INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the causes and effects of the widely varying degree of access to material resources across schools in the Eastern Cape. Starting with a broad overview of schools and classroom resources across the whole province, I go on to examine the Grahamstown education district. I discuss the inequalities in resource provision between groupings of schools in the district: comparing independent and state schools, and also examining disparities across schools in different localities within the government sector. The role of parents in providing resources for their children’s schooling is also discussed, as are the relationships among the various participants in education, such as non-governmental organisations, officials of the Department of Education, and teachers.

OVERVIEW OF THE SCHOOL SECTOR

In 2006, there were 2 101 768 learners and 63 157 teachers in 5 886 schools in the Eastern Cape; that is 16,3 per cent of the total number of teachers and 17,1 per cent of learners in 22,4 per cent of the schools in South Africa (Department of Education 2006). Ninety-eight per cent of both learners and teachers in the province were in state schools, with the remaining 2 per cent in the independent school sector. Set against the national proportion of schools to learners the Eastern Cape appears to be relatively well served. But the reality is that many of the province’s schools are tiny farm schools, or mud structures or in a serious state of disrepair. With a total infrastructure backlog of R3,5 billion, the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECED) is unable to clarify whether it can deal with the urgent problem of eradicating all mud schools by 2008 (George 2007:4). Besides the physical conditions of Eastern Cape schools, the problematic provision of water, sanitation, electricity and sufficient textbooks to schools, recorded in The Education Atlas of South Africa (2000), remains.

There are many key crisis indicators in education in South Africa. Of these, the high matric failure rate gets saturation media coverage, yet the disturbingly high national dropout rate is relatively neglected. The differential impact of the poor retention rate can be seen from the official Assessment Report on the UNESCO Education for All programme, which found that in South African rural areas 19,1 per cent of children between the ages of 6-14 had dropped out, compared to 11,4 per cent in urban areas (Beard and Schindler 2001:137). The dropout rate of children older than 14, in the final four years of high school, rises steeply to above 40 per cent nationally. According to a 2003 South African Treasury report, ‘on average, for 100 children in Grade 1 there were
52 in Grade 12 [the final year of school’] (Govender 2005:1). In the Eastern Cape, only about a quarter of Grade 1s make it to matric (Zuzile 2003:1).

The Eastern Cape matric pass rate in 2005 was 57 per cent, considerably lower than the 68 per cent national average. Only eight per cent of Eastern Cape matriculants obtained university endorsements compared to the national average of 17 per cent. A mere four percent of the Eastern Cape matriculants who studied mathematics on the higher grade in 2005 passed (RSA 2006:25).

Another indicator that the problems in the Eastern Cape Education Department are systemic is the very high number of vacant posts in education district offices. The education district offices, and key staff such as subject advisors and education development officers, are the crucial district-level link in the chain from national and provincial education structures through to schools and classrooms. Their role is to ensure that the curriculum is understood by teachers and implemented in their classrooms. Yet the extent of vacancies in Eastern Cape district offices has not changed much since 2005, when the then-superintendent-general claimed that ‘The province needs 600 education development officers – also known as subject advisors – to roll out outcomes-based education. There are only 34’ (Mkokeli 2005:2).

UNDERDEVELOPMENT, HUNGER AND EDUCATION

The racialised inequalities of South African education, rooted in apartheid, continue to structure schooling in profoundly divisive ways. Commentators such as Chisholm (2004) and Jansen (2006) claim that in South Africa we have two distinct school systems: a small minority of ‘deracialised’ formerly whites-only schools that are responsible for a large percentage of matric passes, and a majority of de facto black schools, about one-third of whose learners fail matric.

Despite rapid recent urbanisation, half of South Africa’s learners still attend schools in rural areas (Macfarlane 2005:4). Furthermore, the more highly urbanised provinces/regions spend more on educational resources than the predominantly rural provinces such as the Eastern Cape’. Bhorat and Kanbur (2006:7) point to ‘a remarkable shift of fiscal resources towards poor households in post-apartheid South Africa’, but note that the critical question is whether ‘the magnitude of the shift in resources … has resulted in the intended outcomes’. The merging of the fragmented apartheid-inherited administrations, especially those in former bantustans, has bedevilled attempts at reconstruction and reform. The management and financing of schooling, as a provincial competency, has demonstrated a variety of difficulties.

One such difficulty has been the fate of the school feeding scheme in the Eastern Cape. Launched in 1994 as a Presidential Lead Project, the Primary School Nutrition Programme was implemented nationally as a way of countering poverty. The Eastern Cape has the highest percentage of impoverished people in South Africa, and unemployment in the province stands at 43.6 per cent (by the expanded definition,
Yet in this province, farm schools are not covered by the Nutrition Programme, and those schools that are covered receive food only three days a week, whereas in Gauteng and the Western Cape, needy children are fed five days a week (Tomlinson 2007:14). By 2005, the Eastern Cape Education Department identified 938 574 learners who qualified for food at school, and took over the provincial administration of the Nutrition Programme (George 2006a:1). In 2006, after student demonstrations and a public outcry about hungry children still not receiving food, a review and forensic investigation of the School Nutrition Programme was conducted. The main finding was that corrupt or inept ECED officials had fraudulently awarded tenders to their own, or non-existent, food suppliers. The loss of over R100 million cost the Education MEC, Mkhangeli Matomela, his job (George 2006a). The school feeding scheme debacle is just the most recent manifestation of an ongoing ECED malaise of inefficiency and corruption.

Two recent studies, one a survey of equity and efficiency in South African schools by Taylor (2007) and the other focusing on education in the Eastern Cape by Lawrence and Moyo (2006), exemplify contrasting approaches to the complex problems of how to improve the quality of schooling in the Eastern Cape. Taylor’s equity and efficiency survey is an empirical examination of the measurable outcomes of donor-funded interventions such as Imbewu and Dinaledi. It argues that schools need a certain level of functionality before any intervention can be effective. It points out that in the wake of recent evaluations indicating that a significant percentage of schools do not show any quantifiable improvement in learners’ maths, science and literacy levels, several national funding agencies (like the Zenex Foundation) have decided to target schools with “minimum levels of productive capacity” (Taylor, 2007:533), while international agencies (like the UK Department for International Development, DFID) continue to target the poorest schools, regardless of their functionality.

Lawrence and Moyo (2006) present an account of education interventions in the province, focusing especially on a DFID funded organisation called Imbewu (‘seed’ in Xhosa). The initial phase from 1997 until September 2000 concentrated on helping school communities develop vision and mission statements collaboratively, and on whole school development. According to an unpublished report (Imbewu 2004:i), ‘The overall intention of the project was to improve the quality of the Department of Education at Provincial, Regional and District levels, to drive and sustain improvements in quality education delivery at school.’

In their study Lawrence and Moyo (2006) argue that the viewpoints of participating teachers and ECED officials, rather than any improvement in learners’ test scores, are the primary indicators of the potential effectiveness of a school improvement or teacher education project. For further discussion of the findings of Lawrence and Moyo’s (2006) study and the Taylor (2007) study see the section ‘NGOs and schools’ below.

SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM RESOURCES
Before discussing access to facilities and learning materials, I would first like to examine how learners in the Eastern Cape access education in the most literal sense – how they get to school, and the physical burdens which affect learners’ daily lives. In a survey of 1,052 children aged nine to 19 in the largely rural provinces of Limpopo and KwaZulu Natal, Hemson (2006:26-27) reports that 81 per cent had collected domestic water in the previous week, spending on average 16 hours a week on this. Predictably, such long hours left learners tired, which negatively affected their attendance at school as well as their performance in class. Ironically, at school it is common practice that ‘[G]irls in Grade 4, 5 and 6 are sent to the river to collect water to clean the school’ (Hemson 2006:28). In the Eastern Cape, rural parents similarly depend on their children to help with domestic labour. As the Nelson Mandela Foundation survey observed (2005:46), ‘[H]ousehold chores create tensions between school schedules, family responsibilities, social roles and the desire for education.’

Because of the risk of rape and robbery that so many rural learners face on their long walk to school, the ECED has been negotiating affordable school transport for some years (Editorial, Daily Dispatch 26.01.2007; Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005:47). Yet the difficulties and dangers confronting learners persist even when school buses are arranged. Two drivers and a bus company operating in Bizana were fined recently when 326 learners were found squeezed into two school buses each designed for a maximum of 60 passengers (Booi 2007).

Once learners have made it to school, what is on offer? A classroom is the most fundamental teaching resource, yet there is a shortage of classrooms. In March 2002, 13,874 classrooms were needed in the Eastern Cape, the biggest shortfall in the country (Bot 2005:6). Overcrowded classrooms are the obvious result. Bungeni junior secondary school (JSS) in the Lusikisiki district is a graphic example of how communities cope: in 2007 it had 17 teachers and over 764 learners; far too many to be accommodated in a block of four brick classrooms and a corrugated iron structure big enough for two classes. Scattered rondavels in the surrounding village serve as the other classrooms. There is no office for the principal nor any staffroom for teachers.

Of the 5,929 state schools currently in use (DoE 2006a:1), 572 or 9.6 per cent were described as ‘disaster schools’ by Dalton (2005:5), while the percentage of ‘very weak school buildings’, ranging from classrooms with serious cracks in the walls and no ceilings to those that are structurally unsafe, rose from 14 per cent in 1996, to 53 per cent in 2000 (Bot 2005:6). The state of disrepair of many existing schools, coupled with the ECED’s neglect of routine maintenance, requires that learners and parents do regular maintenance work.

[Photo 1: Girls carrying cow dung to school to fix classroom floors at Imidange JSS in the Mount Frere district. Photograph by Margie Probyn of the Institute for the Study of English in Africa.]
[Photo 2: A work party of mothers applying mud plaster to a school at Qombolo SSS in the Butterworth district. Photograph by Margie Probyn of the Institute for the Study of English in Africa.]

The maintenance efforts of poor local communities, in response to this growing problem, are not enough to prevent avoidable tragedies. Newspapers report on classroom walls
falling down on children all too often, as in the case of a 10-year-old in Nqamakwe who was killed when a dilapidated school collapsed onto her (George 2006b: 6).

**Provision of books**

Several South African researchers (e.g. Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold 2003) regard reading materials as particularly significant resources for children’s literacy and writing development. Most poor Eastern Cape homes have little for children to read beyond a bible. Community libraries are rare in rural areas, and over three-quarters of schools nationally have no library (Bot 2005:7). This combination of circumstances means learners are almost completely dependent on their school to provide them with books to develop grade-appropriate literacy levels.

The provision by the ECED of adequate up-to-date textbooks, especially in poor schools, has to be regarded as an absolute imperative for children’s literacy and broader cognitive development. In fact, it is the minimum for adequate, let alone equitable, resource provision. Yet schools routinely report ‘difficulties in obtaining textbooks from the ECED’ (Lemon 2004:285). Besides shortages of textbooks, there has been little if any provision of readers, making it difficult for learners to develop age appropriate literacy in their home language or English, the language of learning and teaching from grade 4. At Mdatya senior secondary school in the Bizana district, the shortage of textbooks in 2005 meant that 65 Grade 10 learners shared 20 English textbooks. The learners sat mainly on low benches without a backrest, had no desks on which to write (they wrote on their laps) and their teacher had neither table nor chair in his classroom. In a context of such a dire shortage of furniture and textbooks, even when the school had donations of reading books and a teacher who could run a classroom library, there was no suitable surface – bookcase, cupboard or table – on which the teacher could store or display the books donated by Biblionef and Kearsney College. The books lay on the dusty cement floor of an improvised library housed in a block of toilets – toilets which were unused and unusable, because they were designed for water-borne sanitation.

As discussed, schools are at times literally construction sites for learners and parents. More significantly, schools are also sites where children, teachers (and parents) imagine and construct a sense of their own ability, agency and selfhood. What is the impact of these uneven and limited material resources on teachers and, especially, learners? In their study of youths in run-down schools in the United States of America (USA), Fine, Burns, Payne and Torre (2004:2198) argue that dilapidated buildings coupled with a chronic shortage of up-to-date textbooks cripple teachers’ and learners’ social aspirations, ability and sense of self:

Schools, like other contexts of childhood and adolescence, are … intimate places where youths construct identities, build a sense of self, read how society views them, develop the capacity to sustain relations and forge the skills to initiate change. These are the contexts where youth grow or shrink … Buildings in disrepair are
not, therefore, merely a distraction; they are identity producing and self-defining.

GRAHAMSTOWN – A MICROCOSM OF EDUCATIONAL DISPARITIES

The Grahamstown education district provides a microcosm of the educational disparities in the province. Here a few long-established expensive independent schools and well-resourced desegregated state schools exist side by side with a majority of poorly-resourced state schools. The latter are mainly rural and township schools, which are untouched by desegregation and continue to be attended almost exclusively by black learners (Fiske and Ladd 2004).

The shift to desegregate schools in 1990 has resulted in a one-way migration as parents with the means started sending their children to well-resourced schools. While the high fees that well-resourced schools charge allow such schools to pay extra teachers, have smaller classes and buy the resources that the Department does not supply, they effectively exclude poor children. There has been no comparable movement of non-black learners into formerly black schools. Poorly-resourced schools charge fees which are so low that they are completely dependent on the Education Department to provide resources and equipment. The recent policy (DoE 2006), that schools within the poorest first and second quintiles can apply to be non-fee-charging schools, assists parents, but it does not change the pattern of resource disparity. These material realities and the fact that ‘almost 75 per cent of [South African] schools are formerly designated as black’ (Soudien 2004:97), gives an indication of the limited impact of educational desegregation and the unchanged racialised demographics of, especially, rural schooling.

National statistics capture the minute size of the independent school sector, so named because it receives no government subsidy. It caters for only 2.8 per cent of learners in the country and 1.4 per cent in the Eastern Cape (DoE 2006:1). Taken together, the three independent schools in Grahamstown have about the same number of high school learners as one of the larger township schools, but they have the lion’s share of the educational resources in the district. The form and effect of these discrepancies is clearly demonstrated by a representative case study of 15 high schools in the Grahamstown education district. The study, by Lemon (2004), includes a range of state schools (six township and two rural schools, all poorly-resourced, and four well-resourced schools) as well as three independent schools.

Findings of school resourcing study

Lemon’s study found that all three of Grahamstown’s independent schools had a variety of sports facilities as well as science laboratories; and the three schools shared a design and technology centre. Each independent school had a media centre, equipped with books, newspapers and computers with Internet access including e-mail, which was regularly used by the learners, many of whom came from foreign countries. The four well-resourced state schools all had ample sports facilities and functioning libraries, as
well as science and computer laboratories that were used for teaching. Of the eight poorly-resourced state schools, two had functioning libraries, two had science laboratories with basic equipment and two had computers (Lemon 2004:285). Those with computers had far too few computers for teaching purposes, and no Internet link, which effectively made their computers sophisticated word processors rather than sources of information. One other township school had a computer with Internet access.

The teacher:learner ratio can be taken as an indicator of potential teacher attention to learners and, therefore, of good quality schooling. There is a significant difference between this ratio at the independent schools and that of state schools. At all the independent schools it is 1:10 – way below the official teacher:learner ratio of 1:35 for the senior phase (Lemon 2004:280). The official teacher:learner ratios are set for South Africa as a whole by the national Department of Education (1996) and they apply to all levels of schooling. However, there are unexpected variations in teacher:learner ratio among the state schools: the most favourable ratio, of 1:17, was found at two well-resourced schools but also at one poorly-resourced rural school, while the highest, (1:31) was found, unsurprisingly, at a poorly-resourced township school. Although most of the township schools had much higher ratios than well-resourced schools, all the state schools in the study were nonetheless below the official ratio. Favourable teacher:learner ratios in developed countries are usually a reliable indicator of learner achievement.

If school fees are taken as a proxy for social class, the fees in Table 1, of four of the schools, convey how the race-based categories of apartheid continue to differentiate schools and mark societal differences in wealth and poverty (Lemon 2004:280). The steep, stepped increase in fees (see Table 1) from poorest to wealthiest schools is mirrored in the colour and class of parents and learners.

Table 1: Annual school fees in the Grahamstown district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Annual fees (2001)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ex-DET (African) school</td>
<td>R 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-HOR ('Coloured') school</td>
<td>R 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-HOA (White) school</td>
<td>R 2 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent school</td>
<td>R 25 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

based on Lemon (2004:280)
DET – Department of Education and Training
HOR – [House of Representatives]
HOA – [House of Assembly]

Outcomes, as measured in matric examination results of the independent school sector as compared to the state school sector, show as sharp a difference as the teacher:learner ratios; while the variation within the state schools sector bears out Hanushek’s (1995)
caution that factors other than class size play a significant role in learners’ examination performance and results. Hanushek (1995:281) claims that, research ‘provides no support for policies of reducing class sizes. … class sizes in the studies of developing countries are considerably more varied than those in the USA studies.’

The independent schools in Grahamstown routinely achieve a one hundred per cent matric pass rate and 80 to 90 per cent matriculation endorsement (university admission). Among state schools, the well-resourced schools achieve a pass rate of a hundred per cent, or close. Poorly-resourced schools, on the other hand, achieve mainly below 50 percent, although they range from 27 per cent to 90 per cent, with the top-achieving poor school getting a pass rate close to that of a well-resourced school. More interesting variations, however, are found in the matric endorsement rates. Most well-resourced state schools achieved endorsement rates of above 70 per cent. However one such school, despite a low teacher:learner ratio of 1:17, managed an endorsement rate of only 27 per cent (all figures quoted are for 2001), which was not much higher than the 19 per cent of the consistently top township school, which had a teacher:learner ratio of 1:32. What this points to is that indicators such as the teacher:learner ratio and resources alone can only partly explain learners’ performance and results, part of the explanation also rests with the how schools use resources (Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold 2003).

This district-level snapshot demonstrates the extent of variation among schools and also reveals the difficulty of linking examination results to a school’s resource base. Nonetheless there is no disputing the fact that there remains a very wide gulf between the small elite independent school sector on the one hand, and state schools on the other, especially township and rural schools, both in terms of resources, teacher:learner ratios and outcomes. What the study suggests is that within the state school sector, some poorly-resourced schools with big student numbers are able to achieve results on a par with smaller well-resourced schools.

PARENTS IN EDUCATION

The primary purpose of the South African Schools Act of 1996 was to decentralise decision-making and expand parents’ democratic participation in schools through creating School Governing Bodies (SGBs). The Act required parents to play an active role in appointing teachers, resolving disciplinary matters, and deciding on school language policy, as well as overseeing the school’s financial management and budget.

Fulfilling these SGB functions effectively, however, requires parents with time and, more importantly, high levels of literacy and numeracy. In practice the Act has enabled a decisive influence of middle-class interests on education policy and schooling. A Nelson Mandela Foundation survey (2005), found disturbingly low literacy levels, especially among women, in the three rural provinces of Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo – disturbing for schools, because mothers, more than fathers, play an active and supportive role in their children’s schooling. In rural South Africa this is especially true, as the remnants of the long-standing migrant labour system mean that the percentage of households headed by women is high. The survey (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005:28)
found that 25 percent of female household heads in the Eastern Cape had had no formal schooling at all. For those who did have school education, their levels of schooling were mostly too low to enable them to play the sort of role envisaged in the Schools Act, as parents on SGBs. Soudien argues (2004:108) that

The Act projected parental identity around a restrictive middle class notion of who parents were and how they functioned … [and the] upshot of the practice was that in black schools, SGBs continued to be dominated by their principals or their teachers. In formerly white schools, [the better-resourced state schools which black middle class children are now attending] middle class [mainly white] parents dominated.

The new curriculum (Department of Education 1997, 2002) continues to assume that parents play an active and supportive role in their children’s education. Yet teachers, especially in rural areas, complain that few parents attend parent meetings, get involved in school matters, or check that their children do homework (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005:119). This limited parental involvement makes teachers’ task in the classroom more difficult. Both curriculum and school governance reforms are premised on parents being active and informed participants in their children’s schooling. Where this is not the case, the contribution that semi-literate and illiterate parents do make (like re-plastering mud school walls), falls beyond the ambit of current policy.

NGOs AND SCHOOLS

Estimates are that non-governmental sources have spent R1 billion annually since 1994 on school improvement programmes (Taylor, Muller and Vinjevold 2003). There are varying perceptions about whether and how this enormous amount of money is contributing to real improvements in schooling. In the case of Imbewu, Taylor (2007) argues that there have been very limited gains in learning outcomes in the Eastern Cape while Lawrence and Moyo (2006) hold that the differences are in rural peoples’ spirit and sense of agency, rather than in measurable learning outcomes. Yet, agency and resilience, what Lawrence and Moyo would claim as evidence of change, must surely translate into improved learner outcomes. The question is, over what period, and do simple pre-test post-test evaluations capture this?

How does one measure whether an intervention has made a meaningful difference in people’s lives? One reason behind the different interpretations of Taylor (2007) and Lawrence and Moyo (2006) when measuring the impact of Imbewu is that Taylor takes learners’ achievement on tests as proof of the success of interventions, whereas the latter take immeasurable factors like rural peoples’ spirit and sense of agency, or in the researchers’ own words, ‘the programme’s [Imbewu’s] impact on enabling people to transform themselves, and so to reach out to other people in the school and community in a radically different way’ (Lawrence and Moyo 2006:43). Another part of the reason for these differences could lie in a mismatch between the aims of NGO interventions and the needs of schools.
An example of such a mismatch is Nkqubela JSS in the Lusikisiki district. At this school, 880 learners and 21 teachers all had to share one toilet, which, not surprisingly, was blocked within months of being installed. Most learners used the bushes around the school as toilets, while teachers relied on the toilets of nearby residents. Although this situation had prevailed at the school for several years, the toilet facilities were judged to be below standard only when the ECED’s Phakama Project invited a Global teacher to teach at Nkqubela JSS. In preparation for the Global teacher’s arrival in July 2006, the local municipality built three extra toilets and the school erected a perimeter fence.

A Nkqubela teacher observed that the Global teacher ‘came with an attitude that the school never functioned[ed] until her coming’ and had little appreciation of the efforts of the local people to prepare for her coming (BEd Journal, 2006). The Global teacher’s actions upset and angered many teachers – she would barge into teachers’ classrooms, ask to see their lesson objectives in front of the learners, and suggest that outcomes for every lesson should be written on the board. She went into the school storeroom, removed piles of extra or outdated textbooks and insisted that teachers take them to their classes. The principal decided to call the responsible ECED officials to intervene when this teacher ‘burnt a number of books that [learners] were making use of because she believed they were no longer good to use (like those without covers)’ (BEd Journal, 2006). The officials came and ‘begged [the teachers] to tolerate her until she went back’ (BEd Journal, 2006). This experience, unfortunate for both the Global teacher and the Nkqubela teachers, even if it was an exception in an otherwise fruitful project – certainly provides some insights into a mismatch between the intentions of an NGO and the lived experience of participants in a target school.

CONCLUSION

The South African Constitution guarantees children’s right to education, but this does not ensure the quality of that education. Shortcomings in the material resourcing of schools play a significant part in preventing poor children from getting life chances comparable to those of other children. Despite the significant amount spent on school improvement in the Eastern Cape since 1994, the combination of profound inequality coupled with persistent ECED bureaucratic incompetence means that the vastly different levels of school resourcing that still prevail could actually worsen the social divide for the majority of learners. The education department needs to provide minimum essentials, especially for poor children, such as decent properly furnished classrooms, sufficient up-to-date textbooks for each learner and supplemental food.

The stark inequality of material resources is, however, only part of the problem. As Lemon’s (2004) Grahamstown case study showed, how teachers use such resources is as important. The best classroom resources in the world depend on teachers’ own subject and pedagogical knowledge to be used effectively.

Equitable education delivery is a complex chain: from the provincial education department, to the chronically under-staffed district offices, through to how schools use
available educational resources and the quality of classroom teaching. The size of the Eastern Cape, the historic infrastructural backlogs and the degree of inequality within the province further complicate the aim of reaching equitable education. To bring together all these factors, in the unforgiving context of the Eastern Cape, remains the biggest challenge facing all those involved in education in the province.
REFERENCES


End notes

1 In 2000/1, urban provinces like Gauteng and Western Cape spent R4 396 and R4 392 per learner respectively, as compared to R3 436 per learner in the Eastern Cape (De Souza 2003:134).

2 Apartheid departments of education included DET – Department of Education and Training for black South Africans; HOR – the House of Representatives, the Chamber in the racialised tricameral parliament designated for ‘coloureds’, and the HOA – House of Assembly, the Parliamentary House designated for white South Africans.

3 Most toilets at rural schools are pit latrines. The newer versions are more sanitary and odourless, and are called VIP toilets – Ventilation Improved Pit toilets.

4 The Global Teachers Programme is run by Link Community Development, a British-based NGO that claims on its home page to have ‘a great deal of experience in rural educational development in Africa’ (http://www.lcd.org.uk). In South Africa, it sends Global teachers to the Eastern and Northern Cape Provinces.