

EFA AND ACCESS TO SCHOOLING IN SOUTH AFRICA

EFA AND ACCESS – THE SOUTH AFRICAN CASE STUDY

Presented to the Ministry of Education, Accra, Ghana

April - 2009

DR SHIREEN MOTALA

Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg SA

Shireen.Motala@wits.ac.za

EFA AND ACCESS – THE SOUTH AFRICA CASE

- **Research Partnership: SA, Bangladesh, India, Sussex & Ghana (CREATE)**
- **MDGs and EFA**
- **Access and Development.**
- **Sustained access is related to long term improvements in productivity, the reduction of inter generational cycles of poverty, demographic transition, preventative health care, the empowerment of women and reduction in inequality.**
- **Definition of Access in paper**

Education Access is more than simple physical access to school. CREATE introduced the notion of meaningful access to schools which includes high attendance rates, progression through grades with little or no repetition, transition from primary to secondary and meaningful learning i.e. achieving learning outcomes that confirm basic skills are being mastered.
- **Relevance to South Africa's political economic context**

OVERVIEW CONTINUED

- **Zones of exclusion, model and adaptation to the South African context (1 – 6).**
- **Size and scope of the South African schooling system – mainly public (96%), 11 902 316 learners in the public schooling system, majority 66% in primary schools and the rest in secondary schools (34%), small private school sector (2%). Nine provincial departments with devolved responsibility for schooling.**

Table 3: Education in South Africa: A global picture, 2005

		Learners	Educators	Institutions
Public	Primary	7588987	224439	18857
	Secondary	3769255	120377	5668
	Combined	385018	12857	674
	Intermediate	159056	4997	371
	Total	11902316	362670	25570
Independent	Primary	92337	4518	403
	Secondary	59450	3570	183
	Combined	163662	11375	436
	Total	315449	19463	1022
Total Public and Independent		12215765	382133	25592
Other	Adult Education	269140	17181	2278
	Special Education	87865	7394	404
	Further Education	377584	6407	50
	Early Childhood Education	246911	9000	4815
	Public Higher Education	737472	15315	23
	Total other	1718972	55197	7570
Grand Total		13936737	437330	34162

Source: DoE Stats at a Glance, DoE, 2005

The percentage breakdown of learners in the system is shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Percentages of learners participating in the various types of education offered in SA

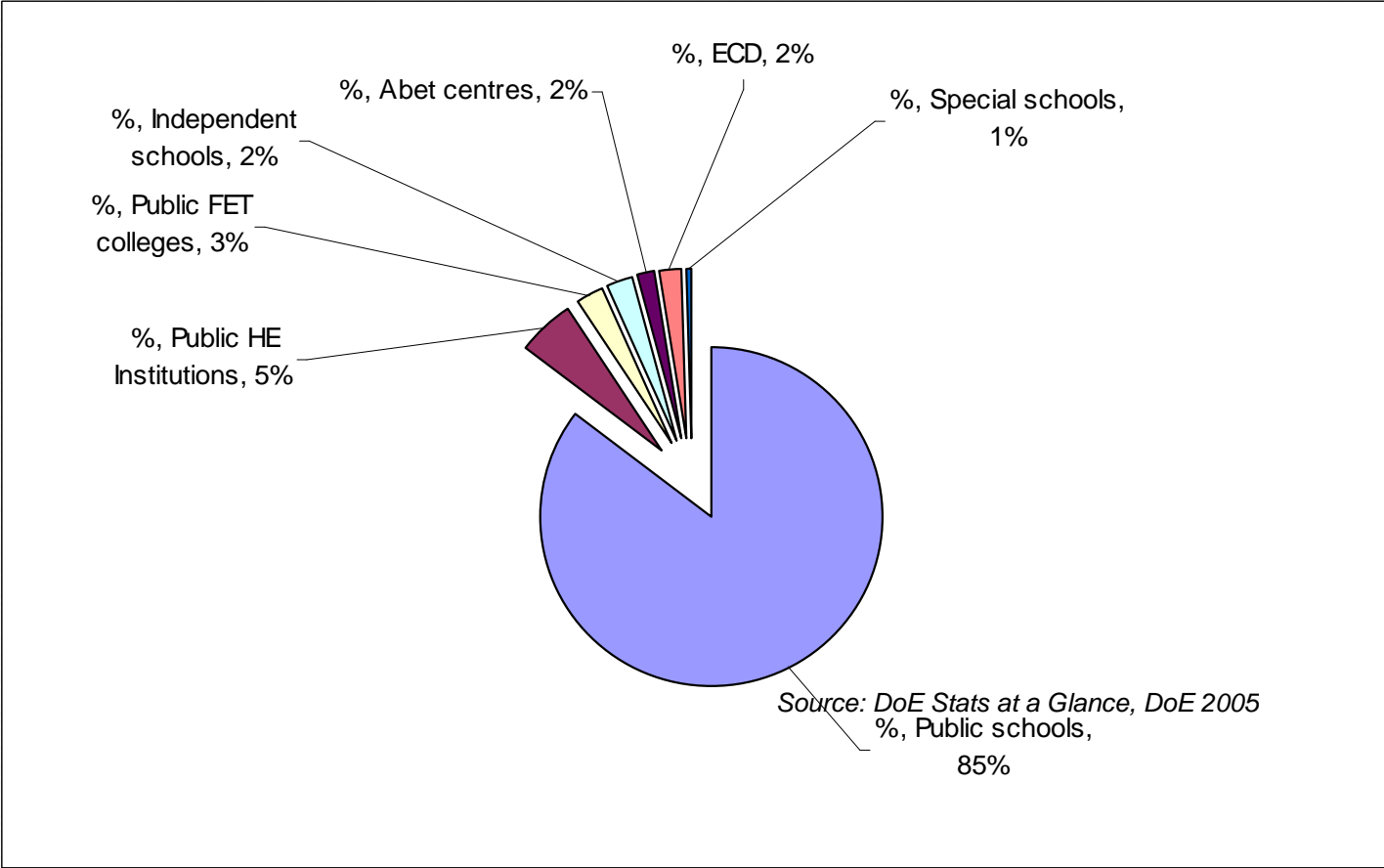


Table 6: Grade 6 systemic evaluation: national averages for all three learning areas

Province	Language	Mathematics	Natural Sciences
EC	30.16	23.4	36.01
FS	38.64	30.8	44.14
GP	51.58	33.76	50
KZN	36.92	26.38	39.65
LP	25.54	19.38	32.57
MP	35.64	25.28	41.01
NW	34.7	24.26	38.43
NC	53.02	32.97	46.89
WC	58.79	40.22	51.93
National	38.03	27.08	40.77

Source: DoE 2005f.

•Table 7: MLA percentage average scores for numeracy, literacy and life skills, 1999

	Numeracy average	Literacy average	Life skills average
Botswana	51.0	48.0	56.0
Madagascar	43.7	54.7	72.1
Malawi	43.0	35.0	77.0
Mali	43.6	51.8	56.9
Mauritius	58.5	61.0	58.0
Morocco	56.4	67.6	62.3
Niger	37.3	41.1	44.7
Senegal	39.7	48.9	45.7
South Africa	30.2	48.1	47.1
Tunisia	60.4	77.9	74.7
Uganda	49.3	58.7	66.8
Zambia	36.0	43.0	51.0

Sources: Strauss & Burger 2000, and Chinapah 2000; available at <http://hrdwarehouse.hsrc.ac.za/publicschool/publicschool.xls>

RELEVANCE OF POLICY TO ACCESS

- **Increased access**
- **Compulsory education (up to Grade 9)**
- **Greater efficiency and legal and policy regulation**
- **Policy intent and outcome**
- **Financing equitable access to education**
- **GDP –5% spent on education.**
- **Finance equity mechanisms (ESS, means testing SFNS) post-provisioning)**
- **Redistributive thrust**
- **Equalisation rather than redress**

PATTERNS OF EXCLUSION IN SA

Access Overview

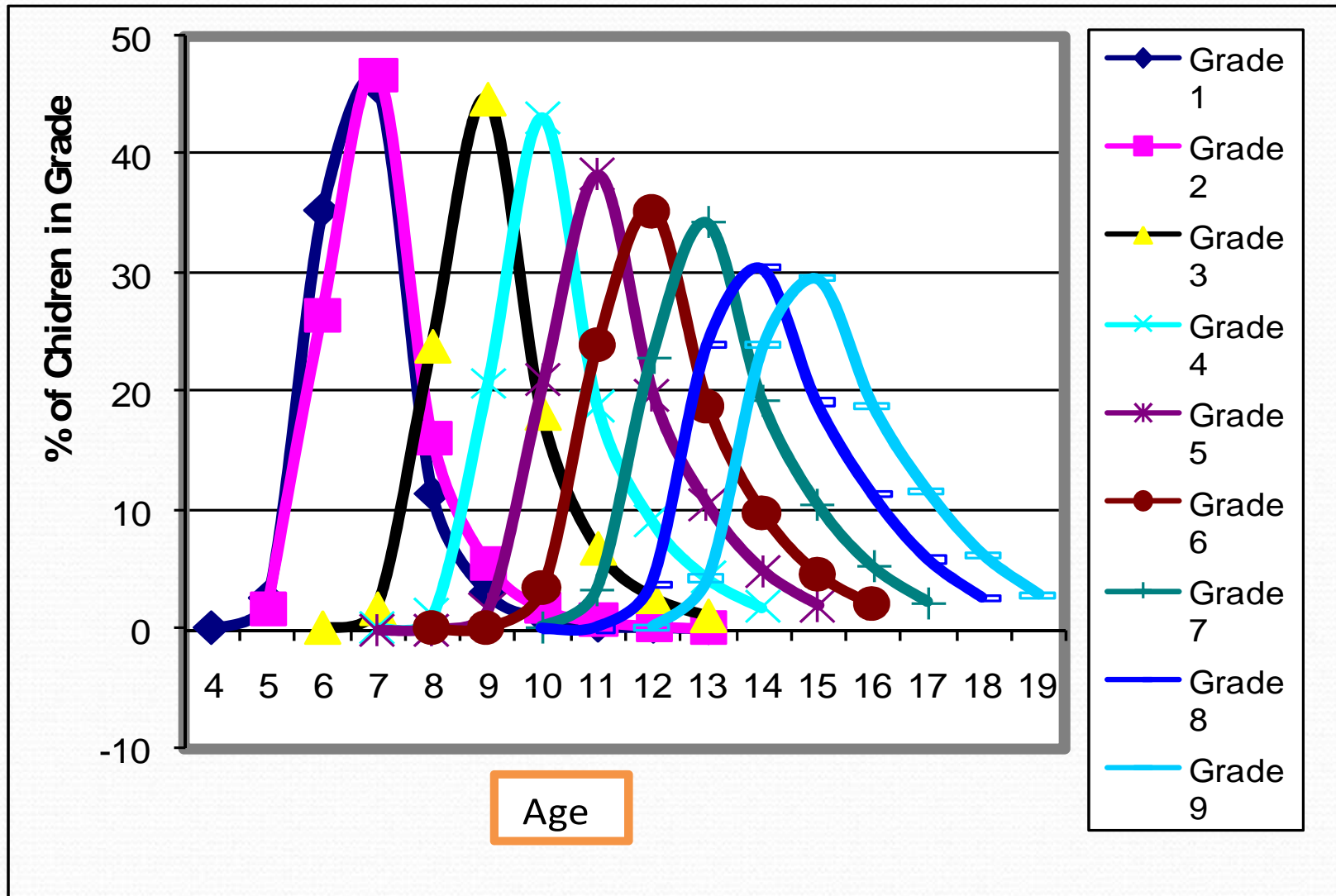
Sources: National Data Sets, secondary analysis and fieldwork research

- **Access to basic education in South Africa is expansive when compared with other developing countries. Schooling is institutionalised and there is a culture of schooling.**
- **Learners persist in school despite poor quality, limited skill acquisition, in different teaching and poor facilities**
- **Opportunity costs and “warehousing” – child labour in South Africa**
- **Very few children who have never been to school (Zone 1). Almost all school-age children enrol in schools, with just under 2% of learners never entering a school.**

RELEVANCE OF POLICY TO ACCESS

- **High GER (2007) over 100% in primary school grades (up to Grade 7).**
- **Lower NERs– 87.4% for primary Schools in 2007 – learners are not in the correct grade for their age (most likely they are over-age).**
- **Age-specific enrolment rates for 6 to 15 year olds in South Africa stand at over 95%. Over-age and repetition decreasing - policy measures on progression and repetition in a phase**

AGE-GRADE ENROLMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA



PATTERNS OF EXCLUSION IN SA

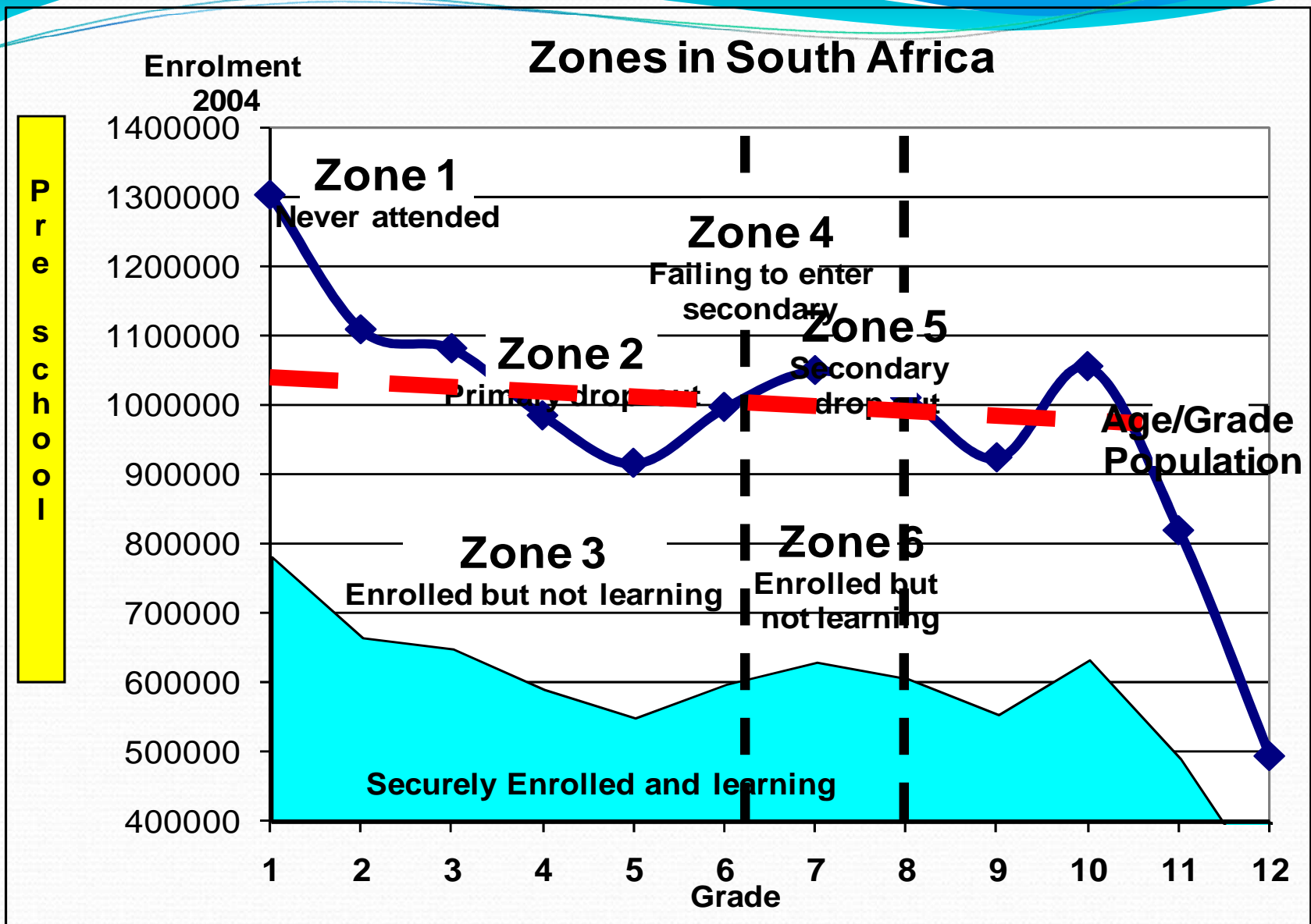
Transition – Primary to Secondary

- **Most learners stay in school through to the end of primary school, with 88% of learners completing Grade 7 in 2006.**
- **Improvement in rate of completion of basic education and transition to secondary schooling between 1997 and 2003. Unesco data suggests that transition rates in 2003 were 95% from primary to secondary.**
- **Zone 4 affected by limited places in secondary schools but successful transition in most instances, school choice issues**

PATTERNS OF EXCLUSION IN SA

Dropout

- **Estimations on drop out vary between 3% and 7% in the 7 – 15 age group.**
- **Zone 3 (Grades 1-7) and Zone 6 (Grades 8 and 9) include learners who are at risk of dropping out. These zones of exclusion are characterised by a range of endogenous and exogenous factors which limit learners' abilities to contend with schooling.**



Silent zones of exclusion

Profile of vulnerability – some statistics

- 32.8% of households received a government grant in 2006 based on poverty, 22% of children (aged 0 to 19) eligible to receive the Child Support Grant are not receiving the grant.
- In the national Department of Education's systemic evaluation of Grade 6 (2005) learners obtained a national mean score of 38% in Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT), 27% in Mathematics, and 41% in Natural Sciences.
- 7% of children are always or often hungry and just over 17% of children are sometimes hungry (General household survey, 2006).
- The impact of HIV/AIDS is evident in the growing number of orphans. In 2003, 17.4% of children had lost one parent and 3% of children had lost both parents (371 000 children).

Causes of exclusion

- **Economic or social stress (cash transfers, indirect costs of education)**
- **HIV/Aids and increased orphanhood (those infected or affected)**
- **Vulnerability or silent exclusion related to protracted poverty**
- **Costs of Education (user fees, transport, uniforms)**
- **Absence of epistemic access or access to content knowledge and skills needed for required level of achievement and competency (time on task, TIMMS, language). Baseline research established and learner performance to be tracked**

CAUSES OF EXCLUSION

- Improved internal efficiency not related to improvement in learning outcomes and quality.
- Social ethos and discrimination e.g. racism, sexism, bullying and xenophobia (gender and patriarchy).
- Special needs children
- Systemic issues - Policies on access applied vigorously and districts work hard to get children to school and keep them there. Emphasis is on structural access rather than on meaningful access.

Concluding comments

The South African case and EFA

- **Costs and indirect costs to education (limited success of funding equity policies)**
- **Quality and low achievement in primary and secondary key policy concern – illustrated by low pass rate in matric and limited meaningful opportunities to tertiary education and labour market**
- **Retention and throughput has improved, however age grade profile has not changed**
- **Decentralised school governance policy intent and outcome**

vastly differentiated public schooling system with disparities across districts and regions

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- **ECD and comprehensive expansion required**
- **Gender variation and “failing boys”**
- **Teacher quality, morale and status**
- **Decline in civil society participation**
- **Education indicators improving but decline in broader social indicators e.g. poverty, gini coefficient,**
- **HIV/Aids – tension between prudent fiscus and meeting social targets**

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- **Most important concern is meaningful access to quality education.**
- **The South African case turns the standard question on access around: rather than**
- **‘why are learners not in school?’, we need to ask ‘why are learners in school?’**
- **‘why are learners passing through the system and not failing?’**
- **‘why is learner absenteeism generally not of concern?’**

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

- **'Why are learning outcomes for numeracy and literacy across the system and in relation to regional counterparts at such a low level?**
- **Repetition patterns, over-age learners and the relationship of socio-economic condition to school access require greater review as well.**
- **Vulnerability and silent exclusion is of enormous relevance and require review in South African research if we want to address EFA and MDGs**