states that the arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be used "only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time", and section 28(1)(g) of the Constitution contains a similar provision. However, the Criminal Law (Sentencing) Amendment Act 38 of 2007 obliges a judge to sentence to imprisonment children aged 16 and 17 years who are convicted of very serious crimes. In such cases, detention in prison is the only choice available to a judge, and is an option of 'first resort'.

In September 2008, the Centre for Child Law challenged this provision in the Pretoria High Court. Judge Potterill ruled that under the Amendment Act minimum sentencing is used as a measure of first and only resort, and that this is not consistent with children's rights in the Constitution and international law. This High Court judgment must be confirmed by the Constitutional Court in order to declare an Act of Parliament invalid. The case was heard by the Constitutional Court in March 2009; at the time of writing the judgment was still pending.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

This convention was ratified by Parliament in 2007 and came into effect in May 2008. The CRPD does not define disability but recognises that it is an evolving concept that results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their "full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others". The section on the rights of children with disabilities says: "State Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children". In short, children with disabilities should have equal access to education, basic services, and to participate in play, recreation and leisure.

Once an international treaty is in effect, each state must take legislative and other measures to meet their commitments in the treaty. Some legislative measures are already in place in South Africa: The Constitution enshrines the right to equality and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability. The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000 (Equality Act) promotes equality in respect of race, gender and disability, and specifically prohibits unfair discrimination on the grounds of disability. The Equality Act requires the State to establish specialised equality courts, and offers legal remedies to people if they have suffered discrimination. However, it is not sufficient to put regulations and laws in place to protect people from harm; the CRPD also puts a positive obligation on government to take pro-active steps to create an enabling environment.

The CRPD says governments must use the maximum extent of available resources to progressively realise socio-economic rights. This means that government needs to show that is has a budget and plan to realise these rights. All laws and policies in South Africa therefore should be reviewed to assess whether they comply with the positive obligation on the State to create an enabling environment. The General Principles of the Children's Act provide that the State must in all matters "recognise a child's disability and create an enabling environment to respond to the special needs that the child has". These principles cover the implementation of all legislation relating to children, which effectively means that the State has to make provision for children with disabilities when planning any services for children.

The CRPD must be read together with the UNCRC. Where the UNCRC outlines general children's rights, the CRPD reiterates that children with disabilities are entitled to the same rights and that they need special assistance to realise those rights. For example, the UNCRC states that children have a right to education (article 28); the CRPD adds that children

with disabilities must "receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education" including "effective individualized support measures". This means that government must employ teachers who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille; and must eliminate barriers to access by providing transport, and adapting the physical environment in schools.

Attitudinal barriers often prevent children with disabilities from participating fully in society. Therefore the CRPD requires that the education system fosters "an attitude of respect for the rights of persons with disabilities". The State must also provide early childhood development programmes that help prevent disability and that assist children with disabilities and their families to participate fully in society from the earliest age.

South Africa already has a strong legal framework to give effect to the provisions of the CRPD. However, the domestic legislation has not yet been implemented and principles have not been translated into policy and practice. This includes the education policies and laws discussed below.

Education policy

Recognising that education is a pre-requisite for individual and societal development, government enshrined the right to basic education in the Constitution (section 29). Yet according to the Department of Education's report on the National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS), many schools still do not have electricity, safe water, decent toilets or adequate teaching resources. The National Policy on School Infrastructure states that overcrowding is commonplace and 80% of schools do not have libraries or science laboratories. Poor learning environments are linked to low levels of teacher morale, poor learner performance and high drop-out rates. The lack of decent infrastructure infringes on children's right to education, and educational opportunities remain bound to historical patterns of inequality. Children with disabilities in particular continue to experience discrimination.

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 states that no learner may be denied admission to an ordinary school on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty. However, a Department of Education report presented to Parliament in 2008 indicated that children with disabilities continue to experience significant barriers to education, and that only 10 of the 37 schools for deaf children offer education beyond grade 9. NEIMS 2007 also reports that less than 3% of ordinary schools have facilities for learners with disabilities, such as access ramps.

The government passed the Education Laws Amendment Act 31 of 2007 to redress the inherited inequities in school infrastructure provision and to ensure that all schools provide an enabling physical, teaching and learning environment. The Department of Education thereafter published two policy papers

in late 2008 to support the implementation of this Act: the National Policy for an Equitable Provision of an Enabling School Physical Teaching and Learning Environment (National Policy); and the National Minimum Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure (Norms and Standards).

The National Policy requires the national and provincial departments of education to assess existing resources systematically; to identify targets for investment; and to write development plans. The targets channel resources so that children with disabilities get access to education. The policy stipulates that 80% of all schools are to be resourced to provide inclusive education by 2012; that 500 primary schools are to be developed into full-service schools; and that 400 special schools are to be upgraded.

Although the National Policy requires that new buildings must be accessible and that the architectural norms should refer to access to people with special needs, the Norms and Standards are silent on the issue of disability and access.

Regulations to the Children's Act (as amended)

The Children's Act 38 of 2005 and the Children's Amendment Act 41 of 2007 are now referred to as the Children's Act (as amended). In March 2009, Parliament approved the regulations to the Act, which will assist its implementation. However, the regulations will only become law once published in the *Government Gazette*, and the Act will come into force when the President issues a proclamation announcing the implementation date.

The Act establishes the framework for a holistic range of social services and interventions for children and their families, based on a developmental model of social welfare. Some of these services prepare children for general education, ie early childhood development (ECD) programmes. Others provide support for vulnerable children and their families to keep children in school (such as adult mentors to assist child-headed households and to ensure that all children in a household attend school). Drop-in centres in vulnerable communities will run after-school programmes to assist vulnerable children with homework, and provide nutritious meals in areas where food insecurity is high. In addition, programmes will be established to combat the worst forms of child labour.

The regulations elaborate on the provisions of the Act and give the technical detail needed to support the Act's implementation, for example the ratios of staff to children in ECD programmes.

One of the major constraints to the implementation of the Act is the critical shortage of all types of social service practitioners. The Children's Act provides for probation officers, development workers, child and youth care workers, youth workers, social auxiliary workers and social security workers

("social workers" are listed separately). Other practitioners required by the legislation, for example ECD practitioners and volunteers, are also in short supply. Another complication is that only those practitioners who are registered under the Social Service Professions Act 110 of 1978 may perform functions under the Children's Act — currently the only practitioners that can register are social workers and auxiliaries.

Social Service Professions Bill

The Social Service Professions Act of 1978 regulates professional practice and establishes the South African Council for Social Service Professionals. The Social Service Professions Bill, which will replace the 1978 Act, was gazetted for comment in January 2008. The Bill aims to "advance social justice by promoting developmental social services". It defines the categories of practitioner who are to be registered, requirements for registration, and disciplinary procedures. The Minister of Social Development is expected to table the Bill in Parliament late in 2009.

Regulations to the Social Assistance Act

The responsibility for the material well-being of children rests firstly on parents. At the same time, article 27 the UNCRC obliges states to assist parents and, in case of need, to provide material assistance. Children in South Africa have a right to social assistance under article 26 of the UNCRC and section 27 of the Constitution. This right is realised mainly through a set of targeted social grants.

According to the database of the Department of Social Development, the Child Support Grant (CSG) had over 8.8 million child beneficiaries in April 2009. Although small (R240 per month from April 2009), the grant is associated with improved nutrition, health and education outcomes for children and their families.

Receipt of a grant automatically entitles the child beneficiary to free schooling and free health care. Grants are therefore a pivotal part of an integrated poverty alleviation strategy, and it is crucial that they do not exclude children in need.

There were flaws in the conceptualisation of the CSG and children were excluded on the basis of age, income and lack of identity documents. These limitations have been highlighted through advocacy campaigns over a number of years, and each was subject to litigation in 2008. In August 2008 the Minister of Social Development published new regulations to the Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004. These replaced the 2005 regulations and contained some important changes. These developments suggest that litigation is a powerful tool for improving social policy.

Age threshold

The regulations increase the age threshold for the CSG to children under 15, effective from 1 January 2009. According to an analysis by Debbie Budlender of the Community Agency of Social Enquiry, this one-year increase potentially extends social grants to around 700,000 children. There is no provision in the regulations for further extension to older children. In fact the wording suggests the opposite: A CSG may be awarded to a child "not older than 15 years". Judgment is still pending in a High Court case (*Mahlangu v Minister of Social Development and Others*) where the age limit is being challenged as unconstitutional.

Means test

Following many years of research, advocacy and finally litigation (*Ncamile and Children's Institute v South African Social Security Agency, Eastern Cape Regional Office and Others*), the regulations have done away with the static income threshold used to determine if an applicant is poor enough to qualify. Instead, a formula which links the threshold to the grant amount is provided so that the means test is automatically adjusted as the value of the grant increases. The calculation is simple:

$$A = B \times 10$$
(where *A* is the income threshold and
B is the value of the grant)

In 2009, the grant amount is R240 per month, so the income threshold is R2,400 per month for a single person and R4,800 for a couple. This effectively doubles the previous threshold (set at R1,100 or R800 depending on the area or dwelling type), and brings it in line with inflation.

Proof of identity

Section 11(1) of the Social Assistance Act regulations specify that all applications for social grants must be accompanied by identity documents in the case of adults, and identity books or birth certificates in the case of children, "... provided that if no valid proof is obtainable, a sworn statement or an affidavit ... may be accepted". This reiterates a similar discretionary clause contained in section 10(6) of the 2005 regulations, but not implemented until a High Court order in 2008 (*Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security v Minister of Social Development*) declared those regulations to be in force, compelling the department to implement them.

Other grants and inclusion of refugees

There are three social grants for children: the CSG, the Foster Child Grant (FCG) received by foster parents, and the Care Dependency Grant (CDG), designed to supplement 'lost' income of caregivers whose children have severe disabilities

and need permanent care. While the CSG and the CDG are available only to caregivers who are South African citizens or permanent residents, the 2008 regulations have extended the FCG to refugees. Refugees may also apply for disability grants and social relief of distress. This reform was also the result of litigation (*Scalabrini Centre and Others v Minister of Social Development, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Home Affairs and Another*).

Conclusion

Over the past year, there have been a number of positive legislative developments relating to children spanning child justice, education, social security and social services, but the question remains: Do these developments take South Africa any closer to fulfilling children's rights?

The Child Justice Act respects the rights of children to be protected and treated in a manner appropriate to their age. It not only respects children's dignity and their rights but introduces measures and procedures that will encourage children to respect the human rights of others. The finalisation of the regulations to the Children's Act brings it one step closer to implementation. Where new laws, such as the Criminal Law (Sentencing) Amendment Act, have fallen short of the standards set by the Constitution and international law, they have been successfully challenged in court and the government has been ordered to bring the legislation into compliance. Hence, it could be stated that, in general, South Africa has put in place a comprehensive legislative framework that respects children's rights.

However, international law obliges government to take legislative *and other measures* to fulfil children's rights. This is because legislation only provides a broad framework — and regulations and policies are required to detail the exact nature of the commitment. Through the Education Laws Amendment Act, the government has made a commitment to make schools accessible to children with disabilities. But, unless the proposed Norms and Standards provide for access ramps, schools will remain closed to children with physical disabilities.

Commitments in law or policy must be translated into budgets and actual services, otherwise they remain empty promises. Legislative measures alone are not enough to fulfil children's rights. Four years after being passed by Parliament, the Children's Act is still not in force.

However, children's rights are justiciable and the court cases referred to in this chapter show that once a commitment is enshrined in law, civil society can take government to court if it fails to implement legislation. The court must also consider international law, which means any case challenging the government for non-delivery is strengthened by the ratification of UN treaties such as the CRPD.

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Meaningful access to basic education

Part two presents a series of nine essays that examine children's right to education and some of the factors that help or hinder children's meaningful access to basic education in South Africa.

The essays focus on:

- the right to education;
- meaningful access to basic education;
- the impact of budgetary frame-works and school fee waivers;
- children who are out of school;
- the relationship between poverty and exclusion;
- how to build effective partner-ships between schools and communities; and
- what is required to build strong foundations in numeracy and literacy.

Overview

Children's right to basic education (page 19)

Drawing on the Constitution and international conventions, this essay provides a framework for interpreting the right to education. It also argues that ordinary people have a vital role to play in holding government accountable and ensuring that rights become a reality for all children in South Africa.

Meaningful access to basic education (page 24)

South Africa has made significant progress in improving access to education, and over 96% of children of school-going age attended some form of educational facility in 2007. But extensive enrolment has not resulted in improved educational achievements. Meaningful access to education extends beyond access to schools and includes access to the basic skills, knowledge and values that schools are supposed to teach. This essay outlines some conditions for meaningful access, identifies some of the barriers, and proposes some strategies for increasing meaningful access to basic education.

Education funding:
Budgeting for meaningful access (page 30)

A range of policy and funding mechanisms have been put in place by the Department of Education to mediate poverty and increase access to education. This essay explores the strengths and weaknesses of the current budgetary framework and whether this impedes or improves meaningful access to education.

Addressing quality through school fees and school funding (page 35)

School-fee exemptions and no-fee schools aim to alleviate financial barriers to education, but do these policies enhance meaningful access? This essay examines the impact of these policies on school funding and schools' capacity to deliver quality education.

Children out of school:
Evidence from the Community Survey (page 41)

Poverty is often identified as one of the main reasons why children drop out of school, yet South Africa's high enrolment rate, suggests a more complex relationship between poverty and school drop-out. This analysis of the 2007 Community Survey examines the distribution, family and individual characteristics of children out of school and identifies a number of potential barriers to education.

School drop-out:
Poverty and patterns of exclusion (page 46)

The essay draws on the qualitative findings of the Barriers to Education Project to examine some of the more complex reasons for school drop-out. The essay explores how relative poverty, social exclusion and poor quality education account for patterns of enrolment and drop-out at different points in children's school careers.

Schools and communities:
Building effective partnership (page 50)

The relationship between schools and communities can either enable or impede access to education. This essay draws on findings from the Caring Schools Project to explore these dynamics and to introduce a number of strategies that enable schools and communities to build effective partnerships and promote child well-being.

Count one count all:
Numeracy in the foundation phase (page 55)

The Count One Count All research project identifies key classroom practices that impact on children's ability to learn about numbers. This essay explores how these practices account for learners' poor performance on the grade 3 national assessment and identifies what needs to be done to strengthen numeracy practices in the foundation phase. Some concerns about the Foundations for Learning Campaign are also raised.

Building a strong foundation:
Learning to read, reading to learn (page 60)

Literacy is the key to learning. Yet, the recent grade 3 national assessment results indicate that there is an urgent need to address literacy in the foundation phase. The Human Science Research Council's recent study of 20 schools in Limpopo identifies some of the root causes of the problem and proposes a number of strategies to foster a culture and practice of reading.

Note: As this issue of the *South African Child Gauge* went to press, the new State President announced the creation of a Ministry of Basic Education. In terms of current policy and legislation, basic education comprises grades R – 9. It is unclear whether grades 10 – 12 will now be included as part of basic education. If they are, this will increase the burden on government to meet its constitutional obligation to provide basic education for all.

Children's right to basic education

Lori Lake and Shirley Pendlebury (Children's Institute)

In South Africa, the right to education is guaranteed by section 29 of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution. Broader constitutional values and principles also support *rights within* and *rights through education*. Government is obliged to pass laws, develop policies and establish programmes that "protect, respect, promote and fulfil" the right to education. The right to education is thus justiciable and government can be challenged in court if it fails to meet its constitutional obligations.

Claims about human rights also extend beyond legislation and jurisprudence. International declarations, national legislation and policies do not necessarily translate into actual rights on the ground, and many children struggle to realise their right to education both within and outside the classroom. In this context, human rights play an essential role as moral imperatives and political resources that can enable people to stand up for their rights and hold the State accountable.

This essay focuses on:

- What is meant by the right to basic education?
- What is the relationship between children's right to education and their other rights?
- What are the State's obligations regarding children's right to basic education?
- Why is ongoing public debate about rights important?

What is meant by the right to basic education?

Education is a human right. This means that there is a universal moral imperative for all people, irrespective of citizenship or national legislation, to have opportunities for formal education. This moral conception of human rights underpins international conventions such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which recognises the right to education, together with other rights, as essential in promoting world peace and democracy.

Human rights are universal and all human beings are equal as rights-holders. The moral significance of human rights does not vary with local legislation or according to whose rights are at stake. Where a government or any of its agencies violates or disregards the moral rights of the people it governs, it is what Thomas Pogge calls "official disrespect".

In South Africa, education is also a justiciable constitutional right. The Bill of Rights binds all three arms of government to give effect to the right to education. Government can thus be held accountable through the courts for failing to meet its obligations regarding education.

The constitutional right to education

Section 29(1)(a) of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution establishes the right to basic education — for both adults and children — as an immediate right unqualified by any limitation related to progressive realisation. Fulfillment of the right places both positive and negative obligations on the State. The positive obligation requires government to take active steps to ensure that every child has access to educational facilities and enjoys the right to education. The negative obligation means that government and its agencies (such as public schools) should not impede children's access to education.

In addition, section 29(1)(b) establishes the right to further education, which the State must "through reasonable measures" make "progressively available and accessible".

This essay focuses on children's rights *to, in* and *through* basic education (see figure 1 on p. 21). Currently, basic education for children in South Africa comprises compulsory school enrolment for the full General Education and Training (GET) band from grade R to grade 9, or from 7 to 15 years of age, whichever is reached first. While the reception year (grade R) is not yet compulsory, the Department of Education aims to make grade R available to all five-year-olds by 2010.

Language rights go hand-in-hand with the right to education. Section 29(2) of the Bill of Rights states that everyone who attends a public school also has a constitutional right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice, where this is "reasonably practicable". This recognises South Africa's linguistic diversity and aims to redress historical discriminatory practices, but it does not affirm an unqualified right to first language instruction.

In keeping with the constitutional rights to freedom of association, belief, culture and religion, section 29(3) assures the right for everyone to establish independent educational

institutions, provided that they do not discriminate on the basis of race; are registered with the Department of Education; and maintain appropriate standards.

The Constitution does not specify the content of the right, but section 39 states the requirements for interpreting constitutional rights, including the right to education. The interpretation must "promote the values that underlie an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom" and must consider international law.

International law

Most international conventions offer similar definitions of the right to education and commonly recognise two main aspects of the right: the purpose and process of education.

For example, the International Covenant on Economic and Social Rights (1966) requires education to "be directed to the full development of the human personality and its sense of dignity; strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society; promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic and religious groups; and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace".

A similar broad purpose statement appears in article 29 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (1989), and is elaborated in General Comment No. 1 of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All (2000) is more specific. Goal Six is to improve every aspect of the quality of education so that "recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills".

International conventions also outline a number of common elements in terms of process, including: non-discriminatory access to public educational institutions and programmes; compulsory, free primary education for all; free choice of education; minimum standards and a transparent, effective monitoring system.

The 1999 UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) General Comment No. 13 provides further guidelines for interpreting the right to education and calls for basic education to be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable (see the box on the right).

What is the relationship between the right to education and other rights?

Rights are interdependent and the right to education should therefore be interpreted in the context of the full Bill of Rights. The rights to equality (section 9) and human dignity (section 10) set the ethical standards for a democratic system of education in which every child — regardless of race, gender, culture, language, religion, ability or disability — is equally

Education and the 4 As

Availability
Educational institutions and programmes must be available in sufficient quantity to meet local needs. This includes a range of resources, eg buildings, water and sanitation, trained teachers receiving domestically competitive salaries, teaching materials, libraries, computer facilities and information technology.

Accessibility
Education must be accessible to all. There should be no discrimination on the basis of race, class and gender, and vulnerable groups must be catered for (such as refugee children or children with disabilities). Schools must be physically accessible (eg it must be safe and easy for children to travel to school). Schools must be economically accessible and affordable. Primary education should be free to all.

Acceptability
Education programmes, including curricula and teaching methods, must be acceptable to students. Education should be relevant, culturally appropriate and of good quality. It should also respect the rights of learners (eg school discipline and language of instruction).

Adaptability
The education system needs to be flexible so it can adapt to the needs of changing societies and communities, and respond to the needs of students in diverse social and cultural settings (such as children with disabilities or children living in child-headed households).

Sources: Adapted from the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1999) *General Comment No. 13: The Right to Education (Art. 13 of the Covenant), 8 December 1999.* E/C.12/1999/10; Tomaševski K (2001) *Right to Education Primer No. 3 Human rights obligations: making education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable.* Gothenburg: Novum Grafiska.

entitled to learn, under conditions that respect, protect and promote the inherent human dignity of each child.

The right to education is part of a compendium of socio-economic rights, including rights to access to adequate housing, health-care services, sufficient food and water, and social security. Although children's right to basic education is not subject to progressive realisation, the CESCR and the South African Human Rights Commission regard it as dependent on the progressive realisation of other socio-economic rights. For example, children who are sick or hungry will struggle to learn.

Arguably, socio-economic rights are necessary conditions for people to exercise their civil and political rights. The rights to freedom and security of the person; freedom of religion, belief and opinion; and freedom of expression are pertinent to

both *rights in* education and *rights through* education. For example, schools must provide a safe learning environment and create opportunities for learners to participate in decision-making.

Section 28 of the Bill of Rights safeguards children's rights to care and protection, and recognises that the best interests of the child are of paramount importance in all matters concerning the child, including education.

Just administrative action (section 33) grants everyone the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and fair. This includes the administration of school admissions, children's educational achievement records and disciplinary hearings.

Education is not only a right in itself, it also empowers people to claim and realise their other rights. According to the South African Human Rights Commission, the right to basic education is a central facilitative right in South Africa's constitutional democracy. Through basic education, people are better able to appreciate and exercise the full range of their human rights. For example, the *Education for All — Global Monitoring Report* describes how access to education enables women to

make choices that improve maternal and child health. In other words, education gives people the freedom to make informed choices and enhances what Amartya Sen calls their capability to lead lives they have reason to value.

Spreen and Vally describe how education acts as a multiplier. Where the right to education is effectively guaranteed, it enhances the enjoyment of all individual rights and freedoms. Conversely, where the right to education is denied, violated or disrespected, this deprives people of their awareness and enjoyment of many other rights and freedoms. (Of course, education acts as a multiplier only if schools are not being used — as most of them were under apartheid — to indoctrinate learners or produce a compliant underclass.)

Human rights considerations inform every facet of the education system. Vally points out that this includes policy, access, budgeting, curriculum, management, assessment, teaching and learning. Human rights education is also an essential component of the Revised National Curriculum Statement which aims to develop informed and active citizens who know their rights and can challenge injustices.

Figure 1: Rights to, in and through education as described in the Constitution

Rights to education

Everyone has the
right to basic education
Section 29(1)(a)

Everyone has the
right to further education
Section 29(1)(b)

Everyone has the right
to learn in their official
language of choice
Section 29(2)

Children have the right
to be protected from work
that places their education
at risk
Section 28(1)(f)

Rights in education

Everyone has the right to dignity
Section 10

Everyone has the right to equality
Section 9

Everyone has the right to an
environment that is not
harmful to health
Section 24

Children have the right to
protection from abuse and neglect
Section 28(1)(d)

Children have the right
to basic nutrition
Section 28(1)(c)

Rights through education

Basic education facilitates access
to a wide range of political, social
and economic rights.

This includes, amongst others:
- the rights to equality and dignity;
- the right to further education;
- the right to information;
- the right to health care and social security;
- the right to just administrative action;
- freedom and security of the person;
- freedom of religion, belief and opinion; and
- freedom of expression and association.

What are the State's obligations regarding children's right to basic education?

Section 7(2) of the Constitution requires the State to "respect, protect, promote and fulfill the rights in the Bill of Rights". Each obligation imposes a related set of duties on the State:

- the obligation to **respect** requires the State to avoid measures that prevent children's enjoyment of the right to basic education;

- the obligation to **protect** requires the State to prevent others (for example, parents and caregivers) from interfering with children's enjoyment of the right to basic education;

- the obligation to **promote** imposes a duty on the State to encourage educational participation and to make citizens aware of their educational rights; and

- the obligation to **fulfil** imposes a duty on the State to take positive measures that enable all children to enjoy the right to basic education.

South Africa has developed an impressive array of laws, regulations and policies which aim to get all school-aged children into schools and ensure a safe school environment. The policy intent is to establish an education system that is inclusive, efficient and attentive to the quality of learning conditions and outcomes. Children's rights to dignity and equality are protected through, for example, the abolition of corporal punishment, the prohibition of discriminatory practices, codes of ethics for educators and learners, and particular attention to the rights of children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and those with disabilities and special education needs.

Despite a comprehensive set of laws and policies to give effect to rights to, in and through education, many children in South Africa do not yet enjoy these rights in practice. The other essays in this publication present some key factors that hamper full realisation of the right to basic education.

Legislation gives effect to the right to basic education and defines some of the corresponding duties and duty-bearers. But in the absence of clear norms and standards, many of the State's constitutional obligations remain loosely specified.

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Children's moral rights often extend beyond existing policy and legislation and create what Sen calls "imperfect obligations" that stretch beyond the fully delineated roles of duty-bearers. Sen argues that, in the case of imperfect obligations, there can and should be ongoing deliberation about the way in which the right is best fulfilled; what would count as genuine realisation; and how the respective demands of different rights should be integrated. As education is itself a contested terrain, many of the obligations regarding the right to education are imperfect and thus open to debate.

Why is ongoing public debate about rights important?

Sen argues that a theory of human rights "cannot sensibly be confined within the juridical model within which it is so frequently incarcerated". Human rights are also moral injunctions that can be used as political tools to challenge and extend existing policies and to motivate and mobilise for social change.

Wilson argues that rights have conservative as well as radical potential. The concept of rights can be used to challenge injustices or it may be used to mask existing inequalities. Spreen and Vally warn against "constitutional romanticism" or proceeding as if rights exist for everyone instead of recognising circumstances where people's rights on paper don't translate to rights on the ground. It is therefore vital that the concerns and needs of those who are most deprived become central in defining what is meant by the right to basic education.

While legislation and litigation can get results, enduring respect for human rights is sustained not just by a country's constitution, government and legal system. It is, Pogge suggests, sustained more deeply by people's values, as shaped by the education system and the economic distribution of resources. What is needed to secure a right, he suggests, is a vigilant public that is willing to work towards the political realisation of the right. Ongoing public debate is critical for securing meaningful access to education. So, too, is what Vally describes as "an active and responsible citizenship who understand the law and its limitations and are willing to insist on their rights and mobilise when these aren't forthcoming".

What are the conclusions?

In South Africa, the right to education is defined in section 29 of the Bill of Rights, which must be interpreted in line with international law and democratic values.

Human rights are indivisible, and the right to education must be seen in relation to other human rights. Children have rights in and through education, as well as to education. The rights to equality and dignity set the standards for a democratic system of education, and the right to education acts as a multiplier that enables people to access other political and socio-economic rights.

Government has an obligation to respect, protect, promote and fulfil these rights through policy and legislation; yet many of these obligations are imperfect and the precise content and meaning of the right to education remain open to debate.

Rights are political resources that can be used to extend and deepen meaningful access to education. Children's right to basic education will only be realised when government meets the educational needs of all children in South Africa. Ongoing dialogue and advocacy are essential in order to interpret what is meant by the right to basic education, and to mobilise public action for its full realisation.

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Meaningful access
to basic education

Shirley Pendlebury (Children's Institute)

Section 29(1)(a) of South Africa's Constitution states that "everyone has a right to basic education, including adult basic education". For children, this corresponds to the period of compulsory schooling from 7 – 15 years of age (or until the end of grade 9).

Compulsory education places a responsibility on government to ensure that schools are accessible and affordable for children of compulsory school age. The national Department of Education (together with provincial departments and the schools and teachers under their authority) is also responsible for ensuring that within every school *children can learn* and *teachers can, and do, teach.*

This essay draws on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) *Review of Education Policies: South Africa*, Department of Education documents and other independent reviews, such as the review by Motala and co-authors and the Centre for Development and Enterprise (CDE) review. The essay focuses on:

- What is meaningful access to basic education?
- What policies provide for meaningful access?
- What are children's prospects for meaningful access?
- What factors influence children's meaningful access to education?
- What is the government doing to improve meaningful access?
- What are the recommendations?

What is meaningful access to basic education?

Concepts in this section come from Wally Morrow, who first distinguished 'formal' and 'epistemological' access.

Formal (or institutional) access focuses on the proportion of school-aged children who are enrolled at school. Yet access is meaningful only when schools ensure epistemological access, and support children's systematic learning of basic

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skills, knowledge, values and practices, and do so in a manner that respects children's dignity and background.

The phrases 'epistemological access' and 'systematic learning' imply that learning must be structured so that children develop coherent ways of understanding and engaging with different learning areas. Teaching for meaningful access is about carefully designed learning programmes and materials that enable children gradually to develop competences that cannot be learned in an instant, and that go beyond the informal learning that goes on daily at home. Basic education provides the foundations for this developmental continuum.

Basic education for school-aged children in South Africa covers the General Education and Training Band (GET) over three phases: foundation phase (grades 1 – 3); intermediate phase (grades 4 – 6); and senior phase (grades 7 – 9). A reception year, grade R, becomes compulsory from 2010. It is not yet clear whether the current definition of 'basic education' will change in light of the new Ministry of Basic Education.

Developing literacy is a central purpose of basic education. Literacy includes the reading, writing and numeracy skills that children acquire through formal schooling, as well as in different community and household contexts. Adult basic education complements children's education because it helps to build a literate society, where literacy practices outside of school support and extend school-based learning.

At the heart of basic education are learning to read and write, to reason, to work with number, shape and pattern, and to use concepts to understand the content of different learning areas. Children have meaningful access to education when schools enable them to do these things. When basic education is meaningful and adaptable, its content and teaching methods work together to foster generative learning that extends children's capacity to think for themselves and with others, and to apply what they have learnt in different contexts. In the process, basic education should also prepare young people for a productive role in society.

What policies provide for meaningful access to basic education?

Through the National Education Policy Act of 1996, the Minister of Education determines national norms and standards for education planning, provision, governance, monitoring and evaluation. Provincial departments of education exercise executive responsibility for basic and further education, aligned with national policy and goals.

The South African Schools Act of 1996 gives legal form to school access, seeks to ensure that all learners have access to quality education without discrimination, and specifies the conditions for school governance and funding.

Education White Paper 6 presents government policy on inclusive education. It envisages a school system that meets the full range of learning needs and supports children in overcoming a wide range of barriers to learning. Barriers to learning are all those factors, intrinsic and extrinsic, that prevent children's optimal learning or reduce the extent to which children can benefit from education.

The Employment of Educators Act of 1998 governs teachers' terms of employment. The South African Council for Educators is responsible for professional development and ethical standards. The Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development of 2006 establishes guidelines for initial teacher education and continuing professional development.

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) of 2002 specifies the scope, conditions and outcomes for access to systematic learning. Eight learning areas comprise the curriculum for basic education. The RNCS stipulates learning outcomes and sets assessment standards that describe what a learner will be able to do to demonstrate competence in each grade.

The Amended National Norms and Standards for School Funding of 2006 introduced a policy of no-fee schools, which together with school-fee exemptions, as outlined in the South African Schools Act Regulations of 2006, aim to alleviate poverty and improve access for learners from poor communities.

The Education Laws Amendment Act of 2007 introduces minimum norms and standards for all schools, outlines school performance indicators, and provides measures to curb the presence of drugs, weapons and other dangerous objects.

Overall, South Africa has a strong suite of policies to support meaningful access to education. The OECD review team argues that although reform policies are of a high conceptual quality, "change management" has failed. Key aspects of policy reform have not reached schools and classrooms.

What are children's prospects for meaningful educational access?

Children's institutional access to education in South Africa is extensive. Analysis of General Household Survey data shows that 96.5% of children aged 7 – 17 years attended some form of education facility in 2007. Attendance rates are high until the age of 14 years, with a 98% attendance rate for 14-year-olds in 2007. Thereafter, attendance rates drop to 95% for 15-year-olds, and 88% for 17-year-olds. Unfortunately, attendance rates do not provide any information on how often children attend school.

Motala and her co-authors argue that children's prospects for meaningful access to basic education depend largely on who has access to what kind of schooling and on what basis. Poverty, race, gender, geography and disability may all affect school attendance and the quality of schools that children attend, as case 3 on p. 28 illustrates.

In terms of attainment, access is meaningful if children are able to progress through school to attain at least grade 9. In terms of achievement, access is meaningful only if children achieve the appropriate learning outcomes at a level right for their grade.

Although the proportion of the population attaining grade 9 has increased, for the majority of children in South Africa meaningful access remains elusive. Poor national averages for language and mathematics in grades 3 and 6 indicate that most children do not acquire the skills and understanding that give substance to the right to education.

The Department of Education has conducted two grade 3 systemic evaluations of children's literacy and numeracy learning achievements, in 2001 and 2007. Provisional results of the 2007 evaluation show improved national and provincial averages (with the exception of Limpopo). Average provincial scores mask variations within provinces. The Western Cape, with the highest mean scores, also has some of the districts with the largest proportion of children out of school. (See the essay on *Children out of School: Evidence from the Community Survey* on pp. 41 – 45 .)

Table 1: Grade 3 mean achievement scores (%) for literacy and numeracy, 2001 & 2007

	Literacy		Numeracy	
	2001	**2007**	**2001**	**2007**
Eastern Cape	24	35	34	36
Free State	27	43	29	42
Gauteng	33	38	32	42
KwaZulu-Natal	35	38	31	36
Limpopo	27	29	26	24
Mpumalanga	28	32	29	31
North West	29	35	25	29
Northern Cape	23	34	26	31
Western Cape	33	48	32	49
South Africa	30	36	30	35

Source: Department of Education (2008) *2007 Grade 3 Systemic Evaluation.* Pretoria: DoE. [Leaflet]

Schools still have a long way to go to enable all, or even most, children to learn to read, write, reason, and work with numbers. For 2011, the Department of Education has set a benchmark of at least 50% for standardised achievement tests. Yet in 2007, only 20% of the participating schools met this benchmark in either literacy or numeracy or both. Interestingly, 31% of the participating learners achieved the benchmark or higher. In other words, even at schools that performed poorly, some children performed well. The reasons for this need to be explored, but may well be related to home circumstances.

Results of the grade 6 national assessment, in 2005, also show that the education system is failing to enable meaningful access for most children. The national average for the language of literacy teaching was 38% and for mathematics only 27%. Overall, children from urban schools fared best; children who fared worst were from provinces that inherited former homelands.

What factors influence children's meaningful access to education?

Children in South Africa are just as able as children anywhere else in the world. So why do their learning achievements fall so far short of international and national benchmarks?

As the OECD review shows, the reasons are complex and relate to children's home circumstances, as well as to conditions within the education system and its schools. (See the essay on *Schools and Communities: Building effective partnership* on pp. 50 – 54 for a discussion on how home circumstances impact on meaningful access.)

Within the school system, inadequate teacher preparation, shortages of textbooks and other materials, language issues, and inadequate or poorly focused learning time all hinder meaningful access. Teachers' competence in the language of learning and teaching is critical. Also, teachers' classroom practices play a crucial role in helping or hindering children's learning. In a review of 20 evaluations of primary mathematics, science and language programmes, the Centre for Development and Enterprise identified key weaknesses: poor curriculum coverage; slow curriculum pacing; little progress in cognitive demand; insufficient written work; inadequate reading practice; and poor feedback to learners.

Willingness to learn is an important condition for meaningful access. A key question for every school and every teacher is how to cultivate a willingness and desire to learn. Case 1 illustrates how children choose to exclude themselves when they do not regard lessons as worthwhile.

Case 1: Locked gates

At a Children's Institute roundtable on education, a participant described a school that locked the school gate when learners were in class and opened it only at the start and end of the school day, and at break.

Perhaps the closed gate helped to make the school more secure. Perhaps it was meant to get teachers and learners to arrive on time and not to shirk during lessons. Instead, learners chose to come for the early or late morning session depending on which teachers and classes they found useful, relevant and stimulating.

Source: Children's Institute (2008) *Meaningful access to basic education. Report on roundtable discussion, 15 October 2008.* Cape Town. Unpublished.

Textbooks and other learning materials

Textbooks are an indispensable educational resource, especially where there are not enough competent teachers for all learning areas. Textbooks help to get national curriculum requirements into the hands of learners and teachers. The OECD review points out that, despite South Africa's strong educational publishing industry, books are scarce in many schools. Learners share books; teachers' reference books are in short supply; photocopied notes and copious copying from the chalkboard are wide-spread. Without books and properly stocked libraries, children have few opportunities for independent and collaborative learning. Only 7.2% of public schools have stocked libraries (see figure 2 on p. 28). An analysis of provincial data shows that schools in predominantly rural provinces are worst off.

Time, class size and teachers' presence

While there are shining examples of well-functioning, caring schools, endemic disorder ravages many of the schools serving the most disadvantaged children. Teacher and learner absenteeism affect the amount and quality of learning time; so, too, do haphazard starts to the school year, lateness for class, and time wastage through copying notes from the chalkboard. In a study undertaken for the Education Labour Relations Council, Linda Chisholm and fellow researchers found that organisational practices at schools and teachers' management of their assessment and reporting duties also seriously erode teaching time.

Although the average ratio of learners-to-teachers for public primary schools is below the official norm of 40:1, over-crowded classrooms and high learner-to-teacher ratios remain a dominant feature in pockets of South Africa's schooling system, especially in schools catering to children from disadvantaged communities. In large classes teachers struggle to attend to individual needs, as is described in case 2.

High teacher absenteeism lowers educational quality and feeds cynicism about the value of education. Reducing teacher and learner absences is key to accomplishing education for all.

Curriculum

The Revised National Curriculum Statement sets out the skills, concepts and values for each learning area, as well as "learning outcomes" for each grade. The three nationally pre-scribed learning programmes (literacy, numeracy and life skills) for the foundation phase stipulate the scope, pace and sequence of classroom learning from grade R to grade 3. In the intermediate and senior phases, teachers are responsible for developing learning programmes for a full suite of learning areas. Unless children acquire a strong basis in the foundation phase, the increased number of learning programmes in later phases may be too steep a climb for some children.

Case 2: "Push, push, push"

Teacher Dyson: *Most times, there is no time you can give those who are struggling. You find that you've got to push-push-push. And at the same time you find you are not ... doing justice to those who are struggling.*

Teacher Sungi: *I know most teachers won't agree with me when I say that seven hours is not enough ... The seven hours that I spend here at school is not only for classroom work, there is administration, there are committees ... work in this and work in that ... then there are ... special children who need attention. So ... when I feel, really, I need more time with them ... on Saturdays I come here, and they enjoy it so much ... It's not just time ... inclusive education can work only if our educators are committed.*

Source: Materechera EK (2008) *The Making of Inclusive Schools in a District of South Africa's North West Province.* Unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand.

Teachers, teaching and teacher education

Low morale pervades the teaching force, and many teachers are bewildered by the multiple demands on their time, the OECD review observes. As a professional practice, teaching entails the organisation of systematic learning. Demanding too much of teachers can distract their attention from this important work. So, what must teachers know and be able to do if they are to fulfil their role in enabling systematic learning? First, because school knowledge is complex, teachers must have an understanding of the 'design' of each learning area they teach, so that they can arrange what is to be learnt in a meaningful sequence. Second, they need a clear conceptual structure for the content to be learned. Finally, they need to think about what learners will do during lessons. Learning happens through children's engagement with cognitive tasks related to the main concepts of the learning area or subject.

School climate

At their best, schools are safe places where children can develop emotionally and socially as well as intellectually, and where they learn — through example and experience, as much as through instruction — of their own and others' rights and responsibilities. At their worst, schools are places where children are vulnerable to abuse, rape, bullying, humiliation, and inadequate support for learning — all of which may impede meaningful access. Unrecognised learning disabilities or poor concentration due to hunger, disease or trauma can also result in children's silent exclusion and eventual drop-out.

Figure 2: Proportion of schools with access to physical infrastructure in 2006

Bar chart showing PROPORTION (%) on the vertical axis (0 to 100):
- water: 89%
- electricity: 84%
- sanitation: 64%
- computers: 32%
- laboratories: 12%
- libraries: 7%
- facilities for learners with disabilities: 2%

Source: Department of Education (2007) *National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS)*. Pretoria: DoE.

Facilities

Access to water and sanitation is essential for children's and teachers' health and well-being. As figure 2 on the next page shows, school infrastructure is inadequate in a substantial proportion of South Africa's schools. While access to electricity has improved dramatically over 10 years, poor sanitation remains a concern. Physical access is limited for people with movement disabilities; very few schools have ramps or toilets for people in wheelchairs.

Case 3 draws on a study of courting practices amongst orphans affected by HIV/AIDS in rural KwaZulu-Natal and illustrates how the interplay of different factors can hinder meaningful access to education.

What is the government doing to improve meaningful access?

The quality of education and meaningful access are closely related. The Department of Education has several initiatives for improving the quality of education at schools. For example, designated Dinaledi schools have been designed to promote meaningful access to mathematics, science and technology, particularly in rural and township areas, while the QIDS-UP programme provides teacher and district support to 5,000 low performing primary schools. The government also plans to train an additional 6,000 teachers over the next three years to address current shortfalls particularly in poor, rural schools.

The Foundations for Learning Campaign targets grades R – 6 at all schools and aims to increase every child's perfor-mance in literacy and mathematics to at least 50% by 2011. Learning programmes prescribe the minimum time that teachers must spend teaching literacy and numeracy skills every day, and set milestones for pacing curriculum content. A resource list prescribes minimum resources (eg wall charts and counting apparatus) for every classroom. Reading kits should have been distributed to primary schools in 2008.

During the campaign, district officials must check that schools are testing children's progress regularly and reporting results to parents. In 2011, the Department of Education will evaluate learning achievements in grades 3 and 6.

Case 3: Forfeiting education?

In the eyes of children's activists in the region, young girls who ... entered *ukugana* relationships were foreclosing their 'futures' in forfeiting their education. Yet the education people received ... was of a particu-larly low standard...

Although educational approaches had changed ... in terms of government policy, this did not translate into quality education for young people at their school. Teachers were unskilled in the creative teaching methods that the new ... curriculum required. Most lessons involved teachers copying sections of text-books onto a black board and getting the children to read and repeat what was written there. A shortage of textbooks ... reinforced this method of instruction. Most lessons were written in English, a language that many of the young people spoke hardly at all ... The political culture of the school emphasized deference towards teachers and unquestioning obedience to their orders, creating an atmosphere that discouraged questions from the young, even when they did not understand what had been written on the board. Although corporal punishment had been outlawed ... some teachers carried sticks with them to class ...

Teachers themselves were demoralised, something that seemed to be symbolised in a burnt-out class room that remained neglected for over nine months. Another classroom was empty except for a discarded pile of torn text books strewn in the dust ...

Source: Henderson P (2009) *'Ukugana'*: Informal marriage and children's rights discourse among 'Aids-orphans' in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Paper presented at the Living Rights Symposium, Institut Universitaire Kurt Bosch, Sion, Switzerland, 19 – 20 January 2009.

The campaign tackles many in-school barriers to learning, such as insufficient time on task, poor curriculum pacing, insufficient reading and writing practice, and inadequate learning materials. It holds schools, teachers and districts accountable for supporting learning. If it succeeds, the campaign could go a long way towards enabling epistemological access for many more children.

What are the recommendations?

Despite impressive accomplishments in policy development and high enrolment rates, meaningful access to basic education is a reality for only a small proportion of children. Children in South Africa have the same capacities as children elsewhere and poor learning achievements result largely from failures within the education system, at district and school levels. For many children, home and community circumstances are also barriers to meaningful educational access.

What can be done? Some key recommendations:

- **For teachers and learners:** Show up, on time, every day, for every class; use teaching and learning time well.

- **For school principals:** Support teachers to teach; reduce interruptions to teaching and learning time; work with teachers, the school governing body, children and their parents to create a safe and supportive learning environment.

- **For parents, communities and civil society:** Monitor, and lobby for, equitable distribution of core resources (ie every primary school should be receiving and using reading packs for the Foundations for Learning Campaign).

- **For district officials:** Provide constructive oversight; communicate clearly and support schools in a way that facilitates the implementation of policy, builds relational trust and holds staff accountable.

- **For the Department of Education and teacher educators:** Provide incentives such as bursaries and occupational-specific dispensation to attract and retain teachers; ensure pre- and in-service teacher education which prepares teachers to teach effectively in the different contexts of South African schools; put support systems in place to ensure the quality and well-being of teaching staff.

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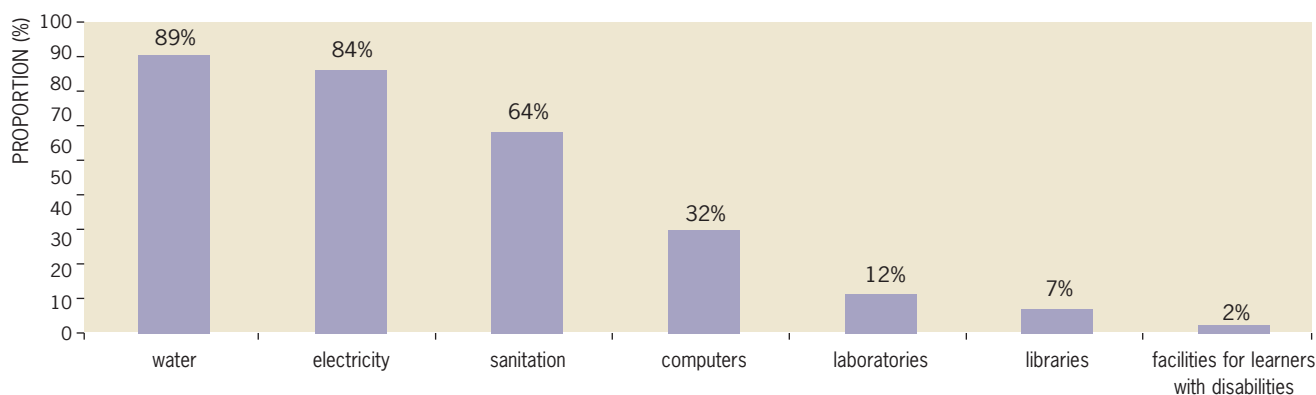
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South African Schools Act (84 of 1996).

How budgetary frameworks
support meaningful access to education

Russell Wildeman (Institute for Democracy in South Africa)

Most people would agree that budgets promote access to public services, but it is less clear whether budgets are capable of facilitating access to quality education. Education involves a range of complex processes, so it is not realistic to expect a simple one-to-one relationship between inputs and outputs. It is therefore important to consider to what extent budgets and budgetary frameworks can support the delivery of quality education.

This essay examines:

- What is meant by a credible education budget?
- How does the current budgetary framework affect access to education?
- What policies regulate access to basic education?
- How does expenditure vary between provinces?
- What is the relationship between education budgets and meaningful access to education?

What is a credible education budget?

The delivery of education services is not as straightforward as providing a social grant to a beneficiary. The social contract between government and the beneficiary is concluded once the grant has been paid, but the delivery of education services is a much more complex process that depends on a number of variables. This means it is important to evaluate the actual composition of education spending. For example: How much money is spent on teacher salaries; school buildings and infrastructure; school books and other teaching aids?

An education budget must be credible in two senses. Firstly, the budget must make good financial sense and account for all necessary expenditure. Secondly, the budget must give effect to sound educational policies and promote meaningful access to education.

In the late 1990s, the South African government warned against spending the bulk of the education budget on teacher salaries, and called for more strategic spending in education. Many provinces consistently overspent their school budgets; and the focus on teacher salaries left little money for other resources such as textbooks, libraries, support staff and infrastructure.

It is not hard to see what the government was driving at: Meaningful access to education is severely compromised if school buildings are falling apart and learners don't have access to good quality textbooks.

The current budgetary framework is a direct response to the hefty spending on personnel (notably teacher salaries) in the late 1990s. The framework aims to moderate expenditure on personnel and increase expenditure on textbooks, school buildings and provision for school funding. This suggests a more balanced approach to education spending, but does the new budgetary framework promote meaningful access to education?

How does the current budgetary framework affect access to education?

Budgetary frameworks can be looked at from various angles, but it is most revealing to focus on transversal expenditure (items that are common to all education programmes), and the relative expenditure on different education programmes (eg public schools, special needs education, etc.). Figure 3 provides information about transversal expenditure in provincial education budgets for the period 2004/05 to 2010/11.

Figure 3: Transversal expenditure items in provincial education budgets: real spending (2007 Rands), 2004/05 – 2010/11
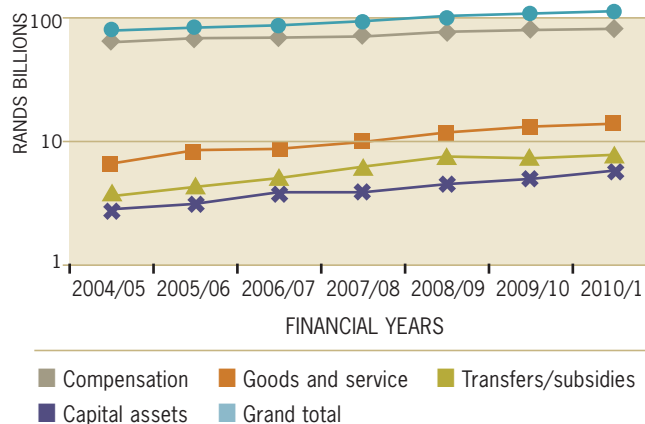
Source: Wildeman RA & Lefko-Everett K (2008) *Reviewing Provincial Education Budgets, 2004 to 2010.* Cape Town: IDASA.

Expenditure on compensation (teacher salaries and benefits) is projected to decline by seven percentage points (from approximately 83% of the total provincial education budget in 2004/05 to 76% in 2009/10). These savings have been used to support increased spending in other areas. For example: Expenditure on goods and services is projected to grow from 8.5% in 2004/05 to 12.2% in 2009/10, and expenditure on capital (mostly school buildings) is projected to consume 7.2% of the total provincial education budget in 2009/10.

These patterns are also reflected in the real average annual growth rates. Expenditure on compensation is projected to grow in real terms by 4.1% on average over the period 2004/05 to 2010/11. Expenditure on goods, services and transfers is projected to grow by more than 13% and expenditure on capital is projected to grow by 12.3% over the same period.

The critical question is how these changes affect access to education. Has moderating spending on teacher salaries limited learners' access to quality education or does a more 'balanced' expenditure framework support the delivery of quality education? Figure 4 provides a different perspective and illustrates trends in provincial spending on education programmes.

Figure 4: Relative spending on provincial education programmes: real spending trends (2007 Rands), 2004/05 – 2010/11

Legend:
- Public Ordinary Schools
- Further Education and Training
- Early Childhood Development (ECD)
- Special needs
- Adult Basic Education

Expenditure on public ordinary schools represents the largest claim on provincial education budgets, but figure 4 clearly shows upward trends in spending on other programmes. This means that the moderation of spending on teacher salaries has resulted in increased expenditure in programmes such as grade R (or early childhood development), special needs education, and public further education and training (FET) colleges. Access to public schooling is still a priority but spending on complementary services that improve access to public schooling (such as grade R and special needs) has increased significantly.

While it is easy to agree with the government's argument that spending was disproportionately focused on teacher salaries, it is clear that the current budgetary framework does not settle questions about access to meaningful education. In fact, the government appears unwilling to confront the question about how expenditures need to change to give more meaningful access. The same framework that was adopted in the late 1990s is still in place despite powerful arguments for improving teacher salaries and overall working conditions. Yet, until recently the government has been reluctant to modify this framework and has instead increased expenditure on non-personnel items.

Which policies regulate access to basic education?

The government has introduced a range of policies to redress past inequalities and improve access to basic education. This includes: Norms and Standards for School Funding; no-fee schools and school-fee exemptions; the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP); special needs; grade R and occupational specific dispensation (OSD) for educators.

Norms and Standards for School Funding

The Norms and Standards for School Funding policy contains guidelines about how to direct non-personnel and non-capital expenditures to public ordinary schools and independent schools. These funds are meant to be used by public schools to pay for learner and teaching support materials (eg textbooks), utility bills, small capital expenditures (such as photocopiers and printers) and non-emergency repairs to schools. Table 2 provides information on the growth of school funding for the period 2000 to 2006.

Table 2: The size of school allocations and summary inequality measures, 2000 – 2006

Year	Total allocation (R billions)	Per learner allocation (Rands)	Coefficient of variation	Mean absolute deviation
2000	R1,29	R110	0.50	47.2
2001	R1,87	R162	0.33	53.6
2002	R1,95	R172	0.48	80.7
2003	R2,48	R216	0.41	69.5
2004	R2,77	R242	0.27	60.3
2005	R3,54	R304	0.22	65.7
2006	R4,25	R357	0.19	61.0

Note: The total allocations in 2002 and 2003 exclude the North West province because no reliable data exist or were available for these years.

The almost four-fold increase in the size of the school-level allocation confirms education authorities' interpretation that non-personnel expenditures are central to improving access to quality education. Two measures of inequality, namely the coefficient of variation and the mean absolute deviation[1], indicate that provincial inequalities in per learner spending are declining over time. However, provincial aggregates hide important differences in the funding allocations for rich, poor and very poor schools.

No-fee schools and school-fee exemptions

No-fee schools are an extension of the principles of the school funding norms and standards in that the best redress funding is reserved for schools serving the poorest of the poor. During the Education Department's 2003 policy review, the idea of fee-free schools was proposed as a strategy to combat inequalities and improve access to basic education for large numbers of poor learners. Due to the limited funding in provincial education budgets, the Department of Education hoped a national conditional grant would ease funding pressures on provinces. However, this did not materialise; so no-fee schools are being phased in gradually.

In 2009, no-fee schools were extended to reach approximately 60% of learners. However, funding allocations for no-fee schools vary both within and across provinces, raising concerns about the equitable implementation of the policy. Research conducted by the Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security suggests that while many no-fee schools are financially better off than before, state funding for no-fee schools is not sufficient to provide quality education (see the essay *Addressing quality through school fees and school funding* on pp. 35 – 40). It may well be that no-fee schools now face the twin difficulties of inadequate state funding and loss of income from school fees, which make such schools acutely vulnerable.

A further policy designed to promote equitable access to education is the introduction of school-fee exemptions in 2006. This policy enables learners from poor households who attend fee-paying schools to apply for school-fee exemptions. Orphans and children receiving social grants are automatically exempt from paying fees — in theory, but often not in practice. Many schools are reluctant to implement the policy, as exemptions are not funded.

The National School Nutrition Programme

The NSNP aims to alleviate the impact of poverty and hunger by providing meals and/or snacks to targeted learners in many primary and some secondary schools. Yet funding for the NSNP has been inconsistent in the post-2000 era. Figure 5 compares the growth in the school nutrition and HIV/AIDS grants with the total conditional grant allocation to provincial education departments over the period 2003/04 to 2009/10.

Figure 5: Tracking transfers to provincial education departments, 2003/04 – 2009/10

	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
■ HIV/AIDS	2.2	−2.4	1.0	4.1	1.7	1.1
■ National school nutrition	2.3	28.4	−5.9	0.1	2.6	2.3
■ Total grant allocation	−16.2	21.1	30.8	6.1	10.3	−34.7
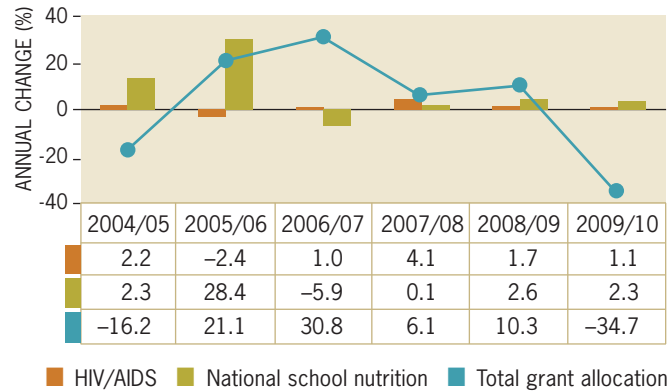
Source: Wildeman RA (2007) *A Review of National and Provincial Education Budgets 2007.* Cape Town: IDASA.

In 2006/07, the public further education and training (FET) grant was introduced into provincial education budgets (see figure 6 on the next page). This represented a direct trade-off with the school nutrition grant, which actually declined by approximately 6% in real terms in the same year. While great strides have been made in improving learners' access to critical non-personnel expenditure items through the school funding norms and standards, inconsistent funding has compromised the delivery of school-feeding programmes at many primary and secondary schools.

Special needs

Inclusive education refers to the provision of special needs schools and the education of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. Special needs education represents another example of how a policy that guarantees better access to education was limited by poor resourcing in its implementation. Figure 6 shows the relative priority given to different education programmes at provincial level for the period 2003/04 to 2009/10.

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1 The 'coefficient of variation' and the 'mean absolute deviation' are measures of inequality. Put simply, they indicate the differences in per capita expenditures across the nine provincial education departments. If there are no differences in what provinces invest on average for each learner, then these measures would be zero (0). Thus, the further away these values move from zero, the larger the differences between provinces.

Figure 6: The relative prioritisation of different service delivery programmes, 2003/04 – 2009/10
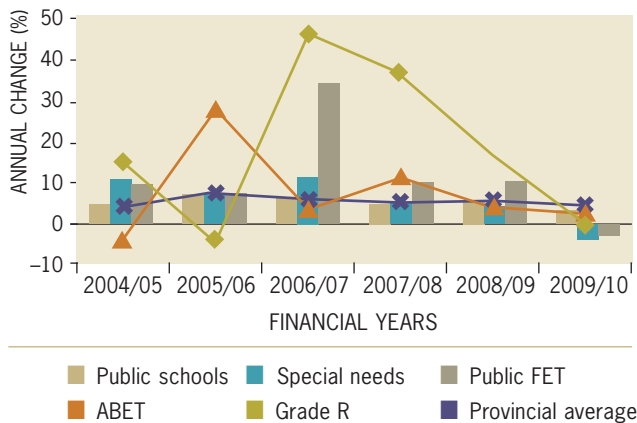
While the consolidated provincial budget (or provincial average) showed a steady increase from 2004/05 to 2009/10, expenditure on grade R (ECD) and public FET outpaced expenditure on special needs for most of the period. This trend explains why many provincial education departments were reluctant to implement the targeting of out-of-school learners with disabilities fully. Budgetary frameworks that emphasised public schools, grade R and public FET did not address the needs of many poor learners with disabilities who are still out of school. In 2008, this picture improved as a significantly large sum of money was set aside by the national government to fast-track the implementation of inclusive education policies. This may account for the high proportion of children with disabilities who are currently out of school. (See the essay *Children out of school: Evidence from the Community Survey* on pp. 41 – 45.)

Grade R

Access to grade R has gathered momentum towards achieving universal access by 2010 (when there should be at least one grade R class attached to each public primary school). Although ECD expenditure starts from a low spending base, it is significant that provincial education departments are at least trying to improve access for the young. Nominal expenditure on ECD (mostly grade R allocations) was projected to grow from R932 million in 2007/08 to R3.2 billion in 2010/11 at a real average annual rate of 34.1%. It is the fastest growing education programme in the provinces.

Occupational Specific Dispensation

Although there has been much talk about improving the quality of teaching and teachers, there was little, if any, discussion of what this meant in terms of compensation of teachers until 2006, when the government first proposed the introduction of occupational specific dispensation. OSD aims to attract and retain certain categories of professional staff in the public service, including teachers. In education, OSD provides for performance-based salary increases that aim to improve teaching quality and keep skilled educators in the classroom. The OSD agreement for education was signed in April 2008 and an average salary increase of 4.5% (over and above the ordinary annual increase) was implemented retrospectively to January 2008. This led to a significant increase in spending. The 2008/09 costs of OSD in the North West province alone were estimated at R232 million, and that province's 2009/10 budget for OSD is set at R389 million.

This marks a significant shift from previous fiscal policies that attempted to contract the public sector and reduce spending on salaries. As the first performance-linked pay progressions are only scheduled for 2010, it remains to be seen how this policy will affect the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom.

How does expenditure vary between the provinces?

Access to education under apartheid was determined largely by race and the region where children went to school. The amalgamation of the old provincial education authorities severely limited the impact of race on education planning and budgeting, but region is still an important variable. The data tables that follow track the extent to which provincial inequalities have been reduced.

Table 3: Summary of key inequality measures in provincial education departments, 2004/05, 2005/06 & 2006/07

	National per learner average (Rands)	Coefficient of variation	Average per capita spending of poor provinces as factor of national average	Average per capita spending of rich provinces as factor of national average
2004/05	4,930	0.09	1.01	1.10
2005/06	5,453	0.11	1.01	1.10
2006/07	5,995	0.14	1.01	0.97

Note: The provinces defined as 'poor' are the Eastern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga, while the 'rich' provinces are Gauteng, the Northern Cape and the Western Cape.

Table 3 summarises variations in the allocation of the total provincial education budget. In 2004/05 and 2005/06, poor provinces were spending the same amount per learner as the national average, while richer provinces spent 10% more than the national average. However, in 2006/07, the joint average spending of rich provinces dropped significantly to 3% below the national per learner average.

Table 4: Key inequality measures in provincial public ordinary school budgets, 2005/06, 2006/07 & 2007/08

	National per learner average (Rands)	Coefficient of variation	Average per learner spending of poor provinces as factor of national average	Average per learner spending of rich provinces as factor of national average
2005/06	5,075	0.10	0.99	1.10
2006/07	5,549	0.13	0.99	0.98
2007/08	6,201	0.06	0.98	1.09

Source: Wildeman RA & Lefko-Everett K (2008) *Reviewing Provincial Education Budgets, 2004 to 2010.* Cape Town: IDASA.

Note: The provinces defined as 'poor' are the Eastern Cape, Free State, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Mpumalanga, while the 'rich' provinces are Gauteng, the Northern Cape and the Western Cape.

Table 4 focuses on variations in the public ordinary school budget. In 2007/08, poor provinces invested 2% less in public ordinary schools than the national per learner average, while the richer provinces invested 9% more than the national average for the same period. However the decrease in the coefficient of variation indicates that inequality levels have declined to a very low relative level, suggesting almost complete equality in inter-provincial spending on public ordinary schools.

From an access point of view, it appears to matter little whether a child attends a school in Mpumalanga or the Western Cape. Useful as these measures are, they do not capture the backlogs in education provisioning, and may therefore promote a false picture of inter-provincial equality. Also, provinces have different ratios of personnel and non-personnel expenditure, which mean that access issues must be thought of differently in, for example, the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape. The Western Cape spends more on good quality and senior teachers, while the Eastern Cape spends more on non-personnel resources.

These kinds of choices will have implications for access, but it is not clear which one of these choices is most likely to offer meaningful access to basic education. How one evaluates such spending frameworks and their relation to meaningful access cannot be determined by looking at outcomes measures alone, but must also be seen in the context of redressing inequalities.

What are the conclusions?

Access to education has dramatically improved in the post-1994 period. According to the General Household Survey, 96.5% of children of school-going age were attending some form of school or educational facility in 2007 (see p. 82). Although there are still large infrastructure backlogs, infra-structure budgets have grown substantially in the last few years and are set to continue to grow at a robust pace. However, this kind of institutional access does not necessarily equate to quality education.

This distinction mirrors the difference between a purely bricks and mortar approach and one that looks at the outcomes achieved by learners across the system. This short review of budgetary frameworks suggests that it is easier to align budgetary frameworks with institutional access because the outcomes can be measured more easily. One simply asks what resources have been allocated to a particular programme, how many learners have access to such a programme, if there is adequate provisioning for infra-structure and if there are the right number of teachers to lead such a programme. These questions are indeed important, but they do not indicate whether learners have access to a quality education.

Budgetary frameworks that are aligned to the vision of quality basic education are far more subject to interpretation. Post-1994, the government argued that a greater investment in non-personnel expenditures would yield greater returns in quality than increased spending on salaries. However, this argument was clouded by the government's concerns to trim the cost of education and its demands on the national fiscus. Domestic and international empirical research shows that both teaching and non-teaching inputs are important for good quality education; yet very little was done to improve teachers' status and working conditions until the introduction of OSD in 2008.

More than 13 years since the current expenditure frame-work was adopted, South Africa's learners continue to perform badly in comparison with their counterparts in deve-loping countries. While the occupational specific dispensation recognises the central role of teachers in ensuring quality education, it remains to be seen whether the introduction of a performance-based incentive system for educators will translate into improved educational outcomes for children.

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Addressing quality through school fees and school funding

Katharine Hall (Children's Institute) and Sonja Giese (Promoting Access to Children's Entitlements)

The idea of free schooling is primarily about removing the financial barriers to education. Two mechanisms have been introduced to alleviate the financial costs of schooling for poor children: School-fee exemptions, introduced by the South African Schools Act of 1996 and outlined in the regulations of 2006, and the no-fee school policy outlined in the Amended National Norms and Standards for School Funding of 2006.

Although these policies are ostensibly about addressing financial barriers to education, they are also part of a broader education funding strategy designed to promote more equitable access to better quality education.

This essay outlines the two fee-waiver policies and describes how they are meant to work in practice, and then considers the implementation and effect of no-fee schools as a redistributive mechanism:

- What policies govern school fees and school funding?
- How are the school quintiles determined for no-fee schools?
- How has the quintile system been implemented?
- Are the current funding allocations adequate?
- What are some of the implementation challenges facing no-fee schools?
- How does the policy impact on school revenue and quality education?

This essay draws partly on a study of the implementation and impact of the no-fee and exemption policies, commissioned by the Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security (ACESS) in 2008. The study combined policy and literature reviews with primary research and secondary analysis of data from three provinces. An analysis of national Education Management Information System (EMIS) data was undertaken by the Children's Institute and is presented here for the first time.

What policies govern school fees and school funding?

Post-apartheid funding policy in education aimed to support the development of a new national system of education that, according to the Schools Act, aimed to "redress past injustices in educational provision [and] provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners".

Education funding policy is therefore explicitly oriented towards improving the quality of school education by redressing the historic inequalities in school funding. Given the spatial distribution of schools and the communities they serve, it is extremely difficult to equalise resources and reduce inequality. More importantly, the norms and standards funding model relates to a very small part of the education budget, while the bulk of spending (on teaching salaries) is not redistributive.

As discussed in the previous essay, national policy in the 1990s required cuts in the number of teaching staff to boost expenditure on equipment and learning materials. If anything, this approach increased disparities in the quality of education: Schools with relatively wealthy parent bodies were able to raise funds to employ more teaching staff, while education suffered in schools serving poor communities. The Amended Norms and Standards acknowledge the irony that, "given the emphasis on redress and equity, the funding provisions of the Act appear to have worked thus far to the advantage of public schools patronised by middle-class and wealthy parents." School-fee exemptions and no-fee schools are both attempts to redistribute resources and improve access to quality education, but they fail to address unequal teaching capacity because salaries are not allocated on a pro-poor basis.

School-fee exemption

The school-fee exemption is meant to be redistributive in that it enables children from poor areas to access fee-charging schools in better resourced areas. In effect, paying parents directly subsidise poorer learners. As school fees are set by the school governing body (SGB), they vary according to what the school community considers necessary and affordable.

Having set the fees at the 'affordable' level, the school is required to exempt learners from households with incomes that fall below a prescribed means test. The formula for the means test takes into account the combined income of the parents and number of school-going children they support in relation to the annual school fees set by the SGB. In addition, certain categories of children (or their caregivers) are automatically eligible for full exemptions, irrespective of their

income, including children in foster care, kinship care or child-headed households, and those receiving social grants.

The main criticism of the policy is that it is unfunded: Schools are not reimbursed, so each exemption is a loss of revenue for the school, with implications for the quality of education it offers. A counter-argument is that it may not be an equitable use of public resources to spend large proportions of the education budget on reimbursing schools that charge fees, at the expense of investments in poorer schools. While the debate has largely been polarised between an 'all or nothing' approach, a compromise allowing for partial reimbursement could be considered. The Department of Education (DoE) has indicated that it is investigating possible compensation for fee exemptions.

The lack of compensation has made schools extremely reluctant to implement the exemption policy, and even to accept learners who may be unable to pay fees. Numerous commentators, including Veriava and Fiske and Ladd, reported that almost no exemptions were applied for or granted in the first few years.

Two important developments have increased implemen-tation of the exemption policy. First, the exemption regulations of 2006 made it compulsory for schools to inform parents about the policy and how to apply for a fee exemption. This included a sample letter and form to send to all parents to confirm that they had been made aware of the exemption.

The second event was a High Court judgment in 2007, which clarified that the exemption policy must be implemented by schools and enforced by provincial education departments (see case 4).

No-fee schools

In 2007, a new funding policy was implemented nationally, in which the poorest 40% of schools were granted no-fee status. No-fee schools may not charge fees; instead, funding allocations are skewed to ensure that the poorest schools receive the largest per-learner allocations. The no-fee policy is reliant on a national poverty ranking system which divides all schools into quintiles. This forms the basis of a spatially targeted, pro-poor funding approach. From its inception, the no-fee policy has been applied to both primary and secondary schools, including the Further Education and Training phase (grades 10 – 12).

Case 4: Fee exemptions at the Hunt Road Secondary School

In 2006, the mothers of two children attending a Durban secondary school were sued for school-fee arrears. Both women were poor, black, single mothers with multiple dependants, who qualified for fee exemptions. With the help of the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) at the University of the Witwatersrand, they took the school, its governing body, the provincial and national ministers of education to court. The main complaint was that they had not been given an opportunity to apply for the fee exemption because the school was not following the correct proce-dures required to implement the policy.

The defence for the school and its governing body (SGB) put forward two main arguments. First, it was argued that the school had limited resources and was already strug-gling to provide the necessary teachers and facilities to ensure an adequate education for its learners. CALS countered that a school's financial difficulties are no justifi-cation for failing to comply with the law, and that rather than (unlawfully) pursuing fee payments from poor parents, the school could approach the provincial education depart-ment for funding review. They pointed out that much of the school's response constituted a grievance against the department rather than the impoverished mothers of learners. For instance, the school had suggested that despite being in a middle-income area, it should be classi-fied as a "township" school because many of its learners commuted from townships. This indicated a problem in the school's classification and funding allocation.

Second, the school argued that it had actually complied with the legal framework, and that the mothers had not applied for exemptions. However, the applicants pointed out several instances where the school and SGB failed to comply with the procedural requirements for the exemption. For instance, it issued an annual circular to parents which, instead of explicitly informing them of the policy and appli-cation procedure (as required by regulation), emphasised that parents must pay school fees and hinted that parents in financial difficulty could contact the school to discuss alternatives. In response to evidence that the mothers had been turned away when asking about exemptions, the school said it was because they had asked about "bur-saries" rather than exemptions. The applicants said this reduced the issue to a matter of semantics, and showed that the school and its SGB had not acted in good faith.

Adv Faranaaz Veriava at CALS emphasised that the case was not an isolated one — rather, it illustrated a systemic problem in the design and implementation of policy. The judgment, in favour of the applicants, affirmed that schools must comply with the law and implement the exemption policy. An important implication of the judgment is a shift in the onus of responsibility: Parents of learners in public schools cannot be sued for non-payment of fees unless the school has determined that they do not qualify for an exemption, and has given them an opportunity to appeal.

Neither the provincial or national departments defended the action. The DoE publicly supported the judgment, which required schools to comply with the legislation.

Source: *Centre for Applied Legal Studies and Others v Hunt Road Secondary School and Others,* Case No. 10091/2006. High Court of South Africa, Durban and Coast Local Division (DCLD) [Unreported]

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How are school quintiles determined?

South Africa's schools are divided into five categories or "quintiles", according to their poverty ranking. The poorest schools are included in quintile 1 and the least poor in quintile 5. There are two steps in the classification of schools. First, a national poverty table, prepared by the Treasury, determines the poverty ranking of areas based on data from the national census including income levels, dependency ratios and literacy rates in the area. Provinces then rank schools from quintile 1 to 5, according to the catchment area of the school. Each national quintile contains 20% of all learners, with quintile 1 representing the poorest 20% and quintile 5 the wealthiest 20%. However, provincial inequalities mean that these quintiles are unevenly distributed across provinces. According to the 2003 Plan of Action, the rationale for national ranking (according to the previous provincial ranking) is to ensure that "equally poor learners across the country will be subject to the same pro-poor targeting".

The quintile ranking of a school is important because it determines the no-fee status of the school. Each year the Minister of Education determines the quintiles or parts of quintiles where schools may not charge compulsory school fees. In 2007, quintiles 1 and 2 were identified as no-fee schools.

The quintile ranking determines the amount of money that a school receives. The poorest schools receive the greatest per-learner allocation, based on the assumption that schools in wealthier communities are better able to raise funds and require less support from government. The policy requires that 60% of the available resources must be distributed to the poorest 40% of learners (ie quintiles 1 and 2).

How are learners and schools distributed across quintiles?

Although quintile rankings are allocated to schools, the proportions refer not to the institutions, but to the number of

Figure 7: Distribution of schools and learners across quintiles, compared to national targets
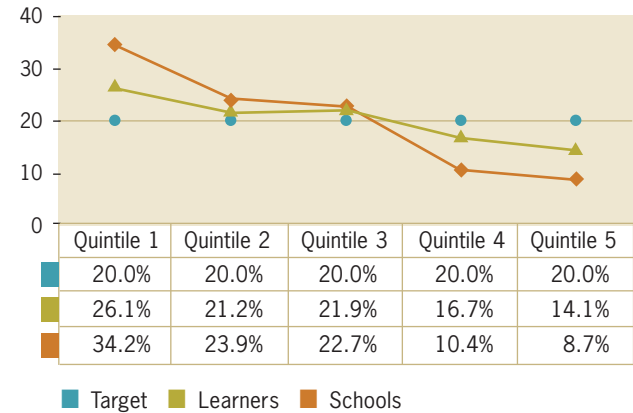
	Quintile 1	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5
■	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%
■	26.1%	21.2%	21.9%	16.7%	14.1%
■	34.2%	23.9%	22.7%	10.4%	8.7%

■ Target ■ Learners ■ Schools

Source: Department of Education (2008) Education Management Information System data. Pretoria: DoE. Analysis by Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Note: Data are based on public ordinary schools in 2008, and exclude 275 out of 24,710 schools where quintile was unspecified.

learners in each quintile. Lower quintile schools are smaller, on average, than upper quintile schools — for instance, the mean number of learners in quintile 1 schools is 331, compared with just over 700 learners in quintile 5 schools, based on analysis of 2008 EMIS data. About a third (34%) of schools nationally were allocated quintile 1 status in 2008. This achieved coverage of 26% of learners nationally, resulting in a slight over-representation of learners in quintile 1, where the maximum per-learner allocation applies. Conversely, schools in quintile 5 are relatively large, and only 8.7% of schools were allocated quintile 5 status, covering 14% of learners nationally.

The national poverty distribution table stipulates what proportion of learners in each province should be accommodated in each quintile. The quintile system attempts to address the uneven distribution of poverty across provinces, with the poorest provinces having the greatest number of learners in quintiles 1 and 2. For example, 34.8% of learners in the Eastern Cape should be accommodated in quintile 1

Table 5: National poverty distribution table — targets and actual quintiles, 2008

| | National quintiles | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 (poorest) | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 (least poor) | | Total |
	Target %	Actual %	Target %	Actual %	Target %	Actual %	Target %	Actual %	Target %	Actual %	%
Eastern Cape	34.8	34.6	21.6	31.2	21.0	20.3	11.6	7.8	10.9	6.0	100
Free State	30.8	64.1	14.9	12.5	20.1	10.2	18.8	6.9	15.4	6.3	100
Gauteng	10.5	11.0	11.4	10.6	27.4	31.4	27.2	26.5	23.6	20.5	100
KwaZulu-Natal	24.2	34.2	18.8	23.3	25.6	23.6	17.3	10.7	14.1	8.2	100
Limpopo	34.0	40.3	22.3	30.8	24.9	22.2	11.6	4.4	7.2	2.2	100
Mpumalanga	16.7	25.9	20.2	29.6	29.8	20.6	19.9	14.2	13.5	9.7	100
North West	22.7	36.2	15.2	19.3	30.5	40.2	20.5	2.1	11.0	2.2	100
Northern Cape	26.3	41.7	17.7	25.0	21.6	15.0	14.8	7.9	19.6	10.5	100
Western Cape	6.5	19.5	8.0	8.4	23.1	17.2	27.7	23.3	34.6	31.6	100
SOUTH AFRICA	20.0	34.2	20.0	23.9	20.0	22.7	20.0	10.4	20.0	8.7	100

Sources: Department of Education (2006) Regulations Relating to the Exemption of Parents from Payment of School Fees in Public Schools. *Government Gazette* No. 29311, Government Notice No. 1052, 18 October 2006. Pretoria: DoE. Department of Education (2008) Education Management Information System data. Pretoria: DoE. Analysis by Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Note: EMIS data are based on public ordinary schools in 2008, and excludes 275 out of 24,710 schools where quintile was unspecified. An updated poverty table, with revised quintile rankings, is included in the no-fee schools lists for 2009, published in October 2008 and available on www.education.gov.za.

schools, as opposed to 6.5% of learners in the relatively wealthy Western Cape.

An analysis of the actual allocation of quintiles shows the provincial disparity in quintile allocations and demonstrates the redistributive nature of the policy. When comparing the target and actual distribution, a much larger proportion of learners nationally attend schools in the no-fee category (quintiles 1 and 2) than envisaged. This raises questions about whether provincial budgets are sufficient to provide the appropriate level learner allocation to so many learners.

How has the quintile system been implemented?

Primary research commissioned by ACESS in 22 schools across three provinces identified several challenges with the ranking of schools. Principals of participating schools in the upper quintiles called for a review of their quintile status based on learner demographics. The main disputed areas were:

- **Outdated source data:** Spatial targeting it is not always precise. The main national data source used to determine the poverty score is the census, which is quickly outdated in the context of urban migration.

- **Ranking errors:** In some instances schools in the same area are ranked differently, resulting in unequal allocations to schools serving the same community.

- **Failure to consider learner demographics:** Poor schools close to less poor areas may be prejudiced by the relative

wealth of their neighbours, and ranked in a higher quintile than appropriate. The ranking system only considers the physical location of the school and does not take into account learner demographics. For many reasons, including freedom of choice, quality of education and necessity, some poor children go to school in other areas, but the spatial-targeting approach does not allow the learner subsidy to 'follow the child'. This, coupled with the lack of compensation for fee waivers, means that schools that accept these children suffer financially.

- **Masking inequality:** Quintile rankings can mask large disparities between schools that are ranked equally (within and across provinces).

- **Poor communication:** Poor communication and lack of consultation leave schools and parents confused about schools' status and rank. Misleading statements by politicians about free education have added to the confusion, and resulted in parents refusing to pay fees.

A circuit manager in the Eastern Cape remarked:

Everybody is fuming with rage with the issue of quintiles ... People do not understand the tools used by the department to determine which school should fall into quintile 5 or 1. In the same locality, one [school] can be in quintile 1 and 2 while the one next to it is in quintile 4. The policy can only be successful if parents fully understand it.

Schools can apply to change their quintile ranking, but it is not a straightforward process.

Are the current funding allocations adequate?

The recommended per-learner allocation for each quintile is determined by the DoE and published annually in the *Government Gazette*. A national "table of targets" indicates the per-learner amount that provinces should allocate to schools in each quintile to cover non-capital and non-personnel costs. The school allocation is then calculated by multiplying the learner allocation by the number of learners enrolled at the school.

The national targets, in table 6, are pro-poor in that the year-on-year increases in allocations to schools are greatest in the lower quintiles, while increases for the upper quintiles barely keep pace with inflation. The intention is that allocations to the poorest schools will increase disproportionately over time, creating a more even distribution of school resources.

Table 6: National targets for the school allocation, 2007 – 2010

	Annual per-learner allocation			
	2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**
Quintile 1	R738	R775	R807	R855
Quintile 2	R677	R711	R740	R784
Quintile 3*	R554	R581	R605	R641
Quintile 4	R369	R388	R404	R428
Quintile 5	R123	R129	R134	R147

Sources: Department of Education (2006) Amended National Norms & Standards. *Government Gazette* No. 29179, 31 August 2006. Pretoria: DoE.
Department of Education (2007) National Norms and Standards for School Funding. *Government Gazette* No. 30332, Notice No. 883, 26 September 2007. Pretoria: DoE.
Note: *The quintile 3 allocation corresponds to the 'adequacy benchmark' set by the DoE.

The Education Department sets an 'adequacy benchmark' — the minimum amount needed to meet the non-personnel and non-capital costs of a learner's education. (Teachers' salaries are paid directly by the department.) However, Wildeman has raised concerns about whether this amount is sufficient to enable schools — particularly those in poor rural areas — to function effectively.

Provinces receive an equitable share of the total education budget. Poorer provinces have a greater proportion of poor schools and are therefore required to pay out more learner allocations to schools in the no-fee quintiles than richer provinces. This may result in wide disparities in funding allocated to schools in different provinces.

What are some of the implementation challenges facing no-fee schools?

The ACESS research highlighted a number of challenges relating to the management and expenditure of school allocations.

Provincial variability: The actual transfer of funds to schools is managed by provincial education departments, but there is some variation in the way this is managed in different provinces, which in turn makes it difficult to establish a consolidated monitoring system.

Transfer delays: Late or unreliable transfers in some provinces played havoc with school cash flows. This may improve as a recent amendment to the norms and standards places an obligation on provincial departments to transfer payments to public schools before 15 May each year.

Inflexible budgets: Allocations for different budget line items are often fixed and inflexible. For instance, allocations for municipal services are sometimes insufficient to cover costs, and schools are unsure how or where to access funds to cover arrears. Some rural schools received specific allocations for municipal services, but had no piped water or electricity — and were unsure whether or how the funds could be reallocated to other line items.

Financial management and poor communication: In section 21 schools, SGBs are required to monitor all funds received and spent, keep financial records, and prepare budgets at the start of the new year. Yet schools are not always informed of the exact amount, purpose and date of transfer of allocations, making budgets difficult to manage. Provincial departments are required to notify schools in writing once a transfer has been made — but this was not always done.

Lack of capacity: Despite efforts to provide financial management training to SGBs, the financial reporting requirements remain complex and onerous, and proper budgetary management is beyond the capacity of many schools. Apparently schools in Limpopo that did not submit annual financial statements by mid-year were penalised by forfeiting 70% of their allocation.

Poor management of funds on behalf of section 20 schools: Where provincial departments manage expenditure on behalf of section 20 schools, challenges include delays in procurement and service payments, and difficulties in keeping track of expenditure. Schools are therefore unable to reconcile their spending against their budgets, but are still expected to operate within the confines of their budget allocations.

Better support and training, combined with clear mechanisms to track all transfers into school accounts will promote better financial management and accountability.

How does the policy impact on school revenue and education quality?

The changes in funding allocations to schools over the period 2005 to 2008 have been redistributive in nature, with the largest increases going to the poorest schools.

In order to calculate whether no-fee schools are better or worse off than before, it is necessary to compare the income of schools before no-fee status (smaller norms and standards allocation + school fees) versus the income after being declared a no-fee school (larger norms and standards allocation + no school fees).

Information on school fees for the three-year period 2005 to 2007 was collected from 1,326 schools in Limpopo, enabling comparison of school revenue over the period when the no-fee policy was introduced. The Limpopo data showed a net benefit for no-fee schools, even when taking into account the loss of fee revenue. In 2006, 92% of schools that became no-fee increased their revenue by an average of R60,000 per year. A principal from a Limpopo school commented:

> The school used to charge R55 per learner... which was very hard to collect from all the parents. Now we receive a lump sum, which is a great improvement for our budget.

Self-reported school expenditure items before and after no-fee status suggested large increases in the number of schools employing support staff (although the allocation is meant to be spent on non-personnel costs), as well as on equipment rental, maintenance, telephones and other services. Some schools said that they now had a budget for additional teaching resources and extra-curricular activities, such as sports and music, that were previously unaffordable. Although a small sample, these findings suggest that no-fee schools are better off than before.

On the other hand, schools in quintiles 3 – 5 received a lower per-learner allocation in real terms in 2007 than in 2005. The research strongly suggests that the introduction of the no-fees policy has worsened the situation in fee-paying schools and that some are forced to function on less than the amount the government considers as minimally adequate to educate a child. The primary reason for the worsening situation in fee-paying schools appears to be the decline in fee-paying behaviour.

What are the conclusions?

The introduction of the no-fee schools policy has resulted in increased revenue for most no-fee schools, while simultaneously relieving the burden of school fees on poor parents. However, increased funding does not imply sufficient funding, or necessarily result in quality improvements. Many schools continue to operate on a budget that does not allow for the delivery of quality education or the provision of school infrastructure that is conducive to learning. Moreover, non-personnel resources are merely tools that can support delivery of education, but the allocation of teachers and personnel budgets remains inequitable. There remains a need to review the school funding policy and legislative framework as a whole to ensure that the policy achieves the objective of equitable access to quality education.

Funding policy cannot on its own resolve issues of inequitable access and poor quality. Commentators have noted the danger of regarding funding mechanisms as a substitute for more direct and difficult interventions to improve education quality. Comparative country studies have shown that financial inputs do not necessarily translate into improved educational outcomes. Hanushek warns that South Africa should be wary of an approach where "eager to improve quality and unable to do it directly, government policy typically moves to what is thought to be the next best thing — providing added resources to schools". Other essays in this publication discuss non-financial ways to address education quality in South Africa.

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Children out of school:
Evidence from the Community Survey

Brahm Fleisch, Jennifer Shindler and Helen Perry (School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand)

Section 3(1) in the South Africa Schools Act requires that all children "attend school from the first school day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of seven years until the last day of the year in which such learner reaches the age of fifteen years or the ninth grade whichever comes first". This period of compulsory schooling from grades 1 – 9 corresponds to the right to basic education that is guaranteed by section 29(1)(a) in the Constitution.

Since 1994, South Africa has made significant strides in improving access to basic education, yet a recent survey suggests that approximately 400,000 children are still out of school.

This essay draws on a detailed analysis of the 2007 Community Survey to explore patterns of access and exclusion and focuses on four key questions:

- How many children have access to basic education?
- In which areas of the country are children most likely to be out of school?
- What are the characteristics of children who are out of school?
- What are the key factors that shape children's access to basic education?

How many children have access to basic education?

A nationally representative Community Survey was conducted by Statistics South Africa in February 2007, collecting data for 949,105 individuals and 246,618 households. The survey contains detailed information on educational attendance[1] and attainment for all household members, along with data on variables such as total annual earnings, employment, health, disability and access to social grants.

Analysis of survey data suggests that access to basic education is improving, with an attendance rate of 95.4% for grades 1 – 9. The biggest increase was among seven-year-

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1 Attendance data are derived from question 26 of the survey: "Is the person currently attending an educational institution?" The data refer to attendance at a point in time, and do not necessarily indicate regular attendance at school. These figures are also slightly lower than the enrolment figures calculated from the Department of Education SNAP surveys.

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Figure 8: Attendance rates at educational institutions for children aged 6 – 16 years for 1996, 2001 & 2007

olds where attendance increased from 88.4% in 2001 to 94.8% in 2007. There has also been a large increase in the attendance rate of six-year-olds due to the phasing in of grade R and the lowering of the age of school entry to six years in 2004.[2]

While the attendance rate of compulsory school-aged children is very high, there are still large numbers of children who are out of school. In 2007, just over 408,000 children aged seven to 15 years (4.6%) were not attending school.

The number of children who have never been to school is small, at around 58,000, or less than 1% of all children between the ages of seven and 15. Nearly one-third of these children are seven years old and presumably most of them will enrol at school in the next year or two. This suggests that most of the 408,000 children not in school either go to school late or drop out for various reasons.

In which parts of the country are children most likely to be out of school?

One of the more interesting findings emerging from the 2007 Community Survey is the uneven distribution of out-of-school children between provinces. The three wealthiest provinces (Gauteng, Northern and Western Cape) have the highest proportion of children out of school. Poorer provinces such as Limpopo, Free State and Mpumalanga record very low proportions of children out of school.

A similar pattern can be seen in the cities. The proportion of compulsory school-age children out of school in the six metropolitan municipalities is consistently higher than the national average (5.2% compared to 4.5%), with Johannesburg and Cape Town each showing almost 6% of children not in school.

An analysis of the 25 municipalities with the highest percentages of children out of school reveals some surprising results. More than a third of these municipalities are located in rural parts of the Western Cape, either along the Southern Cape coast or in the Karoo. Six municipalities are located in the Eastern Cape and three in the Northern Cape — all in similar rural farming areas. While more research is needed to identify the specific reasons for the high drop-out in these municipalities, a Human Rights Watch report pointed to child labour and the closure of farm schools as contributing factors. Research by Adnams, Rosenthal and others found that high rates of foetal alcohol syndrome may also account for children dropping out of school in these areas.

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2   In terms of the Education Laws Amendment Act of 2002, five-year-old children who were turning six before 30 June could be admitted to grade 1 from January 2004. Despite the lowering of the age at which children may begin school, seven remains the age at which compulsory schooling begins.

What are the characteristics of children out of school?

There are a number of individual and family characteristics that may help explain why children are not in school or that make it harder for children to access basic education.

Disability

The survey data suggest that disability is a significant barrier to basic education. While only 167,000 children aged 7 – 15 years (1.9%) are reported in the survey as having some type of disability, children with disabilities account for nearly 10% of the total number of children who are out of school. The survey also indicates that children with disabilities have a much lower attendance rate than other children, as 38,000 children with disabilities (22.5%) were out of school.

Poverty and social grants

The survey suggests that access to services and employment status do not have a major impact on access to education, but that social grants are associated with patterns of attendance. Social grants were received by 3,535,000 children (40%) in the survey. These children had a higher rate of attendance (96.5%) than the school-going population as a whole. Conversely, 265,400 of children out of school are not receiving social grants. While this is "only" 5.1% of school-aged children who do not receive social grants, 65% of out-of-school children are not receiving social grants. These children in all likelihood are

Table 7: Individual and family characteristics of children aged 7 – 15 years who were not in school in 2007

Characteristics	Number of children in school	Number of children out of school	Total number of children	% out of school	% of total number of children out of school
Total children 7 – 15 years	8,565,217	408,437	8,973,654	4.6	100
Disability	129,567	37,510	167,077	22.5	9
No disability	8,435,650	370,927	8,806,577	4.2	91
Receiving social grant	3,410,537	124,886	3,535,422	3.5	31
Not receiving social grant	4,983,297	265,404	5,248,701	5.1	65
Piped water from access point outside yard	1,914,328	90,980	2,005,307	4.5	22
Piped water inside dwelling	3,175,412	154,232	3,329,643	4.6	38
Piped water inside yard	1,847,297	81,370	1,928,667	4.2	20
Other water access*	1,628,181	81,856	1,710,037	4.8	20
Electricity for lighting	6,585,464	296,886	6,882,350	4.3	73
Other type of fuel for lighting**	1,979,753	111,552	2,091,305	5.3	27
Both parents alive	6,393,495	277,393	6,670,888	4.2	68
Mother alive, father dead or status not known	1,399,021	77,226	1,476,247	5.2	19
Father alive, mother dead or status not known	323,301	18,749	342,050	5.5	5
Both parents dead or status not known	449,400	35,070	484,470	7.2	9
Born in South Africa	8,507,042	397,473	8,904,515	4.5	97
Born outside South Africa	47,086	6,438	53,524	12.0	2
Place of birth unknown or unspecified	8,806	4,526	13,332	34.0	1
Have not moved in last six years	7,381,651	351,420	7,733,070	4.5	86
Moved in last six years	1,183,567	57,017	1,240,584	4.6	14
Not one person in the household is employed	3,566,130	173,762	3,739,892	4.6	42
At least one person in the household is employed	4,999,087	234,676	5,233,763	4.5	57

Source: Statistics South Africa (2008) 2007 Community Survey raw data. Supplied by Stats SA, September 2008.
Analysis by Brahm Fleisch, Jennifer Shindler & Helen Perry, University of the Witwatersrand.

Notes:
*   Other water access includes borehole, spring, dam/pool, river/stream, water vendor, rain-water tank and other.
** Other sources of fuel for lighting include gas, paraffin, candles, solar and other.

eligible for social grants, but their parents, grandparents or heads of household do not have the means to access them.

Orphans

Children who reported that either their mothers or both parents were dead (or status unknown) accounted for 9% of the total number of children aged 7 – 15 years. A higher proportion of these children were out of school: 5.5% of maternal orphans, 5.2% of paternal orphans and 7.2% of double orphans (both parents dead) were out of school in 2007. In total, 32% of children who are out of school have one or more parents who are dead (or status unknown).

Children born outside South Africa

The number of children born outside South Africa (or where the place of birth is either unknown or unspecified) is small (67,000 children), but these children have a much lower attendance rate than average. More than one in 10 children born outside South Africa are not attending school. This increases to more than one-third of children whose place of birth is unknown.

Family structure

Approximately 5,159,000 children aged 7 – 15 (15%) live in households where their parents are the head of household and a further 2,633,000 children (29%) live in households where their grandparents or great-grandparents are the head of the household.

A much higher proportion of children living with relatives as the head of household who are neither parents nor grandparents (7.6%) are out of school than children who live with their biological parents as the head of household (4%). Children living with a non-relative who is the head of the household are even more vulnerable: 10.6% of these children are out of school. Research by Anderson in 2000 and 2005 found that living with a relative improves education outcomes.

Child-headed households

Only 23,000 children aged 7 – 15 (1%) are head or acting head of their households, yet a high proportion (17%) of these children were out of school. This confirms findings by Case and Ardington on the negative impact of child-headed households on continuous school attendance.

What are the key factors that shape children's access to basic education?

How does the 2007 Community Survey contribute to our understanding of school participation? Firstly, it provides a good estimate of the number of compulsory school-aged children who are out of school. While the attendance rate of 95.4% is good by international standards, it still leaves 408,000 children aged 7 – 15 out of school.

Secondly, the survey provides an opportunity to understand the profile and characteristics of children who are out of school. Wilson's 2004 analysis on the right to education suggests that poverty and the government's school-fee policy is the reason why many of these children are not in school. However, the survey data do not support this as the singular reason for children not being in school. In a recently published book on why South Africa's school children underachieve in

Table 8: Household structure and proportion of children enrolled in 2007

Relationship to head of household	Number of children in school	Number of children out of school	Total number of children	% out of school	% of total number of children out of school
Total children 7 – 15 years	8,565,217	408,437	8,973,654	4.6	100
Son/daughter of the head of the household	4,951,564	207,820	5,159,384	4.0	50.9
Grandchild/great-grandchild of head of household	2,522,299	110,988	2,633,287	4.2	27.2
Adopted son/daughter of head of household	119,516	8,753	128,269	6.8	2.1
Head/acting head of the household	19,255	4,006	23,261	17.2	1.0
Brother/sister of head of household	219,136	14,575	233,711	6.2	3.6
Brother/sister-in-law of head of household	24,294	2,279	26,573	8.6	0.6
Non-related person to the head of the household	29,407	3,475	32,882	10.6	0.9
Other relative to the head of the household	539,041	44,381	583,422	7.6	10.9
Stepchild of the head of the household	94,135	5,290	99,424	5.3	1.3

Source: Statistics South Africa (2008) 2007 Community Survey raw data. Supplied by Stats SA, September 2008.
Analysis by Brahm Fleisch, Jennifer Shindler & Helen Perry, University of the Witwatersrand.

reading and maths, Fleisch found that (measured by house-hold income) at least 60% of children attending school from grades 1 – 9 live in families that are poor.

What are the conclusions?

The analysis of the 2007 Community Survey suggests that poverty and school fees are unlikely to be a sufficient explanation as to why children are not in school. If poverty alone is not necessarily a barrier to access, then what other factors might explain why children are not in school?

The evidence from the 2007 Community Survey suggests at least five broad, but inter-related, factors that may account for children not being in school:

- Children with various kinds of disability are not attending school.

- Children living with biological parents or grandparents are far more likely to be in school than children living with other relatives, with siblings and with people that are not relatives, or children who are themselves the head of a household.

- Children living in households that are, in all likelihood, eligible for social grants but who do not receive them are also at risk. They may not necessarily be disabled or living in a stressed family structure, but for some reason their parents or grandparents have not been able to access the welfare safety net.

- Children who have one or both parents dead or their whereabouts unknown are vulnerable to being out of school.

- Children living on farms and in small towns in the Southern Cape and central Karoo have lower attendance rates than children from other areas.

The findings suggest a picture of children living on the margins of society. Orphaned and disabled children are vulnerable to being out of school, as well as children who are likely to be living in households that are excluded from the mainstream economy and that struggle to access state services such as social grants. These children may also be living on the fringes of households, in which other children — the sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters — receive more favourable treatment. Many of these factors overlap at the complex intersection of poverty and social exclusion and suggest further issues for analysis. They also suggest that bringing the 408,000 out-of-school 7 – 15-year-olds into schools will require similarly complex interventions from a variety of agencies.

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School drop-out:
Poverty and patterns of exclusion

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Poverty is often cited as an important reason for why learners drop out of school. It is taken for granted that the costs of school fees, uniforms, transport and stationery, and the loss of child labour, strain limited household resources to push children out of school. But this explanation does not necessarily hold true in South Africa, where most children enrol in school despite high levels of poverty. Although 70% of children lived in poverty in 2006,[1] South Africa had a high gross enrolment rate (according to the Department of Education) — 96% for grades R – 9 and 86% for grades 10 – 12 in 2006.

Absolute poverty, therefore, cannot on its own explain drop-out. Poverty matters, but not in the way it has commonly been understood in relation to access to education. What is needed is an expanded, more nuanced definition of poverty, rather than a simple equation between drop-out and absolute poverty.

This essay examines how a multi-dimensional model of poverty helps account for the impact of poverty on children's school attendance at different stages of their school careers:

- In what ways does absolute poverty affect children's school attendance?
- How does relative poverty account for school drop-out during grades R – 9?
- How does poor quality education become a cause of drop-out after grade 9?

The essay draws on the findings of the Barriers to Education Project, a joint initiative between Social Surveys Africa and the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at the University of Witwatersrand. The study combined quantitative and qualitative research, including a national survey of over 4,400 households across South Africa, and focus group discussions with caregivers, youth and educators in Limpopo and Gauteng, which provided rich data on the complex reasons for school drop-out in these communities. This essay draws on data from the qualitative component of the study.

In what ways does absolute poverty affect children's school attendance?

Absolute poverty refers to a minimum standard of goods and services needed to meet basic needs and sustain subsistence. People falling under some absolute standard — such as the Millennium Development Goals declaration of "a dollar a day" — can be classified as poor. Absolute poverty (the inability to afford the direct costs of schooling) is often used in international documents to explain limited access to schools. For example, Kattan describes a dramatic increase in enrolment when costs such as school fees were reduced or eliminated in Kenya in 2004.

In South Africa school fees have been singled out as a particularly burdensome cost, and organisations such as the Education Rights Project at the University of the Witwatersrand have been campaigning for their complete abolition. Fleisch and Woolman have argued that absolute or 'abject' poverty inhibits access to education because the full range of costs associated with attendance, particularly uniforms and transport, are unaffordable for households.

In theory, fees should not be keeping children out of school since the introduction of the school-fee exemption policy and no-fee schools. These determine that children attending the poorest schools in South Africa do not have to pay fees and poor children attending fee-paying schools can apply for a full or partial fee exemption. Yet, in practice, most caregivers who participated in the Barriers to Education focus groups were unaware that their children could not be punished or turned away from school for non-payment of fees, or for not having the correct school uniform. Most indicated that they were struggling or unable to pay school fees. Therefore, the issue is less about poverty and more about schools' non-adherence to policy, as well as the school-funding system, which creates incentives for schools to exclude poor learners. (See the essay on *Addressing quality through school fees and school funding* on pp. 35 – 40.)

Despite the burden of poverty on so many South African households, the vast majority of children stay in school. Rather

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1   This poverty line is set at R350 per person per month (in 2000 prices), and increased each year in line with inflation. See pp. 77 in the *Children Count - The Numbers* section for a detailed discussion of this poverty line and related data.

than causing drop-out, absolute poverty may in fact draw children into school and keep them there longer. Schools offer poor households additional resources in the form of child care, some basic access to nutrition and hope for a better future. High adult unemployment and legislation preventing child labour mean there is little opportunity for children to engage in income-generating activities outside of school.

Absolute poverty may prolong a child's journey through school as a result of repetition. Hallman and Grant, reporting on a study in KwaZulu-Natal in 2004, found that poor children are more likely to experience "school delays".

Children living in absolute poverty have the odds stacked against them and may be more vulnerable to failure. A learner from Thembelihle in Limpopo explained:

You can't study at night because sometimes your mother does not have money to buy enough paraffin for you to study 'til late and sometimes when you are using the candle it burns out before you complete studying.

The essay now turns to a broader conceptualisation of poverty that may explain why children drop out of school in the basic education phase.

How does relative poverty account for school drop-out during grades R – 9?

Recent attempts at conceptualising poverty have looked beyond absolute poverty to an understanding of the way that poverty is measured or experienced in relation to others. The concept of 'relative poverty' was developed in response to the acknowledgement that poverty is always, to some extent, a relative concept. A person is generally judged to be poor in comparison to the people around him or her. Unlike absolute poverty, which focuses on basic survival, relative poverty focuses on inequalities within society.

In terms of access to education, relative poverty is concerned with children's experience of poverty, its inequitable outcomes and the processes that lead to exclusion. The concept of relative poverty helps focus the attention on the phenomenological experience of poverty: It puts the lived experience of poverty at centre stage.

Case 5 illustrates how poverty bites hardest in relation to other people. It suggests that children are less likely to drop out of school when they are equally poor than when there is a greater socio-economic mix.

Case 5: The effects of relative poverty

Doreen is a small rural village in Limpopo, just south of the Zimbabwean border, surrounded by commercial farmland. Most households subsist on social grants and the meagre income from farm labour. Children from Doreen and the surrounding area attend farm schools or leave home to attend school in the nearby town of Musina, which few families can afford. The two farm schools do not offer education beyond grades 7 and 9 respectively. All households in the village are very poor. They struggle to pay for uniforms and stationary, and many simply don't pay — but the children remain in school until grade 9.

The communities of Phagameng and Thembelihle tell a different story. Phagameng is a township adjacent to the town of Modimolle in Limpopo. Whilst almost all the children attending the Phagameng township school are from low income households, there is a greater socio-economic mix of learners than in Doreen. And it is this difference, however small, that is key.

Children from the local informal settlement in Phagameng were singled out by other learners for being poor and "dirty". A girl attending the Phagameng high school explained how she was embarrassed to be seen with pap in her lunch box, when other children had "nice things" like cheese and bread. She was so embarrassed that she chose to walk home to have lunch during break time.

In the informal settlement of Thembelihle most children attend school in the suburbs of Lenasia. Thembelihle learners and caregivers spoke of their feelings of disempowerment and inadequacy in relation to the wealthier learners and parents. When asked what concerns young people in her community, a young woman from Thembelihle said:

I think it is the issues of houses and electricity in the house because you feel like you don't exist when your classmates start to talk about how their mothers cooked, using the microwave. You feel small because if we had electricity we wouldn't be using paraffin stoves or lamps or candles ...

A learner in Thembelihle, who attended a high school in Lenasia before dropping out of school, explained:

... like when you are in a big family and the mother can't give everyone the attention they need. She only concentrates on the youngest ones and forgets about you, and if you ask her for something regarding your school she won't give it to you ... When you get to school you see that other children have everything and you are the only one who does not have a thing so you end up dropping out of school because you feel like you are the odd one out. Then your mother starts calling you names because you dropped out.

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The reasons for school drop-out are complex, as the case shows. A child's 'decision' to drop out of school is seldom related to one clear factor, but to a complex interplay of social and economic factors. Feelings of inferiority and needing to fit in with the peer group may cause stress and anxiety, which affect participation in class or attendance at school. Feelings of inferiority may be especially pronounced for learners from informal settlements attending former Model C schools, or rural children who are sent to urban township schools in the interests of gaining a better education. In case 5, fees and access costs were not identified as the problem — it was the daily burden of poverty and the feeling of being poor in relation to those around them that pushed children out of school.

Focusing on relative poverty in addition to absolute poverty highlights the lived experience of the child at school. It urges us to focus on the child's experience of poverty in relation to others, and the processes through which the child is excluded from school, rather than the absolute costs of education.

A puzzle still remains. Relative poverty may be experienced throughout children's school career, so what causes the sudden increase in school drop-out after the end of compulsory schooling in grade 9?

How does poor quality education become a cause of drop-out after grade 9?

Noble, Wright and Cluver emphasise a multi-dimensional model of poverty which includes both absolute and relative measures, and includes, as indicators of poverty, opportunities to access good quality services and a person's ability to participate fully in society.

In South Africa most learners do not have access to good quality education. We argue that the primary reason for drop-out in the post-compulsory phase of schooling is the poor quality of education received by learners in South Africa.

International and national benchmark tests demonstrate that learners are failing to achieve literacy and numeracy outcomes. The Department of Education's grade 3 and grade 6 systemic evaluations show dismal results. In the grade 6 tests in 2005 learners obtained a national mean score of 38% in the language of learning and teaching, 27% in mathematics, and 41% in natural sciences.

Some learners from Phagameng, Thembelihle and Diepkloof Extension (Gauteng) appeared disinterested in and alienated from their schooling and felt that they have no positive future to look forward to. A Phagameng parent commented:

… teachers in our schools don't teach our children and they don't care about our children's future. Our children don't feel free to go to school because of the bad things that happen in our community. The teachers from the schools in town teach the children and they care about their future and the schools are strict so everything is done properly.

Some young people simply didn't see the value of education. Phagameng learners pointed out that even those learners who obtained distinctions in matric were not finding work. This left learners feeling discouraged and demotivated.

If learners are realising that their education has no value, it may explain their reluctance to continue beyond compulsory schooling in grade 9. Boredom, high unemployment or economic 'opportunities' outside of school in the form of crime may leave learners feeling that there is little value in

pushing through. Pressure on schools to perform in the matric exams may cause them to push out learners who are weak and unlikely to succeed, or learners may themselves recognise that they are not coping with classroom content.

Amartya Sen's capabilities approach reminds us that the goal of development programmes or policies is not simply to alleviate absolute poverty but to enable all people to develop their "capabilities". Sen defines human capabilities as being "the substantive freedom of people to lead the lives they have reason to value and enhance the real choices they have". A good education is a basic capability. It equips learners with the knowledge and skills to use their material possessions, innate talents and environment to make real choices, and to lead a full life. Lack of access to quality education is an indicator of poverty.

In South Africa, many learners are clearly not able to translate educational inputs into capabilities. Sen's capability approach to development highlights the link between the quality of an education system and the continued enrolment in that system by youth. Even if learners have resources and equality, they may still drop out because their education is of no use to them, or is not valued.

What are the conclusions?

There is a need for a more complex and nuanced under-standing of the relationship between poverty and school drop-out. Absolute poverty cannot account for drop-out on its own because so many poor learners continue to stay in school. Yet it may account for delayed entry into school and high repetition rates. Relative poverty shows how inequalities between learners may make learners more vulnerable to drop out, while Sen's capabilities approach highlights poor quality education as a primary driver of school drop-out.

Whilst the results of the Barrier to Education Project need to be tested more extensively, the implications for policy are sobering. If children are more likely to stay in schools and communities where all children are poor, then what implica-tions does this have for breaking class and socio-economic boundaries?

If poverty is felt in a relative way, then a simple concen-tration on fees and other access costs will not have a major impact on school drop-out. Instead, the solution may lie in understanding the processes by which children and parents become excluded. Resources should be directed into providing better support mechanisms for poorer learners and to engender a human rights culture in schools.

Furthermore, interventions to increase access beyond basic education need to recognise the link between access and quality. Meaningful access to education extends far beyond physical access and school attendance. It includes learners making cognitive progress and attaining curricula outcomes. Focusing resources on quality is not at the expense of access issues — it directly begins to address them.

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Schools and communities:
Building effective partnership

Norma Rudolph (Children's Institute)

Conditions in homes, schools and communities must be conducive for children's growth, learning and development. However, in the context of AIDS and persistent inequality in South Africa, deep crisis affects all aspects of children's lives and creates barriers to meaningful access to education. This calls for concerted action from a wide range of role-players, both within and outside of schools.

In response to the crisis, the Caring Schools Project of the Children's Institute is developing a capacity-building approach to mobilise partnerships that can support child well-being and improve meaningful access to education. The *Champion for Children's Handbook: How to build a caring school community* was developed with the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, working in four school communities in the Free State and Western Cape. Save the Children UK and the Catholic Institute of Education are key partners currently using the approach in Limpopo and the Free State.

The term 'school community' refers to the full range of role-players either living in a specific geographic area or who are responsible for service provision in that area, including government institutions and officials, non-government organisations and community structures, faith-based organisations and households.

Drawing on data from the Caring Schools Project and other formal and informal partnerships, including the Caring Schools Network (see the box on p. 52), this essay explores how schools and communities can either hamper meaningful access to education or work together to ensure that all children thrive and benefit from schooling.

The essay focuses on:

- How do children's circumstances hamper meaningful access to education?
- How can partnership enhance meaningful access?
- How can policy and practice build effective partnership?
- Why are champions for children important?

How do children's circumstances hamper meaningful access to education?

Children who are hungry, sick or afraid cannot learn. In many parts of South Africa, conditions inside and outside of schools undermine child well-being and impact negatively on meaningful access to education.

Difficulties in homes and communities

School communities participating in the Caring Schools Project identified a number of factors that put children at risk. High unemployment and seasonal work leave many families in poverty and a lack of food and basic services threatens children's health and development. The breakdown of family structures due to poverty, violence and HIV/AIDS further contributes to children's vulnerability. There are growing numbers of orphans and single-parent households with grandmothers increasingly carrying the burden of child care. Adult support and supervision of children after school hours are rare, compounded by low levels of education in the family.

Children seeking a sense of purpose and belonging are easily influenced by peer pressure to engage in high risk and negative behaviour. Children report high levels of physical and sexual abuse and many are involved in gangs, or are victims of violence. School fees, together with a number of hidden costs, including school uniforms, transport, books and stationery, further hamper access to schooling.

Difficulties in communities spill into schools

Problems in homes and neighbouring communities spill over into schools. Teachers often have to pay attention to learners' physical and emotional needs before they can teach. A Free State educator explains:

The high rate of unemployment leaves many children in deep poverty. Unemployment fuels the abuse of alcohol. Many children are therefore exposed to risks such as sexual abuse, drug addiction, hunger and neglect.

Despite chemical dependence escalating in schools and communities, there is a chronic lack of affordable, good quality rehabilitation services. Children report "bullying" and "lack of

discipline" at school and complain of rough, vulgar and disrespectful teachers.

One principal refers to "bus-stop" teachers, who leave home very early, arrive at school tired and rush out of the class at the end of the school day to catch their transport home. These teachers choose to live in better serviced communities and frequently do not understand learners' home environment, and cannot do home visits.

Communities and schools impact on each other

Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana suggest that the communities in which schools are located strongly influence their development, and *vice versa*. According to Jansen, this is particularly true in the context of the AIDS pandemic: "... as teenage pregnancies in schools soar, it is becoming more and more evident that sexual relationships between teachers and students further contribute to a very dangerous liaison in the schools. ... HIV/AIDS is not only what infected adults and children bring into the school, it is a pandemic that recreates itself in the school as well."

Children bring weapons, including guns, into school. Children in the Western Cape describe several incidents where gang violence spilled into the school, and one suspended learner was killed at home. Learners who have been on the "wrong side of the law" or are considered "trouble-makers", frequently have difficulty returning to school. Police in Sekhukune district in Limpopo believe that getting youth back into school could bring down the crime rate.

Children often do not have a voice at home or in school and corporal punishment continues, particularly in schools where it is practiced and condoned in the neighbouring community. One learner describes an incident where a learner "who was slapped by a teacher, slapped the teacher back". Learners suggest that this kind of behaviour seems to perpetuate the cycle of violence, and increase the sense of disorder and chaos in the school. Alcohol, drugs and gang violence fuel existing tensions within and between schools and communities.

How can partnership enhance meaningful access?

Schools cannot solve all these problems, but schools do offer a useful starting point for identifying vulnerable children and addressing their needs. Even in very poorly-resourced communities, schools are equipped with telephones, knowledge and contacts. For many children school is the only place where they have contact with adults they can talk to. There are also far more schools than social workers in South Africa.

Constructive involvement of parents and the broader community in the life of the school holds great benefits for the school, the students, the parents and their mutual relationship. The Caring Schools Project uses a rights-based approach to build partnership and encourages school communities to identify strengths and work toward a shared vision of a better future. Project participants have identified many protective factors, such as: love and care; social grants and poverty alleviation programmes; schools, clinics, churches and school-feeding programmes; transport to and from school; and soccer fields.

Dialogue between school and community role-players can generate innovative strategies to meet children's needs, including: assisting families to access grants; education and advocacy campaigns addressing problems such as "tik" and HIV/AIDS; parents, youth and community volunteers assisting in different ways; and teachers asking assertively for greater support from Department of Education district officials.

What was achieved in each school community using the Caring Schools approach depended to a large extent on geographic location, level of poverty and the quality of leadership among role-players. For example, a school in the Cape Town metropole experienced better access to services and greater support from the neighbouring wealthy community than a remote rural school in the Free State. This school is 50 km from Kimberly in the Northern Cape, but residents have to travel 180 km to access services in the provincial capital of Bloemfontein. Achievements were significantly better in schools where the principals were actively involved in the project, compared to one where the principal was absent for several months.

How can policy and practice support effective partnership?

Relationships between schools and communities are not always easy or productive. Partnerships depend on the relative capital that each partner brings and are seldom if ever free of power relations and dynamics. The next section of this essay discusses the potential (and limitations) of school governing bodies, school-based support teams, and community facilitators to build effective partnership.

School management and school governing bodies

Principals who are attentive to learners and educators contribute significantly to building healthy school and community relationships. According to Marneweck, Bialobrzeska, Mhlanga and Mphisa many school leaders have begun to respond intuitively to the AIDS pandemic by creating networks of support for learners in and around their schools and by addressing the need for basic nutrition, aftercare and counselling.

This is a promising development, because the role of school leaders is becoming increasingly complex as management has to implement a series of sophisticated education policies, often with very little support or training. The 2000 Tirisano campaign calls for schools to become "centres of community

life" and, indeed, schools hold valuable potential as centres of learning for the whole community. Yet many schools struggle to realise this possibility — a Free State school, for example, limited their birth certificate drive to learners and their families because they were afraid that outsiders might damage property while participating in the drive.

Fortunately, principals are not expected to carry out their functions in isolation. In particular the school management team (SMT) and school governing body (SGB) can assist. The SGB is a school's primary link with the community through elected representation of parents, educators, non-teaching staff and learners (in secondary schools). According to the 1996 South African Schools Act, SGBs are required to:

- develop and adopt a constitution and mission statement for the school;

- determine the school's admissions policy;

- administer and control the school's property, buildings and grounds;

- recommend the appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff; and

- develop a budget for the school, which may include schools fees, for approval by the parent body.

A review undertaken by the Department of Education in 2004 suggests that SGBs in formerly disadvantaged schools often function poorly due to poverty and a lack of expertise and experience, and that they find it difficult to sustain active parental participation due to low literacy levels, lack of time and indirect costs. The reverse is true for SGBs in more advantaged schools, where white middle-class men tend to dominate.

Despite these challenges, it is essential that SGBs draw communities into schools to address the growing challenges of poverty, AIDS and other risk factors. The National Policy on HIV and AIDS for Learners, Students and Educators describes the role of the SGB in developing an HIV and AIDS implementation plan that reflects "the needs, ethos and values of a specific school or institution and its community". The policy also expects schools to draw on the expertise of community health workers and local clinics.

The Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communications identifies SGBs as key role-players in making schools "nodes of care and support" for vulnerable children. Since 2002, Soul City has worked with the government and civil society organisations to host highly successful jamborees at schools, where different government departments come together to process affidavits and applications for identify documents, birth certificates and social grants.

School-based support teams

Education White Paper 6, which focuses on inclusive education, proposes that the Department of Education establishes district-based support teams to provide an integrated, community-based service that can identify orphans, and co-ordinate support and care for such learners. Schools are also expected to establish school-based support teams that include health workers, social workers, police and other service providers.

These intersectoral teams hold great promise in addressing barriers to education. However, the policy has yet to be translated into law, and be put into operation effectively. Currently the need for social workers outstrips the available capacity but it is clear that there are many social work functions that could be undertaken by para-professionals working under the supervision of more senior personnel.

The notion of schools as the centre of community life places high demands on teachers working with big classes in extremely difficult circumstances. The Norms and Standards for Educators describes a "community, citizenship and pastoral role" for teachers beyond the limits of the classroom and school grounds. Teachers are expected to "respond to current social and educational problems with particular

The Caring Schools Network

The Caring Schools Network (CASNET) was established by Save the Children in 2005 and brings together about 60 organisations from around the country. CASNET promotes information sharing and partnership and works with government and civil society to build caring school communities and maximise the benefits for vulnerable children. The flower represents the key components of a caring school community.

Human and Child Rights

Inter-Sectoral Partnerships

Good Governance and Leadership

Relationships

Effective and Creative Teaching and Learning

Infrastructure and Services

Wellness and Safety

Child Participation

emphasis on the issues of violence, drug abuse, poverty … HIV and AIDS … accessing and working in partnership with professional services to deal with these issues".

Rebecca Makolane is a life-orientation teacher at Makeke Primary School in Sekhukhune (Limpopo) and a key player in the local child-care forum made up of volunteers (mostly women) from the local community. She explains:

I enjoy helping people and work with learners and their families to address a range of problems. Poverty and HIV/AIDS have had a serious impact on the lives of children in the district and the school established a food garden to feed orphans and needy learners. When I heard about drop-in centres in KwaZulu-Natal, I pushed for this with the local Department of Social Development. Now there is a drop-in centre nearby where needy children can go for meals, get help with homework and apply for documents and grants. This includes children not attending our school.

Community facilitators

Several organisations are appointing community facilitators to provide a link between schools and communities and to mediate access to services. Nontobeko Sithole, of the Catholic Institute of Education, describes the facilitators in the Caring Schools project in Sekhukhune:

Community facilitators live in the community, so they know the learners in their village. Their primary role is to identify orphans and vulnerable children, interview these learners, do home visits and make sure the necessary support is provided, for example, access to grants, documents, food parcels or counselling. They work with the whole family and feed back to ward councillors and the school-based support team.

Youth facilitators pioneered by Save the Children UK in the Free State play a similar role in reaching out to vulnerable children, as described in case 6.

While community and youth facilitators are an asset to schools, the primary limitation in the early stages of this initiative was the lack of training and support. Save the Children UK is developing a more systematic training approach for this important cadre of child rights champions. By exploring possibilities for accreditation, the intention is to provide facilitators with opportunities to progress along a career path and get paid according to their level of experience. Currently a wide gap persists between professionals and 'volunteers' who generally receive a 'stipend' way lower than the minimum wage. This often results in facilitators leaving the community when other opportunities present themselves.

Case 6: Youth facilitators reach out

Youth facilitators are each contracted for a maximum period of two years and assist learners in a number of ways, such as:

- having fun with children in a range of afternoon activities;
- identifying extremely vulnerable children in schools;
- stimulating the school community to donate clothes and uniforms to a clothing bank;
- facilitating access to documentation like birth certificates and identity documents;
- ensuring access to health care by taking children to the local clinic and by ensuring medication is taken correctly;
- listening to children's problems;
- following up when children are absent from school and making home visits; and
- helping the school community to establish and maintain food gardens that can contribute to the school-feeding programme, and by yielding food parcels to vulnerable children and their families.

Children spoke about how they are able to talk more easily to youth facilitators than to educators or their family members. The home visits help facilitators to understand the home circumstances of the children better and to share this knowledge with educators and the school as a whole. They initiate a range of activities such as music, dancing, traditional dancing, sport and debating, which the children really appreciate.

Source: Mudekunye L & Allan K (2008) Reaching the most vulnerable children through Caring Schools. In: Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service. *SAfAIDS News* 2(14): 15-17.

Why are champions for children important?

Building partnership to ensure meaningful access to education depends to a large extent on 'champions' like Rebecca who take child well-being and justice seriously. These champions understand the circumstances of children — including local risk and protective factors; are familiar with government policy and services; and enable children to get the help they need.

Champions for children also recognise the need to put children first. Life orientation and social sciences teacher at St Paul's High School in Sekhukhune, Stephy Dikgale, explains how she learned really to listen to children:

In the past I just used to tell the teenagers what to do and didn't listen to their stories or excuses. Through the Catholic Institute of Education I learnt to listen to the children. It was a gradual process of change from telling teenagers what to do, to listening and counselling them.

One of the learners who helped me change the way I do things was a grade 10 learner who was always skipping class and smoking. One day I asked him to speak to me at break. He told me that the year before his uncle had forced him to go to the mountain school. He said he didn't want to go but his uncle took him to a shebeen. He got drunk and when he woke up he was at the mountain school. When he came back he was very angry and didn't speak to his uncle. He started smoking because he wanted to make the uncle angry.

I suggested that he speak to his uncle. Two days later he told me that they had solved the problem and were speaking to each other again. The boy seems to have stopped smoking and bunking classes. The boy helped me to realise that I need to listen to learners' stories.

Champions for children understand the need to build partnership. This includes working with professional service providers, parents, learners and the wider community. Schools have been able to make significant improvements when they have started to listen to children and recognised their role as active partners in the process, as illustrated in case 7.

Case 7: Children as partners

Nontobeko Sithole, from the Catholic Institute of Education, describes working with a group of learners from four schools in Sekhukhune, who all regarded toilets as dangerous:

Learners in one school dreamt of having clean and proper toilets at school, but the learners couldn't do anything about this on their own, so they asked the school-based support team to raise the issue with the SGB. The SGB then organised 14 chemical toilets. This happened quickly and easily, so the problem wasn't about money. Toilets simply hadn't been seen as a problem (or a priority) by the teachers and the SGB. This project shows how real change is possible once teachers start listening to children and see them as active partners in the process.

Source: Children's Institute (2009) *Participant report: Networks of Care workshop, February 2009*. Unpublished.

What are the conclusions?

Relationships between schools and communities can either prevent or support meaningful access to basic education. The challenge lies in stimulating awareness and growing the conversation about children's rights, well-being and development, and in working together for change. Child-rights champions who promote partnership with other service providers and who listen to children can have a profound impact, especially for the benefit of those who are most vulnerable. However, it is important to remember that even with the best intentions, income and spatial dimensions of poverty impact on the quality of partnership and what communities with limited resources can achieve. Commitment and action is required from influential role-players in government, business and civil society at all levels in order to support school communities, address persistent inequalities and ensure that all children reach their full potential.

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Count one count all:
Numeracy in the foundation phase

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The development of numeracy is crucial for children's meaningful access to basic education, and beyond. By the time they leave primary school, children should have a confident grasp of counting, number and arithmetic which will provide a solid platform for engagement with mathematics at secondary school.

Evidence from international, national and local assessments suggests that the majority of children in South Africa are not competent in numeracy at the end of primary school. Recognising this crisis in mathematics education, and a similar crisis in literacy, former Education Minister Naledi Pandor launched the Foundations for Learning Campaign (FFLC) in March 2008. The campaign has been hailed as a substantial step forward in addressing the need for strong foundations in mathematics and language education in South Africa.

This essay focuses on the teaching and learning of numeracy in the foundation phase, and critically reflects on the prospects of the FFLC for tackling persistent problems in mathematics education:

- What is the nature and scope of the problem in basic mathematics education?
- How does the FFLC aim to support the development of numeracy in the early grades?
- How do children learn to work with number?
- What do findings from the Count One Count All research project suggest about the potential limitations of the FFLC?
- What are the implications for teaching and learning number in the foundation phase?

What is the problem in basic mathematics education?

Documentation produced by the Western Cape Education Department at the launch of the FFLC indicates that grade 3 mathematics results saw a decline in average scores from 37.3% in 2004 to 31% in 2006. Grade 6 results saw an increase from 15.6% in 2003 to 17.2% in 2005, and then a decline to 14% in 2007. This problem was underscored by Schollar in 2008, pointing to the fact that only 1.5% of the 1995 grade 1 cohort achieved higher grade passes in mathematics in the 2006 matric exams.

These figures speak to a severe crisis in education in South Africa. It begins in the early years of schooling and is compounded in later years to produce a widening gulf between students from middle-class backgrounds who attend well-resourced schools, and those who come from poor families and attend poorly-resourced schools in townships and rural areas. It is sobering to note that even in the Western Cape — a well-resourced province that had the highest pass rate in the 2008 matric exams — the number of schools with a pass rate lower than 60% increased dramatically from 57 schools in 2007 to 75 schools in 2008.

How does the Foundations for Learning Campaign address the problem?

The FFLC addresses the numeracy problem by specifying the content, pace, instructional methods and equipment to be used for teaching mathematics in the foundation and intermediate phases. It entails:

- a curriculum that stipulates milestones to guide teachers in pacing curriculum content over a school year;
- a template for managing instruction in a typical lesson;
- a list of appropriate apparatus and resources to be placed in all classrooms;
- standardised assessment programmes; and
- teacher support, and in the near future, materials and resources for use in classrooms.

All of this is admirable. However, the lesson templates and content milestones in the FFLC are very difficult to translate into a clear picture of what a well-taught classroom looks like in the foundation phase. If teachers follow the prescriptions of the FFLC, but don't have a proper understanding of how children learn to work with numbers, then the campaign may not succeed in improving children's access to mathematics.

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How do children learn to work with numbers?

Becoming numerate is a complex cognitive process. Children will not be able to work with numbers and calculate successfully unless they can count. But counting alone is not enough to be able to calculate successfully. At the same time, children must grasp a profound shift in understanding and recognise that a number such as 5 can be produced as the result of counting five objects, but that it is also an object that can be manipulated according to the laws of arithmetic. Children need to recognise, for example, that 5+4=9 without having to count out four objects, then five objects, and then count them all together.

Gelman and Gallistel, in their book *The child's understanding of number*, suggest that children have mastered counting when they:

- can mark off items in a collection with distinct markers or tags so that one and only one marker is used for each item;
- recognise that the tags themselves are organised in a repeatable, stable order;
- understand that a number, such as 5, represents the total number of items;
- understand that a number can become an object which can be manipulated; and
- understand that counting procedures can be applied to any collection of items.

In becoming numerate, children have to learn to manage different kinds of countable items. Steffe, Von Glasersfeld, Richards and Cobb suggest that there are five different types of things that are progressively difficult for a child to count: *perceptual units* (things which can be seen), *figural items* (things not present, but recallable, such as the number of people at home); *motor units* (movements like steps or handclaps); *verbal units* (number words) and *abstract units*. Finally, children need to understand that the order in which items in a collection are counted does not affect the numerosity (or size) of the collection.

Children begin the process of learning to count in their preschool years, but it is not until well into the foundation phase that counting can become the springboard for learning arithmetic. Children start with the counting of physical objects (including their fingers) and as they become more adept, their attention shifts, as Gray notes, "from the objects of the real world to objects of the arithmetical world — numbers and their symbols". For example: for children to comprehend two-digit numbers (or place value) they have to understand that 10 is a concept and not a real world object.

In order to accomplish this developmental sequence, teachers and children need to do a lot of work to deepen notions of counting and develop flexible and powerful means of representing number (using apparatus such as fingers, counters, beads, number lines, and numerical symbols). For example, learning the generative rules for counting beyond 10 is not

trivial — children need to be able to know how to count in 10s, and then generate units appropriately as they count to 100 and beyond. Learning number bonds to 10, and learning to appropriately partition numbers*, assist in developing this expertise.

Anghileri and others argue that oral work is crucial in the early years, as it encourages students to work with numbers mentally. In the process they develop rich connections and strategies, which can serve as a basis for solving more difficult procedures. Karpov argues that children also need opportunities to solve problems, develop a range of strategies which they make visible for discussion, and try out different representations of a problem and its solution. They need problems and activities that allow them to make their own connections, find new facts and commit facts to memory. They also need to be taught a range of possible strategies for adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing numbers.

What are the findings of the Count One Count All (COCA) research project?

It is often argued that South Africa's teachers lack an adequate conceptual knowledge of mathematics and that this accounts for children's poor performance. However, the COCA research suggests that what teachers lack is an understanding of how children learn number and that this has a significant impact on the teaching and learning of number in the foundation phase.

The COCA project is based on observing 18 foundation phase numeracy lessons, six per grade, in three schools in a poor, semi-urban area of the Western Cape province. All teachers and most learners in these schools speak isiXhosa as their first language, and isiXhosa is the medium of instruction except for the use of number names, which are learned in English. All teachers are qualified to teach at the foundation phase level and range in teaching experience from five to 25 years. Classes are on average large, with as many as 57 learners in one grade 2 class. Only two of the classes fall within the national teacher-to-learner ratio norm of 1:40.

An analysis of classroom data from the COCA research shows that teachers' lack of understanding of how children learn number is evident in teachers' approaches to whole class teaching and group work; in diagnosing difficulties and taking remedial action; and in using apparatus, textbooks and written work.

Understanding how number knowledge develops
The following interchange is taken from a grade 1 class. The children were asked to estimate the number of counters in the teacher's hand, which were then counted out, and the

class was asked to work out how their estimates differed from the actual number.

T: *Right, let us count from 9 to 13.*
The learners began to count from 1, in 1s (a 'count all' strategy).

T: *No, I told you to start from 9.*
Learners then proceed to counting "9,10,11,12,13" (a 'count on' strategy)

T: *What are we supposed to add to 9 to get 13?*

L: *14*

T: *Ha-a, what do we have to add?*

L: *15*

T: *No, count, what must you add to 9 to get 14?*

L: *17*

T: *Count from 13 and go backwards. How many?*

L: *18*

T: *No, we are confused now.*

L: *3*

T: *What number will you add to 9 and you get 13 as an answer?*

L: *4*

T: *Who just said 4? Very good.*

A number of issues emerge from this interchange. Children do not appear to have strategies other than 'counting all' to solve the problem put to them. The teacher insists that they "count on" from 9 to 13, and when this fails, she urges them to "count backwards". Both processes involve double counting, which is a complex and difficult strategy to master. The teacher assumes the children have mastered it, which they clearly have not.

Learning early number is an immensely difficult and challenging task. Teachers need to be conversant with current thinking and research in this area. The milestones outlined in the FFLC document can, in our view, only come to life when located within a learning trajectory for number which spans the foundation phase. This trajectory maps out how number sense develops over the first few years of schooling and the strategies learners successively use to count, to calculate using counting, and then to calculate without reliance on counting. It can assist teachers to understand the successive challenges children face in gaining mastery of number, and how learners can be helped to achieve this.

Whole-class teaching, group and independent work
Every classroom observed was dominated by teacher talk in the context of whole-class teaching. Teachers determined the

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* Number bonds are pairs which make up each number. For example: the number bonds for 5 are 2+3, 1+4 and 0+5. Partitioning a number shows the sum of its distinct parts. For example, the particians of 4 are: 4; 3+1; 2+2; 2+1+1 and 1+1+1+1.

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pace of the lessons, rarely re-orienting a lesson to any significant extent to take account of learners' difficulties. In the observed lessons, on average 66% of all lesson time was spent by the teacher talking to the class from the front of the classroom and eliciting collective verbal responses from learners.

There was no evidence of 'group work' in the sense this is commonly understood, namely the engagement by a group of learners with a significantly challenging task which necessarily entails their joint involvement in solving it. Classes were commonly organised into groups, in that children sat around a table, or group of tables. 'Group work' most often entailed providing a task which one child undertook and the others observed. It was not uncommon to find 4 – 10 learners in a group, with one pencil and one piece of paper which one child used while the others watched.

In those infrequent cases where all children were expected to work on a task, they worked alone, even though physically sitting in a group. These tasks usually involved practicing a small number of calculations rather than solving problems. There were no sustained opportunities for individual, independent work by learners. Verbal, collective responses overwhelmingly dominated lessons.

The FFLC emphasis on group work may be potentially counter-productive. All too often in the COCA research this device was seen by teachers as an end in itself, not as a means for achieving a desired objective. Researchers saw no evidence of group work being used to engage children in serious mathematical activities.

Diagnostic assessment and remedial action
Group work and collective responses to whole-class teaching can inhibit the evaluation of individual student learning. COCA researchers saw very little evidence of teachers' diagnostic assessment of learners or of remedial action. Children's responses to questions in grade 1 and 2 classrooms indicated that they had not grasped the principles of counting set out by Gelman and Gallistel. The following typical extract is taken from a grade 1 class. This interchange followed an estimation problem similar to that described in the first extract.

T: *Now listen. Listen, is 8 smaller or bigger than 10. Which is bigger, 8 or 10?*

L: *It's 10.*

T: *By how many is 10 more than 8, use your mind. If you have 8 things and another has 10, how many more are yours less than his? For you to have 10 things, how many must you add to your 8 to make 10? How many things must you add? You have 8 things and you want them to be 10, how many must you add?*

L: *I must add 5, miss.*

T: *No, those of you saying 5 keep quiet that is not the correct answer.*

L: *With 2.* (Showing two fingers)

T: *Yes, 2.*

In this lesson there were five other occasions where children called out incorrect answers, and they were ignored. Dealing with incorrect answers by ignoring them or simply repeating the question was common across the grades. Identifying problems and using these in teaching to overcome conceptual difficulties was not in evidence in any of the lessons observed. The proposal of the FFLC to implement standardised assessments will assist in establishing milestones and levels of competence, but cannot replace diagnostic teaching in the classroom. Without the latter, all that standardised assessment will do is indicate how poorly students are doing.

Teachers utilised a very limited range of strategies for guiding learners' engagement with concepts and problems, and for dealing with errors. The observed teachers regularly used only instructing, modelling and closed questions, but seldom used the practices of justifying, noticing, focusing, probing, extending, explicating and so forth.

The use of apparatus

All the classrooms observed had some apparatus (such as counters and beads). However, in the vast majority of cases, the apparatus was used by teachers to demonstrate to the class, rather than used by the learners themselves. Apparatus was mainly used as an end in itself and not as a means to build learners' understanding and confidence. Activities involving apparatus often took a whole lesson with no identifiable learning outcomes. Rarely did children use apparatus individually to solve problems. As with group work, insisting on the use of apparatus without a clear understanding of its pedagogic purpose can undermine rather than promote the teaching of number, taking up valuable teaching time without students learning anything of value.

The use of textbooks, workbooks and written work

Very little writing took place in any of the grades observed. This is linked to the lack of independent work by students, which is in turn linked to the lack of diagnostic assessment. The only way learners could make visible their lack of understanding in a whole-class teaching format is if they failed to give a correct response to a question posed by the teacher. Children's questions were not generally entertained by the teachers, who usually ignored or rebuffed hands put up.

Children require resources (textbooks, worksheets and jotters) for what Thompson refers to as meaningful mathematical "mark making". This provides opportunities for independent work and gives learners access to a structured curriculum, allowing them to work at their own pace, and providing teachers with a mechanism for evaluating performance. The proposal of the FFLC that each child should be involved in 20 minutes of written work each day is important, but this can only translate into improved performance if the set tasks are mathematically worthwhile, structured in such a way that all learners engage with them, and accompanied with appropriate feedback.

What are the implications for teaching and learning number in the foundation phase?

The COCA research described here highlights a number of pedagogic practices prevalent in the foundation phase numeracy classrooms that were observed: the predominance of whole-class teaching in which few opportunities were provided for learners to make visible their understanding and

have misconceptions corrected; the low level of mathematical tasks set; the widespread use of apparatus and group work which consumed significant amounts of time at the expense of mathematically demanding activities; and relatively little reliance on independent written work.

The FFLC, by suggesting lesson templates which apportion time to whole-class teaching, group work and individual work will go some way in addressing the problems faced in the foundation phase. However these changes will only have meaningful impact if combined with appropriate resources and support for teachers, especially guidance in relation to how children learn number. For teachers to become effective teachers of number they need to master the processes by which children learn number, develop mechanisms to diagnose problems and help students along, and find ways of providing learners with opportunities to engage with and internalise concepts through well-structured purposeful individual or group activities.

What are the conclusions?

Addressing these concerns appropriately and speedily is a challenge facing all teacher educators currently working in pre- and in-service teacher education at the foundation level. Teacher education policy and practice need to be informed by well-funded, large-scale research projects on teachers and teaching. In South Africa, considerable resources have been spent on testing learners, and this is useful for showing what children do not know. However, large-scale testing says nothing about why children do not succeed, or what teachers think about how children learn number, and why they fail to do so. The work of the COCA project is a modest contribution to research on what is going on, and going wrong, in numeracy learning in the early years of education.

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Building a strong foundation: Learning to read; reading to learn

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The period from five to 10 years of age is critical in the development of children's reading, writing and thinking skills. This coincides with teaching and learning in the foundation phase (grades R – 3), and continues into the intermediate phase (grades 4 – 6). All further learning rests on these foundations, which should enable children to reach their full potential and function effectively in society. Yet recent studies show that South Africa's learners are falling behind internationally and failing to master basic literacy skills.

This essay explores:

- Why is literacy is important?
- What is the scope of the problem in South Africa?
- What are some of the main causes of the problem?
- How can literacy be strengthened?

Why is literacy important?

Literacy extends beyond the ability to read and write simple sentences. Over the past two decades a broad definition of literacy has evolved. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) defines literacy as "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in the wider society".

Literacy does not simply provide educational and economic benefits. It also gives people the tools to access a range of other socio-economic and political rights.

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Table 9: Performance outcomes of South Africa's learners in PIRLS, 2006

Percentage of learners at or above the given international benchmark score of:	Mark (benchmark/competence)	Learner outcomes				
		All countries %	South Africa %	Afrikaans* %	English* %	African languages* %
	400 (low/basic)	94	22	55	52	4 – 14
	475 (intermediatesome)	76	13	35	36	0 – 3
	550 (high/competent)	41	6	17	18	0
	625 (advanced/fully competent)	7	2	5	5	0

Source: Various tables and textual information from the PIRLS report in: Howie S, Venter E, Van Staden S, Zimmerman L, Long C, Scherman V & Archer E (2007) *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study 2006 summary report: South African children's reading literacy achievement*. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Note: * For South Africa's grade 5 learners with Afrikaans, English or an African language as home language. Ranges of figures reflect the spread across the nine remaining official languages, with Sesotho- and Setswana-speaking learners performing at the top of the range.

Literacy unlocks learning. First one learns to read. Then one reads to learn. In other words, reading becomes the key to unlocking further knowledge and skills.

Research confirms this common-sense understanding. Early learning reportedly enhances learning and information processing later in life. Early success or failure impacts on future performance. Cunha's research team demonstrated how the returns on teaching and learning investment are greatest during early childhood. People benefit most from education and development that occurred when they were eight years old or younger. These benefits also outweigh the costs of attempting to remedy learning problems later in life.

Once set on the learning path, learners cumulatively gather more skills, knowledge and understanding. Logic, common sense and research concur on the benefits of building a strong foundation.

What is the scope of the problem in South Africa?

South Africa's learners are falling behind internationally. The country achieved the lowest score on the 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which evaluated the performance of grade 4 learners from 40 countries. However, South Africa's results were based on the performance of grade 5 learners. Table 9 reveals just how far below international benchmarks the majority of the country's learners performed. Only 22% of learners from South Africa achieved the low benchmark, compared to 94% of learners from all countries.

Language also had an impact on learner performance. Learners were evaluated in all 11 official languages. Those who completed tests in English and Afrikaans performed far better than those completing tests in African languages. In South Africa many learners have a different language of instruction from their home language. These learners performed poorly compared to those whose school and home languages were the same. This situation also applied to African languages, except for learners who completed the Tshivenda test, although not being Tshivenda-speaking. These findings illustrate how issues related to the language of instruction can further compromise learners' performance. However, learners whose home language was not English or Afrikaans, but were learning through these languages, did significantly better than many who were learning through their African home languages. This finding points to factors other than language that influence learning.

The report also pointed to a range of factors related to the home (early literacy, access to books, parents' level of education and reading habits); learner (attitude towards reading, self-concept, and out-of-school activity); and school (access to books, teaching strategies, and classroom practices) that determined the success of early literacy development.

Local findings signal that literacy is already a problem in the foundation phase. In 2008 the Department of Education released the provisional findings from the 2007 grade 3 national assessment.[1] Learners' mean literacy score improved from 30% in 2001 to 36% in 2007. This reflects some improvement in teaching quality, but the low achievement level remains cause for concern. Over half of the learners failed to master the contents of the learning area on which much of their future studies rest.

A range of competencies were evaluated, including reading and viewing text, interpreting written text (thinking and reasoning), and creative writing. Learners performed best with reading and viewing, and worst with thinking and reasoning. Only 15% of the participating schools (23% of the participating learners) achieved the benchmark of 50%.

Variations between the provinces point to the devastating effects of poverty (visible in proxies such as the number of books available at home, parents' level of education and the

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1 The comprehensive report was pending at the time of writing.

Table 10: Variation of grade 3 literacy scores of learners across provinces in South Africa
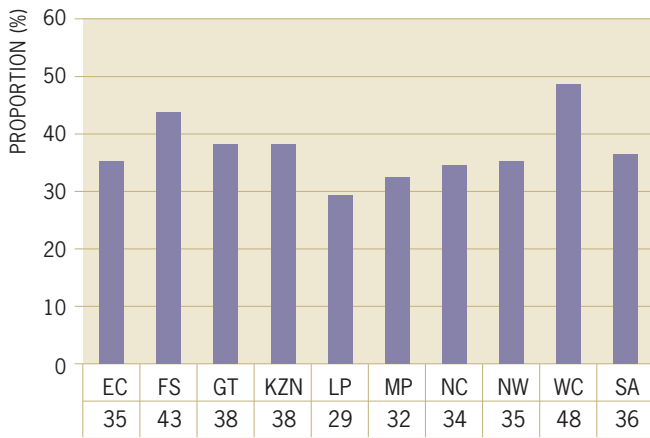
	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NC	NW	WC	SA
	35	43	38	38	29	32	34	35	48	36

Source: Department of Education (2008) 2007 Grade 3 Systemic Evaluation. Pretoria: DoE. [Leaflet]

nutritional status of learners), as well as other factors such as access to books at school, qualified teachers and the effective use of teaching time. Learners from poorer and less developed provinces such as Limpopo performed worst with an average score of 29%, followed closely by Mpumalanga at 32%. Western Cape learners performed best with a score of 48%, followed by Free State learners at 43%. Exploring the Free State situation further may teach us more about effective implementation in rural areas. Table 10 shows the variations across provinces.

In a 2006 study, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) assessed the language performance of approximately 78,000 grade 8 learners in the Western Cape. Here learners scored best with multiple-choice questions but struggled to produce their own written responses. They also had difficulty interpreting texts from other learning areas. Xhosa-speaking learners found it particularly difficult to deal with language content across the curriculum, most likely because of the difference between their mother-tongue and the language of instruction. Of the Xhosa-speaking learners, 41% failed to achieve any significant learning outcomes (ie, they scored less than 29% on the test), while only 1% of these learners scored higher than 59% on the test.

These findings suggest that problems in foundation phase literacy teaching and learning may have far-reaching effects for secondary school-learner performance. Prinsloo's findings from the HSRC's PlusTime Project examined the impact of increased teaching time after school hours on the perform-ance of grade 8 learners, and suggested that this intervention was simply too late to address the deficits in learning that probably developed in the foundation phase.

What are the causes of the problem?

An HSRC team led by Reeves, Heugh and Prinsloo evaluated literacy teaching at 20 schools in Limpopo during 2007/2008. The focus was on first and additional (second) languages in grades R – 4. Following a literature review, information was collected through textbook analysis, reviews of learner work-books, assessment tools and other documents, classroom and school site observations, questionnaires, and interviews with individuals and focus groups. District officials, school principals, school management teams, school governing bodies (including community representatives and parents), teachers, teacher training institutions and learners participated. Research teams of four experts spent two full days at each school.

Four broad areas of concern were identified in the report written under Reeves' leadership:

Not enough challenge, pace and volume in school work

Learners do not read and write nearly enough at and after school. It is not good enough for a whole classroom of grade 1, 2 or 3 learners to have only 10 exercises comprising two five-word columns in their workbooks after 25 weeks of school. Learners simply do not get enough opportunity to practice reading and writing. Classrooms need to be print-rich, but are not, and the absence of a reading culture in classrooms further aggravates the situation. Curriculum coverage also falls short in the process.

Absence of specific and good literacy instruction

About half of the schools did not have grade R teachers with appropriate qualifications. As a result, learners do not develop strong pre-literacy skills. In subsequent grades, teachers often fail to engage in specific language and literacy deve-lopment instruction. The relevance and quality of teacher training is of great concern. Therefore, many teachers do not know and follow the correct steps to develop learners' literacy skills. Learning programmes are not deliberate, well-struc-tured and detailed enough. Teachers struggle to specify learning outcomes or use assessment effectively. Mentoring and support infrastructures are lacking, especially staff such as curriculum advisors and the required district and circuit officials. In addition, only 15% of teachers, phase organisers or heads of department had post-graduate qualifications.

Lack of integration between learning areas and learning support materials

Learning materials (textbooks) do not articulate well across grades and learning areas. The complexity of language (vocabulary and syntax) differs sharply between materials written in the mother-tongue and the additional language of instruction, and also between materials for the foundation phase (grades 1 – 3) and grade 4 onwards. Therefore, by the

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end of grade 3, learners simply haven't achieved the competencies they need to engage with texts in the intermediate phase. The quality of day-to-day instruction in bi- or multilingual contexts remains problematic. The research suggests that one should neither delay the introduction of a first additional language, nor let go of mother-tongue teaching too early. When this change happens too abruptly (towards the end of grade 3 or early in grade 4) it can damage competencies in both languages. Learners face an impossible transition hurdle that may leave them struggling for the rest of their school careers. Appropriate teaching and learning materials are also not always available.

Poor homes and communities
Limited access to pre-school and playgroup facilities, limited access to books and reading, and low levels of adult literacy — all make it harder for learners living in poor communities to develop a strong grounding in basic literacy. This situation reduces parents' involvement in and support of learners' school and homework. It also makes it harder to foster a love for reading and a hunger for knowledge. Parents and school governing bodies often do not have a good grasp of the intricacies of language and literacy development, and may pressurise schools to switch to English-only teaching at the earliest opportunity without understanding the long-term consequences.

Various factors concerning management, organisation, teacher training and the provision of materials and facilities further complicate the situation. For example: The largest classes observed during the study were 57 in grade 1; 90 in grade 2; 83 in grade 3; and 112 in grade 4. This makes teaching and learning almost impossible.

How can literacy be strengthened?

The Limpopo study made a number of recommendations to address these problems and improve literacy teaching in the province. To be effective the plan needs to respond to local conditions, align with national policy, have a clear budget, set exact timeframes, assign accountability, and follow precise targets and standards for monitoring and evaluation. Here are some of the proposed solutions:

Grade R
Optimise pre-school literacy benefits to children by having enough well-qualified teachers following excellent programmes at good facilities.

Building a common understanding
Ensure everyone understands the need for strong literacy development in multi-lingual settings, and align official directives, practical implementation and interaction.

Case 8: The Book Box Project: Promoting a love of books and reading

The Book Box Project provides books and a range of creative activities that are designed to foster a love of books and reading in the classroom. Many of the activities are designed for small groups of learners to use independently, freeing the teacher to work with smaller groups of learners, while the rest of the class are meaningfully occupied.

The book boxes are designed by foundation phase student teachers attending the School of Education at the University of Witwatersrand and are one of the core course-work assignments. Students make two identical book boxes. They keep one book box for their own use when they qualify, and the other is donated to a school in a disadvantaged area. Each book box is unique, yet each box contains the following items:

- A children's fiction or non-fiction book.
- Three bookmarks.
- A read-along tape of the core book.
- A three-dimensional item related to the core book.
- A few games or activities.
- A checklist of all items in the book box.
- A teacher's manual containing learning outcomes and assessment standards linked to the National Curriculum Statement as well as activity instructions and additional notes for the teachers.

A resource in literacy programmes

Book boxes contain a number of activities to develop an interest in books. They expose learners to a range of texts including poetry, rhymes, instructions, and narrative text, and provide an opportunity for learners to practice their reading skills. Story-telling or retelling using the toys, puppets and sequence cards can be done in English or the mother tongue. Block puzzles, jigsaw puzzles and card games such as 'Snap!' can also be played using the learners' mother tongue, and some book boxes have been translated which further promotes the development of indigenous languages.

Contribution to teaching and learning

Book box activities have enabled teachers and learners to use a wider range of activities in the classroom. Besides literacy learning, the book boxes indirectly promote a number of life skills. Children learn to respect resources and take responsibility for their use and care. They learn about obeying rules,

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honesty, taking turns and following instructions. Teachers have models of well-prepared homemade resources, new approaches to learning and teaching, materials to support multilingual teaching and independent workstations.

Reach and impact

Since 1997 the Book Box Project has donated over 700 book boxes to previously disadvantaged schools in four provinces. The book boxes have encouraged many schools to create reading corners in classrooms, small reading rooms and even libraries. The project has brought together people from different communities who all are working to promote literacy development in South Africa.

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Language of instruction

Introduce the first additional language early but gradually, without sacrificing the home language. Start by introducing oral activities early in grade 1; add literacy (reading and writing activities) late in grade 1 or at the start of grade 2; strengthen reading and writing in the first additional language up to grade 6 (parallel to teaching the home language); and include explicit work across the curriculum towards the end of grade 3 and throughout grades 4 – 6.

Teacher training

Provide teacher training and support to strengthen the teaching of reading and writing — in both the home and first additional language — across the foundation and intermediate phases following best standards and bi-lingual teaching methodologies. A critical question concerns the inclusion of training of teachers for grade R and younger as a priority at universities. Level 5 courses do not adequately prepare teachers for this critical phase, especially in disadvantaged communities.

Textbooks, readers and literacy-rich classrooms

Place good materials in the hands of every learner daily during class time, and for taking home to read. Ensure that classrooms display abundant wall charts, fact sheets, posters and learner work, which are then used to encourage interactive literacy engagement. Case 8, the Book Box Project, on p. 64 presents one example of best practice.

Teaching time (time on task)

Make every minute count; use teaching and learning timeframes efficiently; get through plentiful volumes of daily classroom activity; and do regular (if not daily) homework for reading and writing from the first day in grade 1.

Home and community support

Foster improved home, family and community support, including libraries. The Foundations for Learning Campaign of the Department of Education is a good beginning to enhance early-learner and adult literacy development in an integrated way. This initiative has to be sustained, and much more needs to be done.

What are the conclusions?

Literacy is the key to further learning and development. Yet national and international studies show that South Africa's learners are struggling to master basic literacy. The research studies cited in this essay suggest some of the central problems, their probable causes and potential solutions. Learners do not receive good instruction; learning programmes are poorly integrated across learning areas, grades and materials; and there is little support for literacy and learning at home or in the community. These problems can be addressed by strengthening grade R teaching and learning; improving

teacher training programmes; using quality textbooks and learning materials; respecting teaching time; addressing the issues related to languages of instruction; and enhancing home and community support to learners.

These recommendations are echoed in a report by Barber and Mourshed, who maintain that the right people should teach in schools, with sufficient instructional capacity, to give every child the opportunity to succeed. Chisholm's work on children's right to education in South Africa also points to the limitations of process, quality, under-delivery and poverty.

Access to basic education is not simply about providing facilities or having learners come to school every day. Access to education implies access to quality education. *Good* learning and *good* teaching are essential, for without quality there can be no meaningful access. This can happen only when good teachers, using the best learning materials and approaches, make optimal use of all the available teaching time. Not a minute should be wasted.

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Children Count — The numbers

Part three presents child-centred data to monitor progress and track the realisation of children's socio-economic rights in South Africa.

A set of key indicators track progress in the following domains:

- Demography of South Africa's children
- Children's access to social assistance
- Children's access to education
- Child health: the general context
- Child health: HIV/AIDS
- Children's access to housing
- Children's access to basic services

A full set of indicators and detailed commentary is available on **www.childrencount.ci.org.za.**

Introducing *Children Count* — Abantwana Babalulekile

Updated by Katharine Hall and Lori Lake (Children's Institute)

South Africa's commitment to the realisation of socio-economic rights is contained in the Constitution, the highest law of the land, which includes provisions to ensure that no person should be without the basic necessities of life. These basic necessities are specified in the Bill of Rights, and particularly section 26 (access to adequate housing); section 27 (health care, sufficient food, water and social security); section 28 (the special rights of children) and section 29 (education).

Children are specifically mentioned, and as well as the general rights, every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health-care services and social services. These form part of what are collectively known as socio-economic rights. While these rights are guaranteed by the Constitution, the question is: *How well is South Africa doing in realising these rights for all children?* In order to answer this question we need to monitor the situation of children in South Africa.

A rights-based approach

Children Count — Abantwana Babalulekile is an ongoing data and advocacy project of the Children's Institute, and was established in 2005 to monitor progress for children. It provides reliable and accessible child-centred information which can be used to inform the design and targeting of policies, programmes and interventions, and as a tool for tracking progress in the realisation of children's rights.

Child-centred data

Any monitoring project needs regular and reliable data, and South Africa is fortunate to be a fairly data-rich country. There is an array of administrative data sets, and the national statistics body, Statistics South Africa, undertakes regular national population surveys which provide useful information on a range of issues. However most information about the social and economic situation of people living in South Africa does not focus on children, but rather counts all individuals or households. This is the standard way for central statistics organs to present national data, but it is of limited use for those interested in understanding the situation of children.

'Child-centred' data does not only mean that we use data about children specifically. It also means using national population or household data, but analysing it at the level of the child. This is important because the numbers can differ enormously depending on the unit of analysis. For example: National statistics tell us the unemployment rate, but only a child-centred analysis can tell us how many children live in households where no adult is employed. National statistics tell us what proportion of households are without adequate sanitation, but when we use a child-centred analysis, the proportion is significantly higher.

Counting South Africa's children

Children Count — Abantwana Babalulekile presents child-centred data on many of the areas covered under socio-economic rights. As new data become available with the release of national surveys and other data sources, it is possible to track changes in the conditions of children and their access to services over time. This year, *Children Count — Abantwana Babalulekile* presents national survey data for each year from 2002 to 2007, and many of the indicators in this issue compare the situation of children over this six-year period.

The tables on the following pages give basic information about children's demographics, care arrangements, income poverty, social security, education, health status, housing and basic services. Each table is accompanied by commentary that provides context and gives a brief interpretation of the data. The data are presented for all children in South Africa and, where possible, by province.

The indicators in this *South African Child Gauge* are a subset of the *Children Count — Abantwana Babalulekile* indicators on demographics and socio-economic rights.

The project's website contains the full range of indicators and more detailed data, as well as links to other websites and useful documents. It can be accessed at: **www.childrencount.ci.org.za**.

Data sources

Children Count — Abantwana Babalulekile uses a number of data sources. Some are administrative databases used by government departments (Health, Education, and Social Development) to record and monitor the services they deliver. Some of the HIV/AIDS data are from the ASSA model, a statistical model developed by the Actuarial Society of South Africa, which uses many different types of data sources to derive estimates of the incidence of HIV, and treatment needs. Most of the indicators presented are derived from the *General Household Survey* of Statistics South Africa. Data sources are carefully considered before inclusion, and the strengths and limitations of each are outlined on the website, and on pp xx – xx. Definitions and technical notes for the indicators are included in the accompanying commentary, and can also be found on the website.

Confidence intervals

Sample surveys are subject to error. The proportions or percentages simply reflect the mid-point of a possible range, but the true values could fall anywhere between the upper and lower bounds. The confidence intervals indicate the reliability of the estimate at the 95% level. This means that if independent samples were repeatedly taken from the same population, we would expect the proportion to lie between upper and lower bounds of the confidence interval 95% of the time.

It is important to look at the confidence intervals when assessing whether apparent differences between provinces or sub-groups are real. The wider the confidence interval, the more uncertain the proportion. Where confidence intervals overlap for different sub-populations or time periods, we cannot be sure that there is a real difference in the proportions, even if the mid-point proportions differ. In the accompanying bar graphs, the confidence intervals are represented by vertical lines at the top of each bar (I).

Meaningful access to basic education

The theme of this *South African Child Gauge* is 'meaningful access to basic education'. Children have multiple, inter-related needs that require a holistic approach to programme and service provision. Although the indicators presented here do not all directly reflect on education provisioning, data on child poverty, HIV prevalence, orphaning and child-only households together with children's access to social grants, housing and basic services all have a direct impact on children's ability to realise their right to education. A set of six indicators speaks directly to children's access to education: attendance rates, distance to the nearest school, learner-to-educator ratios, gender parity, and schools with access to water and sanitation.

Each domain in *Children Count — Abantwana Babalulekile* is introduced below and key findings are highlighted.

Demography of South Africa's children (pages 71 – 78)

This section provides child population figures and gives a profile of South Africa's children and their care arrangements, including children's co-residence with biological parents, the number and proportion of orphans, children living in child-headed households, children living in income poverty, and children living in a household with an employed adult. There were just over 18.3 million children in South Africa in 2007. Nearly 20% of children are orphans who have lost a mother, father or both parents; 23% of children do not live with either of their biological parents; but only 0.8% of children live in child-only households. Two-thirds of children live in income poverty, and about 40% live in a household where no adult is employed.

Children's access to social assistance (pages 79 – 81)

Social assistance grants are an important source of income to help caregivers meet children's basic needs. Nearly 8 million children received the Child Support Grant in mid-2008, nearly 100,000 children received the Care Dependency Grant, and a further 431,000 children received the Foster Child Grant.

Children's access to education
(pages 82 – 89)

This section uses a number of indicators to monitor children's access to education. Many children have to travel long distances to reach their nearest school: 17% of children live far from their nearest primary school and this increases to 29% for high school. Access to schooling thus remains a problem for many children, especially those living in rural areas. Despite these barriers, South Africa has made significant strides in improving access to education with an attendance rate of 97% in 2007. However this does not necessarily translate into educational outcomes or capture the regularity of children's attendance and progress through school.

South Africa scores well in terms of gender parity, with an equal proportion of girls and boys attending school. These figures mask other gender-related issues (eg violence and sexual assault) that must be addressed before girls truly have equal access to education.

Realising the right to education is not just about universal access to school: The quality of learning environment is also crucial. The average learner-to-educator ratio in 2007 was 32.4 learners per educator. This is in line with national and international recommendations. Schools must also provide a safe and healthy learning environment. In 2006, 89% of schools had water on site, yet only 60% of schools had adequate sanitation.

Child health: the general context
(pages 90 – 92)

This section reports infant and under-five mortality rates; distance to clinic; and children living in households experiencing child hunger. In 2007, nearly 40% of children lived far from their nearest primary health-care clinic, and 2.7 million children lived in households that reported child hunger.

Child health: HIV/AIDS
(pages 93 – 97)

This section looks at indicators of HIV prevalence in pregnant women; access to prevention of mother-to-child transmission programmes (PMTCT); and access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) in pregnant women and children. 2007 data show that nearly 70% of pregnant women received voluntary counselling and testing as part of the PMTCT programme, and close to one-third of pregnant women who accessed antenatal clinics were found to be infected with HIV. Just over one in three adults (34%) and one in four children (27%) eligible for ART initiated treatment in 2007. While access to treatment has increased significantly since 2002, there are a large number of people who are not receiving treatment.

Children's access to housing
(pages 98 – 99)

This section presents data on children living in adequate housing and over-crowded dwellings. In 2007, 69% of children lived in formal housing, while over 2.6 million children lived in backyard dwellings and shacks in informal settlements. A quarter of the child population lived in over-crowded households.

Children's access to basic services
(pages 100 – 102)

Without water and sanitation, children face substantial health risks. This section presents data on children's access to drinking water, sanitation and electricity. In 2007, only 63% of children had access to drinking water on site. Children's access to adequate toilet facilities rose to 59%, and 80% of children lived in households with electricity connections.
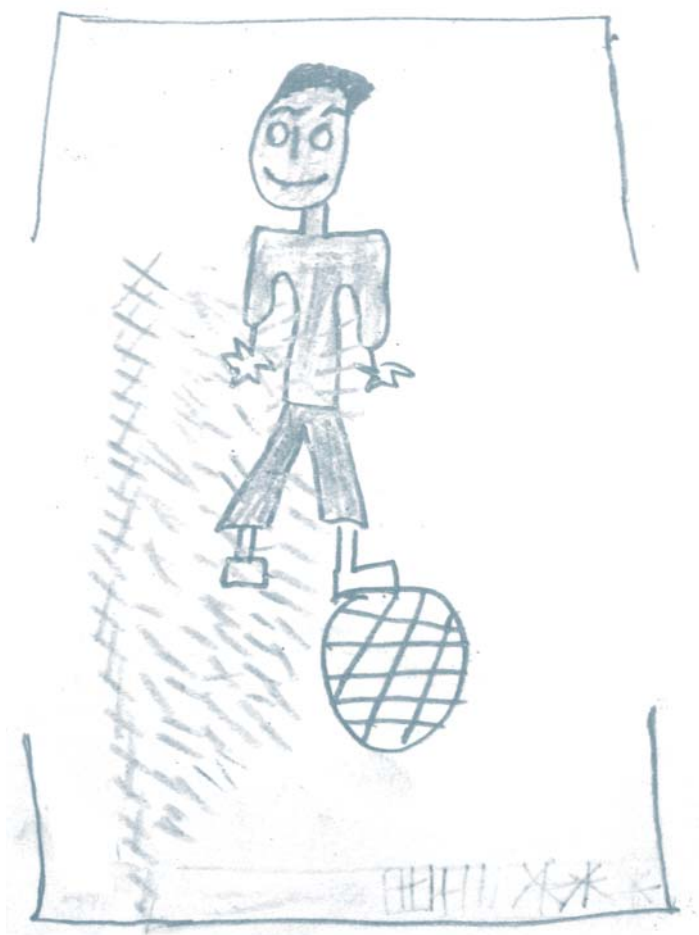
Demography of South Africa's children

Updated by Helen Meintjes and Katharine Hall (Children's Institute)

The UN General Guidelines for Periodic Reports on the Convention on the Rights of the Child,
paragraph 7, says that reports made by states should be accompanied by
"... detailed statistical information ... Quantitative information should indicate
variations between various areas of the country ... and between groups of children ...".

The number and proportion of children living in South Africa

This indicator refers to the number of children under the age of 18 years living in South Africa and includes child population numbers by province, population group, age and sex.

There were a total of 18.3 million children in South Africa in July 2007. Children therefore constitute nearly 40% of the population. This represents a 4% (760,000) growth in the child population from 2002 – 2007.

Two-thirds of all children live in four of South Africa's nine provinces: KwaZulu-Natal (22%), Eastern Cape (16%), Gauteng (16%) and Limpopo (14%). The distribution of children across provinces is slightly different to that of adults, with a greater proportion of children living in provinces with large rural populations (Limpopo, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal), and a greater proportion of adults in the largely metropolitan provinces. Despite being the smallest province on the map, Gauteng accommodates nearly a quarter of all adults (23%), but only 16% of children.

The child population is skewed slightly with boys (52%) outnumbering girls (48%). Children are evenly distributed across three equal age groups (0 – 5 years, 6 – 12 years, 13 – 17 years). These age groups are used for standard disaggregation of *Children Count — Abantwana Babalulekile* data.

The child population is also analysed by population group — 'African', 'Coloured', 'Indian' and 'White' — for purposes of measuring and monitoring persistent racial inequality. In 2007, African children accounted for 84% of the total child population.

Table 1a: Number of children in South Africa 2002 – 2007, by province

Province	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	%
Eastern Cape	2,836,000	2,881,000	3,216,000	3,137,000	3,181,000	2,971,000	16
Free State	990,000	980,000	1,064,000	1,114,000	1,118,000	1,138,000	6
Gauteng	2,741,000	2,779,000	2,642,000	2,656,000	2,720,000	2,884,000	16
KwaZulu-Natal	3,833,000	3,830,000	3,792,000	3,841,000	3,817,000	4,023,000	22
Limpopo	2,501,000	2,533,000	2,616,000	2,615,000	2,660,000	2,504,000	14
Mpumalanga	1,306,000	1,319,000	1,308,000	1,351,000	1,402,000	1,474,000	8
North West	1,431,000	1,453,000	1,489,000	1,461,000	1,431,000	1,295,000	7
Northern Cape	301,000	300,000	337,000	337,000	344,000	433,000	2
Western Cape	1,591,000	1,585,000	1,559,000	1,572,000	1,571,000	1,571,000	9
South Africa	**17,530,000**	**17,660,000**	**18,022,000**	**18,087,000**	**18,243,000**	**18,292,000**	**100**

Table 1b: Number of children in South Africa 2002 – 2007, by population group

Pop. group	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	%
African	14,590,000	14,770,000	15,078,000	15,181,000	15,364,000	15,441,000	84
Coloured	1,518,000	1,512,000	1,534,000	1,522,000	1,518,000	1,567,000	9
Indian	336,000	317,000	310,000	346,000	337,000	317,000	2
White	1,086,000	1,061,000	1,099,000	1,038,000	1,023,000	968,000	5
South Africa	**17,530,000**	**17,660,000**	**18,022,000**	**18,087,000**	**18,243,000**	**18,292,000**	**100**

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2008) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2007*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA. Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

The number and proportion of orphans living in South Africa

An orphan is defined as a child under the age of 18 years whose mother, father, or both biological parents have died. This includes those whose living status is reported as unknown, but excludes those whose living status is unspecified. For the purpose of this indicator, we define orphans in three mutually exclusive categories:

• A maternal orphan is a child whose mother has died but whose father is alive;
• A paternal orphan is a child whose father has died but whose mother is alive;
• A double orphan is a child whose mother and father have both died.

The total number of orphans is the sum of maternal, paternal and double orphans.

This definition differs from those commonly used by UN agencies and the Actuarial Society of South Africa (ASSA), where the definition of maternal and paternal orphans includes children who are double orphans. As the orphan definitions used here are mutually exclusive and additive, the figures differ from orphan estimates provided by the ASSA models.

The 2007 General Household Survey indicates that there were approximately 3.7 million orphans in South Africa. This includes children without a living biological mother, father or both parents and equates to 20% of all children in South Africa. The total number of orphans has increased substantially, with approximately 700,000 more orphaned children in 2007 than in 2002. This increase is likely to be driven primarily by the AIDS pandemic.

It is important to disaggregate the total orphan figures because the death of one parent can have different implications for children than the death of both parents, and the death of a mother is likely to have a greater impact on children's lives than the absence of a father from children's lives (Case, Paxson & Ableidinger 2004; Ardington 2007; Cluver, Gardner & Operario 2007).

In 2007, 13% of children in South Africa were paternal orphans (whose mothers were still alive), 3% of children (600,000 children) were maternal orphans; and a further 4% of children were double orphans. In other words, the vast majority (64%) of all orphans in South Africa are paternal orphans. The large number of paternal orphans is linked to high mortality rates of men, and the frequent absence of fathers in children's lives (1% or 170,000 children have fathers whose vital status is "unknown").

In 2007, half of all orphans in South Africa lived in KwaZulu-Natal or the Eastern Cape. These orphans account for 26% and 24% respectively of the total number of children in these provinces. Orphaned children also account for 26% of the total child population in the Free State. In 2007, 79% of all orphans were of school-going age (7 – 17 years).

Table 1c: Number and proportion of orphans in South Africa, 2007
(Y-axis reduced to 50%)
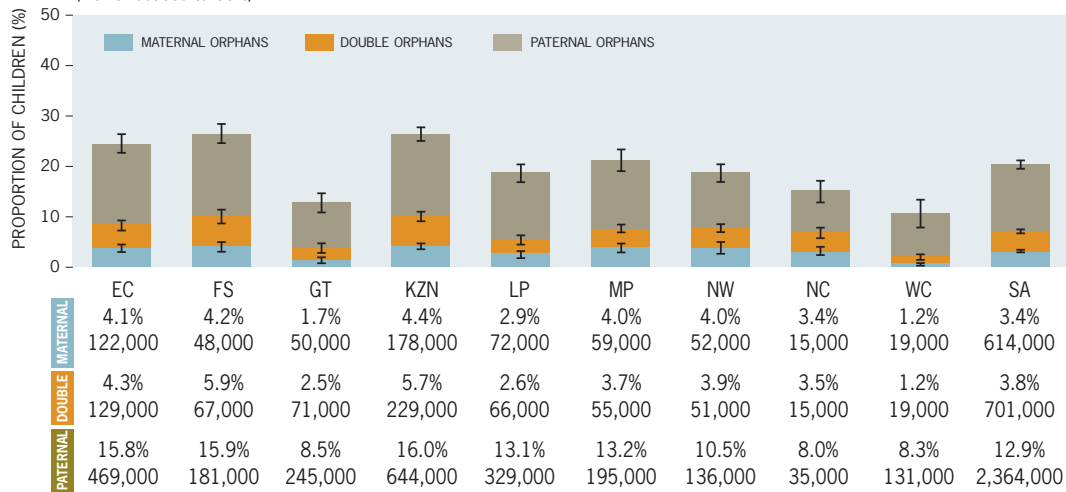
	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
MATERNAL	4.1% 122,000	4.2% 48,000	1.7% 50,000	4.4% 178,000	2.9% 72,000	4.0% 59,000	4.0% 52,000	3.4% 15,000	1.2% 19,000	3.4% 614,000
DOUBLE	4.3% 129,000	5.9% 67,000	2.5% 71,000	5.7% 229,000	2.6% 66,000	3.7% 55,000	3.9% 51,000	3.5% 15,000	1.2% 19,000	3.8% 701,000
PATERNAL	15.8% 469,000	15.9% 181,000	8.5% 245,000	16.0% 644,000	13.1% 329,000	13.2% 195,000	10.5% 136,000	8.0% 35,000	8.3% 131,000	12.9% 2,364,000

Source: Statistics South Africa (2008) *General Household Survey 2007*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA.
Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

Table 1d: Number and proportion of orphans in South Africa, 2002
(Y-axis reduced to 50%)

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
MATERNAL	3.0% 85,000	4.2% 42,000	2.0% 54,000	3.5% 135,000	2.2% 54,000	3.6% 46,000	2.5% 35,000	3.6% 11,000	1.6% 26,000	2.8% 488,000
DOUBLE	2.3% 65,000	2.3% 22,000	1.7% 46,000	2.9% 109,000	1.5% 37,000	1.9% 25,000	1.9% 27,000	1.2% 4,000	1.0% 16,000	2.0% 352,000
PATERNAL	14.2% 403,000	12.6% 125,000	10.9% 298,000	13.2% 504,000	13.7% 342,000	9.6% 126,000	14.4% 206,000	9.7% 29,000	7.6% 120,000	12.3% 2,155,000

Source: Statistics South Africa (2003) *General Household Survey 2002*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA.
Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

The number and proportion of children living with their biological parent(s)

South Africa has a long history of children not living consistently in the same dwelling as their biological parents due to poverty, labour migration, educational opportunities or cultural practice. As a result, many children experience a sequence of different caregivers or are brought up without paternal figures.

This indicator shows the number and proportion of children in South Africa who are living in the same household as both their biological parents, their mother only; their father only; or who are not living with either biological parent.

The General Household Survey 2007 indicates that 34% of children lived with both their biological parents. Forty percent of all children — more than 7 million children — live with their mothers but without their fathers. Only 3% of children live in households where their fathers are present and their mothers absent. Twenty-three percent of children live with neither biological parent. Yet only a minority of these children (17%) are double orphans.

In both the Western Cape and Gauteng, the proportion of children living with both parents is significantly higher than the national average, with more than half of children resident with both parents, and small proportions of children living with neither parent. In contrast, nearly a third of children (31%) in the Eastern Cape live with neither parent. These patterns are consistent from 2002 – 2007.

Less than one-third of African children were living with both their parents in July 2007, yet the vast majority of Indian and White children (82% and 80% respectively) were resident with both biological parents. Almost one-quarter (24%) of all African children do not live with either of their parents and a further 43% of African children live with their mothers and without their fathers. These figures indicate an absence of fathers in the domestic lives of large numbers of African children.

Younger children (0 – 5-year-olds) are more likely to be living with their mothers (whether their fathers are present or not) than older children (6 – 17 years), who are more likely than younger children to be living with neither parent.

Table 1e: Number and proportion of children living with biological parents, 2007

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
MOTHER ONLY	40.6%	38.2%	31.7%	40.8%	46.9%	42.4%	44.7%	34.3%	35.9%	39.9%
	1,207,000	435,000	915,000	1,643,000	1,174,000	625,000	578,000	148,000	565,000	7,290,000
BOTH PARENTS	26.1%	32.4%	54.6%	28.0%	24.6%	30.8%	29.3%	41.9%	50.8%	34.3%
	774,000	369,000	1,574,000	1,126,000	617,000	454,000	380,000	181,000	799,000	6,274,000
FATHER ONLY	2.1%	2.9%	3.3%	3.8%	1.7%	2.7%	2.0%	1.9%	3.4%	2.8%
	63,000	33,000	95,000	154,000	44,000	39,000	26,000	8,000	54,000	516,000

Source: Statistics South Africa (2008) *General Household Survey 2007*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA.
Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand.
③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line
at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals.
⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

Table 1f: Number and proportion of children living with biological parents, 2002

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
MOTHER ONLY	39.0%	31.3%	33.5%	39.8%	46.5%	37.8%	39.7%	31.5%	31.7%	38.1%
	1,106,000	310,000	918,000	1,527,000	1,162,000	493,000	568,000	95,000	504,000	6,684,000
BOTH PARENTS	28.5%	43.1%	51.9%	33.2%	27.6%	34.5%	35.2%	46.6%	57.4%	37.8%
	808,000	427,000	1,423,000	1,271,000	691,000	450,000	504,000	140,000	913,000	6,627,000
FATHER ONLY	2.5%	3.9%	3.3%	4.2%	1.8%	3.3%	1.8%	1.9%	2.2%	2.9%
	70,000	38,000	91,000	162,000	45,000	44,000	26,000	6,000	35,000	516,000

Source: Statistics South Africa (2003) *General Household Survey 2002*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA.
Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand.
③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line
at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals.
⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

Number and proportion of children living in child-only households

A child-only household is defined as a household in which all members are younger than 18 years. These households are also commonly known as 'child-headed households'.

There is much concern that the number of children living in child-only households will rise as orphan numbers increase due to the AIDS pandemic. Many argue that kinship networks are "stretched to their limits" and are struggling to support orphaned children. While there is limited evidence that this is the case (Meintjes & Giese 2006), it is important to monitor the prevalence of child-only households as the HIV/AIDS pandemic continues.

An analysis of the General Household Survey 2007 indicates that there were 150,000 children living in a total of 79,000 child-only households across South Africa. It equates to 0.8% of all children and 0.6% of all households. There has been no change in the proportion of children living in child-only households between 2002 and 2007.

While it is not ideal for any child to live without an adult present, it is positive that half (49%) of all children living in child-only households are over 14 years. Most children living in child-only households (79%) live in three provinces: Limpopo (38%), Eastern Cape (25%) and KwaZulu-Natal (16%).

Research suggests that child-only households often exist for a short period, for example after the death of an adult and prior to other child-care arrangements being made (Meintjes & Giese 2006; Hill, Hosegood & Newell 2008).

There is no robust data on child-only (or 'child-headed') households in South Africa to date. The figures should be treated with caution as the number of child-only households forms just a very small sub-sample of the General Household Survey. In particular, we caution against reading too much into the provincial breakdowns, or into any differences noted between the 2002 and 2007 estimates.

Table 1g: Number and proportion of children living in child-only households, 2002 & 2007

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2002	1.6%	0.7%	0.1%	0.5%	1.3%	0.6%	0.3%	0.2%	0.0%	0.7%
	46,000	6,000	3,000	18,000	32,000	8,000	5,000	0	0	118,000
2007	1.2%	0.7%	0.2%	0.6%	2.3%	0.6%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.8%
	37,000	8,000	6,000	24,000	57,000	9,000	5,000	1,000	2,000	148,000

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2008) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household 2007.* Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA. Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information, including graphs on a smaller scale.

Number and proportion of children living in income poverty

This indicator shows the number and proportion of children living in households that are income-poor. The poverty line is set at R350 per person per month (in 2000 Rands), and increased each year in line with inflation. Per capita income is calculated by adding all reported income for household members older than 15 years, then adding all income from social grants, and dividing the total household income by the number of household members. Both income and social grants are known to be under-reported in the General Household Survey. Child poverty is therefore likely to be over-estimated.

Using a single income measure tells us nothing about how resources are distributed between family members, or how money is spent, but it does give an indication of how many children are living with severely constrained resources. Money is needed to access a range of services, and income poverty often compromises children's rights to nutrition, education and health-care services.

International law and the South African Constitution recognise the link between income and the realisation of basic human rights, and acknowledge that children have the right to social assistance (social grants) when families cannot meet children's basic needs. Income poverty is therefore an important indicator of people in need of social assistance, and of the State's progress in realising the right to social assistance.

South Africa has very high rates of child poverty. In 2007, two-thirds of children (68%) lived in households with a per capita income below R350. In the Eastern Cape and Limpopo, approximately eight out of 10 children live in households with this low level of per capita income. The Western Cape and Gauteng have the lowest child poverty rates — calculated at 39% and 48% respectively.

The data suggest that there has been a decline in child poverty from 2002 – 2007. It may be partly the result of a massive expansion in the reach of the Child Support Grant (see p. 79) over the same period.

There are glaring racial disparities in income poverty: While three-quarters (75%) of African children lived in poor households in 2007, only 5% of White children lived below the poverty line. Poverty rates for Coloured and Indian children are 43% and 14% respectively.

Table 1h: Number and proportion of children living in income poverty, 2002 & 2007
(Households with monthly per capita income less than R350, in 2000 Rands)

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2002	87.8%	79.7%	54.3%	79.6%	89.7%	81.0%	80.1%	74.2%	53.6%	76.8%
	2,772,000	868,000	1,401,000	3,116,000	2,419,000	1,071,000	1,197,000	248,000	812,000	13,904,000
2007	77.5%	69.2%	47.5%	72.6%	81.6%	74.2%	74.8%	64.7%	38.9%	67.7%
	2,302,000	788,000	1,369,000	2,921,000	2,044,000	1,093,000	969,000	280,000	612,000	12,377,000

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2008) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2007*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA. Analysis by Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

The number and proportion of children living in households with an employed adult

This indicator gives the number and proportion of children who live in households where there is at least one employed adult. Adults are defined as people aged 18 years and older; so economically active children are excluded from the analysis. The definition of 'employment' is derived from the General Household Survey and includes regular or irregular work for wages or salary, as well as various forms of self-employment, including unpaid work in a family business, subsistence agriculture, construction and home maintenance, and even begging.

In September 2007, the official unemployment rate in South Africa was 23% (Statistics South Africa 2008). This is based on a narrow definition that includes only those adults who had actively looked but failed to find work in the four weeks preceding the survey. An expanded definition of unemployment, which includes "discouraged work-seekers" who were unemployed but not actively looking for work in the month preceding the survey, gives a much higher, and more accurate, indication of unemployment, at around 33%.

Apart from providing regular income, an employed adult may bring other benefits to the household, including health insurance, unemployment insurance, and maternity leave, which can contribute to children's health, development and education.

In 2007, some 62% of children in South Africa lived in households with at least one working adult. The other 38% (nearly 7 million children) live in households where no adults are working. There has been little change in the proportion of children living in unemployed households from 2002 – 2007, despite a decrease in the official unemployment rate from 30% to 23% over the same period.

This indicator is very closely related to income poverty, in that provinces with relatively high proportions of children living in unemployed households also have high rates of child poverty. The Eastern Cape and Limpopo have the highest rates of unemployment, and the largest proportions of children living in poverty. While 88% of children in the Western Cape and 82% in Gauteng live with at least one working adult, only 51% of children in the Eastern Cape and 41% in Limpopo live with an employed adult.

Table 1i: Number and proportion of children living in households with an employed adult, 2002 & 2007

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2002	51.5%	69.9%	82.2%	59.8%	48.2%	67.8%	66.0%	73.5%	87.2%	64.7%
	1,461,000	692,000	2,254,000	2,291,000	1,207,000	886,000	945,000	221,000	1,387,000	11,344,000
2007	50.5%	62.3%	82.3%	58.5%	40.9%	64.7%	58.7%	70.2%	88.1%	62.1%
	1,501,000	709,000	2,374,000	2,353,000	1,025,000	953,000	760,000	304,000	1,384,000	11,363,000

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2008) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2007.* Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA. Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

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Children's access to social assistance

Updated by Katharine Hall (Children's Institute)

The Constitution of South Africa, section 27(1)(c), says that "everyone has the right to have access to …
social security, including, if they are unable to support themselves and their dependants, appropriate social assistance".

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that every child has the right "to a standard of living adequate
for his or her development" (article 27) and obliges the State "in case of need" to "provide material assistance".
Article 26 guarantees "every child the right to benefit from social security".

The number of children receiving the Child Support Grant

This indicator shows the number of children receiving the Child Support Grant (CSG), as reported by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), which disburses social grants on behalf of the Department of Social Development.

The right to social assistance ensures that people living in poverty are able to meet basic subsistence needs. Government is obliged to support children directly when their parents or caregivers are too poor to do so. Income support is provided through social assistance programmes, such as the CSG, which is an unconditional cash grant paid to the caregivers of eligible children.

From April 2009 the CSG has a value of R240 per month per child. Introduced in 1998 with a value of R100, the CSG has become the single biggest programme for alleviating child poverty in South Africa. Take-up of the CSG has increased dramatically over the past decade, and in July 2008, the monthly CSG was paid to nearly 8 million children aged 0 – 13 years.

There have been two important changes in eligibility criteria related to the age and income thresholds. At first the CSG was only available for children 0 – 6 years old. Later it was progressively extended to older children, and in January 2009 the age threshold increased to 15 (so that 14-year-old children may apply).

From 1998, children were eligible for the CSG if their primary caregiver and his/her spouse had a joint monthly income of R800 or less and lived in a formal house in an urban area. For those who lived in rural areas or informal housing, the income threshold was R1,100 per month. This threshold remained static for 10 years until August 2008 when a formula was introduced for calculating income threshold — set at 10 times the amount of the grant. Therefore the 2009 income threshold is R2,400 per month for a single caregiver (and R4,800 per month for the joint income of the caregiver and married spouse).

Using the 2004 General Household Survey, Budlender calculated that 65% of all children under the age of 14 were eligible for the CSG in that they passed the old means test (Budlender, Rosa & Hall 2005). Applying this eligibility rate to the most recent available population data (mid-2007), it is estimated that the number of children accessing the CSG that year was equivalent to 86% of eligible children, although the actual take-up rate would be lower due to errors of inclusion. After the means test was adjusted in 2008, Budlender (2008) again calculated the eligibility rates and found that 82% of children 0 – 13 years would be eligible for the CSG.

There is substantial evidence that grants, including the CSG, are being spent on food, education and basic goods and services. This evidence shows that the grant not only helps to realise children's right to social assistance, but also improves their access to food, education, and basic services (Case, Hosegood & Lund 2005; Budlender & Woolard 2008; Samson, Lee, Ndlebe, Mac Quene, Van Niekerk, Ghandi, Harigaya & Abrahams 2004).

Table 2a: The number of children under 14 years receiving the CSG, 2005 – 2008

Number of child beneficiaries				
Province	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**
Eastern Cape	1,078,442	1,413,830	1,489,191	1,497,736
Free State	361,318	417,076	438,230	441,397
Gauteng	723,432	862,346	921,509	926,179
KwaZulu-Natal	1,338,045	1,746,944	1,945,026	1,963,944
Limpopo	990,194	1,200,185	1,249,818	1,253,794
Mpumalanga	489,663	613,008	643,727	645,565
North West	465,242	604,525	611,625	613,002
Northern Cape	101,728	121,332	174,604	175,250
Western Cape	365,655	431,514	457,077	458,980
South Africa	**5,913,719**	**7,410,760**	**7,930,807**	**7,975,847**
CSG amount	R180	R190	R200	R220

Source: South African Social Security Agency (2005; 2006; 2007; 2008) SOCPEN database. Pretoria: SASSA.

Notes: ① SOCPEN figures are taken from mid-year (June/July) to coincide with data collection for the annual General Household Survey. ② Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ③ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

The number of children receiving the Foster Child Grant

This indicator shows the number of children who are accessing the Foster Child Grant (FCG) in South Africa, as recorded in the SOCPEN administrative data system of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA).

The FCG is available to foster parents who have a child placed in their care by an order of the court. It is a non-contributory cash grant to the value of R680 in 2009.

The grant was initially intended as financial support for children removed from their families and placed in foster care for protection in situations of abuse or neglect. However, it is increasingly used to provide financial support to caregivers of children who have lost their biological parents because of the AIDS pandemic. The appropriateness and effectiveness of this approach has been questioned (Meintjes, Budlender, Giese & Johnson 2003).

At the end of July 2008, caregivers of over 430,000 children were receiving the FCG. The number of grants has doubled since 2004, with figures increasing by more than 100% in the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West provinces. Take-up of the FCG varies substantially between provinces, and nearly half of all grants go to just two provinces: KwaZulu-Natal (111,582) and Eastern Cape (81,404).

It is not possible to calculate a take-up rate for the FCG as there is no accurate record of how many children are eligible for placement in foster care. A large proportion of children are not receiving the FCG even though, under current policy, they would be eligible for the grant, based on their orphan status alone. For example: 422,000 children received the FCG in 2007, yet the double-orphan figures for the same year came to 701,000.

Table 2b: The number of children receiving the Foster Child Grant, 2004 – 2008

Province	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Eastern Cape	39,772	53,383	68,197	79,766	81,404
Free State	25,140	33,653	40,712	44,170	45,122
Gauteng	28,281	34,647	40,576	50,580	51,719
KwaZulu-Natal	49,462	57,351	81,420	108,423	111,582
Limpopo	18,718	25,615	36,020	43,291	44,201
Mpumalanga	7,642	12,662	18,252	21,436	21,813
North West	14,154	19,000	27,737	31,341	31,821
Northern Cape	8,693	9,480	11,462	14,358	14,494
Western Cape	23,903	26,026	27,326	28,518	28,735
South Africa	**215,765**	**271,817**	**351,702**	**421,883**	**430,891**

Source: South African Social Security Agency (2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008) SOCPEN database. Pretoria: SASSA.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ③ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

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The number of children receiving the Care Dependency Grant

This indicator shows the number of children who are accessing the Care Dependency Grant (CDG) in South Africa, as recorded in the SOCPEN administrative data system of the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA).

The CDG is a non-contributory monthly cash transfer to caregivers of children with severe disabilities who require permanent care. It excludes those children who are cared for in state institutions, because the purpose of the grant is to replace lost earnings of the caregiver looking after the child. It also excludes infants under one year because young babies have full-time care needs, whether or not they have disabilities. To qualify for the CDG, the child needs to undergo a medical assessment and the parent must pass an income or means test.

The value of the CDG increased to R1,010 in April 2009. Although the grant is targeted at children with severe disabilities, children with chronic illnesses are eligible for the grant once the illness becomes disabling, for example children who are very sick with AIDS-related illnesses.

As children with severe disabilities and chronic illnesses need substantial care and attention, a parent may need to stay at home or employ a caregiver to tend to the child. Children with health conditions may need medication, equipment or to attend hospital often. These extra costs can put strain on families that are already struggling to make ends meet. Poverty and chronic health conditions are therefore strongly related (Berry 2002).

It is not possible to calculate a take-up rate for the CDG because there is little data on the number of children living with disability in South Africa, or who are in need of permanent care. In July 2008, 99,621 children were receiving the CDG — an increase of nearly 20,000 since 2004.

The provincial distribution of CDGs is fairly consistent with the distribution of children. The provinces with the largest numbers of children, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape, receive the largest share of CDGs. There has been a consistent and gradual increase in access to the CDG over the five-year period.

Table 2c: The number of children receiving the Care Dependency Grant, 2004 – 2008

Province	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Eastern Cape	18,246	19,925	20,367	20,274	20,253
Free State	3,210	3,401	3,679	3,871	3,924
Gauteng	10,522	11,468	12,140	12,672	12,667
KwaZulu-Natal	20,510	20,994	24,098	27,578	27,855
Limpopo	8,844	9,609	10,553	11,316	11,396
Mpumalanga	4,188	4,273	4,532	4,991	5,018
North West	6,424	6,961	7,791	7,759	7,795
Northern Cape	1,853	2,186	2,582	3,394	3,403
Western Cape	6,290	6,881	7,111	7,307	7,310
South Africa	**80,087**	**85,698**	**92,853**	**99,162**	**99,621**

Source: South African Social Security Agency (2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008) SOCPEN database. Pretoria: SASSA.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ③ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

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Children's access to education

Updated by Ariane De Lannoy and Lori Lake (Children's Institute)

Section 29(1)(a) of the South African Constitution states that "everyone has the right to a basic education" and section 29(1)(b) states that "everyone has the right to further education" and that the State must make such education "progressively available and accessible".

Article 11(3)(a) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child says that State Parties to the Charter "shall take all appropriate measures with a view to achieving the full realisation of this right and shall in particular ... provide free and compulsory basic education".

Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises "the right of the child to education" and also obliges the State to "make primary education compulsory and available free to all".

Number and proportion of children attending an educational institution

This indicator reflects the number and proportion of children aged 7 – 17 years who are reported to be attending a school or educational facility. This is different from 'enrolment rate', which reflects the number of children enrolled in educational institutions, as reported by schools to the national Department of Education early in the school year.

Education is a critical socio-economic right that provides the foundation for lifelong learning and economic opportunities. Basic education is compulsory in grades 1 – 9, or for children aged 7 – 15. Children who have completed basic education also have a right to further education (grades 10 – 12), which government must take reasonable measures to make available.

Table 3a: Number and proportion of children attending an educational institution, 2002 & 2007

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2002	94.1%	96.4%	97.6%	93.0%	96.7%	96.5%	93.4%	90.8%	94.7%	95.0%
	1,761,000	607,000	1,653,000	2,315,000	1,596,000	798,000	827,000	163,000	931,000	10,651,000
2007	96.3%	97.5%	96.0%	96.0%	97.9%	97.7%	95.5%	95.6%	95.8%	96.5%
	1,791,000	677,000	1,555,000	2,455,000	1,566,000	895,000	712,000	252,000	921,000	10,824,000

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2008) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household 2007*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA. Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

At a national level, it is extremely positive that a high proportion (96.5%) of children of school-going age (7 – 17 years) attended some form of educational facility in 2007. Since 2002, the national attendance rate has seen a one percentage point increase. Of a total of 11.2 million children aged 7 – 17 years, nearly 400,000 are reported as not attending school.

At a provincial level, the Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal have all seen significant increases in attendance rates. In the Northern Cape, attendance increased by five percentage points from 91% in 2002 to 96% in 2007, while attendance in KwaZulu-Natal increased by over three percentage points and attendance in the Eastern Cape by nearly two percentage points. In July 2007, four provinces had attendance rates that were slightly lower than the national average: Gauteng, Northern Cape, North West,

and Western Cape each had rates of just below 96%.

Attendance rates among African (97%) and Coloured (94%) children remain lower than those for Indian (99%) and White children (99%). It is encouraging, however, that there has been a significant increase in attendance among African and Coloured children over the past five years.

Attendance rates alone do not capture the regularity of children's school attendance, or progress through school. Overall attendance rates also tend to mask the problem of drop-out among children older than 15. Analysis of attendance among discrete age groups shows a significant drop in attendance amongst children older than 14. Whereas 98% of 14-year-olds were reported to be attending an educational institution in 2007, attendance dropped to 95% of 15-year-olds, 88% of 17-year-olds, and 59% of 19-year-olds.

Table 3b: Proportion of children and youth attending an education institution, by age, 2007
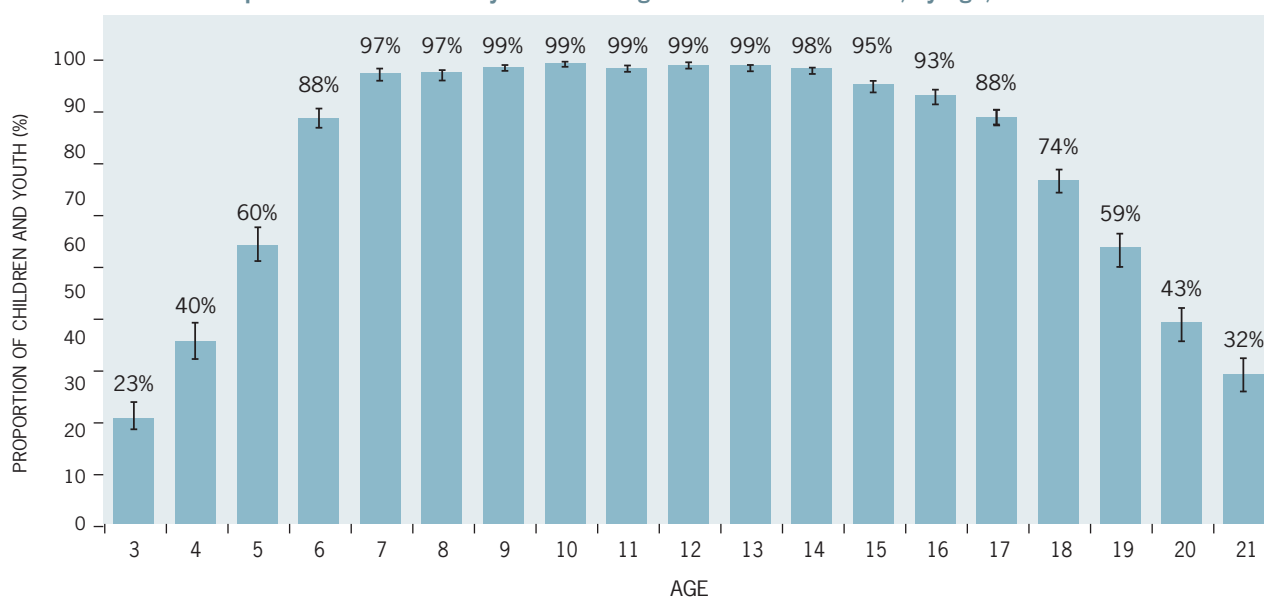
Source: Statistics South Africa (2008) *General Household Survey 2007*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA.

A comparative analysis indicates that the drop-out problem is most severe among Coloured and African youth. At the age of 14, 100% of White children, 98% of African children and 95% of Coloured children were reported as attending an educational institution. At the age of 18, the difference in attendance rates is striking: 80% of White children, 77% of African, and only 45% of Coloured children attended an educational institution in 2007.

These results indicate relatively low levels of enrolment in further education and training, and point to ongoing racial inequality in education outcomes. Research has shown that children from more 'disadvantaged' backgrounds — ie with limited economic

resources, lower levels of parental education, or who have lost one or both parents — are less likely to enrol in school and are more likely to drop out or progress slowly than their more advantaged peers (Crouch 2005; Lam & Seekings 2005). Until we understand, and find solutions for, the various factors that push or pull 'disadvantaged' youth out of school, it is impossible to state that everyone's right to further and even basic education has been realised.

It is, nevertheless, encouraging to note that 40% of children (just over 1.2 million) in the pre-school age group (3 – 5-year-olds) were attending some kind of educational institution in 2007.

The number and proportion of children living far from the nearest school

This indicator reflects the distance from a child's household to the nearest school. Distance is measured through a proxy indicator: length of time travelled to reach the nearest school. The nearest school is regarded as 'far' if a child would have to travel more than 30 minutes to reach it, irrespective of mode of transport. For children aged 7 – 13, distance is measured to the nearest primary school. For children aged 14 – 17, distance is measured to the nearest secondary school.

Access to schools and other educational facilities is a necessary condition for achieving the right to education. The location of a school and the distance between school and home can pose a barrier to education. Access to schools is also hampered by poor roads, transport that is unavailable or un-affordable, and danger along the way. Risks may be different for young children, for girls and boys, and are likely to be greater when children travel alone.

For children who do not have schools nearby, the cost, risk and effort of getting to school can influence decisions about school attendance. Those who travel long distances to reach school may wake very early and risk arriving late or physically exhausted, which may affect their ability to learn.

According to the General Household Survey 2007, there are approximately 7 million children of primary school age (7 – 13 years) in South Africa. Seventeen percent of these children would have to travel more than 30 minutes to reach the nearest primary school. The highest proportions of children living far from the nearest primary school are in the North West (27%) and KwaZulu-Natal (25%).

Just over 4 million children in South Africa are of secondary school age (14 – 17 years). Twenty-nine percent of these children live far away from their nearest high school. In five of the nine provinces more than 30% of the children live far away from a secondary school: Eastern Cape (41%), North West (41%), KwaZulu-Natal (35%), Limpopo (31%) and Mpumalanga (33%).

The Western Cape was the only province that showed a significant improvement in physical access to educational institutions — both primary and secondary — over the six-year period.

Access to school thus remains a problem for many children in South Africa, particularly those living in rural areas. Some rural schools have been merged or closed down, making the situation worse for children in these areas. It appears that the problem is greater for children of secondary school age than for younger children. The data also indicate that African children are more likely to be faced with large distances to the nearest primary and secondary schools (19% and 33% respectively) compared to, for example, 8% and 10% respectively of White children.

It is important to note that children do not neces-sarily attend the school closest to their home for many reasons, including over-crowding, poor faci-lities and quality of education. The school fee exem-ption policy aims to remove financial obstacles to education in fee-charging schools. In theory the exemption makes it possible for children living in poor areas to attend better schools in areas further away. The proportion of learners who actually travel far to school is therefore likely to be higher than reflected in this indicator.
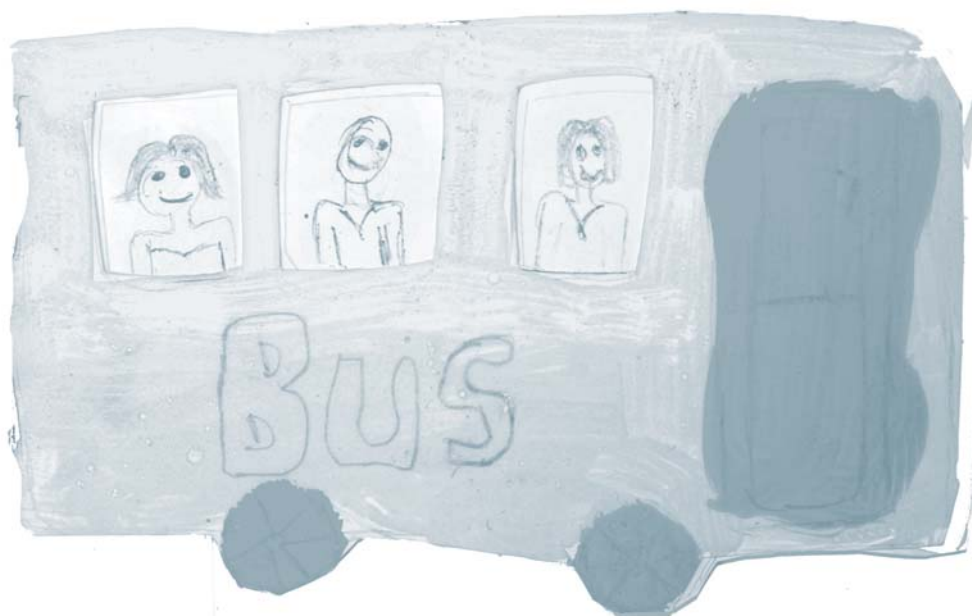
Table 3c: Number and proportion of children living far from the nearest primary school, 2002 & 2007

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2002	17.8%	20.4%	8.1%	28.7%	11.8%	15.8%	20.6%	15.9%	7.6%	17.1%
	211,000	78,000	86,000	447,000	125,000	82,000	119,000	19,000	47,000	1,213,000
2007	16.8%	13.3%	11.1%	25.3%	15.9%	16.7%	27.2%	16.0%	3.8%	17.0%
	195,000	58,000	115,000	402,000	159,000	97,000	125,000	28,000	23,000	1,202,000
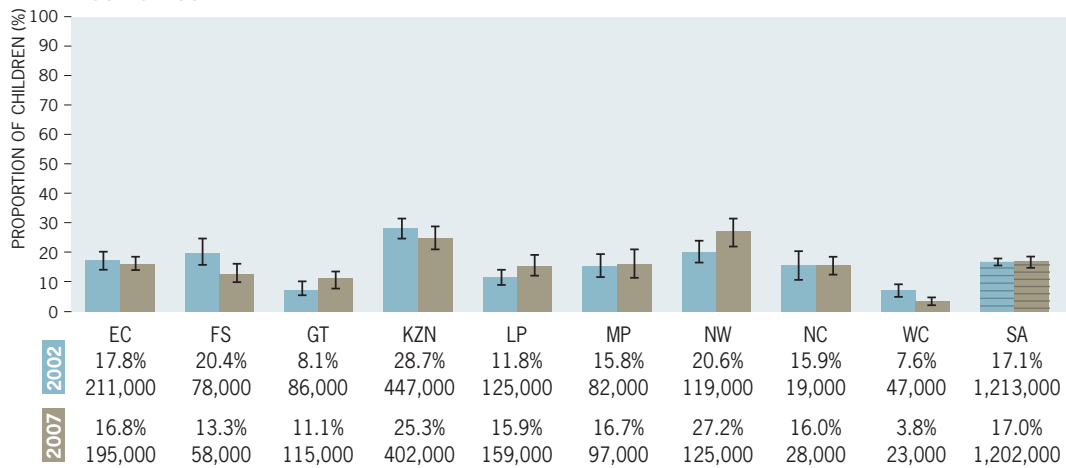
Table 3d: Number and proportion of children living far from the nearest secondary school, 2002 & 2007

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2002	41.9%	23.9%	10.9%	36.3%	27.2%	30.3%	32.5%	22.5%	15.3%	28.5%
	288,000	59,000	69,000	338,000	161,000	93,000	100,000	14,000	55,000	1,177,000
2007	40.6%	19.6%	17.1%	34.6%	30.7%	32.5%	41.3%	22.1%	8.1%	29.4%
	282,000	51,000	100,000	333,000	185,000	109,000	117,000	19,000	29,000	1,225,000

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2008) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2007*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA. Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

Learner-to-educator ratio in public schools

The learner-to-educator ratio (LER) is the average number of learners per educator in a given school year. It is important to note that the number of educators may include principals and other support staff in schools, and therefore tends to over-estimate the number of teaching staff in relation to learners.

Realising the right to education for all children is not just a matter of universal access to schools. The quality of the learning environment is also crucial. Research shows that educators play a key role in determining educational outcomes, and the LER contributes directly to the quality of schooling offered (Van der Berg 2006; Crouch & Mabogoane 2001).

A low LER is not the only factor that impacts on quality. Educators' professional competence, subject knowledge, regular attendance at school and the proportion of time they and the learners spend 'on task' are all important in determining educational outcomes.

The more crowded the classrooms, the less educators are able to give personal attention to individual learners. Learners in over-crowded classes may find it difficult to follow the lesson, or to ask questions when they do not understand. Moreover, in the context of HIV/AIDS, educators can play an important role in identifying and supporting children who are particularly vulnerable, and in linking them to appropriate support services. The larger the class, the harder it is for educators to know the circumstances of individual learners.

Department of Education data show a slight increase in the LER for public schools between 2000 and 2004, but a decrease since 2004. The average LER in public schools was 32.4 in 2007, with slightly higher (worse) ratios in primary schools than in secondary schools.

The national and provincial average LERs in public schools are in line with national and international recommendations — set at a maximum of 40 learners per educator in primary schools and 35 learners per educator in secondary schools (Crouch & Perry 2003). However schools — and classes — vary enormously in size, and some educators have classes of 50 learners or more (Phurutse 2005). In 2007, the National Education Information Management System reported that 25% of classrooms were over-crowded, with more than 45 learners per classroom.

One factor influencing the LER is the ability of schools to employ more educators when needed. Some schools are able to employ additional educators, using school fees that they raise. Schools that cannot collect (high) fees from their learners, are likely to have high LERs.

There are huge differences in the LER between public and independent (private) schools — at a national level, the LER in independent schools is approximately 16. Table 3e reflects the LER in public schools only.

Table 3e: Average learner-to-educator ratios for public schools, 2000 – 2007

Province	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006[1]	2007[1]
Eastern Cape	32.1	33.3	31.8	32.9	33.6	33.0	33.2	32.6
Free State	32.6	31.4	31.6	31.2	30.2	29.7	29.5	29.1
Gauteng	33.2	33.0	33.2	33.6	34.2	31.6	33.8	32.6
KwaZulu-Natal	36.5	37.2	37.4	39.6	36.3	34.4	33.0	33.2
Limpopo	33.6	31.8	32.9	33.7	35.6	34.1	33.4	33.5
Mpumalanga	34.5	36.9	36.9	36.4	35.7	33.6	34.5	33.1
North West	30.6	30.7	30.1	29.7	30.0	31.1	29.8	29.5
Northern Cape	30.7	31.4	30.6	32.8	34.0	31.9	30.2	31.2
Western Cape	32.1	35.5	36.3	36.9	37.7	31.5	31.2	31.4
South Africa	**33.4**	**33.9**	**33.8**	**34.6**	**34.5**	**32.8**	**32.7**	**32.4**

Source: Department of Education (2002 – 2009) *Education Statistics in South Africa at a Glance 2000 – 2007*. Pretoria: DoE.

Notes: ① From 2006, the data are delineated according to new provincial boundaries and may not be directly comparable to the previous years. ② Strengths and limitations of the data can be found on pp. 103 – 104. ③ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

Gender Parity Index in schooling

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) reflects girls' level of access to education compared to that of boys. This is calculated for each school phase. A score of 1 reflects equal enrolment rates for boys and girls. A GPI less than 1 indicates that there are proportionally more boys than girls in the formal education system. A GPI greater than 1 means that there are proportionately more girls than boys attending school.

Gender inequities continue to exist in many parts of the world and girl children are actively discouraged from pursuing an education in certain cultures and traditions. UN Millennium Development Goal No. 3 aims to promote gender equality and eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

In South Africa, girls — by and large — do not experience discrimination when measured by access to school. In 2007, South Africa had a combined GPI of 1.01 for primary and secondary schools. This indicates that almost equal proportions of girls and boys are enrolled in the education system. However, the combined index masks different trends for primary and high school age groups.

While there are slightly more boys enrolled at primary school than girls (GPI = 0.98), the pattern shifts at the secondary school level, where girls are more likely than boys to attend school (GPI = 1.10). This change in the GPI may indicate that fewer boys

than girls are progressing from primary school to secondary school, or that boys are more likely than girls to drop out of high school. This suggests that teenage pregnancy is not the primary cause of high school drop-out, although it may be a significant factor for girls.

This pattern is mirrored in the provinces, where the GPI for primary school is slightly below 1 in most provinces. Overall, there has been little change in the index over the six-year period, with GPIs for 2000 to 2007 remaining almost identical across the provinces, and nationally.

Although gender-based discrimination is not a huge problem in terms of access to school in South Africa, a recent study found that 5% of girls at secondary school were likely to have been raped or sexually assaulted (Burton 2008). The experience of violence at school can influence girls' decisions about schooling and can negatively impact on their schooling outcomes.

A 2006 South African Human Rights Commission inquiry found a clear relationship between school-based violence and school drop-out, academic underperformance, teenage pregnancy and the transmission of HIV/AIDS. Gender parity data therefore mask a number of other gender-related issues that must be dealt with in order to provide truly equal and safe access to education for boys and girls.

Table 3f: Gender parity index of learners in all schools, by province, 2000 – 2007

Province	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006[1]	2007[1]
Eastern Cape	1.05	1.05	1.04	1.03	1.05	1.04	1.04	1.09
Free State	1.00	0.99	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.00	1.01	0.99
Gauteng	1 01	0 99	0 98	0 97	1 00	1 00	1 00	1.00
KwaZulu-Natal	0.99	0.99	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.99	1.00
Limpopo	1.00	0.99	0.99	0.98	1.00	0.99	0.99	1.07
Mpumalanga	1.02	0.98	0.98	0.96	0.99	0.98	0.99	1.00
North West	1.01	0.99	0.98	0.98	0.99	1.00	0.99	0.92
Northern Cape	1.00	1.00	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.99	0.99	1.00
Western Cape	1.04	1.03	1.00	1.00	1.03	1.04	1.04	1.01
South Africa	**1.01**	**1.00**	**0.99**	**0.99**	**1.00**	**1.00**	**1.01**	**1.01**

Source: Department of Education (2002 – 2009) *Education Statistics in South Africa at a Glance 2000 – 2007*. Pretoria: DoE.

Notes: [1] From 2006, the data are delineated according to new provincial boundaries and may not be directly comparable to the previous years. [2] Strengths and limitations of the data can be found on ppp. 103 – 104. [3] See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

Number and proportion of schools with access to water on or near site

This indicator shows the number and proportion of schools with access to water on or near site. Data for 2006 include schools serviced by a municipality and schools depending on boreholes on site, or rainwater-harvesting systems.

Children need reliable access to safe drinking water to prevent illness and promote health and hygiene. As most children attend school for seven hours a day, five days a week, it is crucial that they have access to an adequate supply of potable water while at school.

If children do not have access to safe drinking water at school, their right to water is not being realised. This also impacts on their right to health, as illnesses spread rapidly in crowded conditions. Poor water supply can also impact on children's right to basic nutrition because water is needed to prepare food and the nutritious drinks provided by the National School Nutrition Programme.

South Africa seems to have made good progress in increasing the number of schools with on-site water. In the 1996 School Register of Needs Survey, 65% of South African schools had potable (clean drinking) water on site. In the 2000 survey, 71% of schools had potable water. In a different survey of schools (National Education Infrastructure Management System — NEIMS), conducted by the Department of Education in 2006, 89% of schools had access to clean water on or near site. The extent to which this apparent increase reflects improved water provision is unclear, because the surveys are not directly comparable.

Based on 2006 figures, nearly all schools in the Western Cape, Northern Cape and Gauteng had water on or near site. The worst serviced provinces were the Eastern Cape and Free State, where a fifth of schools did not have access to water on site.

It is important to note that a third (34%) of schools classified as having water on/near site did not receive municipal water but relied on alternative sources, such as rainwater tanks, and nearly one in every five schools (18%) had an unreliable water supply — where water was available for less than half the time. The data do not indicate the quantity of water available. The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry defines the minimum standards for basic water supply at schools as 15 – 20 litres per learner per day (assuming the use of flush toilets) and one water supply terminal per 130 persons (within 200 meters of the main building).

Table 3g: Water provision in ordinary public schools, 1996, 2000 & 2006

Province (2006)	Ordinary schools No.	Schools with water on or near site		Schools served by municipality	
		No.	%	No.	%
Eastern Cape	5,724	4,589	80	2,274	40
Free State	1,717	1,397	81	885	52
Gauteng	1,972	1,940	98	1,854	94
KwaZulu-Natal	5,822	5,174	89	2,943	51
Limpopo	4,037	3,640	90	2,449	61
Mpumalanga	1,981	1,757	89	1,280	65
North West	1,796	1,708	95	1,201	67
Northern Cape	620	607	98	433	70
Western Cape	1,476	1,442	98	1,344	91
South Africa 2006*	25,145	22,254	89	14,663	58
South Africa 2000**	27,148	19,331	71	not available	
South Africa 1996**	26,734	17,366	65	not available	

Sources: * Department of Education (2007) *National Educational Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS)*. Pretoria: DoE.
** Department of Education (2007) School Register of Needs. In: *National Educational Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS)*. Pretoria: DoE.

Notes: ① Data from the School Register of Needs and the NEIMS are not directly comparable. See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for a more detailed discussion of the indicator. ② Strengths and limitations of the data can be found on pp. 103 – 104.

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Number and proportion of schools with adequate sanitation facilities

This indicator reflects the number and proportion of schools with adequate sanitation facilities. 'Type of toilet' is used to determine the adequacy of sanitation. For the purposes of this indicator, 'adequate' sanitation facilities include flush toilets, ventilated improved pit latrines (VIPs) and Enviroloos. Inadequate sanitation facilities include ordinary pit latrines, buckets or no toilets.

Access to adequate sanitation is essential for children, as their rights to health and survival depend on it. The danger of the spread of disease increases greatly when large numbers of children are brought together on a daily basis at school. It is therefore critical that learners are taught about the importance of sanitation and personal hygiene practices and that adequate sanitation facilities are provided at school.

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (DWAF) considers flush toilets, VIPs and Enviroloos (urine-diversion or composting toilets) as acceptable sanitation facilities (2008). While many people prefer flush toilets, VIPs and Enviroloos offer a safe and healthy alternative in areas without sufficient water or suitable infrastructure to support waterborne sanitation. Ordinary pit latrines and bucket toilets are considered inadequate as they fail to stop the spread of disease.

In 2006, 61% of schools had acceptable sanitation on site in the form of flush toilets (40%) and VIPs or Enviroloos (21%). Nearly four in every 10 schools had unacceptable sanitation — mostly in the form of ordinary pit latrines, but nearly 1,400 schools used the bucket system or had no toilets on site at all.

Data show a clear urban–rural bias. Predominantly urban provinces such as Gauteng and the Western Cape have the highest proportion of schools using flush toilets at 94% and 97% respectively. Schools using dry sanitation options such as VIPs and Enviroloos are concentrated in provinces with large rural populations, such as Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga. The Eastern Cape has the poorest level of school sanitation: Only four out of 10 schools have adequate sanitation, and 11% have no toilets at all, or use the bucket system.

On the whole, it appears that children's access to basic sanitation facilities at schools has improved since 1996, but it is clearly not enough as nearly 40% of schools still had inadequate sanitation in 2006.

Although the majority of schools nationally had adequate sanitation facilities, it is unclear whether these toilets are clean and in working order, or if there are enough toilets to meet learners' needs. The Department of Education does report on learner-to-toilet ratios, but is currently using a minimum standard of 50:1. This falls well below the minimum standard, recommended by DWAF (2008), of 25 learners to one toilet.

Table 3h: Sanitation provision in ordinary public schools, 1996, 2000 & 2006

Province (2006)	Ordinary public schools	Adequate sanitation				Inadequate sanitation			
		Flush toilets		VIP / Enviroloo		Pit latrines		Bucket / none	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	(N)	(%)
Eastern Cape	5,724	1,126	20	1,086	19	2,884	50	628	11
Free State	1,717	854	50	159	9	589	34	115	7
Gauteng	1,972	1,861	94	14	1	54	3	43	2
KwaZulu-Natal	5,822	1,583	27	1,753	30	2,251	39	235	4
Limpopo	4,037	805	20	1,564	39	1,577	39	91	2
Mpumalanga	1,981	961	49	397	20	511	26	112	6
North West	620	430	69	101	16	67	11	22	4
Northern Cape	1,796	936	52	185	10	571	32	104	6
Western Cape	1,476	1,436	97	7	0	5	0	28	2
South Africa 2006*	25,145	9,992	40	5,266	21	8,509	34	1,378	5
South Africa 2000**	27,148	10,361	38	15,398 (57%)				2,691	10
South Africa 1996**	26,734	8,867	33	16,120 (60%)				3,674	14

Sources: *Department of Education (2007) *National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS)*. Pretoria: DoE.
** Department of Education (2007) School Register of Needs. Reported in: *National Educational Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS)* (2007) Pretoria: DoE.

Notes: ① Data from the School Register of Needs and the NEIMS are not directly comparable. See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for a more detailed discussion of the indicator. ② Strengths and limitations of the data can be found on pp. 103 – 104.

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Child health: The general context

Updated by Lori Lake and Double-Hugh Marera (Children's Institute)

Section 27 of the Constitution of South Africa provides that everyone has
the right to have access to health-care services. In addition, section 28(1)(c) gives children
"the right to basic nutrition and basic health care services".

Article 14(1) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child states that "every child
shall have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical, mental and spiritual health".

Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child says that State Parties should recognise
"the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to
facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health". It obliges the State to take
measures "to diminish infant and child mortality" and "to combat disease and malnutrition".

The infant mortality rate and under-five mortality rate

*NOTE: This indicator has not been updated since 2006, as more recent and reliable estimates were not
available. The health and nutrition domains of* Children Count – Abantwana Babalulekile *are under review for
further development in 2009.*

The World Health Organisation describes the infant
mortality rate and under-five mortality rate as leading
indicators of the level of child health in a country. The
infant mortality rate (IMR) indicates the number of
children per 1,000 live births who died before their
first birthday. The under-five mortality rate is the
number of deaths among children before reaching the
age of five years, per 1,000 live births. Both these
indicators are also used to track progress on the
Millennium Development Goal to reduce mortality in
children under five by 2015.

The 2000 South African National Burden of
Disease Study (BOD) draws on the 1998 Demo-
graphic Health Survey, which was the last population
survey to provide reliable data on child mortality. Con-
flicting information on child mortality over the past
eight years has created a high level of uncertainty

about the extent of child survival in the country. The
lack of regular and reliable data means that the
country cannot adequately address problems or
persistent inequalities across the provinces.

According to the 2000 BOD, the infant mortality
rate was 59 deaths per 1,000 live births and the
under-five mortality rate was 95 deaths per 1,000
live births. The number of child deaths in South
Africa remains unacceptably high and most of these
deaths are preventable.

AIDS contributes to 40% of child deaths under
five. Diseases of poverty, which include low birth
weight, diarrhoea, lower respiratory infections and
protein-energy malnutrition account for another 30%
of these deaths (Bradshaw, Nannan, Laubscher,
Groenewald, Joubert, Nojilana, Norman, Pieterse &
Schneider 2000).

Table 4a: Infant and under-five mortality rate, 2000

Province	Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)
Eastern Cape	71	105
Free State	62	99
Gauteng	44	75
KwaZulu-Natal	68	116
Limpopo	52	81
Mpumalanga	59	100
North West	55	89
Northern Cape	46	68
Western Cape	32	46
South Africa	**59**	**95**

Source: Bradshaw D, Nannan N, Laubscher R, Groenewald P, Joubert J, Nojilana B, Norman R, Pieterse D & Schneider M (2004) *South
African National Burden of Disease Study 2000 – Estimates of Provincial Mortality.* Cape Town: South African Medical Research Council,
Burden of Disease Unit.

The number and proportion of children living far from the nearest clinic

This indicator reflects the distance from a child's household to the nearest clinic. Distance is measured through a proxy indicator: length of time travelled to reach the nearest clinic, by whatever form of transport is usually used. The nearest clinic is regarded as 'far' if a child would have to travel more than 30 minutes to reach it, irrespective of mode of transport.

The health of children is influenced by many factors, including nutrition, access to clean water, adequate housing, sanitation and a safe environment. Primary health-care clinics provide important preventative and curative services, and increased access to clinics could substantially reduce child illness and mortality.

According to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2000), primary health care should be: available (in sufficient supply); accessible (easily reached); affordable; and of good quality. From 1996, primary health care through the public service was made free to everyone in South Africa, but the availability and physical accessibility of health-care services remains a problem, particularly for people living in remote areas.

The General Household Survey 2007 shows that nearly four in every 10 children in South Africa live far from their nearest primary health-care facility. That means 6.9 million children need to travel more than 30 minutes to reach their nearest clinic. Nationally, there has been little improvement in access to clinic services between 2002 and 2007. The situation has worsened in the North West province over the six-year period.

There is considerable variation between provinces. Around 50% of children in the Eastern Cape, North West, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo provinces travel far to reach clinics. The proportion of children living far from the nearest clinic is around 20% in the Free State, Gauteng and Northern Cape, and 8% in the Western Cape.

There are also significant differences between population groups. A total of 42% of African children would have to travel far to the nearest clinic in comparison with only 12 – 13% of Coloured, Indian and White children.

Table 4b: Number and proportion of children living far from the nearest clinic, 2002 & 2007

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2002	52.7%	25.2%	16.9%	48.2%	41.5%	34.8%	40.5%	27.9%	10.8%	36.4%
	1,494,000	249,000	464,000	1,847,000	1,039,000	454,000	580,000	84,000	172,000	6,382,000
2007	50.9%	23.3%	21.8%	47.8%	46.7%	37.6%	50.3%	20.4%	7.8%	37.8%
	1,511,000	266,000	627,000	1,922,000	1,170,000	554,000	651,000	88,000	123,000	6,914,000

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2008) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2007*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA. Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

The number and proportion of children living in households where there is child hunger

This indicator draws on data from the General Household Survey and shows the number and proportion of children living in households where children are reported to go hungry "sometimes", "often" or "always" because there isn't enough food. Child hunger is emotive and subjective, and estimates of the extent and frequency of hunger unreliable, but it is assumed that variation and reporting error will be reasonably consistent so that it is possible to report trends from year to year.

The government has introduced a number of programmes to reduce hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity, yet child hunger continues to be a problem. The 2007 General Household Survey indicated 2.7 million children living in households that reported child hunger. This represents a significant drop in reported child hunger from 30% of children in 2002 to 15% of children in 2007.

There are large disparities in reported hunger between provinces and population groups. The province with the highest rate of reported child hunger in 2007 was the Eastern Cape (21%), which was also one of the provinces with high rates of child poverty and children living without an employed adult present.

Limpopo also experiences high rates of unemployment and income poverty, yet it has the lowest proportion of reported child hunger (9%). This may be related to greater food security as a result of rural households having access to land for subsistence agriculture.

Gauteng and the Western Cape had the lowest levels of reported hunger in 2002 and have shown little change from 2002 to 2007, but there have been substantial improvements in some provinces: Limpopo and the Free State have the lowest levels of reported child hunger, dropping from 28% to 9% and 29% to 10% respectively between 2002 and 2007. In the Eastern Cape, child hunger dropped from 47% in 2002 to 21% in 2007. However, levels of child hunger remain high in the Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, North West and the Western Cape.

Hunger, like poverty and unemployment, is most likely to be found among African children. In 2007, some 2.5 million African children lived in households that reported child hunger. This equates to nearly 17% of the total African child population, while relatively few Coloured (11%), Indian (1%), and White (0.1%) children experienced reported hunger.

Table 4c: Number and proportion of children living in households where there is child hunger, 2002 & 2007

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2002	47.4%	29.2%	17.0%	30.9%	27.9%	33.4%	30.5%	25.4%	16.3%	29.7%
	1,346,000	290,000	465,000	1,186,000	698,000	437,000	436,000	77,000	260,000	5,203,000
2007	21.4%	10.3%	12.4%	15.2%	8.6%	16.1%	17.5%	11.0%	17.4%	14.9%
	635,000	118,000	357,000	610,000	215,000	238,000	227,000	48,000	273,000	2,723,000

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2008) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2007*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA. Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

Additional sources for health

- *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Act 108 of 1996.*
- Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN General Assembly Resolution 44/25*. Geneva: United Nations.
- Secretary General of the Organisation of the African Union (1990) *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, OAU resolution 21.8/49*.
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Child health: HIV/AIDS

Leigh Johnson (Centre for Actuarial Research, University of Cape Town)

Section 27 of the South African Constitution provides that everyone has the right to have access to health-care services. In addition, section 28(1)(c) gives children "the right to basic nutrition, basic health care services, and social services".

Article 14(1) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child states that "every child shall have the right to enjoy the best possible state of physical, mental and spiritual health".

Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says that State Parties should recognise "the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health". It obliges the State to take measures "to diminish infant and child mortality" and "to combat disease and malnutrition".

HIV prevalence in pregnant women

The HIV prevalence amongst pregnant women is the proportion of pregnant women who are HIV positive. The majority of children who are HIV positive have been infected through mother-to-child transmission. Therefore the prevalence of HIV amongst infants and young children is largely influenced by the HIV prevalence of pregnant women and interventions to prevent mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT).
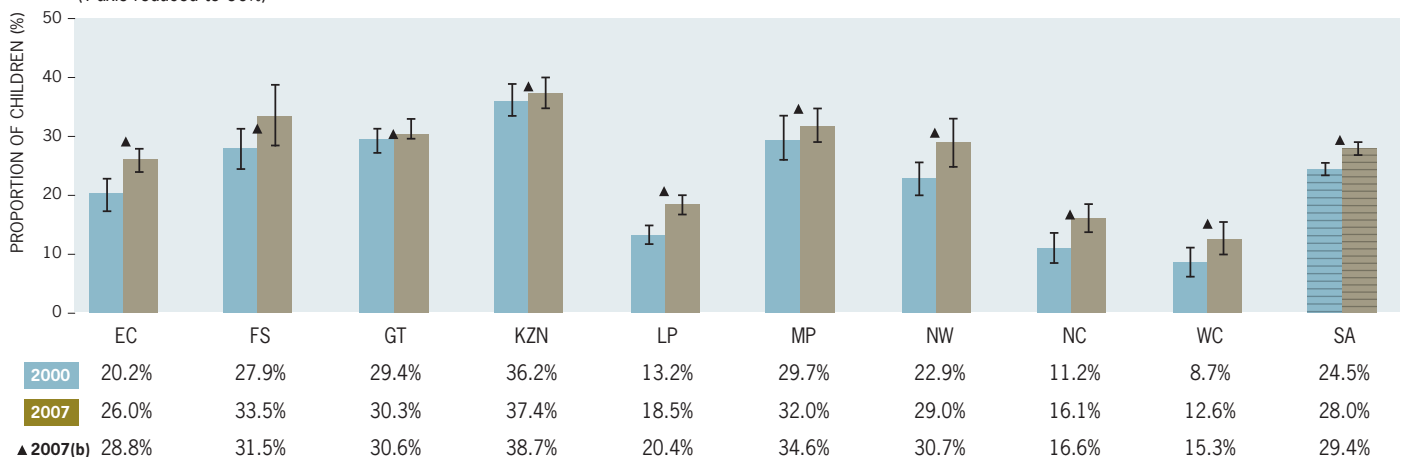
HIV prevalence in pregnant women increased steadily from 24.5% in 2000 to 30.2% in 2005. Although the 2006 and 2007 results of the National HIV and Syphilis Prevalence Survey suggest a slight decline in HIV prevalence in recent years, these results need to be interpreted with caution. The sampling protocol changed in 2006 to include a much larger number of clinics, and it is possible that some of the change that was observed between 2005 and 2006 was due to the change in the sampling rather than a change in the true prevalence of HIV in pregnant women. It has also been argued that the results of the 2007 survey were incorrectly weighted, and that the use of the 2006 weights would in fact have resulted in an increase in prevalence between 2006 and 2007 (Dorrington & Bourne 2008a). The alternative prevalence estimates calculated by Dorrington and Bourne (2008b), based on applying the 2006 weights to the 2007 data, are shown in table 5a, together with the 2007 estimates published by the Department of Health (2008). At the time of writing, agreement on the correct weighting method had not been reached.

There are substantial differences in HIV prevalence between South Africa's provinces. KwaZulu-Natal has consistently had the highest prevalence of HIV, in excess of 35% since 2002. In contrast, the Western Cape has had an HIV prevalence of around 15% in recent years. Other provinces with relatively low HIV prevalence are the Northern Cape and Limpopo, with HIV-prevalence levels in recent years around 17% and 20% respectively.

These inter-provincial differences are partly a reflection of differences in HIV prevalence between different racial and cultural groups. For example, male circumcision is believed to be a major factor explaining inter-regional differences in HIV prevalence within Africa (Auvert *et al* 2001; Williams *et al* 2006), and its prevalence differs substantially between South Africa's provinces (Connolly *et al* 2008). Other factors such as urbanisation, migration, socio-economic status and access to HIV-prevention and treatment services could also explain some of the differences in HIV prevalence between provinces.

The survey does not include pregnant women who attend private health facilities, or women who deliver at public health facilities without having made a booking visit. Women seeking antenatal care in the private health sector have a relatively low prevalence of HIV (Wilkinson 1999). Thus the surveys over-estimate HIV prevalence in pregnant women generally.

Table 5a: HIV prevalence in pregnant women attending public antenatal clinics, 2000 & 2007
(Y-axis reduced to 50%)

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2000	20.2%	27.9%	29.4%	36.2%	13.2%	29.7%	22.9%	11.2%	8.7%	24.5%
2007	26.0%	33.5%	30.3%	37.4%	18.5%	32.0%	29.0%	16.1%	12.6%	28.0%
▲ **2007(b)**	28.8%	31.5%	30.6%	38.7%	20.4%	34.6%	30.7%	16.6%	15.3%	29.4%

Sources: 2000 & 2007: Department of Health (2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008) *National HIV and Syphilis Prevalence Surveys 2002 – 2007*. Pretoria: DoH.
2007(b): Dorrrington R & Bourne D (2008b) Re-estimated provincial HIV antenatal survey prevalence for 2007 and a reinterpretation of the national trend. *South African Medical Journal*, 98(12): 940-941.

For more data, visit www.childrencount.ci.org.za

Access to prevention of mother-to-child transmission programmes (PMTCT)

This indicator is the proportion of women attending public antenatal clinics who receive voluntary counselling and testing for HIV, as part of the PMTCT programme.

The roll-out of PMTCT has expanded dramatically in recent years, with the proportion of pregnant women receiving HIV counselling and testing increasing from approximately 7% in 2001/2002 to almost 70% in 2006/2007. In 2001, the Department of Health introduced two pilot PMTCT sites in each province, although there were many additional sites already providing treatment in the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces at this time (McCoy *et al* 2002). Following legal action by the Treatment Action Campaign in 2001 and 2002, the department was ordered to make PMTCT services available to all pregnant women, and since that time, access to PMTCT has improved steadily in all provinces.

Access to PMTCT remains very variable between provinces. The Western Cape, which began its PMTCT programme in 1999, is about two to three years ahead of the national average in terms of its PMTCT roll-out. The Northern Cape, which appears to have got off to a slow start, has expanded its PMTCT provision dramatically in recent years and is now the province with the second highest proportion of pregnant women who are tested for HIV. At the other end of the spectrum, Mpumalanga has consistently had one of the lowest levels of PMTCT roll-out,

although its performance has improved substantially in the most recent survey.

The proportion of pregnant women who receive HIV testing and counselling is a measure of three factors: (1) the proportion of antenatal clinics that provide PMTCT services; (2) the proportion of women who are offered HIV testing at PMTCT facilities; and (3) the proportion of women who agree to be tested for HIV. Although it is often assumed that PMTCT facilities would offer HIV testing to all pregnant women, recent qualitative evidence suggests that a significant proportion of women attending PMTCT services are not offered testing due to shortages of counsellors, testing supplies and relevant forms (Nkonki *et al* 2007). Early experience suggested that 25 – 50% of women would decline the offer to be tested for HIV (McCoy *et al* 2002; Mseleku *et al* 2005), but other evidence suggests that less than 10% of women decline the offer to be tested if there is individual counselling and if lay counsellors have been recruited (Abdullah *et al* 2001; Doherty *et al* 2003; Coetzee *et al* 2005).

A number of different data sources have been used for different years, and differences between data sets might therefore account for some of the changes observed from one year to the next. Estimates from provinces that experienced data problems have been omitted in the table below, but attempts were made to correct these problems for the purpose of estimating the national averages.

Table 5b:
Proportion of booked women attending public antenatal clinics who receive HIV testing, 2001 – 2007

Province	2001/2 %	2002/3 %	2003 %	2004 %	2005/6 %	2006/7 %
Eastern Cape	1.7	6.7	–	–	–	75.3
Free State	4.6	15.8	31.1	33.7	40.4	66.9
Gauteng	–	20.0	17.6	39.0	47.4	60.6
KwaZulu-Natal	7.2	13.6	–	–	43.8	58.5
Limpopo	1.0	8.4	26.0	37.6	46.5	77.5
Mpumalanga	0.6	0.0	10.9	12.9	31.4	58.2
North West	2.2	30.7	–	34.7	47.9	74.3
Northern Cape	5.0	4.6	18.2	16.4	59.1	81.5
Western Cape	–	43.9	–	–	–	93.7
South Africa	**6.9**	**15.6**	**25.3**	**37.3**	**49.1**	**69.2**

Sources:
- McCoy D, Besser M, Visser R & Doherty T (2002) *Interim findings on the national PMTCT pilot sites*. Durban: Health Systems Trust.
- Ramkissoon A, Kleinschmidt I, Beksinska M, Smit J & Hlazo J & Mabude Z (2004) *National Baseline Assessment of Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV Services in South African Public Health Facilities 2002/2003*. Durban: Reproductive Health Research Unit, University of the Witwatersrand.
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- Barron P, Day C, Loveday M & Monticelli F (2005) *The District Health Barometer: Year 1*. Durban: Health Systems Trust.
- Barron P, Day C, Monticelli F, Vermaak K, Okorafar O, Moodley K & Doherty T (2006) *The District Health Barometer: 2005/6*. Durban: Health Systems Trust.
- Barron P, Day C & Monticelli F (2007) *The District Health Barometer: 2006/7*. Durban: Health Systems Trust.

Analysis by Leigh Johnson, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

Notes: ① Some provinces supplied implausible figures; therefore these fields have been left empty. ② Different data surveys were done at different times. Therefore the reporting periods differ from year to year.

Access to antiretroviral treatment (ART) in adults

This indicator is defined as the proportion of HIV-infected adults progressing to AIDS in a particular year who initiate antiretroviral treatment. It is calculated as the number of adults starting ART in a particular year, divided by the number of new adult AIDS cases over the same year.

Prior to 2004, access to ART was limited mainly to beneficiaries of medical schemes and individuals receiving treatment through workplace treatment programmes. Towards the end of 2003, the Department of Health announced a comprehensive HIV/AIDS care, management and treatment plan, which included the provision of ART to all patients attending public health facilities with a CD4+ count <200/µl, or an AIDS-defining illness (Department of Health 2003). Largely as a result of this programme, the proportion of newly eligible adults initiating treatment has increased sharply, from 3.8% over the period from mid-2002 to mid-2003, to 34.0% over the period from mid-2006 to mid-2007. Although great progress has been made in making ART available in the public health sector, there is clearly still a large number of clinically eligible individuals who are not receiving treatment.

The results also suggest that there are substantial differences in access to ART across the provinces. The Western Cape Department of Health introduced antiretroviral treatment much more rapidly than the other provincial health departments, following the national Department of Health announcement in 2003, and over the period from mid-2006 to mid-2007 it is estimated that 56.5% of newly eligible adults started treatment. Over the same period, an even higher rate of coverage (74.4%) was achieved in the Northern Cape. Free State has had the lowest rate of antiretroviral coverage in recent years.

There are several barriers to the expansion of the ART programme. Most critically, there is a lack of infrastructure and a shortage of trained health workers in many public health facilities, which is making it difficult to devolve the provision of ART to the primary care level. It is also likely that a large proportion of individuals who are eligible for ART are either not aware of their HIV status or have not received a recent CD4 assessment. Lastly, stigma and confusion regarding the effectiveness of ART are likely to result in individuals avoiding diagnosis and treatment.

Table 5c: Proportion of adults newly eligible for ART who initiate treatment, 2002 – 2007

Province	2002/3 %	2003/4 %	2004/5 %	2005/6 %	2006/7 %
Eastern Cape	4.3	7.0	19.1	31.8	36.4
Free State	3.0	3.2	8.7	13.2	21.5
Gauteng	3.7	8.3	16.7	28.1	29.3
KwaZulu-Natal	4.0	4.6	15.3	30.1	36.3
Limpopo	3.0	3.8	11.7	26.9	33.2
Mpumalanga	3.1	4.1	7.9	18.5	33.3
North West	2.7	3.5	17.6	33.4	33.8
Northern Cape	4.0	6.6	28.9	43.2	74.4
Western Cape	9.0	33.1	43.0	57.6	56.5
South Africa	**3.8**	**6.6**	**16.1**	**28.9**	**34.0**

Sources:
• Department of Health (2008) National Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Plan statistics. Unpublished.
• Dorrington RE, Johnson LF, Bradshaw D & Daniel T (2006) *The Demographic Impact of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. National and Provincial Indicators for 2006*. Cape Town: Centre for Actuarial Research (UCT), Medical Research Council and Actuarial Society of South Africa.

Analysis by Leigh Johnson, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

Note: Reporting periods run from mid-year to mid-year.

Access to antiretroviral treatment (ART) in children

This indicator is defined as the proportion of newly infected children starting antiretroviral treatment. It is calculated as the number of children starting ART in a particular year, divided by the estimated number of new paediatric HIV infections over the same year.

The indicator follows a similar trend to the antiretroviral coverage in adults, with the proportion of newly infected children starting ART increasing from 2.1% in the period between mid-2002 and mid-2003, to 27.2% in the period from mid-2006 to mid-2007. The exceptionally high coverage in the Western Cape (88.7% over the 2006/2007 period) is a reflection of the success of the prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) programme in that province, which has dramatically reduced the annual numbers of new HIV infections. Northern Cape, North West and Gauteng have also performed well, although there was an unexpected drop in the number of children enrolled on treatment in Gauteng between mid-2006 and mid-2007, when compared with the previous 12-month period.

Although the indicators of antiretroviral coverage suggest greater access to ART in adults when compared with children, the indicators for adults and children are not comparable because they reflect different definitions of antiretroviral eligibility. Recent guidelines recommend that antiretroviral treatment should be started in all HIV-infected children in the first year of life (World Health Organisation 2008; Southern African HIV Clinicians Society 2008). The number of children newly eligible for treatment in a particular year has therefore been calculated as the number of new paediatric HIV infections. The Department of Health guidelines that have been used up to now, however, do not recommend immediate initiation of ART in infancy (Department of Health 2005). The calculations of antiretroviral coverage in adults are based on the assumption that adults are eligible only when they progress to AIDS, a relatively conservative assumption that is likely to lead to the over-estimation of adult ART coverage.

The numerator is the number of children starting ART between the middle of the stated year and the middle of the next year. This is derived from estimates of the cumulative numbers of children enrolled on treatment in the public health sector (Department of Health 2008) and estimates of the total number of individuals receiving treatment through disease management and non-governmental programmes (Johnson & McLeod 2007).

The denominator is calculated as the ASSA2003 estimate of the number of new HIV infections in children over the same period. The ASSA2003 estimates have been updated to take into account revised estimates of access to PMTCT services.

Table 5d: Proportion of newly infected children who start ART, 2002 – 2007

Province	2002/3	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7
	%	%	%	%	%
Eastern Cape	1.2	2.3	7.7	13.1	19.0
Free State	1.4	1.6	5.5	14.9	–
Gauteng	2.1	6.9	14.8	31.1	28.3
KwaZulu-Natal	1.6	2.2	7.4	20.8	26.5
Limpopo	0.8	1.2	4.6	9.0	13.5
Mpumalanga	1.3	1.8	3.0	12.2	20.8
North West	1.3	1.6	6.9	18.9	36.0
Northern Cape	1.5	3.9	27.2	51.8	82.7
Western Cape	20.1	36.8	51.1	58.5	88.7
South Africa	**2.1**	**3.9**	**9.4**	**20.8**	**27.2**

Sources:
- Department of Health (2008) National Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Plan statistics. Unpublished.
- Dorrington RE, Johnson LF, Bradshaw D & Daniel T (2006) *The Demographic Impact of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. National and Provincial Indicators for 2006.* Cape Town: Centre for Actuarial Research (UCT), Medical Research Council and Actuarial Society of South Africa.

Analysis by Leigh Johnson, Centre for Actuarial Research, UCT.

Notes: ① Reporting periods run from mid-year to mid-year. ② Updated figures were not reported by the Free State for the period mid-2006 to mid-2007.

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Children's access to housing

Updated by Katharine Hall (Children's Institute)

Section 26 of the Constitution of South Africa provides that "everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing", and section 28(1)(c) gives children "the right to ... shelter".

Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for his/her development" and obliges the State "in cases of need" to "provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to ... housing".

The number and proportion of children living in adequate housing

This indicator shows the number and proportion of children living in formal housing, which is used as a proxy for 'adequate' housing. For the purposes of the indicator, 'formal' housing consists of: dwellings or brick structures on separate stands; flats or apartments; town/cluster/semi-detached houses; units in retirement villages; and rooms or flatlets on larger properties. 'Informal' housing consists of: informal dwellings or shacks in backyards or informal settlements; dwellings or houses/flats/rooms in backyards; and caravans or tents. 'Traditional dwelling' is defined as a 'traditional dwelling/hut/structure made of traditional materials'. These dwelling types are listed in the General Household Survey (2002 – 2007), which is the data source for this indicator.

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) identifies "access to services" as one of the key elements of adequate housing. Children living in formal areas are more likely to have services on site than those living in informal or traditional dwellings. They are also more likely to be close to facilities like schools, libraries, clinics and hospitals.

Adequate housing must also be 'habitable' (provide physical safety, protect from the elements, not be over-crowded). Informal housing in backyards and informal settlements makes up the bulk of the housing backlog in South Africa and is generally not habitable in these terms.

In 2007, just over 2.6 million children in South Africa lived in backyard dwellings or shacks in informal settlements. While there has been an increase of nearly 300,000 children in informal households since 2002, the distribution of children in formal, informal and traditional dwellings has remained fairly constant over the six-year period. This is surprising, given the delivery of over 2.5 million houses since 1994.
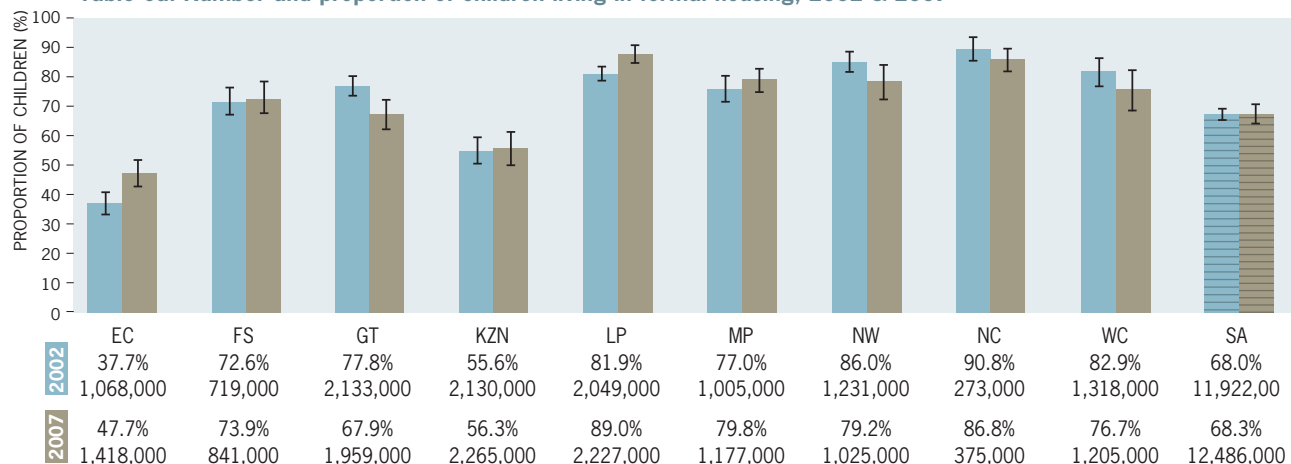
The greatest proportions of inadequately housed children are in provinces with large metropolitan centres and small rural populations. Forty-two percent of children in informal housing are 0 – 5 years old. These children are more likely to be exposed to environmental hazards such as shack fires and paraffin poisoning than those in formal housing.

The proportion of children in informal dwellings in Gauteng has increased from 22% to 32% between 2002 and 2007, despite the fact that over a quarter of all subsidy-linked houses have been delivered in this province. Limpopo has the lowest proportion (3%) of children in informal housing and the highest proportion in formal dwellings. The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal also have low proportions of children (less than 10%) in informal housing — and have the largest proportions of children living in traditional dwellings (44% and 36% respectively).

The General Household Survey shows persistent racial inequalities. Ninety-eight percent of White children live in formal housing, compared with only 63% of African children.

Housing provides the context for family life. Many children live apart from their biological parents due to adult mobility and migrant labour (see *Demography* on pp. 71 – 78). It is possible that increased delivery and the prioritisation of women in the urban housing process would enable more children to live with one or both parents.

Table 6a: Number and proportion of children living in formal housing, 2002 & 2007

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2002	37.7%	72.6%	77.8%	55.6%	81.9%	77.0%	86.0%	90.8%	82.9%	68.0%
	1,068,000	719,000	2,133,000	2,130,000	2,049,000	1,005,000	1,231,000	273,000	1,318,000	11,922,00
2007	47.7%	73.9%	67.9%	56.3%	89.0%	79.8%	79.2%	86.8%	76.7%	68.3%
	1,418,000	841,000	1,959,000	2,265,000	2,227,000	1,177,000	1,025,000	375,000	1,205,000	12,486,000

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2008) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2007*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA. Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

The number and proportion of children living in over-crowded households

Children are defined as living in over-crowded households when there is a ratio of more than two people per room (excluding bathrooms but including kitchen and living room).

The UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights defines 'habitability' as one of the criteria for adequate housing. Over-crowding is a problem because it can undermine children's needs and rights. For instance, it is difficult for school children to do homework if other household members want to sleep or watch television. Children's right to privacy can be infringed if they do not have space to wash or change in private. The right to health can be infringed as communicable diseases spread more easily in over-crowded conditions. Over-crowding also places children at greater risk of sexual abuse, especially where boys and girls have to share beds, or children have to sleep with adults. Analyses of the General Household Survey (2002 – 2007) show that children under the age of six years are more likely than older children to live in over-crowded households.

Over-crowding makes it difficult to target services and programmes to households effectively. For instance, urban households are entitled to six kilolitres of free water, but this household-level allocation discriminates against over-crowded households because it does not take household size into account.

Nearly 4.8 million children lived in over-crowded households in 2007. This represents a quarter (26%) of the child population
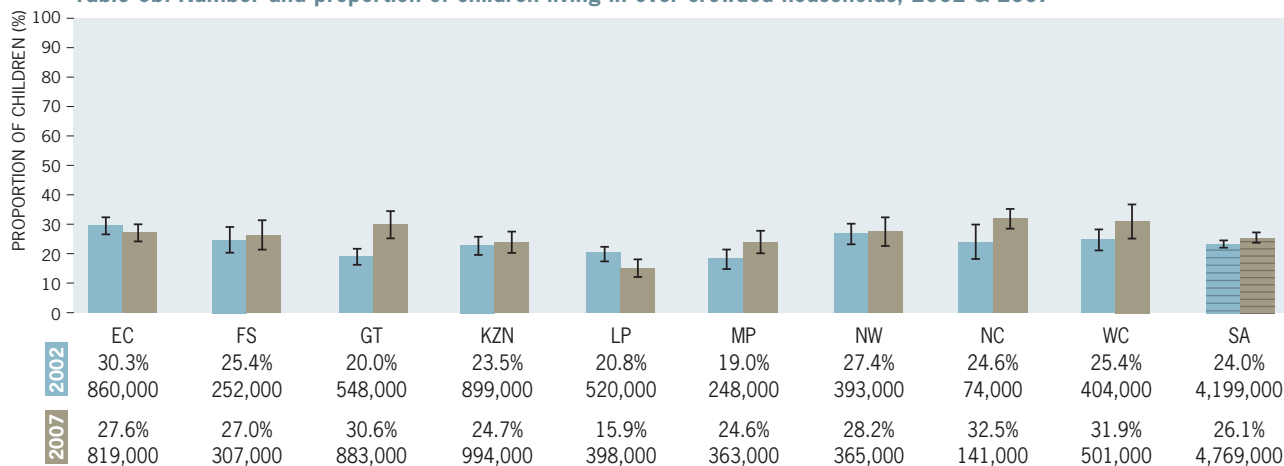
— much higher than the proportion of adults living in crowded conditions (16%). Over-crowding is associated with housing type: 54% of children who stay in informal dwellings also live in over-crowded conditions, compared with 28% of children in traditional dwellings and 19% of children in formal housing.

Provincial trends in over-crowding parallel trends in housing type. In Gauteng there has been a significant increase in the proportion of children living in over-crowded and informal households between 2002 and 2007 — despite the massive roll-out of subsidy housing in the province. Small but steady increases in over-crowding are found in the Northern and Western Cape (from 25% to 33% of children in each province), while Limpopo shows a slight drop in over-crowding.

There is a strong racial bias in children's housing conditions. Coloured children (33%) and African children (27%) are significantly more likely to live in crowded conditions than Indian and White children (8% and 1% respectively).

The average household size has gradually decreased from 4.5 in 1996 to 3.8 in 2007, indicating a trend towards smaller households, which may in turn be linked to the provision of small subsidy houses. Households in which children live are much larger than the national average. The median household size for adult-only households is one person, while the median for households with children is five members.

Table 6b: Number and proportion of children living in over-crowded households, 2002 & 2007

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2002	30.3%	25.4%	20.0%	23.5%	20.8%	19.0%	27.4%	24.6%	25.4%	24.0%
	860,000	252,000	548,000	899,000	520,000	248,000	393,000	74,000	404,000	4,199,000
2007	27.6%	27.0%	30.6%	24.7%	15.9%	24.6%	28.2%	32.5%	31.9%	26.1%
	819,000	307,000	883,000	994,000	398,000	363,000	365,000	141,000	501,000	4,769,000

Source: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2008) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2007*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA. Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

Additional sources for housing

- *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Act 108 of 1996.*
- Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 44/25.* Geneva: United Nations.
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (1991) *The Right to Adequate Housing (Art.11 (1)): 13/12/91. CESCR General comment 4. (General Comments).* Geneva: United Nations.

Children's access to basic services

Updated by Katharine Hall and Double-Hugh Marera (Children's Institute)

Section 27(1)(b) of the Constitution of South Africa provides that "everyone has the right
to have access to ... sufficient ... water" and section 24(a) states that
"everyone has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being".
Article 14(2)(c) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child obliges
the State to "ensure the provision of ... safe drinking water".
Article 24(1)(c) of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child says that State Parties should "recognise the
right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health ..." and to this end should
"take appropriate measures to combat disease and malnutrition ..., including the provision of clean drinking-water".

The number and proportion of children with access to drinking water on site

This indicator shows the number and proportion of children who have access to a safe and reliable supply of drinking water at home — either inside the dwelling or on site. This is used as a proxy for access to adequate water. All other water sources, including public taps, water tankers, dams and rivers, are considered inadequate because of their distance from the dwelling or the possibility that water is of poor quality. The indicator does not show if the water supply is reliable, or if households have broken facilities or are unable to pay for services.

Water is essential for health, hygiene and sanitation. Young children are particularly vulnerable to illnesses associated with poor water quality, such as diarrhoea and cholera.

In 2007, nearly 7 million children lived in households without access to clean drinking water on site. A significantly higher proportion of children (37%) than adults (27%) lived in households without water on site. There has been little improvement in children's access to water from 2002 – 2007.

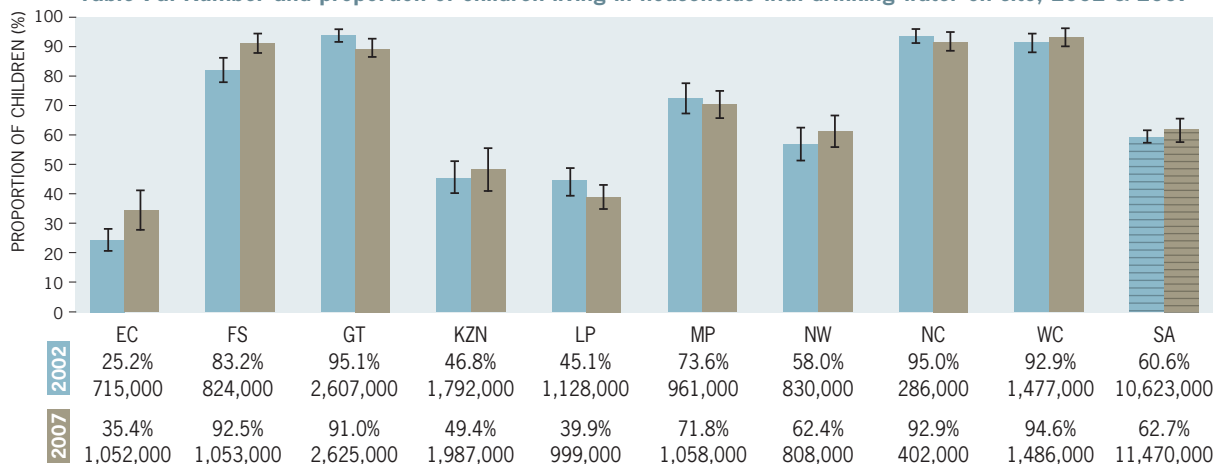Provincial differences are striking. Over 90% of children in the Western and Northern Cape provinces, Gauteng and the Free State have an adequate supply of drinking water. However, access to water remains poor in KwaZulu-Natal (49%), Limpopo (40%) and the Eastern Cape (35%). The Eastern Cape appears to have experienced the greatest improvement in water provisioning since 2002 (when only 25% of children had water on site).

Children living in formal areas are most likely to have services on site. While the majority of children in formal dwellings (74%) and informal dwellings (67%) had water on site in 2007, only 15% of children living in 'traditional' housing had clean water available on the property.

Racial inequalities persist: Only 56% of African children had clean water at home in 2007, while over 90% of all other population groups had clean water on site.

Policy guidelines for basic water supply recommend that water must be within 200 metres of the house (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry 1994); however collecting water from a public source is physically burdensome and can be dangerous, especially for children.

Table 7a: Number and proportion of children living in households with drinking water on site, 2002 & 2007

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2002	25.2%	83.2%	95.1%	46.8%	45.1%	73.6%	58.0%	95.0%	92.9%	60.6%
	715,000	824,000	2,607,000	1,792,000	1,128,000	961,000	830,000	286,000	1,477,000	10,623,000
2007	35.4%	92.5%	91.0%	49.4%	39.9%	71.8%	62.4%	92.9%	94.6%	62.7%
	1,052,000	1,053,000	2,625,000	1,987,000	999,000	1,058,000	808,000	402,000	1,486,000	11,470,000

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2008) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2007*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA. Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

The number and proportion of children living in households with basic sanitation

This indicator includes the number and proportion of children living in households with basic sanitation. Adequate toilet facilities are used as proxy for basic sanitation. This includes flush toilets and ventilated pit latrines that dispose of waste safely and that are within or near a house. Inadequate toilet facilities include pit latrines that are not ventilated, chemical toilets, bucket toilets, or no nearby toilets at all.

Good sanitation is essential for safe and healthy childhoods. Poor sanitation compromises children's health, safety and nutritional status, and is associated with diarrhoea, cholera, malaria, bilharzia, eye infections and skin disease. The use of open land and bucket toilets also impacts on water quality and contributes to the spread of disease.
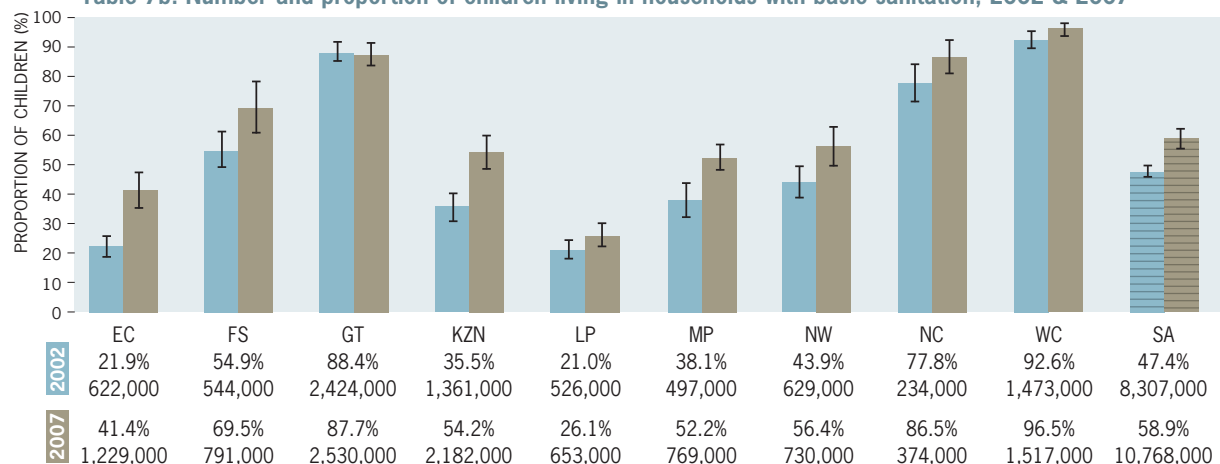
Children's access to adequate sanitation facilities has risen over the six-year period from 47% in 2002 to 59% of children in 2007. Yet nearly 8 million children still use unventilated pit latrines, buckets or open land, despite the State's goal to provide adequate sanitation to all, and to eradicate the bucket system.

There are great provincial disparities. In provinces with large metropolitan populations, like Gauteng and the Western Cape, over 85% children have access to adequate sanitation, while provinces with large rural populations have the poorest sanitation. The proportion of children with adequate toilet facilities in the Eastern Cape increased from 22% in 2002 to 41% in 2007 and from 36% to 54% in KwaZulu-Natal. Only 26% of children in Limpopo had adequate sanitation in 2007.

Racial inequalities persist: over 90% of Indian, White and Coloured children had access to adequate toilets in 2007, while only 52% of African children had access to basic sanitation. This is a marked improvement from 38% of African children in 2002.

Effective sanitation is not simply about toilet technology. It is equally dependent on personal hygiene and effective sanitation services. Data from the General Household Survey do not indicate if toilets are in clean and working order.

Table 7b: Number and proportion of children living in households with basic sanitation, 2002 & 2007

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2002	21.9%	54.9%	88.4%	35.5%	21.0%	38.1%	43.9%	77.8%	92.6%	47.4%
	622,000	544,000	2,424,000	1,361,000	526,000	497,000	629,000	234,000	1,473,000	8,307,000
2007	41.4%	69.5%	87.7%	54.2%	26.1%	52.2%	56.4%	86.5%	96.5%	58.9%
	1,229,000	791,000	2,530,000	2,182,000	653,000	769,000	730,000	374,000	1,517,000	10,768,000

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2008) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2007.* Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA. Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers are rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

The number and proportion of children living in households with an electricity connection

This indicator shows the number and proportion of children who live in households that are connected to the mains electricity supply. There may be many children without access to electricity because their families cannot afford to buy electricity or electrical appliances. On the other hand, many households use electricity even though they are not formally connected to the grid. Illegal connections often consist of long extension wires that run along the ground that can shock children or start electrical fires.

Access to a safe energy source such as electricity impacts on a child's right to housing, health, nutrition and education. Other energy sources pose health hazards, for example, wood or dung fires can cause chest infections. Fires spread rapidly in informal settlements where many households use dangerous energy sources (such as paraffin) for cooking and lighting. Families without fridges struggle to keep food fresh.
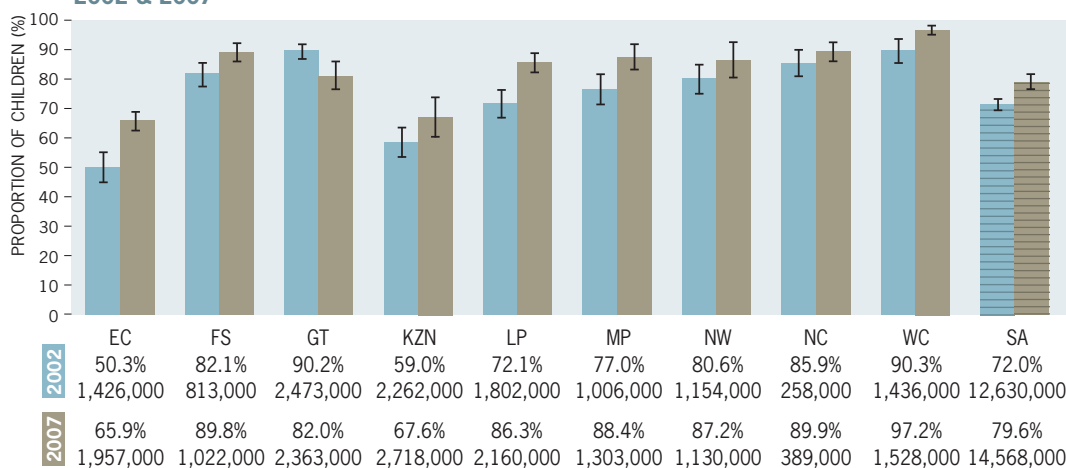
Women and children are often responsible for collecting wood and other fuels, which can be labour intensive. Time spent collecting fuel can impact on children's ability to do homework and keep up at school. Poor lighting makes it hard for children to study after dark.

In 2007, more children had electricity in their homes (80%) than had access to clean drinking water (63%) or basic sanitation (59%). Even in informal areas, the majority (65%) of children had a main electricity supply to their dwelling. Access to electricity does not necessarily mean that households discontinue using flammable fuels, but it does provide an alternative that is safer and usually cheaper — if the appliances are there.

In 2007, only half of children living in traditional homesteads (47%) had access to electricity. This was considerably higher than access to basic sanitation (27%) and to safe drinking water at home (15%).

There has been a gradual improvement in children's access to electricity across the country — from 72% in 2002 to 80% in 2007. Five provinces have made significant progress over the six-year period: Eastern Cape, Free State, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, and the Western Cape. A small but significant decline in access to electricity in Gauteng (from a high 90% in 2002 to 82% in 2007) may be the result of urbanisation and the rapid growth of informal settlements.

Table 7c: Number and proportion of children living in households with an electricity connection, 2002 & 2007

	EC	FS	GT	KZN	LP	MP	NW	NC	WC	SA
2002	50.3%	82.1%	90.2%	59.0%	72.1%	77.0%	80.6%	85.9%	90.3%	72.0%
	1,426,000	813,000	2,473,000	2,262,000	1,802,000	1,006,000	1,154,000	258,000	1,436,000	12,630,000
2007	65.9%	89.8%	82.0%	67.6%	86.3%	88.4%	87.2%	89.9%	97.2%	79.6%
	1,957,000	1,022,000	2,363,000	2,718,000	2,160,000	1,303,000	1,130,000	389,000	1,528,000	14,568,000

Sources: Statistics South Africa (2003; 2008) *General Household Survey 2002; General Household Survey 2007*. Pretoria, Cape Town: StatsSA. Analysis by Double-Hugh Marera & Katharine Hall, Children's Institute, UCT.

Notes: ① Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years. ② Population numbers have been rounded off to the nearest thousand. ③ Strengths and limitations of the data are described on pp. 103 – 104. ④ The confidence intervals, shown on the graph as a vertical line at the top of each bar, represent the range into which the true value may fall. See p. 69 for more details on confidence intervals. ⑤ See www.childrencount.ci.org.za for more information.

Additional sources for basic services

- *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Act 108 of 1996.*
- Department of Water Affairs and Forestry (1994) *White Paper on Water Supply and Sanitation*. Pretoria: DWAF.
- Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 44/25*. Geneva: United Nations.
- Secretary General of the Organisation of the African Union (1990) *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, OAU resolution 21.8/49.*

Technical notes on the data sources

General Household Survey: The GHS is a multi-purpose annual survey conducted by the national statistical agency, Statistics South Africa, to collect information on a range of topics from households in the country's nine provinces. The survey uses a sample of 30,000 households, drawn from census enumeration areas using multi-stage stratified sampling and probability proportional to size principles. The resulting estimates should be representative of all households in South Africa.

The GHS sample consists of households and does not cover other collective institutionalised living-quarters such as boarding schools, orphanages, students' hostels, old-age homes, hospitals, prisons, military barracks and workers' hostels. These exclusions should not have a noticeable impact on the findings in respect of children.

Changes in sample frame and stratification
The current master sample was used for the first time in 2004, meaning that for longitudinal analysis 2002 and 2003 may not be easily comparable with later years as they are based on a different sampling frame. From 2006, the sample was stratified first by province and then by district council. Prior to 2006, the sample was stratified by province and then by urban and rural area. The change in stratification could affect the interpretation of results generated by these surveys when they are compared over time.

Provincial boundary changes
Provincial boundary changes occurred between 2002 and 2007, and slightly affect the provincial populations. The sample and reporting are based on the old provincial boundaries as defined in 2001 and do not represent the new boundaries as defined in December 2005 (Statistics South Africa 2008).

Weights
Person and household weights are provided by Statistics South Africa and are applied in the analyses to give estimates at the provincial and national levels.

GHS data were compared with estimates from the Statistics South Africa's mid-year population estimates, as well as the Actuarial Society of South Africa's ASSA2003 AIDS and Demographic model.

Analyses of the six surveys from 2002 to 2007 suggest that over- and under-estimation may have occurred in the weighting process:

• When comparing the weighted 2002 data with the ASSA2003 AIDS and Demographic model estimates, it seems that the number of children aged 0 – 9 years was under-estimated in the GHS, while the number of children aged 10 – 19 was over-estimated. The pattern is consistent for both sexes. The number of very young males aged 0 – 4 years appears to be under-estimated by 15%. Girls in this age group have been under-estimated by 15.8%. Males in the 10 – 14-year age group appear to be over-estimated by 5.7%.
• The 2007 weighting process produced an over-estimation for boys and an under-estimation for girls. The under-estimation of females is in the range of 3 – 5% while the over-estimation is in the range of 1 – 7%. This results in male-to-female ratios of 1.07, 1.06, 1.08 and 1.08 respectively for the four age groups covering children.

The apparent discrepancies may slightly affect the accuracy of the *Children Count — Abantwana Babalulekile* data. For example, where the male and female patterns vary in respect of a particular characteristic, the total estimate for this characteristic will be somewhat slanted toward the male pattern. A similar slanting will occur where the pattern for 10 – 14-year-olds, for example, differs from that of other age groups. Furthermore, there are likely to be different patterns across population groups.

Disaggregation
Statistics South Africa suggests caution when attempting to interpret data generated at low level disaggregation. The population estimates are benchmarked at the national level in terms of age, sex and population group, while at provincial level benchmarking is by population group only. This could mean that estimates derived from any further disaggregation of the provincial data below the population group may not be robust enough.

Reporting error
Error may be present due to the methodology used, ie the questionnaire is administered to only one respondent in the household who is expected to provide information about all other members of the household. Not all respondents will have accurate information about all children in the household. In instances where the respondent did not or could not provide an answer, this was recorded as "unspecified" (no response) or "don't know" (the respondent stated that they didn't know the answer).

SOCPEN database: Information on social grants is derived from SOCPEN, a national database maintained by the South African Social Security agency (SASSA), which was established by the government in 2004 to implement the disbursement of social grants for the Department of Social Development. Prior to this, SOCPEN was managed directly by the department. There has never been a published, systematic review of the social grants database, and the extent of the limitations of validity or reliability of the data has not been quantified. However, this database is regularly used by the department and other government bodies to monitor grant take-up, and the computerised system, which records every application and grant payment, minimises the possibility of human error. Take-up data and selected reports are available from the department on request throughout the year. *Children Count — Abantwana Babalulekile* reports the mid-year grant take-up figures for the sake of consistency with the GHS survey, which is conducted in June/July each year.

Education statistics in South Africa at a glance: Learner-to-educator ratios and the Gender Parity Index are based on the Department of Education's annual SNAP survey, conducted across the country on the tenth day of the school year. As this survey is conducted annually, data should be available on a yearly basis, but are usually released two years later.

The data collection and processing of this survey have been known to be problematic, and the accuracy and reliability of this data is therefore questionable. The Education Department has previously noted this as a problem, and there have been efforts to improve quality controls in recent years. The department signed the Protocol for Inter-Governmental Cooperation with Statistics South Africa, which means that data must comply with quality standards in order to be accredited as official national data. Stats SA's 'Statistics Quality Assurance Framework' provides data quality guidelines and monitors the quality of the statistics produced in the country. This may help to improve data quality.

The department launched a new administrative data system, the National Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System (LURITS) in September 2008. The system should provide individual records of enrolment from 2010, and may eventually enable the monitoring of learners' attendance and progress, even if they change schools.

School Register of Needs and National Education Infrastructure Management System: Data for school water and sanitation draw on the 2000 School Register of Needs and the 2006 National Education Infrastructure Management System.

The 2000 School Register of Needs survey collected information from 27,148 public and independent schools — covering more schools than the previous (1996) survey. School principals completed the survey forms themselves, and this may have influenced the objectivity of reporting. Provincial departments were required to verify the data provided by schools in their province. The survey was conducted in eight of the nine provinces, while Mpumalanga conducted its own survey. This may have influenced the national results, although there were attempts to control for variation.

The National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS, 2006) collected information from 30,117 education sites comprising public schools, public early childhood education centres, public ELSEN centres (special needs), public Adult Basic Education Training centres and educational offices of the Department of Education. Of these education sites, 25,145 were public schools. Independent schools were excluded from the assessments, or specified separately.

Information on the data collection processes is not readily available; therefore the quality of the data cannot be easily ascertained.

The Department of Education (2007) provides the following caveats:
• The master list of education sites is regularly improved and may change as new schools are established.
• These statistics should not be interpreted to mean that infrastructure is either at the appropriate level of service or in an acceptable condition.
• There have been differences in the definition of various parameters from previous School Register of Needs assessments. These include level of water supply and type of sanitation.

Data for different years are not directly comparable:
• There are known errors and omissions in the School Register of Needs data. The numbers do not add up to the total number of schools. It is not clear why there are more schools counted in 2000 and in 1996 than in 2006.
• The 2006 data (NEIMS) reflect public (government) schools only, while the 2000 and 1996 data (School Register of Needs) included both public and independent schools.
• In the 2006 NEIMS report, the category "pit latrines/enviroloo" was divided into two categories, namely "[ordinary] pit latrines" and "VIP & enviroloo toilets". These figures cannot be compared with those from the Schools Register of Needs, where all three types were collapsed into a single category.
• The School Register of Needs 1996 and 2000 reported "water on site", while the 2006 NEIMS reported "water on or near site". It is not possible to determine the extent to which an apparent increase in schools with access to water is the result of different (broader) question formulation or the expansion of water service provisioning to schools.
• In the 2006 NEIMS report only, the category "water on or near site" was divided into two sub-categories, namely "schools depending on boreholes on site or rainwater harvesting systems' and "schools served by the municipality'. In the *Children Count — Abantwana Babalulekile* indicator the two categories have been collapsed to indicate "schools with water on site or near site" for comparison with previous years.

South African Burden of Disease Study: This 2000 study by the Medical Research Council makes use of vital registration data (number of official births and deaths) but adjusts for under-registration, as large numbers of births and deaths of younger children in particular are unreported. A modelling approach, developed by the Actuarial Society of South Africa (ASSA) was then used to estimate the total number of deaths, since vital statistics are incomplete. The ASSA2000 model was

used to determine overall mortality, the population size, and the number of deaths due to HIV/AIDS for each province.

The basic mortality assumptions for children were as follows: "Child mortality estimates from the 1996 Census and the 1998 *Demographic Health Survey* (SADHS) both show a reversal of the downward trend, although there are differences in the estimated levels (Nannan et al, 2000). Adjustments are made to both sets of estimates due to differences and inherent biases in the different methodologies. A small upward adjustment is made to the DHS and a downward adjustment to the Census data which appear too high due to the inclusion of stillbirths incorrectly classified as live births who have died (Moultrie and Timæus, 2002)". The ASSA-modelled estimates are made available on a yearly basis.

ASSA2003 AIDS and Demographic models: The ASSA2003 suite of demographic models give time series data on population and HIV-related indicators by province, population group, sex, age, and nationally. The models use empirical evidence as well as a series of assumptions as input (Dorrington, Bradshaw, Johnson & Budlender 2004). The underlying assumptions are well accepted and thus the models have been regarded as the 'gold standard' in HIV/AIDS projections in South Africa. These models give an indication of the proportion of adults and children affected by HIV/AIDS.

Recently, there has been some uncertainty surrounding the models. The ASSA2003 model, which is used to produce the estimates of the annual numbers of new paediatric HIV infections, tends to under-estimate quite substantially the HIV prevalence that has been measured in surveys of older children (Shisana *et al* 2005). This suggests that the annual numbers of new paediatric HIV infections could be under-estimated. For this reason, the indicator "HIV prevalence among children" has been discontinued in *Children Count — Abantwana Babalulekile.*

There is also substantial uncertainty around the ASSA2003 estimates of the annual numbers of adults progressing to AIDS in each province (the denominator in the calculation of antiretroviral treatment coverage). Caution is therefore required when analysing the relative levels of antiretroviral coverage in the different provinces.

A further limitation, relevant to antiretroviral treatment, is that the ASSA2003 model estimates the number of new AIDS cases rather than the number of individuals who are newly eligible for antiretroviral treatment. The latter includes individuals whose CD4+ counts have dropped below the threshold of 200/*μl*, while the former does not. This is likely to imply some under-estimation of treatment need.

In the ASSA2003 model, antiretroviral treatment is assumed to be started at the time of the first AIDS-defining illness, and the calculation of the number of new adult AIDS cases in a particular period is therefore unaffected by the level of antiretroviral provision. Since the ASSA2003 model estimates of annual numbers of new AIDS cases are published over intervals from mid-year to mid-year, the rates of adult antiretroviral coverage are calculated for the same periods.

The ASSA2003 estimates have been updated to take into account:

- revised estimates of the proportion of pregnant women who receive HIV counselling and testing (as presented in the section on access to prevention of mother-to-child transmission);
- revised estimates of the proportion of women testing positive who receive nevirapine (this has been set at 75%);
- allowance for the greater effectiveness of the combined AZT and nevirapine regimen that has been introduced in the Western Cape since 2004; and
- revised estimates of the proportion of women who practise exclusive formula feeding (Doherty *et al* 2003).

National Comprehensive HIV and AIDS Plan Statistics: This report by the Department of Health contains the number of adults and children starting antiretroviral treatment in a particular year. The reliability of these data is questionable. For some provinces, like Northern Cape, the cumulative number of children on antiretrovirals dropped from one year to the other, suggesting data quality problems.

District Health Barometer: This report by Health Systems Trust contains data on pregnant women who receive voluntary counselling and testing for HIV. The data show erratic trends in provision of nevirapine to pregnant women and their babies. Leigh Johnson of the Centre for Actuarial Research at UCT suggests that it may reflect changes in record-keeping rather than quality of service. The data collected from all public health facilities are subject to greater uncertainty and should be treated with caution. There is also provincial variation in the quality of the data. Some provinces produced implausible figures; thus these fields have been left empty.

National HIV and Syphilis Antenatal Sero-Prevalence Survey in South Africa: South Africa's antenatal clinic data are among the best in Africa. In most other African countries, HIV prevalence levels are reported in individual clinics or districts, and there is no attempt to draw a nationally representative sample of clinics from which national antenatal clinic prevalence rates can be calculated. This Department of Health survey follows a stratified cluster sampling methodology, with clinics being sampled on a probability proportional to size (PPS) basis. The overall sample sizes are very large, at around 30,000, making this HIV-prevalence dataset one of the largest in the world.

The survey is conducted among pregnant women who attend public health antenatal clinic services during pregnancy. It does not include pregnant women who attend private health facilities, or women who deliver at public health facilities without having made a booking visit. Women seeking antenatal care in the private health sector have a relatively low prevalence of HIV (Wilkinson 1999), and thus the surveys over-estimate HIV prevalence in pregnant women generally. It would also be expected that there would be differences in sexual behaviour between pregnant women and non-pregnant women, and the levels of HIV prevalence observed in the antenatal clinic surveys should therefore not be seen as representative of those in the general female population. After controlling for age differences, HIV prevalence in pregnant women tends to be substantially higher than that in women in the general population (Shisana *et al* 2005; Connolly *et al*, 2004).

It should also be noted that — in accordance with UNAIDS guidelines (UNAIDS/WHO 2001) — women are tested using a single ELISA antibody test, and there is no confirmatory testing of positive specimens. This may bias the results slightly, as the test can produce false positive results in a small proportion of HIV-negative women. Although this bias is generally thought to be of minimal significance when the population prevalence exceeds 10%, recent South African studies have suggested that the false positive rate could be around 2% (Jackson *et al* 2007; Amirfar *et al* 2006; Johnson *et al* 2007). This would imply over-estimation of the true HIV prevalence in pregnant women by about 2%.

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The *South African Child Gauge* is produced by the Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, to track South Africa's progress towards realising children's rights.

The *South African Child Gauge 2008/2009* is the fourth issue in the series and focuses on meaningful access to basic education. This issue also presents recent legislative developments that affect children in South Africa, and the latest child-centred data tracking children's access to social assistance, education, housing, health-care services, water, sanitation and electricity.

The Children's Institute aims to contribute to policies, laws and interventions that promote equity and realise the rights and improve the conditions of all children in South Africa, through research, advocacy, education and technical support.

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