THE STATE OF YOUTH IN SOUTH AFRICA:

TRENDS IN EDUCATION ATTAINMENT

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9 December 2009

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Human Sciences Research Council

9 December 2009

Acknowledgements

This paper forms part of the first phase of the Youth Population Scenarios Project of the Department of Social Development and the HSRC. This first phase was funded jointly by the UNFPA, DSD and the HSRC. We gratefully acknowledge their support.

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Executive summary

The South African education system has made considerable progress in expanding access to early childhood education (ECD) for 5-6-year-olds, for both males and females. South Africa has almost reached the goal of universal access to primary education for both males and females, but still needs to ensure that the remaining 7 to-15-year-olds not attending school are reached. Many different government departments are assisting in ensuring that the learning needs of young people and adults are met, through access to learning and life skills. The Department of Labour, in particular, through the Skills Act, and the work done by the SETAs, did much in promoting the acquisition of skills amongst youths and adults, whilst the Department of Education contributes through its vocational programmes offered at FET colleges, technical schools and higher education institutions. This configuration changed in 2009, after the national elections. Skills development, further and higher education were brought together under the purview of the national Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

Gender parity in access to primary and secondary education, including ECD, has almost been achieved. The proportion of male learners to female learners is marginally higher in primary schools, and that of female learners to male learners is marginally higher in secondary schools. The Department of Education (DoE), however, admits that gender parity in adult literacy remains a challenge. Much work remains to be done to improve adult literacy. Although successes were achieved in providing primary and at least some secondary education to the youth, the drop-out rates in especially the higher grades of secondary education is a matter of concern. In particular, the drop-out rates at Grade 11 level appear to be on the increase with each successive wave of learners progressing through the school system. The observed higher drop-out rates in the post-compulsory school phase will necessarily be a contributing factor to youth unemployment. There is a strong empirical link between educational attainment and success in the labour market.

The achievement of the goal of quality education and improved learning outcomes is the biggest challenge facing the education sector. There is consistent evidence of widespread learner underperformance in both international and local assessments. This issue has received high-level intervention through the introduction of a five year plan for improving teaching and learning.

Despite various successes in post-school and post-secondary education provisioning, urgent interventions are currently needed to address the knowledge and skills needs appropriately of the 18 to 24 and 25 to 35 age cohort. There is an unacceptably high number of young people who could be involved in some form of post-school study but are not, and who are also unemployed. Focused strategies aimed at solving this problem will have to be introduced to reverse this trend. Failing to do so will have an adverse impact on the country's broad economic growth and development agenda.

Lack of funding is one of the main reasons given by the youth for dropping out of education even at secondary education levels. The high cost of higher education makes it almost impossible for students from poor and low-income families to access and persevere with higher education, without financial aid. This makes it difficult to

further improve the race profile of the post-school student profile and to increase higher levels of African and Coloured graduates, particularly in scarce fields. This is currently being addressed by the Ministerial Committee appointed by the Minister of Higher Education and Training to review the efficacy of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme. The quality and learning outcome challenges faced by the primary and secondary education sector, have resulted in academically poorly prepared students enrolling at higher education institutions, making it difficult for them to cope in the higher education environment. This results in unacceptably low success rates and graduation rates at universities and universities of technology with the resultant high levels of drop-out rates.

The evidence shows that having a matric qualification increases the likelihood of formal employment compared to having less than a matric qualification. Those with a a tertiary qualification have up to three times more chance of being in formal employment than those with less than a matric certificate .

Until age 16, educational participation is broadly similar and high amongst different groups of South Africans. Failure to complete secondary school is, however, substantial, especially amongst Africans and Coloureds. Evidence has been provided showing that remaining in school and matriculating and then, if possible, going on to tertiary training would vastly improve a young person's employment prospects. On average, 40% of Grade 12 learners do not write the final Senior Certificate examinations or fail the examinations. This is one of the major points where the youth discontinue studying. Relatively small percentages of learners completing their secondary education qualify for enrolment into scarce skills programmes at higher education institutions because of poor performance in mathematics and physical science.

Post-school education opportunities as well as their efficiency in South Africa need to be improved considerably to assist the youth in enhancing their employability. Higher education (HE) participation rates in South Africa are low compared to international standards**.** On average, only about 20% continue immediately with HE studies the year after finishing school. This points to the low levels of participation in post-secondary education of the youth. The efficiency of higher education is another matter of concern, with 50% of students on average dropping out of degree studies and more than 60% dropping out of certificate and diploma studies. On average, more than 70% of distance HE students drop out of their studies. As a result of these large percentages of drop-outs, graduation rates in HE (currently 17%) are well below the target of the 22% graduation rate envisaged in the National Plan for Higher Education.

Of great concern is the low level of participation and success of black students in specific fields of study like accounting, the natural sciences, engineering, and in research and postgraduate studies. This issue needs to be addressed urgently to develop the next generation of academics and researchers. The government and in particular the Department of Higher Education and Training is working towards an integrated education and training landscape with skills development as a central pillar of job creation and human resources development programmes. It is essential that the full range and mix of knowledge and practical skills be developed by delivering graduates from universities, universities of technology, further education and training

colleges, agricultural colleges, nursing colleges and other training institutions supported by SETAs.

The large numbers of youths out of education and not employed led the DHET to prioritise the investigation of possible ways and means to increase post-school access and success. It is currently not envisaged that higher education would be able to expand rapidly in the short to medium term, due to the high cost of higher education and capacity restrictions. The Further Education and Training (FET) sector is one of the critical means of enlarging the pool of appropriately skilled youths and adults.

The youth, and particularly those that are neither undergoing education and unemployed is one of the current main focus areas of government. Their educational and training needs will have to be addressed by the Department of Higher Education and Training. During the post 1994 period, the Department of Education and the higher education institutions made considerable efforts to widen access. In higher education, the participation rate increased from almost 12% in 1994/5 to nearly 16% in 2007. According to the Stats SA Community Survey of 2007, approximately 2.5 million people in the 18-24 year old age group are unemployed and not studying This accounts for 37.5% of the total 18-24 year olds in South Africa or 66.1% of those who are able and willing to work. This presents a major social challenge, that needs to be dealt with, not only as an educational problem but by government in a holistic manner.

The number of young people who qualify for participating in some form of HE (either certificate/diploma or degree study) but who are not involved in HE and who are unemployed amounts to nearly 650 000 for the 18 to 24 age group. The figure of nearly 650 000 for the 18 to 24 age group are far too large if SA is to meet its targets of high level skilled and high middle level skilled people required for sustained economic development and the improvement of quality of life for all in our country. The fact that approximately 85% of these persons could continue with HE studies at the certificate or diploma level at universities (probably in the main universities of technology) or with some form of post NQF level 4 studies at FET colleges, gives a strong indication of the direction which any interventions aimed at increasing HE opportunities should take - not primarily degree study at traditional universities.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AsgiSA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
DoE	Department of Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DBE	Department of Basic Education
EC	Eastern Cape Province
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EMIS	Education Management Information System
FET	Further Education and Training
GPI	Gender Parity Index
Grade R	Reception Year
FET	Further Education and Training
FS	Free State Province
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GET	General Education and Training
GT	Gauteng Province
HE	Higher Education
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal Province
LP	Limpopo Province
MP	Mpumalanga
NC	Northern Cape Province
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NW	North West Province
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETAs	Sector Education Training Authorities
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
WC	Western Cape Province

The State of Youth: Trends in Education Attainment

1. Introduction

The focus of this paper is to provide an overview of the education attainment of the youth since their level of education impacts directly on their employability and life chances. The main age groups analysed include the 18 to 24 and 25 to 35 age cohorts. There is also a brief review of trends in the participation of the younger age groups in primary and secondary education since their participation rate and education attainment impacts on the youth. The current approach to education policy imperatives is reviewed in so far as they are particularly relevant to the education of the youth. This considers the major achievements attained by the South African education system, as well as identifying areas that still need focused attention to ensure that all South Africans have access to a good quality education that will prepare them for meaningful participation in the economy as well as society, thereby improving their quality of life.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 considers the policy environment. Section 3 reviews trends in participation rates in early childhood development, primary and secondary education. Special attention is devoted to gender parity indices. Section 4 reviews trends in drop-out rates. Section 5 considers data on trends in the Senior Certificate examination results. Section 6 analyses the evidence for participation in further education and training. Section 7 considers the data on post school participation in education. Section 8 looks at trends in the proportion of youth studying. Section 9 reviews trends in the highest level of educational attainment of 18-24 and 25–34 year olds. Finally, section 10 discusses the concerns of the most marginalised group, namely those youths that are neither working nor studying.

The main sources of information used for the study are the census information and the General Household and the Community surveys of Stats SA, the education management information databases maintained by the Department of Education (DoE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training.(DHET) as well as statistical and research reports produced by the Department of Education. These sources of information have several advantages and are being used in the section below. The Stats SA data provide a comprehensive picture of the participation of the youth in education, whilst the DoE, DBE and DHET data and reports provide useful information regarding drop-outs and through-flow of learners and students but do not include enrolments in all forms of education. Throughout the analyses, the data of the 2007 Community Survey show slightly different trends from the General Household Surveys, which could possibly be explained by the much larger sample size of the 2007 Community Survey.

2. Policy background

The Bill of Rights, contained in the South African Constitution, stipulates that everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education and further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, progressively must make available and accessible (RSA, 1996a).

The South African education system consists of three bands, namely General Education and Training (GET), Further Education and Training (FET) and Higher Education (HE). The GET band comprises the Reception Year (Grade R), up to Grade 9, as well as an equivalent Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) qualification. The FET band comprises Grades 10 to 12 in schools, as well as education and training within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Levels 2 to 4, including the N1 to N6 qualifications as well as the recently introduced NC(V) qualifications in FET colleges. These levels are integrated with the NQF, as stipulated by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act 58 of 1995 (RSA, 1995). After the 2009 national elections, skills development, higher and further education were drawn together under the purview of the new national Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

School attendance is compulsory for learners from Grade 1 to Grade 9, or between the ages of 7 and 15, whichever comes first in terms of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) (RSA, 1996b). While education is not compulsory post-Grade 9, no learner who continues to Grade 12 is denied access (DoE, 2009A).

In the "*Education for All (EFA). 2008 Country Report: South Africa.*" (DoE, 2009a) the progress in the achievements of the South African education system in widening access to early childhood education, universal primary access, providing learning and life skills to young people and adults, improving adult literacy, gender parity in access and achieving the goal of quality education and improved learning outcomes are outlined. The achievements in summary are as follows:

- South Africa has made considerable progress in expanding access to early childhood education (ECD) for 5-6-year-olds, for both males and females. Many challenges, however, remain to ensure the country's target for Grade R access to all 5-to-6-year-olds is achieved by 2010. The Gross Enrolment Ratio at Grade R sites attached to public and independent ordinary schools increased from 15% in 1999 to 49% in 2007.
- South Africa has almost reached the goal of universal access to primary education for both males and females, but still needs to ensure that the remaining 7-to-15-year-olds not attending school are reached.
- Many different government departments are assisting in ensuring that the learning needs of young people and adults are met, through access to learning and life skills. The Department of Labour, in particular, through the Skills Act, and the work done by the SETAs, did much in promoting the acquisition of skills amongst youths and adults, whilst the Department of Education contributes via its vocational programmes offered at FET colleges, technical schools and higher education institutions. Government's AsgiSA Programme

places much emphasis on ensuring that the skills required for economic growth are being developed.

- Although improvements in adult literacy have been achieved, much work needs to be done to ensure that the goal of decreasing illiteracy by 50% by 2015 is met.
- Gender parity in access to primary and secondary education, including ECD, has almost been achieved. The proportion of male learners to female learners is marginally higher in primary schools, and that of female learners to male learners is marginally higher in secondary schools. According to the DoE (2009a), this could be attributed, in the main, to higher levels of repetition amongst male learners, as compared to female learners. The DoE, however, admits that gender parity in adult literacy remains a challenge.
- Although remarkable improvements have been made in widening access for African and Coloured learners, they still lag behind in terms of having higher failure and drop-out rates, especially in the senior secondary phase. Their lower participation and success rates at post secondary level consequently means they have, on average, lower levels of education attainment.
- The achievement of the goal of education of quality and improved learning outcomes is the biggest challenge facing the education sector. There is consistent evidence of widespread learner underperformance in both international and local assessments. This issue has received high-level intervention through the introduction of a five-year plan for improving teaching and learning as announced on 5 November 2009 by Mrs. Angie Motshekga, Minister of Basic Education.

Despite several successes in post-school and post-secondary education provisioning, currently urgent interventions are needed to address the knowledge and skills needs appropriately of the 18 to 24 and 25 to 35 age cohorts. There are an unacceptably high number of young people who could be involved in some form of post school study but are not, and are also unemployed. Focused strategies aimed at solving this problem will have to be introduced to reverse this trend. Failing to do so will have an adverse impact on the country's broad economic growth and development agenda.

Lack of funding is one of the main reasons given by the youth for dropping out of school even at secondary education levels. The high cost of higher education makes it almost impossible for students from poor and low-income families to access and persevere with higher education, without financial aid. This makes it difficult to improve further, the race profile of the post-school student population and to increase levels of African and Coloured graduates, particularly in scarce fields. As a result of the increased financial difficulties experienced by the youth who wish to improve their level of education attainment, a Ministerial Committee has been appointed by the Minister of Higher Education and Training to review the efficacy of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme. This report, which is due in December 2009, will help give effect to Government's commitment to introduce free education for the poor progressively up to undergraduate level and will also be essential to the broad redress of racial imbalances in the economy (DHET, 2009a).

The quality and learning outcome challenges faced by the primary and secondary education sector, have resulted in academically poorly prepared students enrolling at higher education institutions, making it difficult for them to cope in the higher education environment. This results in unacceptably low success and graduation rates at universities and universities of technology with the resultant high levels of drop-out rates. The loss of heads of households as a result of HIV/AIDS, leaves the caring of younger children to the youth forcing many of them to drop out of education.

Of great concern is the low level of participation and success of black students in specific fields of study like accounting, the natural sciences, engineering, and in research and postgraduate studies (DHET, 2009a). This issue needs to be addressed urgently to develop the next generation of academics and researchers. The government, and in particular the DHET, is working towards an integrated education and training landscape with skills development as a central pillar of job creation and human resources development programmes (DHET, 2009a). It is essential for the full range and mix of knowledge and practical skills to be developed by delivering graduates from universities, universities of technology, further education and training colleges, agricultural colleges, nursing colleges and other training institutions supported by SETAs. More important though is that the general perception of vocational education by business and society at large be promoted. DHET (2009a) has also stated that the business sector needs to be more responsive to the FET colleges and universities of technology requirement for placement for students in the workplace.. Without a functional partnership with business in this regard, the goal to increase enrolment and throughput will not produce the desired results.

The large numbers of youths out of education and not employed has led the DHET to prioritise the investigation of possible ways and means to increase post-school access and success. It is currently not envisaged that higher education will be able to expand rapidly in the short to medium term, due to the high cost of higher education and capacity restrictions. Rather, DHET (2009b) considers the Further Education and Training (FET) sector as one of the critical ways of enlarging the pool of appropriately skilled youths and adults. One of the immediate aims of the DHET is to strengthen the Further Education and Training College sector and to ensure that it develops into an important and effective component of the government's skills development programme.

Government has recapitalised FET Colleges with an investment of R1.9 billion to reposition the FET colleges into modern and responsive institutions for skills development and advanced learning (DHET, 2009B). In 2007, the Department of Education introduced the National Certificate (Vocational) programmes which are intended to respond directly to the priority skills demands of the South African economy. The DHET see as one of their major challenges to expand work-placements for practical training for FET college students for which they seek the co-operation of employers. To date, R600 million has been invested in bursaries for FET College students in order to create access for financially needy students and the DHET is endeavouring to expand this support. Possibilities for the expansion of financial assistance to the FET sector through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) forms part of the brief of the current Ministerial Committee on NSFAS.

The youth, and particularly those that are not in education and not employed is one of the current main focus areas of government. Their educational and training needs will have to be addressed by the Department of Higher Education and Training. A progress report on the Department of Higher Education and Training delivered by Mary Metcalfe on 23 November 2009 at a CHET workshop: "Responding to the Educational Needs of Post-school Youth" outlined the following important information which provides an overview of the policy direction of the DHET:

- The scope of the DHET is the development of a coherent and single post-school education and training system that is structured both:
    - to meet the aspirations of **youth and adults;** and,
    - to ensure that education, training and skills development initiatives respond to the requirements of the economy, our rural development challenges, and the need to develop an informed and critical citizenry.
- The public providers in the post-school sector are:
    - the 23 public HE institutions (universities and universities of technology) as well as the registered private higher education providers;
    - the 2 National Institutes for Higher Education in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape;
    - the 50 public Further Education and Training Colleges as well as the registered private FET providers;
    - Government Trade Test Centres; and,
    - Skills Development Institutes.
- A preliminary diagnosis identified the following problems that the DHET seeks to address:
    - The marginalisation and economic disempowerment of the majority, marked by low employment rates and large inequalities in incomes;
    - The low skills base of young people who face difficulty in finding decent work and earning decent incomes;
    - The need for a more diversified and knowledge intensive economy;
    - Skill bottlenecks, especially in priority and scarce skills;
    - Low participation rates and distortions in the shape, size and distribution of access to post-school education;
    - Quality and inefficiency challenges in the system, its sub-systems and in institutions; and,
    - The transitions of individuals.
- The following principles will guide the process of addressing the identified problems:
    - The development of a single post-school education and training system structured for the youth and adults which responds to the

requirements of the economy, rural development challenges, and the need to develop an informed and critical citizenry.

- Maximum cooperation amongst the components of the learning delivery system, namely: colleges, universities, workplaces and work training centres.
- Increased access and success.
- A diverse and differentiated institutional base that functions as an integrated whole with meaningful learning pathways across institutional and workplace education and training forms; and,
- Effective coordination between the SETA system and education and training institutions, particularly FET colleges and universities of technology.

This brief overview of the current policy imperatives and priorities for the education and training system sets the broader framework for the analysis of the education achievements as well as the education needs of the South African youth which will be analysed in more detail in the following sections. Differences in trends in terms of race and gender have been identified in the study.

3. Early childhood development, primary and secondary education participation rates and gender parity indices

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Gender Parity Index (GPI) are used as measures of participation of both males and females in education. The Gross Enrolment Ratio is defined as the number of learners, regardless of age, that are enrolled in a specific school phase (e.g. primary phase for Grades 1 to 7) as a percentage of the total appropriate school-age population (e.g. seven- to 13- year-olds for the primary phase). For example, a GER of more than 100% indicates that there are more learners in the formal school system than in the appropriate school-age population (total potential population), which indicates enrolment of under-aged and over-aged learners as a result of early or late entry and grade repetition (DoE, 2007b). The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is defined as GER for females divided by GER for males. This index is used to indicate the level of access of females to education, compared to that of males. For example, a GPI of more than 1 indicates that, in proportion to the appropriate school-age population, there are more females than males in the school system (DoE, 2007b).

In each of the years 2002 to 2006 with the exception of 2007, the GER for both males and females was more than 100 for the primary phase (Grades 1 to 7). The highest GER had been 105 in 2002, declining to 99 for the total enrolment in primary education in 2007. In the secondary phase (Grades 8 to 12), larger percentages of females continued with their education. The GER ratio for females enrolled in secondary education as a percentage was 92%, compared to the males with a much lower GER of 84%. The GER for the primary phase varied between 99 and 105

during the 2002 to 2007 period, whilst the GER for the secondary phase varied between 80 and 91. It is evident from the lower GER for the secondary phase that large numbers of the appropriate age group had dropped out of secondary education.

The GPI for primary education varied between 0.95 and 0.98 for the period 2002 to 2007, steadily increasing from 0.95 in 2002 to 0.98 in 2007. This points to a slightly lower but improving participation of females in secondary education. The trend was the opposite in secondary education, where the GPI varied between 1.07 and 1.1. The highest GPI being in 2004 and 2007, both with values of 1.1. The fact that higher percentages of females participate in secondary education (whereas the opposite happened in primary education), indicates that much higher numbers of males than females dropped out of secondary education. In total, for Grades 1 to 12, the GPI of between 0.99 and 1.01 indicates that South Africa has reached gender parity in primary and secondary education participation, but variations occurred during the different phases.

Table 1 – Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and Gender Parity Index (GPI) for Grades R to 12 in ordinary school sector, by province and gender, 2002 to 2007

Year	Gender	School Phases (Gr. 1-12)						School Bands (Gr. R-12)					
		GER (%)			GPI			GER (%)			GPI		
		Primary Phase (Gr. 1-7)	Secondary Phase (Gr. 8-12)	Total (Gr 1-12)	Primary Phase (Gr. 1-7)	Secondary Phase (Gr. 8-12)	Total (Gr 1-12)	GET Band (Gr. R-9)	FET Band (Gr 10-12)	Total (Gr. R-12)	GET Band (Gr. R-9)	FET Band (Gr 10-12)	Total (Gr. R-12)
2002	F	103	84	95				96	72	90			
	M	108	78	95				99	64	91			
	T	**105**	**81**	**95**	**0.95**	**1.07**	**0.99**	**97**	**68**	**90**	**0.97**	**1.13**	**0.99**
2003	F	101	83	93				93	76	89			
	M	106	77	94				96	69	90			
	T	**104**	**80**	**94**	**0.95**	**1.07**	**0.99**	**95**	**73**	**90**	**0.97**	**1.1**	**0.99**
2004	F	102	93	98				95	88	93			
	M	107	85	98				97	78	93			
	T	**104**	**89**	**98**	**0.96**	**1.1**	**1**	**96**	**83**	**93**	**0.97**	**1.14**	**1.01**
2005	F	101	92	97				94	88	93			
	M	105	85	97				97	77	93			
	T	**103**	**89**	**97**	**0.96**	**1.08**	**1**	**96**	**82**	**93**	**0.97**	**1.13**	**1**
2006	F	100	95	98				95	92	94			
	M	104	87	97				97	80	93			
	T	**102**	**91**	**98**	**0.96**	**1.09**	**1.01**	**96**	**86**	**94**	**0.98**	**1.15**	**1.01**
2007	F	98	92	95				91	93	91			
	M	100	84	94				93	81	90			
	T	**99**	**88**	**94**	**0.98**	**1.1**	**1.01**	**92**	**86**	**91**	**0.98**	**1.15**	**1.01**

Sources: DoE. 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2008a, 2008c, 2009b and Stats SA. 2002, 2003b, 2004b, 2005b, 2006c, 2007b.

The DoE's report on: "*Trends in Education Macro Indicators, 2009*" (DoE, 2009d) confirms that participation levels in the South African education system are high with some 98% of young people, aged 7 to 15, currently involved in education programmes. The DoE (2009d) mentions further that progress in completion is also positive and suggests that, at the current pace, 98% of appropriately aged learners in South Africa will complete the primary school cycle by 2015. The completion rate up to Grade 7 (end of primary school) increased from approximately 88% to 93% between 1995 and 2007, and the completion rate up to Grade 9 (end of compulsory education) increased from 75% to 83%.

The participation of children in early childhood development is considered to be one of the best investments in improving the success of learners in later grades in school. The Gross Enrolment Ratio at Grade R sites attached to public and independent ordinary schools increased from 15% in 1999 to 49% in 2007. The real GER could be higher since this figure excludes Grade R learners who are enrolled at stand-alone and less formal early childhood development (ECD) sites (DoE, 2009a).

4. The out-of-school youth and trends in school-level drop-outs

In the previous section the achievements of the South African Education in widening access to school-level education for the population was discussed. Although successes have been achieved in providing primary and at least some secondary education to the youth, the drop-out rates in the higher grades of secondary education especially, is a matter of concern.

Table 2 below gives the percentage out-of-school youth for the 5 to 18 year olds for the period 2002 to 2007. As previously mentioned, the 2007 Community Survey shows more negative trends than the 2002 to 2006 General Household Surveys, presumably because of a much larger sample size in the former. The phasing in of Grade R (reception year) on a big scale has led to vast improvements in 5 and 6 year-olds attending education programmes. Whereas 59.8% of 5 year olds and 30.0% of 6 year olds were out of school in 2002, these percentages dropped constantly on a year-to-year basis to 19.1% for 6 year-olds and 8.6% for 7 year olds.

The percentage of out of school youth, aged 7-15, dropped between the years 2002 and 2006, according to the General Household Surveys. The percentages of out of school youth for these ages were, however, higher according to the 2007 Community Survey. All data sets show an increase in the percentage of 16 to 18 year olds over the period 2002 to 2007, confirming the **increased drop-out rates at the higher grades in secondary education.** According to the DoE, (2009d) it is of particular concern that the drop-out rates at Grade 11 level appear to be on the increase with each successive wave of learners progressing through the school system. The DoE (2009d) also notes that drop-out rates from Grade 9 upwards are high which is confirmed by

the fact that the drop-out rate increased from 11% at Grade 9 level to 24% at Grade 11 level for the group born between 1980 and 1984. While 81% of the group born between 1980 and 1984 had reached Grade 9, the survival rates of the same group in reaching Grade 11 and Grade 12 declined to 60% and 46% respectively, according to the DoE (2009d).

An analysis of the progression of cohorts of Grade 10 enrolments to Grade 11 the next year and Grade 12 the following year (on the assumption that the percentage of repeaters per grade remains more or less the same) confirms the huge numbers of learners dropping out of the further education and training phase of secondary schools. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 3.

Table 2 – Percentage out of school youth (5 - 18 Year olds), 2002 to 2007

Age	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
5	59.8%	50.6%	46.3%	40.3%	37.8%	19.1%
6	30.0%	24.0%	16.7%	14.1%	15.5%	8.6%
7	9.0%	7.5%	3.2%	4.0%	3.5%	5.1%
8	3.4%	2.7%	1.6%	2.3%	1.7%	4.4%
9	2.5%	1.7%	1.3%	1.6%	1.4%	4.1%
10	2.0%	1.8%	1.0%	1.1%	1.4%	3.7%
11	1.6%	1.2%	2.1%	0.7%	1.6%	3.7%
12	1.6%	1.5%	1.1%	1.0%	1.5%	3.9%
13	2.9%	1.7%	2.1%	1.8%	1.9%	4.2%
14	3.3%	3.7%	2.3%	1.9%	2.8%	4.9%
15	6.8%	4.1%	5.2%	4.8%	5.4%	6.5%
16	8.9%	7.9%	9.2%	8.4%	9.1%	10.1%
17	14.9%	16.4%	13.0%	14.6%	14.6%	16.8%
18	27.8%	26.1%	26.5%	28.3%	27.7%	30.9%

Source: Stats SA. 2003a, 2004a, 2005a, 2006a, 2006b, 2007b.

Table 3 – Progression of various cohorts of Grade 8 learners to Grade 10

	Further Education and Training (FET) Band			FET Band Grade progression rates		
Year	*Gr. 10*	*Gr. 11*	*Gr. 12*	*Gr. 10*	*Gr. 11*	*Gr. 12*
2002	876 175	719 952	486 786	100.0%		
2003	1 096 214	736 720	475 069	100.0%	84.1%	
2004	1 057 935	829 137	505 392	100.0%	75.6%	68.6%
2005	1 069 494	839 009	538 909	100.0%	79.3%	49.2%
2006	1 093 297	890 564	568 664	100.0%	83.3%	53.2%
2007	1 115 961	920 102	625 809	100.0%	84.2%	58.5%
2008	1 076 527	902 752	595 216	100.0%	80.9%	54.4%
2009	1 016 360	880 515	599 626	100.0%	81.8%	66.4%

Source: DoE. 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2008a, 2008c, 2009b.

The observed higher drop-out rates in the post-compulsory school phase is a contributing factor to youth unemployment. There is a strong empirical link between educational attainment and labour market success. It is of critical importance to analyse the reasons why youths drop out of education so as to identify possible policy interventions to assist the youth to continue their education and thereby enhance their employability and quality of life.

Table 4 – Reasons provided by 14 – 17 year olds for not attending school/ education institution as a percentage of the total that are not attending an educational institution (2006 General Household Survey)

Reason Description	14-17 Year olds
Too old/young	1.0%
Has completed school/education	2.7%
School/education institution is too far away	1.3%
No money for fees	34.3%
He/she is working (at home or job)	6.4%
Education is useless or uninteresting	17.7%
Illness	9.5%
Pregnancy	8.1%
Failed exams	5.6%
Got married	0.7%
Family commitment (child minding, etc.)	8.2%
Other/ Unspecified	4.6%

Source: Stats SA. 2006b.

Table 5 – Reasons by 14 – 17 year olds for not attending school/ education institution by gender as % of total not attending (2006 General Household Survey)

Reason Description	Male	Female
Too old/young	1.2%	0.8%
Has completed school/education	3.2%	2.1%
School/education institution is too far away	0.9%	1.6%
No money for fees	37.5%	31.1%
He/she is working (at home or job)	8.3%	4.6%
Education is useless or uninteresting	22.0%	13.3%
Illness	10.3%	8.7%
Pregnancy (self or partner)	0.2%	16.1%
Failed exams	7.9%	3.3%
Got married	0.0%	1.4%
Family commitment (child minding, etc.)	3.9%	12.5%
Other/ Unspecified	4.8%	4.5%

Source: Stats SA. 2006b.

Table 4 gives the reasons for not attending school or an education institution for those 14 to 17 year olds that have dropped out of education. The main reason was a lack of money for fees (34.3%), followed by an indication that education was

uninteresting or useless (17.7%). Family commitments such as child-minding (8.2%), illness (9.5%) and pregnancy (8.1%) were other main reasons for dropping out of education. Analysing the reasons by gender (see Table 5) revealed a similar trend. The main reasons for dropping out are as follows by gender: lack of money for fees (males – 37.5%, females – 31.1%), education was uninteresting or useless (males – 22.0%, females – 13.3%), illness (males – 10.3%, females – 8.7%), and pregnancy/ pregnancy of partner (males – 0.2%, and females – 16.1%). Family commitments contributed to 4.8% males and 4.5% females dropping out, 7.9% males versus 3.3% females indicated that failed examinations were the reason they dropped out, and 8.3% of males and 4.6% of females indicated that they were working at home or had a job and therefore dropped out of education.

Table 6 shows the reasons provided by 14–17 year olds for dropping out of education for the various population groups. The analysis shows very interesting differences in the reasons provided by the various population groups for dropping out of education. An unexpected high percentage of Indians (25.4%) indicated that they have completed school or education. A further analysis of this data revealed that they were all 17 year olds and that their highest level of education was Grade 12.

One of the main reasons for dropping out of school is a lack of money for fees. This was the reason provided by 37.9% of the African, 21.7% of the Coloured, 33.7% of the Indian and 14.2% of the White population in the 14 to 17 age group not attending an educational institution. Education is useless or uninteresting was the biggest reason provided by Coloureds (30.8%) for dropping out, whilst 17.0% of Africans not attending an educational institution in this age group gave this as a reason for dropping out of education. None of the Indians or Whites quoted this as a reason for dropping out. Illness as a reason for dropping out was provided by 15.4% of Whites, 10.9% Africans, 4.8% Coloureds and 2.0% Indians. Pregnancy was a major factor contributing to dropping out of education for Africans (10.2%), followed by Whites (3.2%) and Coloureds (2.4%). Family commitments were one of the main reasons for Indians dropping out of education (24.8%). This was also a contributing factor for Africans (7.5%) and Coloureds (7.0%).

Table 6 – Reasons provided by 14 – 17 year olds for not attending school/ education institution according to population group as a percentage of the total not attending an educational institution (2006 General Household Survey)

Reason Description	African	Coloured	Indian	White
Too old/young	0.7%	1.5%	3.5%	0.0%
Has completed school/education	0.9%	3.1%	25.4%	1.4%
School/education institution too far	1.4%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
No money for fees	37.9%	21.7%	33.7%	14.2%
He/she is working (at home or job)	3.0%	9.3%	10.5%	64.8%
Education is useless or uninteresting	17.0%	30.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Illness	10.9%	4.8%	2.0%	15.4%
Pregnancy	10.2%	2.4%	0.0%	3.2%
Failed exams	5.5%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Got married	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Family commitment (child minding, etc.)	7.5%	7.0%	24.8%	0.0%

Other/ Unspecified	4.2%	9.0%	0.0%	1.0%

Source: Stats SA. 2006b.

Government has been well aware of the barrier that the inability to pay school fees has been to access to education. It has attempted to deal with this problem through two policy interventions, namely the policy on fee exemptions (where learners are either partially or fully exempted from paying school fees, based on their family income), and the establishment of no-fee schools (DoE, 2009a).

5. Trends in senior certificate examination results

Branson, Leibbrandt, Zuzu (in Cloete, 2009) analysed household data from 2000 to 2007 to establish clear, positive links between further study and access to the labour market. They established how beneficial different levels of schooling proved to be. They found that having a matric qualification increased the likelihood of formal employment compared to having less than a matric qualification. Having obtained a tertiary qualification compared to the group with less than a matric certificate improved the likelihood to be formally employed up to three times. Until age 16, educational participation is broadly similar and high amongst the different groups of South Africans. Failure to complete secondary school is, however, substantial, especially amongst Africans and Coloureds. Their research provided evidence that remaining in school and matriculating and then, if possible, going on to tertiary training would vastly improve a young person's prospects of employment.

The importance of at least obtaining a Senior Certificate/National Senior Certificate is evident and it is thus important to consider trends in Senior Certificate examination results. The severe shortage of scarce skills which is very dependent on passing mathematics and/or physical science at school level to be admitted into scarce skills programmes makes it important also to look at trends in the Senior Certificate examination results for these two subject areas.

The year 2008 is a year of enormous significance for education in the Republic of South Africa. The new National Senior Certificate (NSC) curriculum that was introduced in 2006 at the Grade 10 level, culminated in the writing of the first National Senior Certificate examination in November 2008. The 2007 Senior Certificate examination was the end of an era of a tradition of Senior Certificate public examinations that have been in existence since 1848. The 2007 examination was the last examination that was based on the differentiated system of higher and standard grades and the last examination that allowed candidates to write examination question papers that are set at provincial level. The 2008 National Senior Certificate results provide the baseline data against which subsequent examination performances can be compared. Due to the significant change in curriculum and certification the data had to be provided separately for the period 2000 to 2007 versus 2008 and 2009.

The Senior Certificate examination results by gender are provided in Tables 7a(numbers) and 8a (percentages) for the years 2000 to 2007. The National Senior Certificate examination results by gender are provided in Tables 7b (numbers) and 8b (percentages) for the years 2008 and 2009. The total number of Grade 12 enrolled learners by gender has also been included in the tables to show the number and percentages of students that were enrolled but did not write the examinations. These learners may have been discouraged from writing the examinations due to the monitoring of the matric results and the interventions imposed by provincial education departments on schools with low and zero percent pass rates in the senior examinations. Another possible reason is that learners drop out after the annual statistical surveys but before the examinations due to the fact that they are not adequately prepared for the examination or due to other circumstances. Learners that do not turn up for the examinations because they are not adequately prepared or other circumstances may also contribute to these drop-outs during the examinations.

The percentage of Grade 12 learners that did not write the Senior Certificate examinations in 2001 and 2007 were 5.4% and 5.9%. The percentages for the other years were very high, ranging from 11.3% to 18.8%. The percentage of Grade 12 learners that did not write the National Senior Certificate examinations in 2008 and 2009 were 10.4% and 7.9% respectively. This represents a huge drop-out even before the examinations commence. The next group of concern are the learners that fail in the group of candidates that actually wrote the examinations. The failure rate for the Senior Certificate candidates was very high for all years varying between 26.7% and 38.3%. The failure rate for the National Senior Certificate candidates was also very high. In 2008, 37.4% of candidates that wrote failed. The failure rate increased to 39.45 for 2009. The 2009 National Senior Certificate pass rate showed a decline for the seventh year in a row and learner performance in key "gateway" subjects (specifically English, Mathematics and physical sciences) confirmed that much wished-for progress was still not in sight. Reasons cited were poor teaching, weak management and inefficient systems culminating in promises of "urgent action" and improvements in the 2010 results.

The combination of those that that did not write the Senior Certificate and those that failed led to the following percentages of enrolled Grade 12 learners not qualifying in the particular year: 2001 – 41.6%, 2002 – 36.2%, 2003 – 40.2%, 2004 - 41.8%, 2005 – 44.5%, 2006 – 40.9%, and 2007 – 38.6%. The corresponding percentages for the 2008 and 2009 National Senior Certificate examinations were 43.9% and 44.2%. Although it is recognised that some of these learners return for another attempt, most of these fall out of the system and this is one of the most severe contributing factors to the large numbers of youth not in education and not in employment.

About 15.1% to 18.6% of candidates passed the Senior Certificate examinations with endorsement. Only these learners qualify for entry into degree studies. Depending on the admission criteria of the individual universities and universities of technology the candidates who passed without endorsement qualify for entry into diploma and certificate programmes. The changed certification of the National Senior Certificate allows more learners to enter Higher Education, although this is discounted for by the specific admission criteria set by the individual Higher Education Institutions. The 2008 and 2009 National Senior Certificate results, indicate the following results: 19.1% (2008) and 16.9% (2009) qualified for admission to a Higher Certificate; 23.3%

(2008) and 23.7% (2009) qualified for admission to Diploma studies; and, 20.1 (2008) and 19.9% (2009) qualified for admission to Bachelor Degree studies.

The pass rates for mathematics for the Senior Certificate examinations for the period 2000 to 2007 are shown in Table 19a in the Appendices. Fairly equal percentages of males and females of the total number of candidates that wrote the Senior Certificate examinations also wrote mathematics. The candidates that wrote mathematics as a percentage of the total candidates that wrote the examinations varied between 58% and 61.2% for the years 2000 to 2007. Pass rates in mathematics varied between 45.1% and 58.8%. Of the total candidates who wrote the examinations between 2000 and 2007, 26.2% and 34.5% had passed mathematics. In the 2008 and 2009 National Senior Certificate examinations the newly introduced subject Mathematical Literacy was also introduced. The examination results of Mathematics in the 2008 and 2009 examinations are shown in Table 19b and the results for Mathematical Literacy in Table 19c. In 2008 and 2009, 56.0% and 52.6% of the total number of candidates wrote Mathematics. The pass rates for Mathematics for those that wrote were 45.7% in 2008 and 46.0% in 2009. In 2008 and 2009, 49.4% and 50.7% of the total number of candidates wrote Mathematical Literacy. Since the total of Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy are more than 100% for both years, it is assumed than some candidates registered and wrote examinations in both. The pass rates for Mathematical Literacy were 78.7% in 2008 and 74.7% in 2009. These low percentages of candidates who had passed mathematics are a contributing factor to the continued shortage of scarce skills in the country, since mathematics is a core requirement for engineering, science and business studies.

Physical science is another crucial subject necessary for entering into scarce fields of study. The results for the Senior Certificate examinations for the years 2000 to 2007 are shown in Table 20a in the Appendices. The results for the 2008 and 2009 National Senior Certificate examinations are shown in Table 20b. Far lower percentages of the total candidates for the Senior Certificate who wrote the examinations, were enrolled for physical science, varying between 33.4% and 38% for the period 2000 to 2007. Although the pass rates for physical science were considerably higher than for mathematics, varying between 68.6% and 80.3% for the years 2000 to 2007, the lower percentages of candidates that enrolled for physical science in the examinations resulted in the percentage of candidates that had passed physical science varying between 22.9% and 27.7% for the 2000 to 2007 Senior Certificate examinations. For the 2008 and 2009 National Senior Certificate examinations, the percentages of total candidates enrolled for physical science were 40.9% and 40.0%. The pass rates for physical science dropped considerably from 54.9% in 2008 to 36.8% (of all candidates that wrote), which is a serious matter of concern. The percentage of the total number of candidates that had passed physical science dropped from 22.5% in 2008 to 14.7% in 2009 for the National Senior Certificate examinations. Relatively small percentages of learners who complete their secondary education thus qualify for enrolment into scarce skills programmes at higher education institutions. Even those candidates that had passed mathematics and physical science would not necessarily be able to enrol in many of these programmes as they would not meet the admission criteria of the individual universities and universities of technology.

Table 7a – Senior Certificate Examination results by gender, 2000 to 2009

Year	Gender	Enrolled in Grade 12		Candidates who wrote		Candidates Failed		Candidates Passed					
								Without Endorsement		*With Endorsement*		*Total*	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2000	Male	265 184	54.5%	219 725	44.9%	85 103	41.3%	101 653	47.4%	32 969	48.0%	134 622	47.5%
	Female	221 602	45.5%	269 574	55.1%	120 902	58.7%	113 015	52.6%	35 657	52.0%	148 672	52.5%
	Total	486 786	100.0%	489 299	100.0%	206 005	100.0%	214 668	100.0%	68 626	100.0%	283 294	100.0%
2001	Male	258 872	54.5%	247 141	55.0%	98 564	57.3%	112 409	53.7%	36 168	53.4%	148 577	53.6%
	Female	216 197	45.5%	202 191	45.0%	73 562	42.7%	97 090	46.3%	31 539	46.6%	128 629	46.4%
	Total	475 069	100.0%	449 332	100.0%	172 126	100.0%	209 499	100.0%	67 707	100.0%	277 206	100.0%
2002	Male	274 900	54.4%	238 761	54.3%	67 396	57.3%	128 479	53.4%	42 886	52.3%	171 365	53.1%
	Female	230 492	45.6%	201 335	45.7%	50 208	42.7%	112 003	46.6%	39 124	47.7%	151 127	46.9%
	Total	505 392	100.0%	440 096	100.0%	117 604	100.0%	240 482	100.0%	82 010	100.0%	322 492	100.0%
2003	Male	293 470	54.5%	238 761	54.3%	67 396	57.3%	128 479	53.4%	42 886	52.3%	171 365	53.1%
	Female	245 439	45.5%	201 335	45.7%	50 208	42.7%	112 003	46.6%	39 124	47.7%	151 127	46.9%
	Total	538 909	100.0%	440 096	100.0%	117 604	100.0%	240 482	100.0%	82 010	100.0%	322 492	100.0%
2004	Male	310 010	54.5%	253 024	54.1%	77 087	56.2%	131 509	53.5%	44 428	52.2%	175 937	53.2%
	Female	258 654	45.5%	214 866	45.9%	60 086	43.8%	114 091	46.5%	40 689	47.8%	154 780	46.8%
	Total	568 664	100.0%	467 890	100.0%	137 173	100.0%	245 600	100.0%	85 117	100.0%	330 717	100.0%
2005	Male	343 916	55.0%	275 140	54.1%	90 283	56.1%	139 829	53.6%	45 028	52.0%	184 857	53.2%
	Female	281 893	45.0%	233 041	45.9%	70 714	43.9%	120 824	46.4%	41 503	48.0%	162 327	46.8%
	Total	625 809	100.0%	508 181	100.0%	160 997	100.0%	260 653	100.0%	86 531	100.0%	347 184	100.0%
2006	Male	323 380	54.3%	286 355	54.2%	98 917	56.1%	143 007	53.8%	44 431	51.8%	187 438	53.3%
	Female	271 836	45.7%	241 595	45.8%	77 530	43.9%	122 666	46.2%	41 399	48.2%	164 065	46.7%
	Total	595 216	100.0%	527 950	100.0%	176 447	100.0%	265 673	100.0%	85 830	100.0%	351 503	100.0%
2007	Male	328 384	54.8%	310 669	55.0%	110 265	56.2%	154 569	54.7%	45 835	53.6%	200 404	54.4%
	Female	271 242	45.2%	253 712	45.0%	85 899	43.8%	128 194	45.3%	39 619	46.4%	167 813	45.6%
	Total	599 626	100.0%	564 381	100.0%	196 164	100.0%	282 763	100.0%	85 454	100.0%	368 217	100.0%

Source: DoE. 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2008a, 2008c, 2009b.

Table 7b – National Senior Certificate Examination results by gender, 2008 and 2009

Year	Gender	Enrolled in Grade 12	Candi-dates who wrote	Candidates not achieved/ failed		Candidates achieved/ passed									
						With NSC		With Higher Certificate		With Diploma		With Bachelors		Total achieved/ passed	
		Number	Number	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2008	*Total	595 216	533 561	199 817	37.4%	180	0.05%	102 032	30.6%	124 258	37.2%	107 274	32.1%	333 744	62.6%
2009	Male	271 242	251 467	95 676	38.0%	319	0.20%	42 913	27.5%	64011	41.1%	48 550	31.2%	151 791	62.0%
	Female	328 384	300 606	121 681	40.5%	311	0.17%	50 443	28.2%	67024	37.5%	61 147	34.2%	178 925	59.5%
	Total	599 626	552 073	217 357	39.4%	630	0.19%	93 356	27.9%	131 035	39.1%	109 697	32.8%	334 716	60.6%

**Gender breakdown not available for the type of NSC obtained for 2008*

Source: DBE. 2010.

Table 8a – Senior Certificate Examination results by gender, 2001 to 2007 (%)

Year	Gender	Enrolled in Grade 12	Learners who did not write	Candidates who wrote (of Grade 12 enrolments)	Candidates Failed (of those that wrote)	Candidates Passed (of those that wrote)		
						Without Endorse-ment	With Endorse-ment	Total
2001	Male	100.0%	4.5%	95.5%	39.9%	45.5%	14.6%	60.1%
	Female	100.0%	6.5%	93.5%	36.4%	48.0%	15.6%	63.6%
	Total	100.0%	5.4%	94.6%	38.3%	46.6%	15.1%	61.7%
2002	Male	100.0%	13.1%	86.9%	28.2%	53.8%	18.0%	71.8%
	Female	100.0%	12.6%	87.4%	24.9%	55.6%	19.4%	75.1%
	Total	100.0%	12.9%	87.1%	26.7%	54.6%	18.6%	73.3%
2003	Male	100.0%	18.6%	81.4%	28.2%	53.8%	18.0%	71.8%
	Female	100.0%	18.0%	82.0%	24.9%	55.6%	19.4%	75.1%
	Total	100.0%	18.3%	81.7%	26.7%	54.6%	18.6%	73.3%
2004	Male	100.0%	18.4%	81.6%	30.5%	52.0%	17.6%	69.5%
	Female	100.0%	16.9%	83.1%	28.0%	53.1%	18.9%	72.0%
	Total	100.0%	17.7%	82.3%	29.3%	52.5%	18.2%	70.7%
2005	Male	100.0%	20.0%	80.0%	32.8%	50.8%	16.4%	67.2%
	Female	100.0%	17.3%	82.7%	30.3%	51.8%	17.8%	69.7%
	Total	100.0%	18.8%	81.2%	31.7%	51.3%	17.0%	68.3%
2006	Male	100.0%	11.4%	88.6%	34.5%	49.9%	15.5%	65.5%
	Female	100.0%	11.1%	88.9%	32.1%	50.8%	17.1%	67.9%
	Total	100.0%	11.3%	88.7%	33.4%	50.3%	16.3%	66.6%
2007	Male	100.0%	5.4%	94.6%	35.5%	49.8%	14.8%	64.5%
	Female	100.0%	6.5%	93.5%	33.9%	50.5%	15.6%	66.1%
	Total	100.0%	5.9%	94.1%	34.8%	50.1%	15.1%	65.2%

Source: DoE. 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2008a, 2008c, 2009b.

Table 8b – National Senior Certificate Examination results by gender, 2008 and 2009 (%)

Year	Gender	Enrolled in Grade 12	Learners who did not write	Candidates who wrote (of Grade 12 enrolments)	Candidates Failed (of those that wrote)	Candidates Passed (of those that wrote)				
						With NSC	With Higher Certi-ficate	With Diploma	With Bachelors	Total achieved/ passed
2008	Total	100.0%	10.4%	89.6%	37.4%	0.0%	19.1%	23.3%	20.1%	62.6%
2009	Male	100.0%	7.3%	92.7%	38.0%	0.1%	17.1%	25.5%	19.3%	60.4%
	Female	100.0%	8.5%	91.5%	40.5%	0.1%	16.8%	22.3%	20.3%	59.5%
	Total	100.0%	7.9%	92.1%	39.4%	0.1%	16.9%	23.7%	19.9%	60.6%

Source: DBE. 2010.

6. Participation in Further Education and Training

Various government departments are involved in addressing the learning and life skills programmes of the youth. Through the Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs), the Department of Labour has, trained millions of young people and adults in a variety of different skills over the years. Government has, however, realised that far more needs to be done to improve the work done by the SETAs and to provide the necessary skills required by the economy (DoE, 2009a). The Department of Education contributes in this area through the FET college system. After the 2009 election, the training, higher and further education functions were brought together under the purview of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

Table 9 – The total enrolment of learners in, as well as the number of educators employed by public FET colleges in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

Year	2005			2006			2007		
Province	Learners	Educators	Institutions	Learners	Educators	Institutions	Learners	Educators	Institutions
EC	24 500	726	8	30 129	890	8	20 173	837	8
FS	21315	524	4	14 661	510	3	14 224	400	3
GP	123 216	1 866	8	130 388	1 752	9	94 434	1 927	9
KZN	65 073	1 095	9	65 073	1 095	9	77 431	579	9
LP	37 071	555	7	22 908	619	7	17 037	524	7
MP	24 067	265	3	33 778	685	3	36 463	712	3
NW	28 240	379	3	17 743	397	3	14 318	323	3
NC	4 917	168	2	8 959	141	2	10 666	186	2
WC	49 185	329	6	37 547	1 007	6	35 933	499	6
National	377 584	6 407	50	361 186	7 096	50	320 679	5 987	50

Source: DoE. 2008a, 2008c, 2009b

Table 9 presents the figures for learner enrolment in FET colleges and the number of educators employed by these colleges as well as the number of public FET colleges for the years 2005, 2006 and 2007. The enrolments in public FET colleges declined for all three years from 377 584 to 320 679 in 2007. These enrolments are in DoE funded projects as well as non funded programmes. Although the learner enrolments declined from 2005 to 2006, the number of educators increased from 6 407 in 2005 to 7 096 in 2006 which signalled a lower educator : learner ratio which could indicate an improvement in quality. Unfortunately, the number of educators declined to 5 987 in

2007, whilst learner enrolment declined sharply to 320 676. This is a matter of concern, since the Department of Higher Education and Training intends to expand FET quite dramatically in an attempt to improve the workforce and address the untenable high numbers of youth not in education and not employed.

The most positive observations that can be made by studying Table 10 are that 50.3% of the enrolments were in the engineering field, an area in which the country has an acute shortage of skills. The field of business also needs an accelerated number of skilled people for the workforce. 32% of enrolments in the FET colleges were in the field of business and they are thus important providers of skills in this field. The DoE (2009a) mentions that it is reason for concern that fewer students are enrolling in the fields of agriculture and tourism in provinces like the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga, where these sectors have the greatest growth potential.

Table 10 – Learners enrolled in the new National Certificate (Vocational) programmes at FET colleges by field of study, 2007

		Field of Study					
Province		Engineering	Business	Tourism Hospitality	Information Technology	Agriculture	Total
EC	Number	1 322	1 032	229	191	27	2 801
	% of National	10.6	13.0	11.6	9.5	6.4	11.3
FS	Number	612	599	146	118	61	1 536
	% of National	4.9	7.5	7.4	5.8	14.4	6.2
GP	Number	3 315	2 280	542	537	0	6 674
	% of National	26.5	28.6	27.5	26.6	0.0	26.8
KZN	Number	1 723	819	280	373	0	3 195
	% of National	13.8	10.3	14.2	18.5	41.0	13.5
LP	Number	1 923	826	251	225	174	3 399
	% of National	1.4	10.4	12.7	11.1	22.4	13.3
MP	Number	1 186	514	31	124	95	1 950
	% of National	9.5	6.5	1.6	6.1	10.8	7.6
NC	Number	596	590	75	105	46	1 412
	% of National	4.8	7.4	3.8	5.2	0.0	5.5
NW	Number	267	273	39	129	0	708
	% of National	2.1	3.4	2.0	6.4	0.0	2.8
WC	Number	1 569	1 034	379	219	21	3 222
	% of National	12.5	13.0	19.2	10.8	5.0	12.9
Total	Number	12 513	7 967	1 972	2 021	424	24 897
	% of National	50.3	32.0	7.9	8.1	1.7	100.0

Source: DoE. 2007

The DoE (2009f) mentions that there is room for increasing enrolment in the FET college system and that the primary focus of the FET colleges should be the following target groups:

- Unemployed matriculants;
- Unemployed young people with Grades 10 and 11; and,

- Adult seeking to acquire specialist skills for meaningful economic participation.

Although the DoE (2009f) planned to have 800 000 learners enrolled in NC(V) programmes by 2014, this is highly unlikely given the infrastructure and the additional specialised educators required to achieve this. Information on the provisioning and size and shape of private FET colleges is unfortunately not available.

7. Post-school and post secondary participation in education

Determining trends in post-secondary education participation is difficult from the available DoE and DHET databases, because these databases do not include all post-secondary provisioning. Private and distance provisioning are not included in most of the available data sets. The General Household and the Community surveys are providing a more holistic base for ascertaining participation. This will receive attention in the next section. In Table 11, the HE participation rates for the years 2001 to 2009 have been calculated based on the Stats SA mid-year estimations of the 20–24 age cohort. They show that there has been an increase in the GER ratio for HE from 14.2% in 2001 to 17.0% in 2009. This participation rate is low by international standards and will not be sufficient to serve the economic growth rate aspirations of South Africa by providing adequate individuals trained to a high level.

Table 11 – HE participation rates, 2001 to 2009

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
HE Enrolments	627277	667182	705255	744478	735073	741380	760889	817731	834768
20- 24 age population group	4424722	4470460	4512455	4545546	4568462	4641464	4726110	4820527	4920962
GER	14.2%	14.9%	15.6%	16.4%	16.1%	16.0%	16.1%	17.0%	17.0%
Annual Growth Rate in HE Enrolments		6.4%	5.7%	5.6%	-1.3%	0.9%	2.6%	7.5%	2.1%
% of Pop	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%	1.6%

Sources: DoE. 2009e and Stats SA. 2002, 2003b, 2004b, 2005b, 2006c, 2007b.

Opportunities for post-school education and its efficiency in South Africa need to be improved considerably to assist the youth in enhancing their employability. HE participation rates in South Africa are low compared to international standards**.** An analysis of the percentage of successful secondary education students enrolling in public HE institutions the year after they finish school is shown in Table 12 and Figure 1. On average, only about 20% continue immediately with HE studies the year after finishing school. This points to the low levels of participation in the post-secondary education of the youth.

Table 12 - First-time entering undergraduate students in public higher education, by previous year activity (2000 – 2007)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Public higher education: first-time entering, undergraduate, by previous activity								
Secondary school student	48 618	55 762	60 313	70 031	69 503	64 429	63 523	70 963
Technical college student	1 617	1 485	1 197	1 315	1 370	937	769	880
Total	50 235	57 247	61 510	71 346	70 873	65 366	64 292	71 843
Secondary school data								
Total Grade 12 learners	549 203	488 352	486 786	475 069	505 392	538 909	568 930	625 809
Matric pass without endorsement	214 668	209 499	230 726	240 482	245 600	260 653	265 673	282 763
Matric pass with endorsement	68 626	67 707	75 048	82 010	85 117	86 531	85 830	85 454

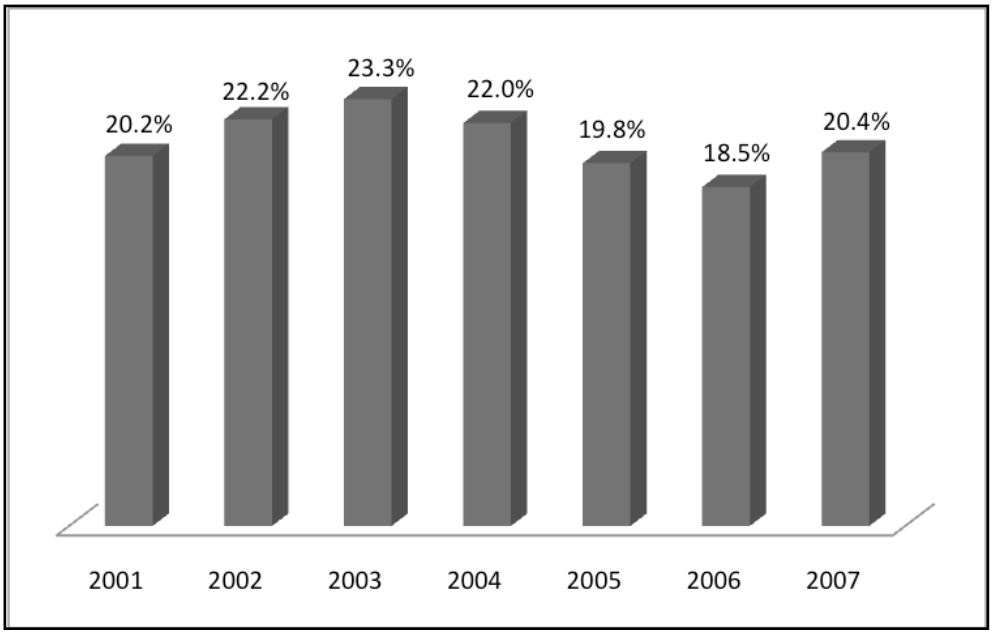
Source: DoE. 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2008a, 2009b, 2009e

The efficiency of higher education is another matter for concern. In Tables 13 and 14 the progress of the 2000 and 2001 cohorts of those students entering undergraduate studies for the first time are given. More recent information is not yet available. The data analyses reveal that by the end of 2004, 38% of the 2000 first time undergraduate cohort students at the contact universities had already dropped out of their studies, 50% had graduated, whilst 12% were still in progress and had not yet completed their qualifications. The results achieved by the former Technikons were even worse, 58% had dropped out, 32% had graduated whilst 10% were still in progress by the end of 2004. Unisa and Technikon SA had a 71% drop-out rate, 9% had graduated, whilst 20% were still in progress by the end of 2004.

The data analysis of the 2001 cohort of first-time undergraduate students showed that by the end of 2004, 35% of the 2001 first time undergraduate cohort students at the contact universities had already dropped out of their studies, 38% had graduated, whilst 12% were still in progress and had not yet completed their qualifications.

The results achieved by the former Technikons were as follows at the end of 2004: 52% had dropped out, 25% had graduated whilst 24% were still in progress by the end of 2004. Unisa and Technikon SA had a 69% drop-out rate, 9% had graduated, whilst 22% were still in progress by the end of 2004.

Figure 1 – Percentage of first-time entering undergraduate students that continue immediately with HE studies the year after they have completed secondary education (2001 – 2007)



Source: DoE. 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2008a, 2009b, 2009e

Table 13 – Progress to end of 2004 academic year of the 2000 cohort of first-time entering undergraduates at the pre-merger institutions

Pre-merger Institutions	First-time entering under-graduates in 2000 academic year	DROPPED OUT					Graduated by end 2004	Still in progress: degree not completed by end of 2004
		End of 2000	End of 2001	End of 2002	End of 2003	Total drop outs		
Universities (contact)	38 407	18%	8%	6%	6%	38%	50%	12%
Technikons (contact)	43 484	24%	14%	9%	11%	58%	32%	10%
Distance (UNISA, TSA)	37 798	44%	12%	8%	7%	71%	9%	20%

Source: DoE. 2009e

Note: The cohort study analysis for 2000 and 2001 first time entering undergraduates for Unisa and Technikon SA have been seperated from the University and Technikon tables reflected above as it is assumed that the average time for completion for students of these two institutions would be longer than the assumed average (5 years) of the predominantly contact institutions.

Table 14 – Progress to end of 2004 academic year of the 2001 cohort of first-time entering undergraduates at the pre-merger institutions

Pre-merger Institutions	First-time entering under-graduates in 2001 academic year	DROPPED OUT				Graduated by end 2004	Still in progress: degree not completed by end of 2004
		End of 2001	End of 2002	End of 2003	Total drop outs		
Universities (contact)	49 765	17%	9%	8%	35%	38%	27%
Technikons (contact)	47 991	28%	10%	13%	52%	25%	24%
Distance (UNISA, TSA)	33 423	49%	11%	10%	69%	9%	22%

Source: DoE. 2009e

Note: *The cohort study analysis for 2000 and 2001students entering undergraduate studies for the first time for Unisa and Technikon SA have been separated from the University and Technikon tables reflected above as it is assumed that the average time for completion for students of these two institutions would be longer than the assumed average (5 years) at the predominantly contact institutions.*

The differences in the success rates in HE of the various population groups is shown in Table 15 for various years. White students have been much more successful than the other population groups, but it is encouraging to note that the success rates, especially of African students have increased considerably since 1996.

The success rate is defined as the percentage of credits for which a student has been registered and passes successfully as a percentage of the total credits for which a student has been registered. In Figure 2, the graduation rate of all students enrolled in public higher education institutions is provided for the years 2000 to 2008. These graduation rates are low compared to international standards and still way below the national target of 22% as envisaged in the Higher Education Plan (DoE, 2001). The graduation rate is defined as the percentage of graduates expressed as a percentage of the total headcount of enrolled students. Although it is a crude measure of student success, influenced and skewed by radical changes in enrolment growth patterns, it is an internationally recognised measure of student success.

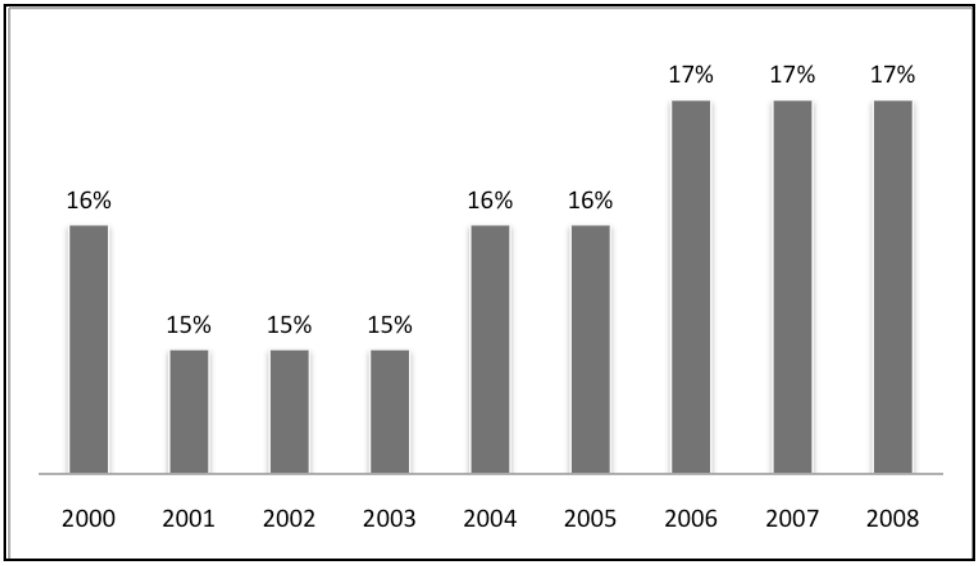
The 20% participation rate foreseen in the National Plan on HE will only be achieved by about 2020. This is approximately 5-10 years later than that foreseen in the National Plan for HE (2001). If the growth in the HE participation rate from 15% given in 2001 in the National Plan is taken as point of departure, then participation has only increased by 1% during the period 2001-2007. A rate of increase such as this would mean that SA would only reach its target of 20% by 2030. Such a slow increase in HE participation will have very negative socio-economic consequences for our country. This implies that specific strategies are required to increase HE study opportunities for young people in SA.

Table 15 – Success rates in higher education according to population group

	African	Coloured	Indian	White
1996	62%	67%	70%	78%
1998	60%	65%	68%	76%
2000	63%	69%	72%	79%
2002	64%	69%	71%	78%
2004	65%	70%	71%	78%
2006	67%	69%	69%	78%
2007	68%	71%	71%	79%
2008	68%	73%	72%	80%

Source: DoE. 2009e

Figure 2 – Graduation rates of higher education students, 2000 to 2008

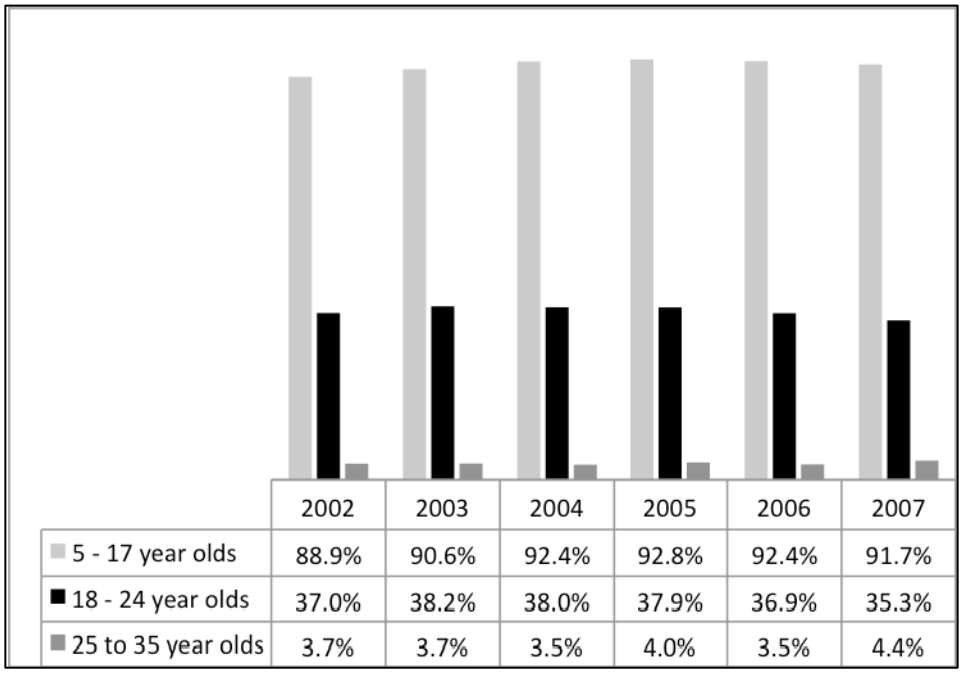


Source: DoE. 2009e

8. Percentage of the youth studying

As mentioned in the previous sections, the data sets available from the Department of Education, the newly established Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education and Training do not cover all the forms of educational and training provisioning. The General Household Survey and the Community Survey of Stats SA provide a more holistic picture of the participation in education by the citizenry.

Figure 3 – Percentage of the 5 to 17, 18 to 24 and 25 to 35 age cohorts *studying, 2000 to 2007*



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
5 - 17 year olds	88.9%	90.6%	92.4%	92.8%	92.4%	91.7%
18 - 24 year olds	37.0%	38.2%	38.0%	37.9%	36.9%	35.3%
25 to 35 year olds	3.7%	3.7%	3.5%	4.0%	3.5%	4.4%

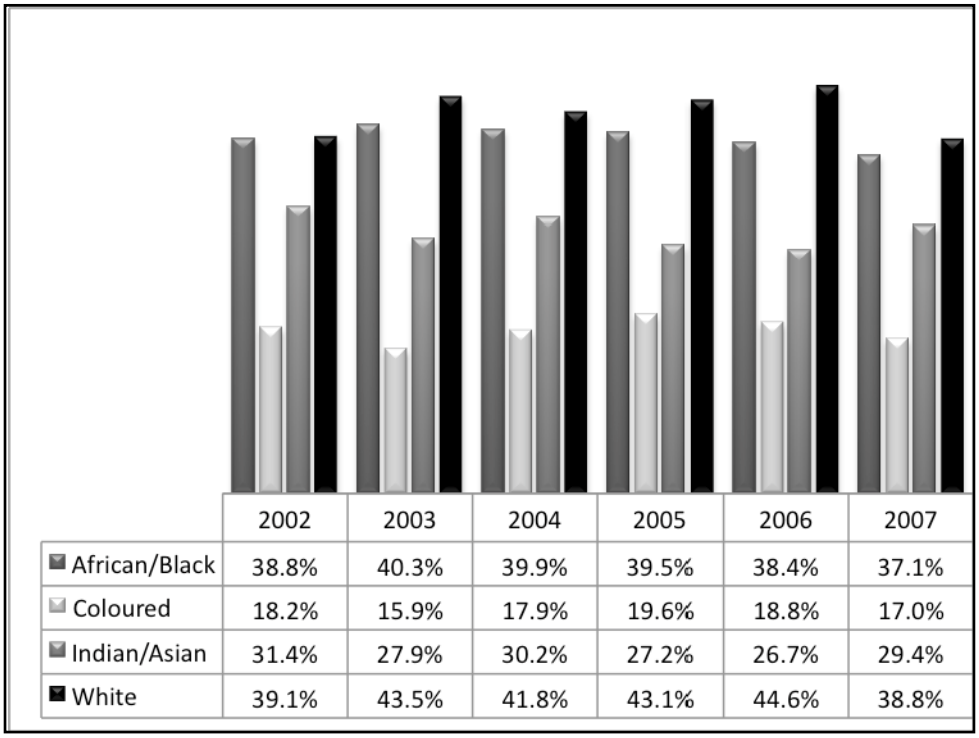
Source: Stats SA. 2003a, 2004a, 2005a, 2006a, 2006b, 2007b

The percentage of the 5 to 17 year olds attending an educational institution increased from 88.9% in 2002 to almost 92% in a period of six years. Although there has been an increase in the number of 18 to 24 year olds studying, the percentage of the population studying in this age cohort did not increase, but declined rather from 38.2% in 2003 to 35.3% in 2007. There were lower but increasing percentages of 25 to 35 year olds who were studying during the period 2002 to 2007, ranging from 3.7% to 4.4%.

Figure 4 shows the percentages of 18 to 24 year olds that were studying during the period 2002 to 2007 according to population group. In all years slightly higher percentages of the White population group participated in education (39.1% in 2002, 38.8% in 2007), followed by the African population (38.8% in 2002, 37.1% in 2007). The percentage of the Indian population that studied was lower than those of the White and African population groups (31.4% in 2002, 29.4% in 2007), whilst the

percentage studying of the Coloured population was the lowest (18.2% in 2002, 17.0% in 2007). The main contributing factor to the percentage studying in this age cohort is the 18 to 19 year olds who were still attending secondary education.

Figure 4 – Percentage of the 18 to 24 age cohort studying according to population group, 2000 to 2007 (as a % of the total of each population group respectively)

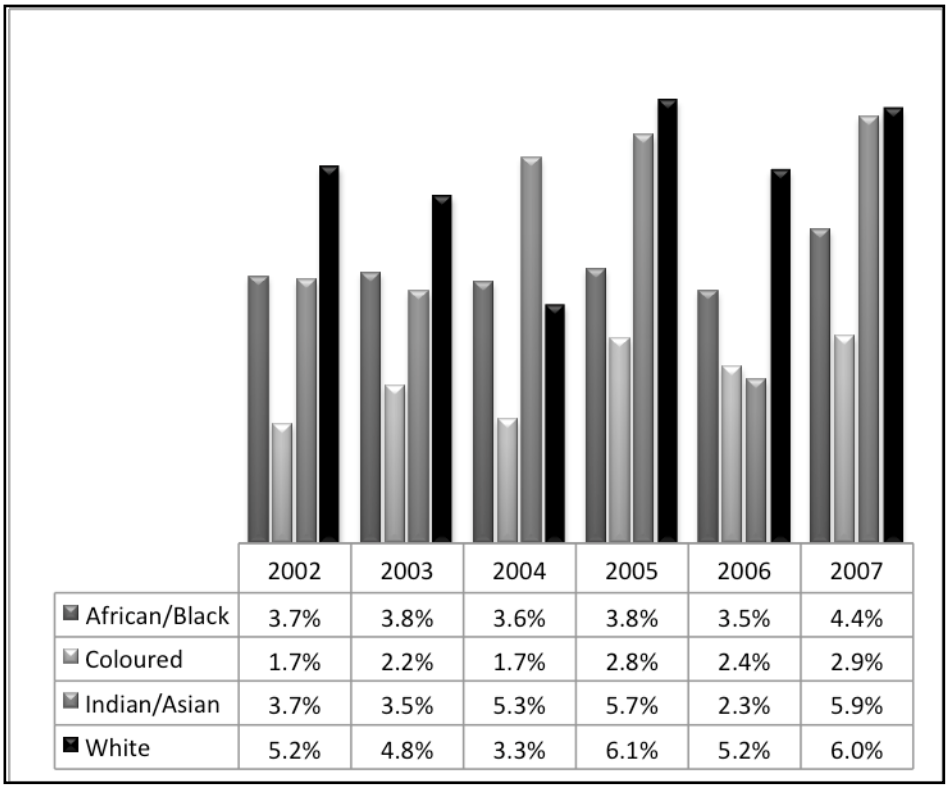


	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
African/Black	38.8%	40.3%	39.9%	39.5%	38.4%	37.1%
Coloured	18.2%	15.9%	17.9%	19.6%	18.8%	17.0%
Indian/Asian	31.4%	27.9%	30.2%	27.2%	26.7%	29.4%
White	39.1%	43.5%	41.8%	43.1%	44.6%	38.8%

Source: Stats SA. 2003a, 2004a, 2005a, 2006a, 2006b, 2007b

Similar patterns of participation in education amongst the various population groups emerge from the data for the 25 to 35 age cohort (see Figure 5). As expected, far lower percentages of this age cohort were studying either because they had completed their studies, were employed, or were unemployed and not studying. In all years except 2004, higher percentages of the White population were studying (5.2% in 2002, 6.0% in 2007). In 2002, 3.7% of Indians in the 25 to 35 age cohort continued studying compared to 5.9% in 2007. Higher percentages of the African population (3.7% in 2002, 4.4% in 2007) continued studying compared to the Coloured population (1.7% in 2002, 2.9% in 2007). For all the population groups in the 25 to 35 age cohort the proportion who continued their education increased during the 2002 to 2007 period.

Figure 5 – Percentage of the 25 to 35 age cohort studying according to population group, 2000 to 2007 (as a % of the total of each population group respectively)



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
African/Black	3.7%	3.8%	3.6%	3.8%	3.5%	4.4%
Coloured	1.7%	2.2%	1.7%	2.8%	2.4%	2.9%
Indian/Asian	3.7%	3.5%	5.3%	5.7%	2.3%	5.9%
White	5.2%	4.8%	3.3%	6.1%	5.2%	6.0%

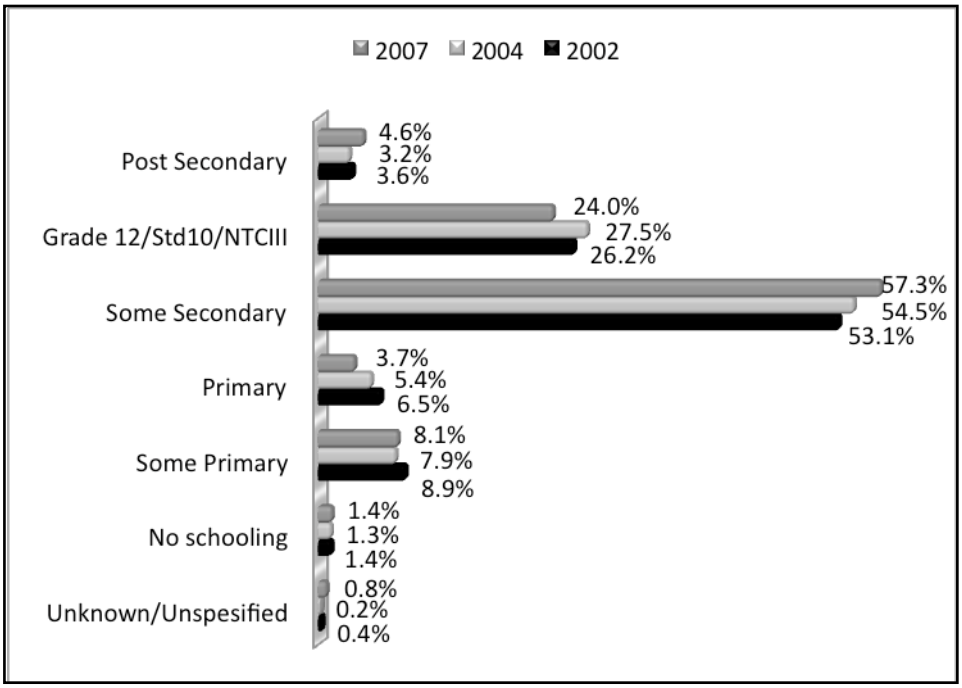
Source: Stats SA. 2003a, 2004a, 2005a, 2006a, 2006b, 2007b

9. Highest level of education attained by the 18 to 24 and 25 to 35 age cohorts

The highest level of education attained by the 18 to 24 and 25 to 35 age cohorts are shown in Figures 6 and 7. The huge improvements made in attending at least some secondary education are evident in both age groups. In the 18 to 24 age cohort the percentage with at least some secondary education increased from 53.1% to 57.3% during the period 2002 to 2007. The percentage of the 18 to 24 age cohort that had attained a Grade 12 as the highest level of education increased from 26.2% to 27.5% during the 2002 to 2004 period but declined during the 2004 to 2007 period to 24.0%. The same trend is evident in the 25 to 35 age cohort, where the percentage of those that obtained a Grade 12 qualification increased from 28.9% in 2002 to 33.0% in 2004, but declined to 23.9% in 2007. The increases in the percentages of those with some secondary education but the decreases in the percentage that had obtained a Grade 12 qualification in the 18 to 24 age cohort may be indicative of increasing drop-out trends in secondary schools. A portion of the drop in the percentage of those

obtaining a Grade 12 can be explained by the increase in the percentage of those obtaining a post-secondary qualification.

Figure 6 – Highest level of education attained: 18-24 age cohort: 2002, 2004 and 2007

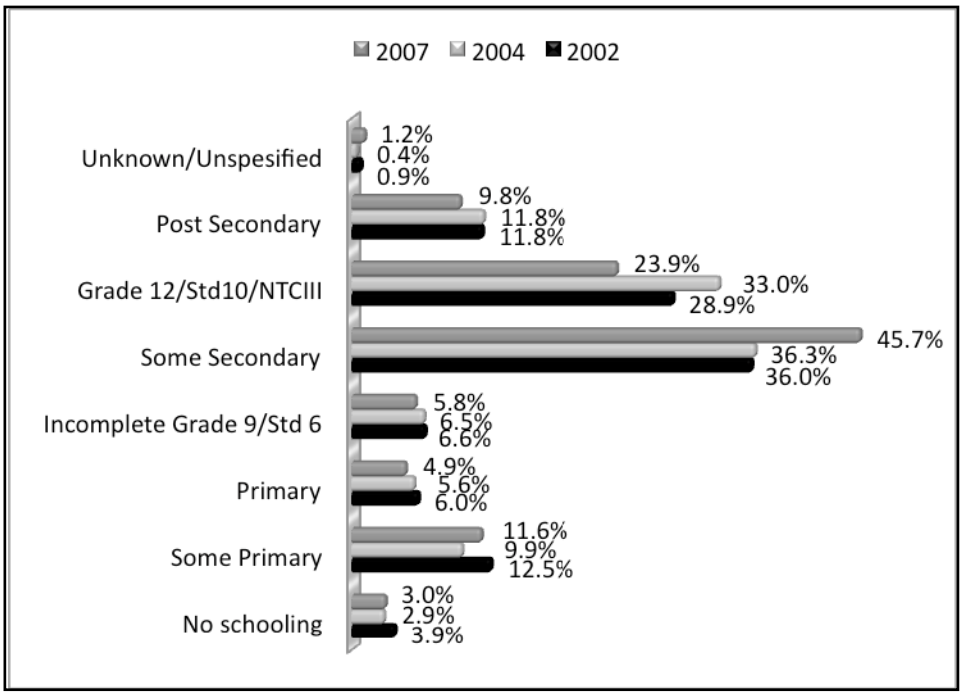


Source: Stats SA. 2003a, 2005a, 2007b

The percentage of 25 to 35 year olds attaining a post secondary education qualification remained at 11.8% for 2002 and 2004 but decreased to 9.8% in 2007. The percentage of 18 to 24 year olds that had attained a post secondary qualification increased from 3.6% in 2002 to 4.6% in 2007.

In this regard, the DoE (2009d) observed that youth literacy (defined as those in the 15 to 24 age group, who have completed at least seven grades of education) stood at 90% in 2007, which was 9% above the average for developing countries. Literacy rates amongst adults aged 20 and older increased from 69.6% in 1995 to 76.3% in 2007.

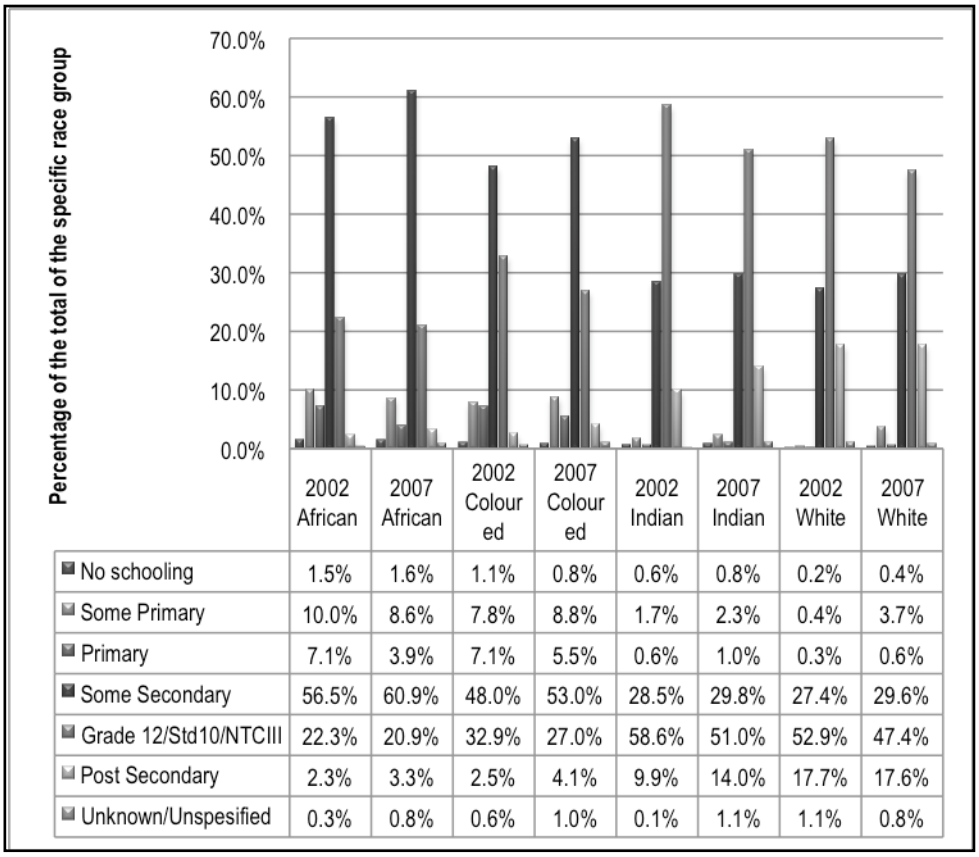
Figure 7 – Highest level of education attained by 25-35 age cohort: 2002, 2004, 2007



Source: Stats SA. 2003a, 2005a, 2007b

In Figure 8, the highest level of education attained by the 18 to 24 age cohort according to population group for 2002 and 2007 is given. The 18 to 24 age cohort analysis shows that the percentage that had some secondary education as their highest level of education had increased for all population groups over the period 2002 to 2007 (African – 56.5% in 2002, 60.9% in 2007, Coloured – 48.0% in 2002, 53.0% in 2007, Indian – 28.5% in 2002, 29.8% in 2007, White – 27.4% in 2002, 29.6% in 2007). The highest percentages having attained at least Grade 12 in 2007 were the Indian (51.0%) and White (47.4%) population groups, followed by the Coloured (27.0%) and African (20.9%) population groups. The percentage of the population with a Grade 12 qualification as the highest level of education attained, declined for all four population groups from 2002 to 2007 (African – 22.3% in 2002, 20.9% in 2007, Coloured – 32.9% in 2002, 27.0% in 2007, Indian – 58.6% in 2002, 52.9% in 2007, White - 52.9% in 2002, 47.4% in 2007). This is explained by increased drop-out rates in the higher secondary education grades and partially by the increases in the attainment of post secondary qualifications (African – 2.3% in 2002, 3.3% in 2007, Coloured – 2.5% in 2002, 4.1% in 2007, Indian – 9.9% in 2002, 14.0% in 2007, White – 17.7% in 2002, 17.6% in 2007).

Figure 8 – Highest level of education attained by the 18-24 age cohort according to population group: 2002 and 2007

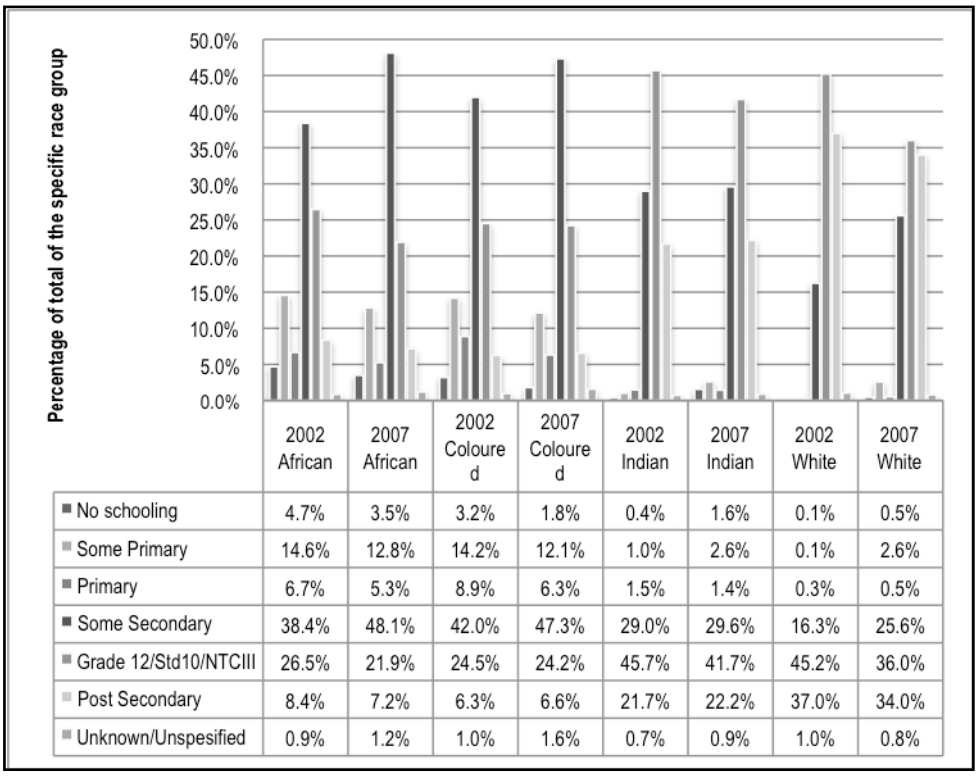


	2002 African	2007 African	2002 Coloured	2007 Coloured	2002 Indian	2007 Indian	2002 White	2007 White
No schooling	1.5%	1.6%	1.1%	0.8%	0.6%	0.8%	0.2%	0.4%
Some Primary	10.0%	8.6%	7.8%	8.8%	1.7%	2.3%	0.4%	3.7%
Primary	7.1%	3.9%	7.1%	5.5%	0.6%	1.0%	0.3%	0.6%
Some Secondary	56.5%	60.9%	48.0%	53.0%	28.5%	29.8%	27.4%	29.6%
Grade 12/Std10/NTCIII	22.3%	20.9%	32.9%	27.0%	58.6%	51.0%	52.9%	47.4%
Post Secondary	2.3%	3.3%	2.5%	4.1%	9.9%	14.0%	17.7%	17.6%
Unknown/Unspesified	0.3%	0.8%	0.6%	1.0%	0.1%	1.1%	1.1%	0.8%

Source: Stats SA. 2003a, 2007b

The 25 to 35 age cohort analysis shows that the percentage that had some secondary education as their highest level of education had increased for all the population groups over the period 2002 to 2007 (African – 38.4% in 2002, 48.1% in 2007, Coloured – 42.0% in 2002, 47.3% in 2007, Indian – 29.0% in 2002, 29.6% in 2007, White – 16.3% in 2002, 45.2% in 2007). The highest level of education attained by the 25 to 35 age cohort according to population group for the years 2002 and 2007 are shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9 – Highest level of education attained by the 25 to 35 age cohort according to population group: 2002 and 2007



	2002 African	2007 African	2002 Coloured	2007 Coloured	2002 Indian	2007 Indian	2002 White	2007 White
No schooling	4.7%	3.5%	3.2%	1.8%	0.4%	1.6%	0.1%	0.5%
Some Primary	14.6%	12.8%	14.2%	12.1%	1.0%	2.6%	0.1%	2.6%
Primary	6.7%	5.3%	8.9%	6.3%	1.5%	1.4%	0.3%	0.5%
Some Secondary	38.4%	48.1%	42.0%	47.3%	29.0%	29.6%	16.3%	25.6%
Grade 12/Std10/NTCIII	26.5%	21.9%	24.5%	24.2%	45.7%	41.7%	45.2%	36.0%
Post Secondary	8.4%	7.2%	6.3%	6.6%	21.7%	22.2%	37.0%	34.0%
Unknown/Unspesified	0.9%	1.2%	1.0%	1.6%	0.7%	0.9%	1.0%	0.8%

Source: Stats SA. 2003a, 2007b

10. Unemployed and non studying youth

There is a large group of young people who are inactive – they are neither working, nor studying. This is a major loss to the economy, and presents social challenges. Below, the evidence on this group is presented. The main purpose of this analysis is to determine the number of persons in the 18 to 24 age cohort who are the most marginalised and in need of support to promote their optimal economic participation.

For this analysis, only those who wanted to study or work, but were not doing so, were considered. Therefore, the following groups were excluded in our calculations:

- All students and scholars (persons attending an education institution or participating in distance/ part-time studies);
- All employed people;
- All persons who could nor work or attend mainstream education because of poor health or severe disability;
- All housewifes/ homemakers who prefer not to work; and,
- All persons who are not interested or preferred not to work.

The remainder was then counted as the targeted group. This group is referred to in this section as the "NEETS" – they are not in employment, education or training. This is essentially the same set of figures that would be found if analysing unemployment, except that it recognises that young people aged 18 to 24 year old who are inactive might be appropriately channelled into *either* employment *or* work.

In the following analysis, the NEETs are expressed as percentages of the total population in the 18 to 24 age cohort as well as the total available for employment by the labour market. The percentages are expressed either as a percentage of the total for all ages in the 18 to 24 age group or as a percentage of the total for the particular age (please note headings in tables).

The distinction of separating out the group that was available for employment by the labour market was made to narrow down the non-working group that was able and willing to work. This group excludes persons who were: studying (full/part time or through distance education); severely disabled or ill; not interested in working; not able to work; and, housewives / homemakers not interested in working. The total available for the labour market includes the remaining group after these persons have been filtered out as well as those already employed and not-studying. The severely disabled are defined as those persons whose disability is so severe that they cannot participate meaningfully in education or employment. Expressing the targeted group as a percentage of the group that was able and willing to work (which includes those already working and not-studying), provides a much more focussed perspective on the size of the problem that needs to be addressed as a matter of priority. Addressing this problem could be a combination of providing youths with second chance education opportunities, getting those that qualify enrolled in further and higher education institutions, providing skills training to enhance employability as well as creating more employment opportunities for the unemployed.

Table 16 provides the results of an analysis done of the number of persons in the 18 to 24 age cohort that were NEETs. The data are tabled according to the highest level of education attained. Out of a total of 6 758 366 in the 18 to 24 age cohort, 2 532 659 persons were unemployed and not studying. This represents 37.5% of the total 18 to 24 cohort and 66.1% of those that are able and willing to work (the remaining 33.9% non-studying students in the 18 to 24 age group are thus employed).

Studying the number and percentage (expressed as % of total available for the labour market) of people for the 18 to 24 age cohort, reveals that: 888 642 (23.2%) had attained an education level less than Grade 10 or Standard 8; 892 502 (23.3%) had a Grade 10 or Standard 8 but less than Grade 12 or Standard 10 qualification; 642 462 (16.8%) had a Grade 12 or Standard 10 qualification; and, 79 874 (2.1%) had a post secondary qualification. The major portion of those with a post-secondary qualification had obtained a certificate or diploma (66 340, 1.73%). The remainder (13 534, 0.35%) had degrees or higher degrees. From this analysis, it is evident that a higher level qualification improves employability.

Table 16 - Persons in the 18 to 24 age cohort who were unemployed and not studying, 2007

			Unemployed and not studying 18 to 24 Year Olds		
Level of Education	**Total 18 to 24 year olds (A)**	**Available for labour market (B)**	**Number of unemployed 18 to 24 year olds that are able & want to work (C)**	**% of total in 18 to 24 age group (C/(Total of A)**	**% of available for labour market (C/(Total of B)**
Unspecified	57 087	41 724	29 173	0.43%	0.76%
Primary or less	894 443	618 081	438 171	6.48%	11.44%
Secondary education less than Grade 10 or Std 8	1 100 928	629 386	450 471	6.67%	11.76%
Grade 10/Std 8 or higher but less than Grade 12/ Std 10	2 771 298	1 312 755	892 508	13.21%	23.30%
Grade 12/Std 10/NTCIII (without university exemption)	1 216 739	887 139	558 367	8.26%	14.58%
Grade 12/Std 10 (with university exemption)	404 556	155 786	84 095	1.24%	2.20%
Certificate with Std 10 /Gr 12	106 678	71 405	43 791	0.65%	1.14%
Diploma with Std 10/Gr 12	91 167	56 360	22 549	0.33%	0.59%
Bachelors degree	67 975	32 967	8 233	0.12%	0.21%
BTech	8 712	3 881	1 527	0.02%	0.04%
Post graduate diploma	17 321	8 086	1 954	0.03%	0.05%
Honours degree	17 614	10 074	1 489	0.02%	0.04%
Higher degree (Masters/PHD)	3 848	2 164	331	0.00%	0.01%
Total	6 758 366	3 829 808	2 532 659	37.47%	66.13%

Source: Stats SA. 2007b

If only those persons are considered that had obtained at least a Grade 12/ Standard 10 or an NTCIII and that had not yet obtained any further higher education degrees, diplomas or certificates, a total of 642 462 persons would have been the target group for a second chance education opportunity. This represents 16.8% of the total number of persons that are able and willing to work. There were also 888 642 (23.2%) persons with a Grade 10/Std 8 or higher but less than Grade 12/ Std 10 who

are also in need of an urgent intervention to assist them to the improve their qualifications. This group represented 23.2% of the total number of persons that are able and willing to work.

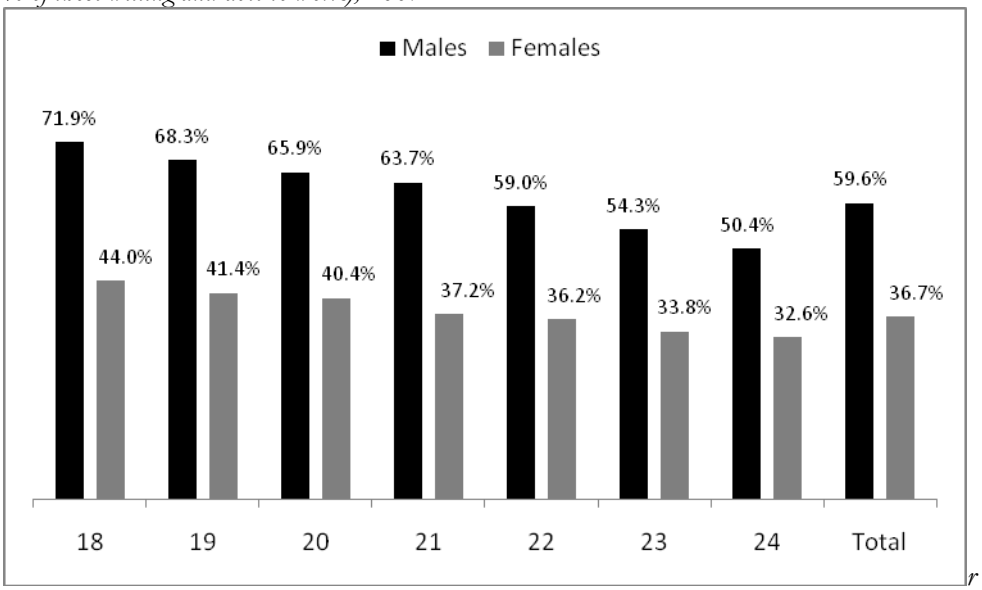
Table 17: Gender distribution of the 18 to 24 year age cohort who were unemployed and not studying, 2007

	Unemployed and not studying 18 to 24 year olds that are able & want to work					
Age	Males	% of males in single year age of total age cohort	% of males in single year age of total available for labour market	Females	% of females in single year age of total age cohort	% of females in single year age of total available for labour market
18	85 324	16.9%	71.9%	110 536	22.2%	44.0%
19	114 883	23.8%	68.3%	146 398	30.4%	41.4%
20	153 083	31.9%	65.9%	195 885	39.1%	40.4%
21	192 090	38.6%	63.7%	223 009	45.2%	37.2%
22	194 838	41.0%	59.0%	241 610	49.7%	36.2%
23	192 461	42.5%	54.3%	238 593	51.7%	33.8%
24	193 970	41.6%	50.4%	249 979	52.4%	32.6%
Total	1 126 649	33.5%	59.6%	1 406 010	41.4%	36.7%

In Table 17, the gender distribution of the number of persons in the 18 to 24 year age cohort who were unemployed and not studying is shown. In Figure 10, these are shown as a percentage of the total number of persons willing and able to work by single year age, respectively. In all the age groups, substantially higher percentages of males who were not attending an education institution or were unemployed but were willing and able to work.One of the main reasons for this was that very high numbers of females were not able or willing to work and were housewives and or homemakers. Although the 2007 Community Survey does not provide such information, it can be assumed that substantial numbers of them were caring for children.

The distribution of the persons in the 18 to 24 year age cohort not in education, unemployed and not severely disabled according to population group is provided in Table 18. The percentages per population group are shown in Figure 11 expressed as percentages of the single year age groups of the African, Coloured, Indian or Asian and White population who were willing and able to work.

Figure 10 – Gender distribution of the 18 to 24 year olds who were unemployed and not studying (as % of those willing and able to work), 2007



Source: Stats SA. 2007b

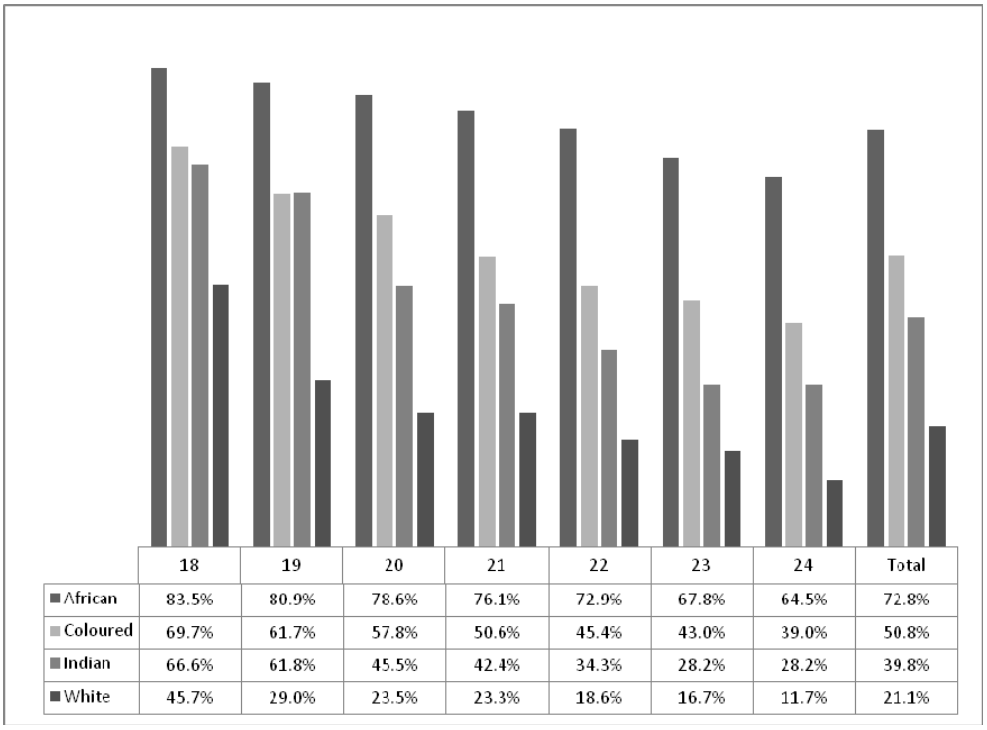
There were very high percentages of this group of persons in the various population groups between the ages of 18 and 24. For all these ages the highest percentage on average was in the African population (72.8%%), followed by the Coloured population (50.8%). The respective percentages for the Indian or Asian population and the White population for this category were 39.8% and 21.1%. In the 18 to 24 age cohort, the African and Coloured population groups were particularly disadvantaged with regard to attending education and being employed, followed by the Indian population group. Lower percentages of the White population of this age cohort were not attending an education institution or were not employed.

Table 18 - Persons in the 18 to 24 age cohort who were unemployed and not studying, 2007

Age	Unemployed 18 to 24 year olds that are able & want to work											
	African			Coloured			Indian or Asian			White		
	Number	% of total in single year age	% of total available for labour market in age	Number	% of total in single year age	% of total available for labour market in age	Number	% of total in single year age	% of total available for labour market in age	Number	% of total in single year age	% of total available for labour market in age
18	153 001	18.4%	83.5%	28 897	34.1%	69.7%	5 860	26.5%	66.6%	8 101	12.5%	45.7%
19	217 326	27.3%	80.9%	30 659	39.1%	61.7%	5 836	26.9%	61.8%	7 459	11.0%	29.0%
20	301 524	37.0%	78.6%	35 276	42.5%	57.8%	5 649	24.5%	45.5%	6 519	10.7%	23.5%
21	366 711	45.3%	76.1%	34 293	39.6%	50.6%	5 925	25.8%	42.4%	8 170	11.4%	23.3%
22	390 521	50.2%	72.9%	31 382	37.8%	45.4%	6 289	23.8%	34.3%	8 255	11.3%	18.6%
23	387 830	52.2%	67.8%	30 367	36.8%	43.0%	5 361	21.4%	28.2%	7 497	11.7%	16.7%
24	405 167	52.4%	64.5%	27 565	34.0%	39.0%	5 465	22.0%	28.2%	5 753	9.0%	11.7%
Total	2 222 080	40.1%	72.8%	218 439	37.7%	50.8%	40 386	24.3%	39.8%	51 754	11.1%	21.1%

Source: Stats SA. 2007b.

Figure 11 – Persons in the 18 to 24 age cohort who were unemployed and not studying according to population group, 2007



	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	Total
African	83.5%	80.9%	78.6%	76.1%	72.9%	67.8%	64.5%	72.8%
Coloured	69.7%	61.7%	57.8%	50.6%	45.4%	43.0%	39.0%	50.8%
Indian	66.6%	61.8%	45.5%	42.4%	34.3%	28.2%	28.2%	39.8%
White	45.7%	29.0%	23.5%	23.3%	18.6%	16.7%	11.7%	21.1%

Source: Stats SA. 2007b

During the post 1994 period, the Department of Education and the Higher Education institutions made considerable efforts to widen access. For schooling, the study by Crouch (2008) shows the success at the pre-grade 10 level, and in higher education the participation rate increased from close to 12% in 1994/5 to nearly 16% in 2007. The problem lies in the 18-24 year old (2 532 659 million) youths that were unemployed and not studying. The finding that 37.5% of the 18-24 year olds in South Africa or 66.1% of those that were able and willing to work within the 18 to 24 age cohort are unemployed and not studying, is not only a problem of education but one that needs to be addressed in a holistic manner by the various government departments.

The number of young people who qualify for participating in some form of HE (either certificate/diploma or degree study) but who are not involved in HE and who are unemployed amounts to nearly 650 000 for the 18 to 24 age group. . The figures of nearly 650 000 for the 18 to 24 age are far too large if SA is to meet its targets of high level skilled and high middle level skilled people required for sustained economic development and the improvement of quality of life for all in our country. The fact that approximately 85% of these persons could continue with HE studies at the certificate or diploma level at universities (probably in the main universities of technology) or with some form of post NQF level 4 studies at FET colleges, gives a

strong indication of the direction which any interventions aimed at increasing HE opportunities should take - not primarily degree study at traditional universities.

11. Conclusion

The success in the expansion of access to primary and secondary level education in South Africa has contributed to higher percentages of the youth having completed at least some secondary education and the general improvement in basic literacy in the country. South Africa has practically reached gender parity with more or less equal percentages of males and females participating in primary and secondary education.

Although successes were achieved in providing primary and at least some secondary education to the youth, the drop-out rates in especially the higher grades of secondary education are a matter of concern. It is of particular concern that the drop-out rates at Grade 11 level appear to be on the increase with each successive wave of learners progressing through the school system. The observed higher drop-out rates in the post-compulsory school phase contributes to increased numbers of youths with incomplete secondary education which is a contributing factor to youth unemployment and not being able to further their education and so enhance their chances of being employed in the formal sector. The achievement of the goal of quality education and improved learning outcomes is the biggest challenge facing the education sector.

Despite various successes in post-school and post-secondary education provisioning, currently, urgent interventions are needed to address the knowledge and skills needs appropriately of the 18 to 24 cohort. There is an unacceptably high number of young people who could be involved in some form of post school study but are not, and are also unemployed.

The lack of funding is one of the main reasons given by the youth for dropping out of education even at secondary education levels. The high cost of higher education makes it almost impossible for students from poor and low-income families to access higher education and persevere with it, without financial aid. This makes it difficult to improve the race profile further of the post-school student profile and to achieve higher levels of African and Coloured graduates, particularly in scarce fields. This is currently being addressed by the Ministerial Committee appointed by the Minister of Higher Education and Training to review the efficacy of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme.

Opportunities for post-school education and its efficiency in South Africa need considerable improvement to assist the youth in enhancing their employability. HE participation rates in South Africa are low compared to international standards**.** On average, only about 20% continue immediately with HE studies the year after finishing school. This points to the low levels of participation in the post-secondary education of the youth. The efficiency of higher education is another matter of concern, with on average 50% of students dropping out of degree studies and more than 60% dropping out of certificate and diploma studies. On average, more than 70% of distance HE students drop out of their studies. As a result of these large

percentages of drop-outs, graduation rates in HE (currently 17%) are well below the target of the 22% rate envisaged in the National Plan for HE. Of great concern is the low level of participation and success of black students in specific fields of study like accounting, natural sciences, engineering, and in research and postgraduate studies.

In Higher Education, the participation rate increased from nearly 12% in 1994/5 to nearly 16% in 2007. This is low compared to international standards. The youth, and particularly those that are not in education and not employed, is one of the current main areas of focus for government. The finding that 37.5% of the 18-24 year olds in South Africa or 66.1% of those that were able and willing to work were unemployed and not studying, is not only a problem of education but one that needs to be addressed in a holistic manner by the various government departments

The number of young people who qualify for participating in some form of HE (either certificate/diploma or degree study) but who are not involved in HE and who are unemployed amounts to nearly 650 000 for the 18 to 24 age group. The figures of nearly 650 000 for the 18 to 24 age group are far too large if SA is to meet its targets of high level skilled and high middle level skilled people required for sustained economic development and the improvement of quality of life for all in our country. The fact that approximately 85% of these persons could continue with HE studies at the certificate or diploma level at universities (probably in the main universities of technology) or with some form of post NQF level 4 studies at FET colleges, gives a strong indication of the direction which any interventions aimed at increasing HE opportunities should take - not primarily degree study at traditional universities.

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APPENDICES

Table 19a – Senior Certificate Examination results in Mathematics by gender, 2002 to 2007

Year	Gender	Candidates who wrote Mathematics	Candidates who passed Mathematics (number)	Candidates who passed Mathematics (%)	Total candidates who wrote Examinations	% of total candidates who wrote Mathematics	% of total candidates who passed Mathematics
2000	Male	131 921	66 007	50.0%	219 725	60.0%	30.0%
	Female	152 096	62 135	40.9%	269 574	56.4%	23.0%
	Total	284 017	128 142	45.1%	489 299	58.0%	26.2%
2001	Male	122 490	62 903	51.4%	247 141	49.6%	25.5%
	Female	141 455	60 246	42.6%	202 191	70.0%	29.8%
	Total	263 945	123 149	46.7%	449 332	58.7%	27.4%
2002	Male	122 902	74 840	60.9%	238 761	51.5%	31.3%
	Female	138 087	71 606	51.9%	201 335	68.6%	35.6%
	Total	260 989	146 446	56.1%	440 096	59.3%	33.3%
2003	Male	136 629	73 935	54.1%	238 761	57.2%	31.0%
	Female	121 694	77 970	64.1%	201 335	60.4%	38.7%
	Total	258 323	151 905	58.8%	440 096	58.7%	34.5%
2004	Male	145 607	75 611	51.9%	253 024	57.5%	29.9%
	Female	130 487	81 184	62.2%	214 866	60.7%	37.8%
	Total	276 094	156 795	56.8%	467 890	59.0%	33.5%
2005	Male	160 588	81 871	51.0%	275 140	58.4%	29.8%
	Female	142 564	87 130	61.1%	233 041	61.2%	37.4%
	Total	303 152	169 001	55.7%	508 181	59.7%	33.3%
2006	Male	169 118	80 662	47.7%	286 355	59.1%	28.2%
	Female	148 524	85 203	57.4%	241 595	61.5%	35.3%
	Total	317 642	165 865	52.2%	527 950	60.2%	31.4%
2007	Male	188 446	92 121	48.9%	310 669	60.7%	29.7%
	Female	159 124	73 641	46.3%	253 712	62.7%	29.0%
	Total	347 570	165 762	47.7%	564 381	61.6%	29.4%

Source: DoE. 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2008a, 2008c, 2009b.

Table 19b – National Senior Certificate Examination results in Mathematics by gender, 2008 and 2009

Year	Gender	Candidates who wrote Mathematics	Candidates who passed Mathematics (number)	Candidates who passed Mathematics (%)	Total candidates who wrote Examinations	% of total candidates who wrote Mathematics	% of total candidates who passed Mathematics
2008	Male	138400	68683	49.6%	244843	56.5%	28.1%
	Female	160421	67820	42.3%	288718	55.6%	23.5%
	Total	298821	136503	45.7%	533561	56.0%	25.6%
2009	Male	133454	66972	50.2%	251467	53.1%	26.6%
	Female	156953	66533	42.4%	300606	52.2%	22.1%
	Total	290407	133505	46.0%	552073	52.6%	24.2%

Source: DBE. 2010.

Table 19c – National Senior Certificate Examination results in Mathematics by gender, 2008 and 2009

Year	Gender	Candidates who wrote Mathematical Literacy	Candidates who passed Mathematical Literacy (number)	Candidates who passed Mathematical Literacy (%)	Total candidates who wrote Examinations	% of total candidates who wrote Mathematical Literacy	% of total candidates who passed Mathematical Literacy
2008	Male	120544	95989	79.6%	244843	49.2%	39.2%
	Female	142920	111241	77.8%	288718	49.5%	38.5%
	Total	263464	207230	78.7%	533561	49.4%	38.8%
2009	Male	125409	96098	76.6%	251467	49.9%	38.2%
	Female	152268	111228	73.0%	300606	50.7%	37.0%
	Total	277677	207326	74.7%	552073	50.3%	37.6%

Source: DBE. 2010.

Table 20a – Senior Certificate Examination results in Physical Science by gender, 2002 to 2007 (%)

Year	Gender	Candidates who wrote Physical Science	Candidates who passed Physical Science (number)	Candidates who passed Physical Science (%)	Total candidates who wrote Examinations	% of total candidates who wrote Physical Science	% of total candidates who passed Physical Science
2000	Male	83 894	60 355	71.9%	219 725	38.2%	27.5%
	Female	79 291	51 809	65.3%	269 574	29.4%	19.2%
	Total	163 185	112 164	68.7%	489 299	33.4%	22.9%
2001	Male	79 321	56 670	71.4%	247 141	32.1%	22.9%
	Female	74 526	48 882	65.6%	202 191	36.9%	24.2%
	Total	153 847	105 552	68.6%	449 332	34.2%	23.5%
2002	Male	80 422	62 994	78.3%	238 761	33.7%	26.4%
	Female	73 433	54 535	74.3%	201 335	36.5%	27.1%
	Total	153 855	117 529	76.4%	440 096	35.0%	26.7%
2003	Male	71 963	56 357	78.3%	238 761	30.1%	23.6%
	Female	79 828	65 590	82.2%	201 335	39.6%	32.6%
	Total	151 791	121 947	80.3%	440 096	34.5%	27.7%
2004	Male	76 140	55 666	73.1%	253 024	30.1%	22.0%
	Female	85 074	63 877	75.1%	214 866	39.6%	29.7%
	Total	161 214	119 543	74.2%	467 890	34.5%	25.5%
2005	Male	87 639	61 145	69.8%	275 140	31.9%	22.2%
	Female	94 189	68 213	72.4%	233 041	40.4%	29.3%
	Total	181 828	129 358	71.1%	508 181	35.8%	25.5%
2006	Male	95 530	66 086	69.2%	286 355	33.4%	23.1%
	Female	99 693	72 830	73.1%	241 595	41.3%	30.1%
	Total	195 223	138 916	71.2%	527 950	37.0%	26.3%
2007	Male	107 817	73 641	68.3%	310 669	34.7%	23.7%
	Female	106 693	76 035	71.3%	253 712	42.1%	30.0%
	Total	214 510	149 676	69.8%	564 381	38.0%	26.5%

Source: DoE. 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006, 2008a, 2008c, 2009b.

Table 20b – National Senior Certificate Examination results in Physical Science by gender, 2008 and 2009 (%)

Year	Gender	Candidates who wrote Physical Science	Candidates who passed Physical Science (number)	Candidates who passed Physical Science (%)	Total candidates who wrote Examinations	% of total candidates who wrote Physical Science	% of total candidates who passed Physical Science
2008	Male	108610	62089	57.2%	244843	44.4%	25.4%
	Female	109546	57734	52.7%	288718	37.9%	20.0%
	Total	218156	119823	54.9%	533561	40.9%	22.5%
2009	Male	107972	42596	39.5%	251467	42.9%	16.9%
	Female	112910	38760	34.3%	300606	37.6%	12.9%
	Total	220882	81356	36.8%	552073	40.0%	14.7%

Source: DBE. 2010.