



Education

The right to education is enshrined in South Africa's Bill of Rights – not only for children but also for adults. Since 1994, the Education Budget has risen from R31,8 billion to R75 billion in 2004/05. To redress inequalities between schools, non-personnel expenditure within provinces favours poorer learners.

Learners

In mid-2003, there were more than 11,7 million school learners, 448 868 university students, 216 499 technikon students, and over 356 000 Further Education and Training (FET) college students. There were 27 458 schools with 354 201 educators.

By mid-2003, South Africa had more than 11 373 libraries, 9 416 of them school libraries.

Universities, technikons and technical colleges are undergoing rationalisation, which will reduce the overall number of institutions through mergers from 36 to 21.



FACT

Girls' school enrolment in South Africa is among the highest in the world.



FACT

Between 1999 and 2002, more than one million adult learners completed literacy and Adult Basic Education and Training courses. Since 1994, literacy has risen from 86% to 93%.



FACT

In 2003/04, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme utilised R850 million in loans and bursaries to support students from the poorest communities in receiving tertiary education. Of the R850 million, R210 million came from repaid loans, an amount which is expected to grow annually.

Structures

South Africa has a single national education system, which is organised and managed by the national Department of Education and the nine provincial departments.

Policy

Schooling is compulsory between the ages of seven and 15. All learners are guaranteed access to quality learning. There are two types of schools: independent (private) and public.

At public schools parents vote on the level of school fees. Poor parents are given exemptions or reductions.

According to a plan of action to improve access to free, quality education, released in June 2003, compulsory school fees are abolished for 40% of learners in the poorest schools where adequate levels of resourcing are reached.

Curriculum 2005

Curriculum 2005 is based on the concept of Outcomes-Based Education which regards learning as an interactive

School enrolments

Education	Period	Enrolment
Enrolment (Early Childhood Development or ECD)	1999 – 2002	150 000 – 280 000
Primary school enrolment	1995 – 2001	95,5%
Secondary school enrolment	1992 – 2001	85% (+15%)

Source: *Towards a Ten Year Review*

FACT

Government has set a target of making every learner in the country information and communications technology-capable by 2010, and for connecting all schools to the Internet by that time.

process between educators and learners. The focus is on what learners should know and be able to do (knowledge, skills, attitudes and values). The goal is to produce active and lifelong learners with a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning.

A revised Curriculum will be phased in, starting with Grades R to 3, in 2004.

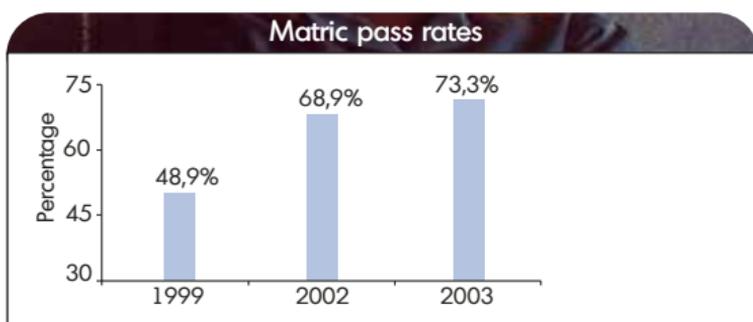
Further Education and Training

FET consists of all learning and training from National Qualifications Framework Levels 2 to 4, or the equivalent of Grades 10 to 12 in the school system and National Technical Certificate 1 to 3 in FET colleges.

The FET Curriculum is shifting towards a balanced learning experience that provides flexible access to lifelong learning, higher education and training, and productive employment.

FET comprises three different pathways: academic, vocationally orientated and occupation-specific.

In 2002, the 152 technical colleges were merged to form 50 multi-campus FET colleges.



Source: Department of Education

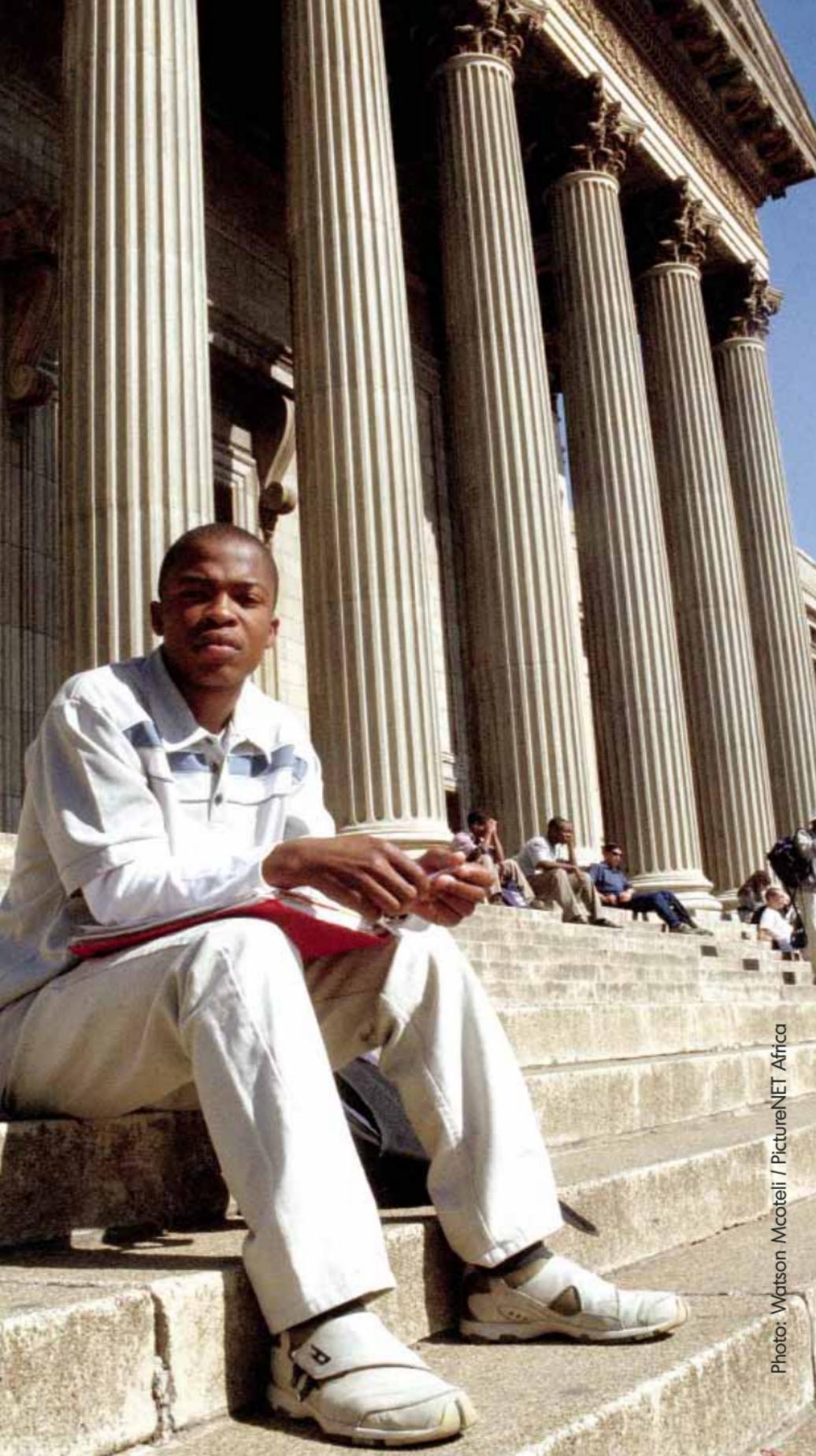
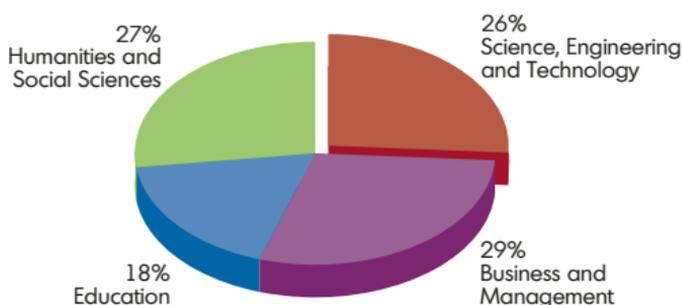


Photo: Watson Mcoiteli / PictureNET Africa

FACT

The world's first free public library service was established by Governor of the Cape, Lord Charles Somerset, in 1820, by levying a tax on the sale of wine. His library formed the basis of what is today the National Library of South Africa in Cape Town.

Enrolments in major fields of study at public higher education institutions, 2001



Source: *Science, Engineering and Technology*

Higher education transformation

According to a strategic plan for higher education, within 15 years enrolment at these institutions will rise from 15% to 20% of school leavers. Within five years, enrolments in the humanities will decline while those in Business and Commerce, and Science, Engineering and Technology will rise.

The 2001 National Plan for Higher Education also envisages:

- a single distance-education institution being established through the merger of the University of South Africa (UNISA) and Technikon South Africa, and the Distance Education Campus of Vista University
- research being funded through a separate formula based on research output
- targets being set to increase the numbers of black and female students and academic staff.

Institutional restructuring

In October 2003, the Minister of Education announced the new names of the merged institutions of higher learning:

- the merged universities of Potchefstroom, North West and Vista (Sebokeng campus) will be called the North West University
- the University of Pretoria will retain its name after incorporating the Mamelodi campus of Vista University
- UNISA will retain its name after merging with the Vista University Distance Education Campus
- technikons Pretoria, North West and Northern Gauteng will be called the Tshwane University of Technology
- Technikon Witwatersrand and the Soweto and East Rand campuses of Vista University will merge with the Rand Afrikaans University in 2005 and be called the University of Johannesburg
- the Medical University of South Africa (Medunsa) and the University of the North will merge to become the University of Limpopo
- the University of Port Elizabeth, Port Elizabeth Technikon and Port Elizabeth Campus of Vista will be called the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University from 2005
- the University of Transkei, Border Technikon and the Eastern Cape Technikon will be called the Eastern Cape University of Technology
- the East London Campus of Rhodes University will be incorporated into the University of Fort Hare
- the universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand will remain unchanged
- Cape Technikon and Peninsula Technikon will be called the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.