South Africa - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 26 August 2009

Information on access to education in South Africa.

A report by the *School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand* states;

> "Since 1994, South Africa has made significant strides in improving access to basic education, yet a recent survey suggests that approximately 400,000 children are still out of school" (School of Education, University of the Witwatersrand, (June 2009) *Children out of school: Evidence from the Community Survey*)

The *US Department of State* report states;

> "The law provides for increased access to education for disadvantaged children--traditionally black children--through a uniform system for the organization, governance, and funding of schools. It mandates compulsory education from ages seven to 15 and ensures that children cannot be refused admission to public schools due to a lack of funds. However, public education is fee based and the government does not fully subsidize education. Even if children qualified for fee exemptions, low income parents had difficulty paying for uniforms, books, and supplies. Some children, therefore, were enrolled in school but did not attend" (US Department of State (25 February 2009) *2008 Human Rights Report: South Africa*)

A report by the *South African Department of Education* states;

> "A number of assessment studies in recent years have shown that the educational achievements of learners in South African schools is unacceptably poor" (South African Department of Education (November 2008) *The development of education: National report of South Africa*)

According to a report by *IRIN News*;

> "Schools also struggle with poor service delivery and equipment. Nearly 15 years after the advent of democracy in South Africa, thousands of schools across the country still have no sanitation, water, electricity, science laboratories or sports facilities, despite the education department having an annual budget allocation larger than any other government department" (IRIN News (30 October 2008) *South Africa: Country needs free universal education*)

The opening page of a paper by *Create* states;

> "Although most learners enrol and complete primary education, late entry is not uncommon and significant numbers of learners are overage. Repetition persists

although legislation has reduced its incidence. Interrupted schooling often related to internal migration is also not uncommon. Demand for schooling remains high despite numerous barriers to success and the poor quality of outcomes for many. Withdrawing children from basic education appears to be a measure of the last resort – even in the context of HIV and AIDS. Silent exclusion (attendance without meaningful learning and achievement) is concealed by high enrolment figures" (Create (March 2008) *Educational Access In South Africa, Country Policy Brief*)

According to a report by the *Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development*;

"South African education is still in the process of transition. It will take time, sustained strategic planning and resourcing, and a steady nerve by policy makers to ensure that the reform vision is realised" (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (2008) *Chapter 9: Conclusions: Strategic Recommendations for Action, Reviews of National Policies for Education, South Africa*)

A report by *Create* states:

"Most learners enrol in and complete basic education; Less than 2% of the 7-17 year age group in 2004 had never been to school; Enrolment rates begin to decline only after basic or compulsory education has been completed; As many as 12% of learners do not complete Grade 7 (Zone 2) (2003 figures); Marginalisation, poverty and HIV/AIDS are likely to be the most significant factors slowing progression; Withdrawal of learners from basic education is seldom contemplated and even more rarely acted upon; Children who are silently excluded from basic education even though they enter and remain in the system (Zones 3 and 6) are of particular concern and are large in number; As many as 8% of learners drop-out in Zone 5 (2003 figures)" (Create, (August 2007) *Educational Access in South Africa, Country Analytic Report*)

According to a report by the *World Data on Education*;

"About 62% of schools have adequate stationary and only 49% have adequate textbooks, 73% have no learning equipment , and 69% have no materials" (World data on Education (October 2006) *South Africa*)

An undated document from *UNICEF* says

"School based violence, learner pregnancy, drop outs (and increasingly boys); lack of quality education and poor or inadequate infrastructure remain manifestations of the social, economic and cultural inequities in the country's school communities" (UNICEF (Undated) *Education and child friendly schools*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any

particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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