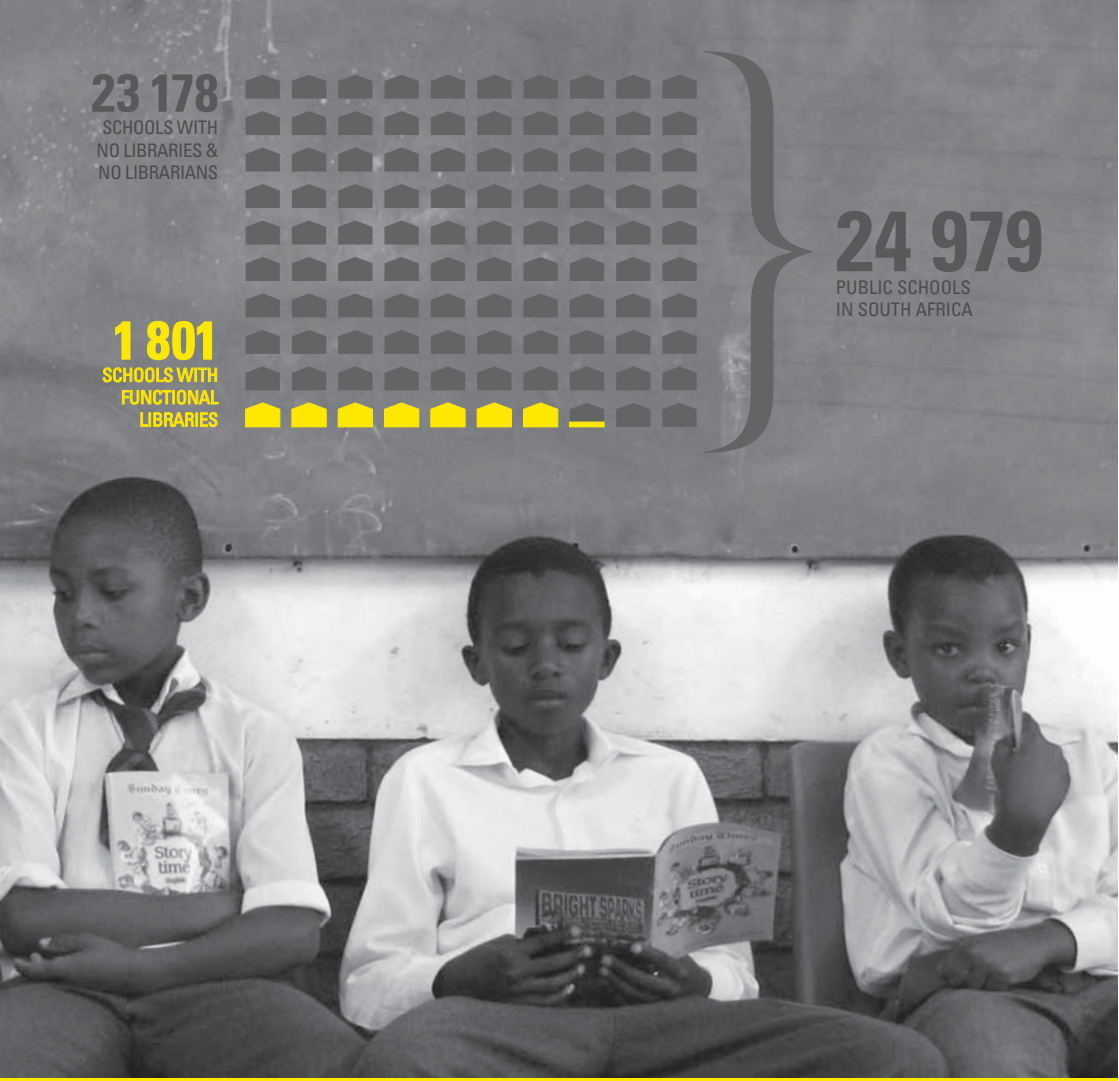


# WE CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO

Costing the provision of functional school libraries in South African public schools

EQUAL EDUCATION
campaign for school libraries

‘Education is an area that needs the attention of all our people, students, parents, teachers, workers and all other organized sectors of our community.’

– Nelson Mandela, *Address at a Rally in Soweto* (13 February 1990)

# WE CAN'T AFFORD NOT TO

Costing the provision of functional school libraries in South African public schools

EQUAL EDUCATION

1 school 1 library 1 librarian

campaign for

school libraries

This publication forms part of Equal Education's Campaign for School Libraries. It is a product of the organization's Policy, Communications and Research (PCR) Department. It is written by Richard Conyngham and Doron Isaacs with Yoliswa Dwane, Keletso Makofane, Mercy Erhiawarien, Dmitri Hess, and Ahmed Mohamed and with architectural designs by Rob Richardson.

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‘We want equality. In some schools there are functioning libraries, but in others there aren’t.’

Nontsikelelo Dlulani (15), Grade 10
EE Youth Group Leadership Committee, Secretary

# Executive summary

**THIS PAPER PURSUES** three closely related objectives: to review the field of international and local research which, particularly over the past two decades, has pointed to the positive causal relationship between functional school libraries and improved learner outcomes; to contextualize the current state of affairs in South African schools, with a specific reference to the Department of Education (DoE)'s repeated failure to formulate a national policy on school libraries and librarians; and lastly, to provide detailed cost estimates which can be used as the basis for a comprehensive implementation plan.

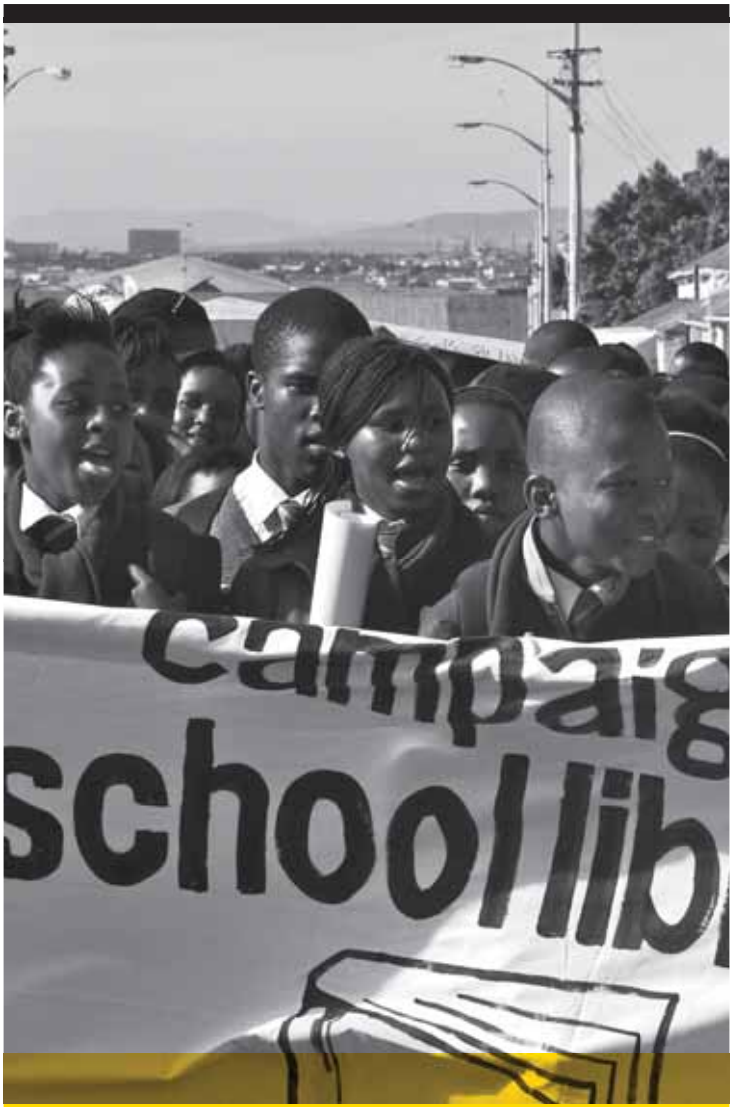
Official surveys have revealed that South Africa's learner outcomes rank poorly on the international stage, not only compared with learners from developed countries, but even among those from less-developed parts of sub-Saharan Africa. At the root of this problem lies the issue of illiteracy which, this paper argues, can be combated by ensuring that every public ordinary school has a stocked library serviced by a qualified full-time librarian.

Major international studies have determined that, all other things being equal, the provision of a functional school library will add between 10% and 25% to average learner outcomes. Local research has determined a strong correlation and causal relationship between the presence of a staffed library and higher academic performance. Libraries have also been found to be a cost-effective method of improving outcomes.

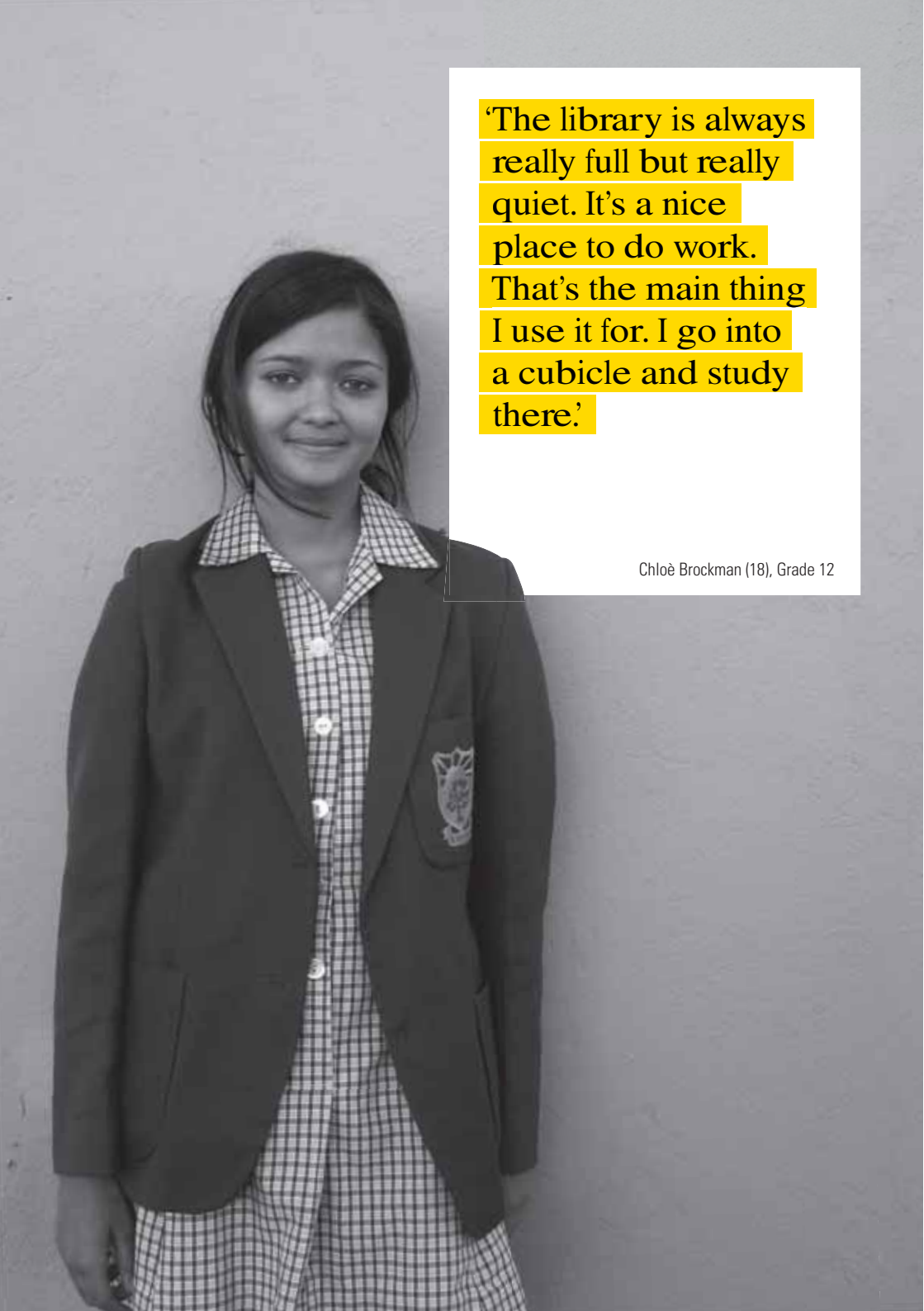
Only 7.23% of public ordinary schools in South Africa have functional libraries. These are almost entirely situated in former Model-C schools which are able to stock and staff these facilities through their own resources. A history of inequality, rooted in apartheid and Bantu education, underlies these unacceptable conditions that the government has to a large extent inherited. However, after fifteen years of democracy, the obvious benefits of functional libraries are still being ignored. Since 1997, six consecutive drafts for a national policy on school libraries have fallen short of adoption and implementation.

The total costs of provision calculated in this paper are based on the most up-to-date government statistics that were available at the time of writing. Divided into four categories, these include: *infrastructure* (R7 923 million); *materials* (R1 983 million); *librarian training* (R348 million); and *librarian salaries* (between R1 193 million and R2 671 million). If the initial provisioning of infrastructure, materials, training and salaries were implemented over ten years, these costs would collectively amount to between 1.6% and 2.6% of the education budget for that period. Thereafter, only salary expenditure would remain, which on its own would amount to between 0.9% and 1.9% of the annual budget.

In 2009, Equal Education (EE) launched the Campaign for School Libraries. This paper, a product of EE's Policy, Communications and Research (PCR) Department, consolidates and expands upon some of the campaign's key demands and uses them as the basis for a cost estimates guideline. It aims to draw the attention of policy makers to the pressing need for libraries in every school across South Africa, by serving as a starting point for what will hopefully be refined and developed into a clear-cut implementation plan.




3000 people march from Salt River to the Cape Town City Hall on 22 September 2009 in EE's first Walk for School Libraries.



‘The library is always really full but really quiet. It’s a nice place to do work. That’s the main thing I use it for. I go into a cubicle and study there.’

Chloè Brockman (18), Grade 12

# 1. Introduction

**SINCE SOUTH AFRICA's** democratic transition, the right to education for all has been a key public priority. The legacy of apartheid, and in particular the fragmented education system which for over forty years was based on racial division and white minority rule, left the new ANC government with a deeply entrenched crisis to resolve.

Empirical studies have shown that South African learners lag far behind their peers in other countries. Indeed, in the *PIRLS 2006* report which tested primary school learners' reading skills in 40 nations, South Africa's learners achieved the lowest scores.[1] In comparison to the South Africans, 7.23% of whom attended schools with functional libraries, 89% of learners in the other 39 countries attended schools with functional libraries; half of the children were taking library books home on a daily basis and half made use of a central school library at least once a week. In the *SACMEQ II* study involving 14 sub-Saharan African countries, 49.9% of South African grade 6 learners could not understand the meaning of basic written information. Overall, South Africa ranked ninth behind countries including Mozambique, Tanzania and Swaziland.[2]

49.9% of South African grade 6 learners could not understand the meaning of basic written information.[2]

This poor national performance obscures an equally serious problem: the huge gulf in literacy between the advantaged and disadvantaged sectors of South African society. In 2005, 42.1% of grade 6 learners in the Western Cape

1 Mullis, I. V. S., et al., *PIRLS 2006 International Report: IEA's Progress in International Reading Literacy Study in Primary School in 40 Countries* (Chestnut Hill, MA: 2007), 328.

2 'Indicators by Country', in *Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality* (2004), http://www.sacmeq.org/indicators.htm, accessed: November 2009.

In a major international study... researchers concluded that, all other things being equal, student performance increases by between 10% and 25% when a stocked, staffed and fully-funded library is in operation within a school.[5]

could read and write at the appropriate level. However, in schools previously classified as 'white', 86.9% met the standard in comparison to just 4.7% in formerly 'black' schools.[3] These challenges of illiteracy and inequality lie at the heart of the educational crisis in South Africa.

Much research in developed and developing countries has focused on the factors which, when employed effectively, can improve the outcomes of learners. Many of these investigations have pointed to the positive causal relationship between the performance of learners and the provision of school libraries.[4] In a major international study, for instance, researchers concluded that, all other things being equal, student performance increases by between 10% and 25% when a stocked, staffed and fully-funded library is in operation within a school.[5]

It is nowadays common knowledge that libraries are an integral part of the education process. They work hand-in-hand with school curricula especially in grades where the use of written resources is expected; they provide a quiet, safe, well-lit space in which learners can study and develop their minds; they act as vital reference points for young people in need of guidance, whether it

3 See *Systemic Evaluation of Literacy and Numeracy* (2006), Western Cape Education Department (WCED), http://wced.wcape.gov.za, accessed: November 2009. By 2007, grade 6 literacy had risen to 54%, however the WCED has withheld the disaggregated data.

4 Suryadarma, D., et al., 'Improving Student Performance in Public Primary Schools in Developing Countries: Evidence from Indonesia', in *Education Economics*, Taylor and Francis Journals, vol. 14 (4), December 2006, 401-429.

5 Lance, K.C., Rodney, M.J., & Hamilton-Pennell, C., *How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards: The Second Colorado Study* (Hi Willow Research and Publishing, Salt Lake City, UT: 2000), 74.

be in relation to their personal interests, their careers, or even their mental and physical health; they significantly improve the outcomes of teachers and learners alike; and, perhaps most importantly, they promote information literacy, a hunger for knowledge and a love of reading. In South Africa's *Library and Information Services (LIS) Transformation Charter*, it is stated that:

> As institutions of reading, libraries contribute significantly to a culture of reading with an emphasis also on writing and learning. Although reading occurs both inside and outside of libraries, they play the leading role in building a nation of life-long readers [...] In addition to their educational and cultural roles, libraries contribute to economic development by improving productivity through a reading and functionally literate workforce.[6]

Nevertheless, in 2007 only 7.23% of South African public ordinary schools were operating functional libraries.[7] Since 1997, five drafts of a National Policy on School Libraries have been circulated by the Department of Education (DoE), and yet there still exists no official policy. A sixth draft, entitled *National Guidelines for School Library Services* has recently emerged, but it is a discussion document, not a policy, and therefore contains no implementation plan.[8]

Equal Education (EE), founded in 2008, is a movement of learners, parents, teachers and community members working for quality and equality in South African education through analysis and activism. Its head office is in Khayelitsha in the Western Cape. Among its overarching objectives are: the development of learning facilities and resources; the improved availability, practice and content of teaching; the building of commitment and passion among teachers and learners; and the overall efficacy of the public education system. After successfully campaigning for the repair of 500 broken school windows in a Khayelitsha school, EE proceeded to reduce the proportion of late-comers in eight Cape Town schools.

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6 *Library and Information Services (LIS) Transformation Charter* (December 2008), commissioned by the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) and National Council for Library and Information Services (NCLIS), 121.

7 *National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS),* National Assessment Report on Public Ordinary Schools (DoE, Sol Plaatje House, Pretoria: September, 2007), 39.

8 *National Guidelines for School Library Services* (2009). This wholly inadequate document was emailed to Equal Education by an official in the DoE. It has not been released for public comment.

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During 2009, EE embarked upon a new campaign: 1 School 1 Library 1 Librarian. In order to address the acute shortage of school libraries in South Africa, its members – thousands of high school students, their teachers and parents – have made a commitment to ensuring that the government provides every school in the country with a library; a trained, full-time librarian or library administrator; adequate shelving; computer facilities; 3 books per learner;[9] as well as annual funding to service each library by ring-fencing 10% of the Learning Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) allocation.

In recent months, EE has been flooded with letters and petitions in support of these objectives.[10] Matanzima Baleni, a member of EE's Parents Committee, stated: 'When one looks at the education statistics, it is clear that South Africa is underperforming internationally and could improve its position with the help of school libraries.' N.D. Maluleke, School Manager of Shihlobyeni Primary School in Limpopo province, wrote:

> Our school has been without a library since 1940 when it was established. It has been difficult to improve the culture of reading in this rural community. It is our resolve as educators, parents, learners and the entire school community to request government to establish a library.

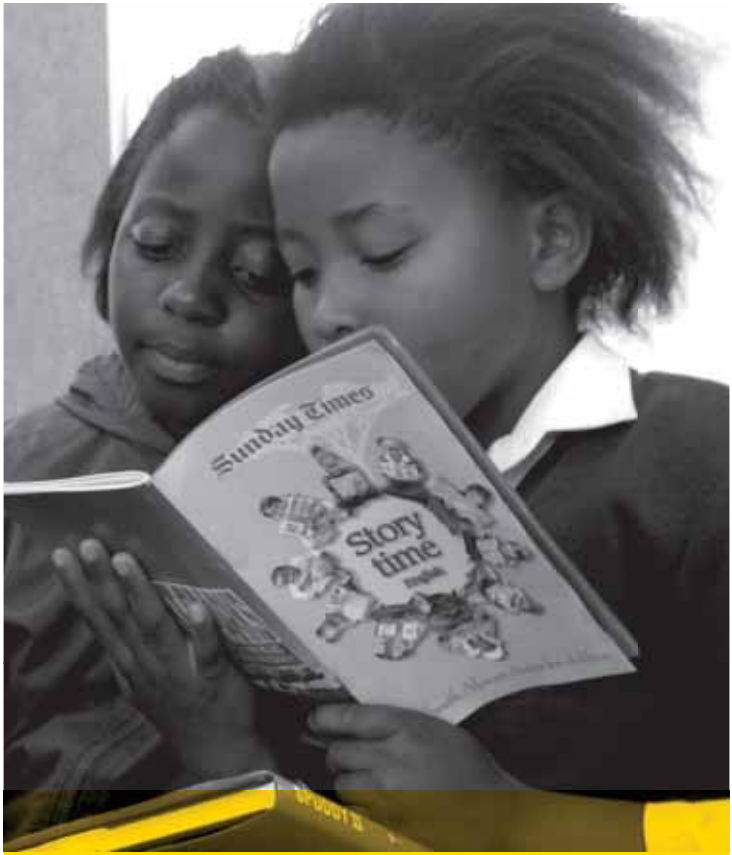
In the present study it will be argued that the provision of school libraries in all South African schools is not only necessary, but feasible. After reviewing some of the leading international research in Section 2, which corroborates the widely-held premise that school libraries lead to improved average learner outcomes, and after contextualizing the current status of school libraries in South Africa in Section 3, estimates of the costs for accomplishing and sustaining these objectives through a national roll-out of school libraries will be presented in Section 4 and the Appendix.

The central argument in this paper, and indeed the key demand in EE's Campaign for School Libraries, is the urgent need for the Department of Basic Education to

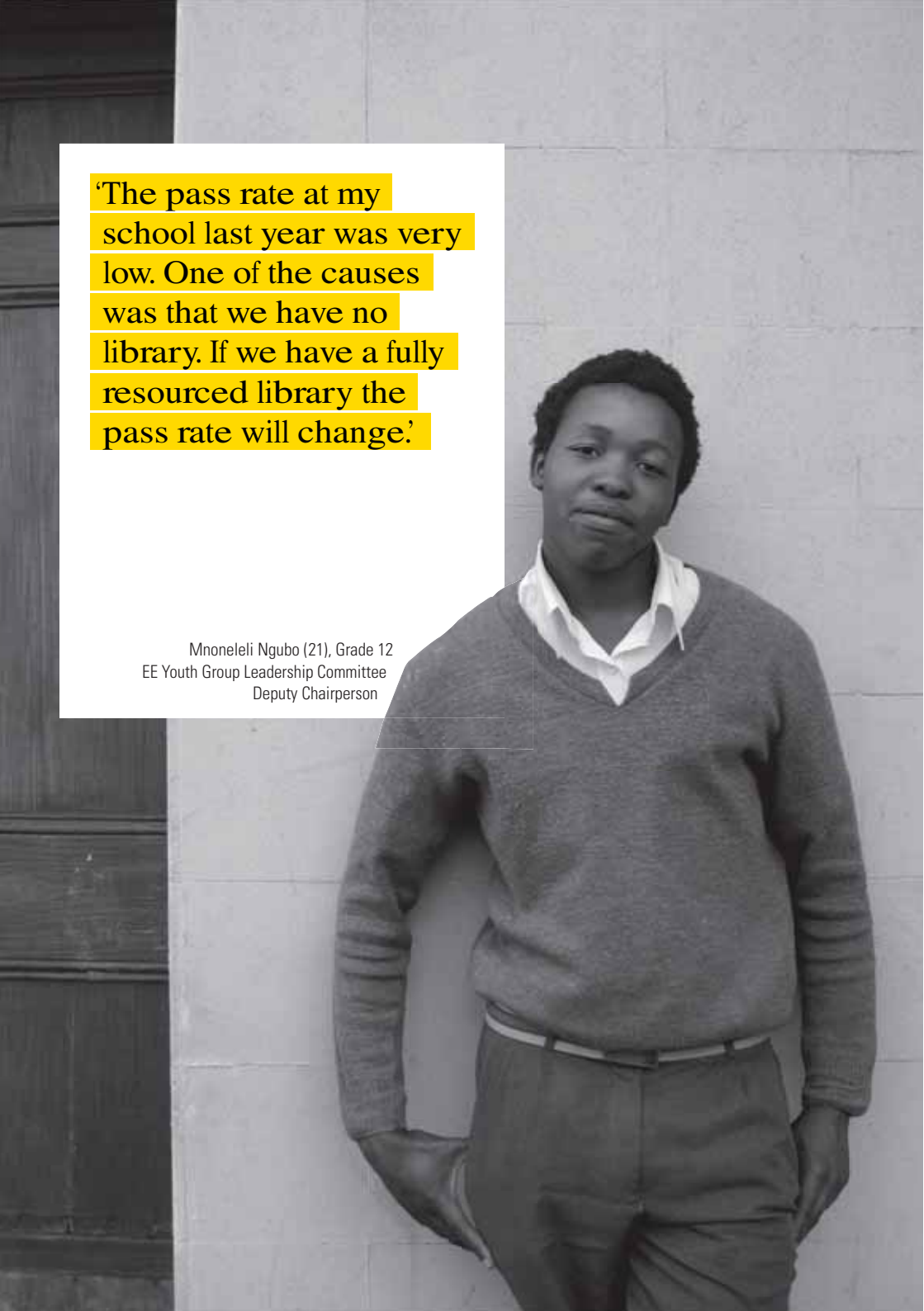
9 This is a slight improvement on the standard set by the DoE's Quality, Improvement, Development and Upliftment Programme (QIDS UP). Walter Johan Mercuur, Deputy Director of QIDS UP, informed EE that QIDS UP aims to provide every learner in schools categorized within National Quintiles 1 and 2 with a minimum of 2 books.

10 By 30 November 2009 approximately 20,000 signatures had been collected.

provide a National Policy on School Libraries, and to develop an implementation plan. The legal framework for doing this already exists in Section 5A of the South African Schools Act, which empowers the Minister of Basic Education to prescribe minimum norms and standards for school infrastructure, including that there 'must' be 'a library'. To date, the Minister has not signed the draft regulations into law. This, along with full-time librarians, is precisely what EE demands.




Young learners during a reading lesson.



‘The pass rate at my school last year was very low. One of the causes was that we have no library. If we have a fully resourced library the pass rate will change.’

Mnoneleli Ngubo (21), Grade 12
EE Youth Group Leadership Committee
Deputy Chairperson

# 2. School libraries and student performance: An overview of the literature

**SINCE THE EARLY 1990s**, international research has provided unequivocal evidence to support the positive impact of school libraries on improved learner performance. The first study of this kind was conducted in 1966 by Professor Sarah Fenwick, where she posited that 'both school and public libraries will be responsible for learning that will span lifetimes'.[11] Three decades later there have arisen numerous reports, from developing and developed countries alike, which attest to these findings – to the extent that it has become an undisputed fact that well-stocked libraries managed by qualified librarians lead to an exponential improvement in the *learning outcomes of students*.

In 1993, a seminal study was conducted in 221 Colorado public schools. The aim of the paper was threefold: to investigate the relationship between expenditure on school libraries and the test performances of learners; to examine the characteristics of school library programmes and the extent to which they are effective; and to assess the contribution of library specialists to learner performance. The authors found that, all else being equal, learners from schools with libraries serviced by qualified librarians generally achieved higher reading scores. Fourth grade learners improved their results by on average 18%.[12]

Baughman (2000) and Smith (2001) conducted similar assessments in Massachusetts and Texas respectively. The Baughman study concluded that test scores were higher in schools with library programmes, and that 'the highest

11 Fenwick, S., *School and Children's Libraries in Australia* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1966), 35.
12 Lance, et al., *How School Librarians Help Kids Achieve Standards*, 9.

[T]he provision of school libraries is not a luxury but a necessity; ... a school library on its own remains insufficient – for a school library to be at its most productive, its resources must be managed by a qualified librarian or library administrator.[15]

achieving students [were those who] attend schools with good libraries'.[13] Smith took a sample of 600 school libraries in Texas and used more than 200 variables to analyze the relationship between student performance and the existence of school libraries. Her conclusion was that while socio-economic variables explain most of the variance in performance at every level of education, library-related variables such as staffing, collection sizes and technology all contribute significantly to the overall performance of learners.[14] The most significant findings in all three of these papers are that: firstly, the provision of school libraries is not a luxury but a necessity; and secondly, that a school library on its own remains insufficient – for a school library to be at its most productive, its resources must be managed by a qualified librarian or library administrator.[15]

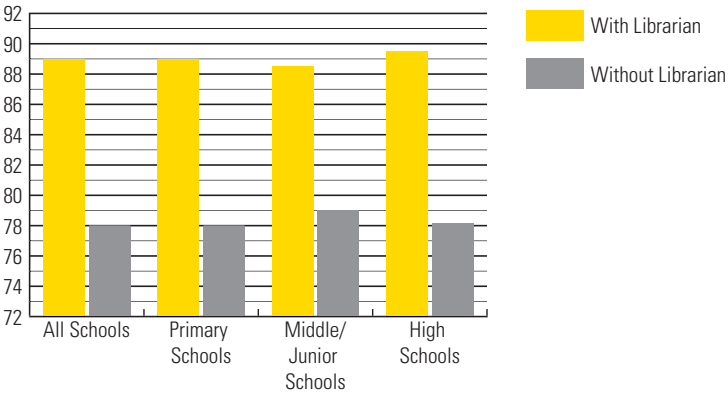
Figure 1 (below), taken from the Smith study, displays the impact, holding other factors constant, of a qualified school librarian on student performance at different school levels in Texas:

13 Baughman, J.C., *School Libraries and MCAS Scores*, Paper presented at a symposium sponsored by the Graduate School of Library and Information Science (Massachusetts, 2000), 10.

14 Smith, Esther G., *Texas School Libraries: Standards, Resources, Services, and Students' Performance* (EGS Research and Consulting: Austin, Texas, 2001), 2.

15 See, for example, the KZN school library policy *School Library Policy – Directorate: Education Library Information and Technology Services* (2003), 10, available at http://www.kzneducation.gov.za/elits/Publications/ELITSSchoolLibPolicy.pdf. This provincial policy, drawn up due to the national policy void, recommends a 'full-time' librarian.

***Figure 1: Average percentage of students who met the minimum requirements***[16]




It is clear from these results that the presence of a qualified school librarian significantly improves the average performance of learners at all levels of schooling.

The vital importance of libraries has been demonstrated as clearly in developing countries. In 2005, Lee et al. examined data from the second major educational policy report *(SACMEQ II)* on 14 sub-Saharan African countries. Through questionnaires and surveys completed by some 42,000 learners in 2,300 schools in all 14 countries, among which South Africa is one, it was found that, even with contextual variables considered, in 'schools with access to more physical resources – such as libraries, administrative offices, playgrounds, electricity, running water, and equipment that is ubiquitous in schools in developed countries – students achieve at higher levels.'[17] These results were later reinforced in the paper *Determinants of Grade 12 Pass Rates in the Post-*Apartheid *South African Schooling System*, where Haroon Bhorat and Morne Oosthuizen note that:

16 Smith, *Texas School Libraries*, 188.

17 Lee, Valerie E., Zuze, Tia Linda, & Ross, Kenneth N., 'School Effectiveness in 14 sub-Saharan African Countries: Links with 6th Graders' Reading Achievement', in *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 31 (2005), 232.

> [T]he presence of school libraries and computers teaching are associated with higher performance. The coefficients of the latter two variables are highly significant ... The mean pass rate for schools without a library [in South Africa] is 47%, compared with 66% for those with a library, a pattern that is found to be broadly consistent across *apartheid* classifications.[18]

Through his research into literacy levels among South African learners, Nick Taylor found the benefits of reading to be irreplaceable:

> Children who read once a week have an advantage of about 5 percentage points in the literacy test over those who do no reading at home; when reading is done 3 times a week the advantage is increased to 10 points, and those who read more than 3 times a week are likely to be about 12 points ahead.[19]

The need for full-time librarians has also been stressed in the South African context. A recent COSATU research paper explains clearly that without dedicated librarians books are not enough: 'Even though there might be books in a school these are locked-up in store rooms or are not used because educators do not know how to use them.' [20]

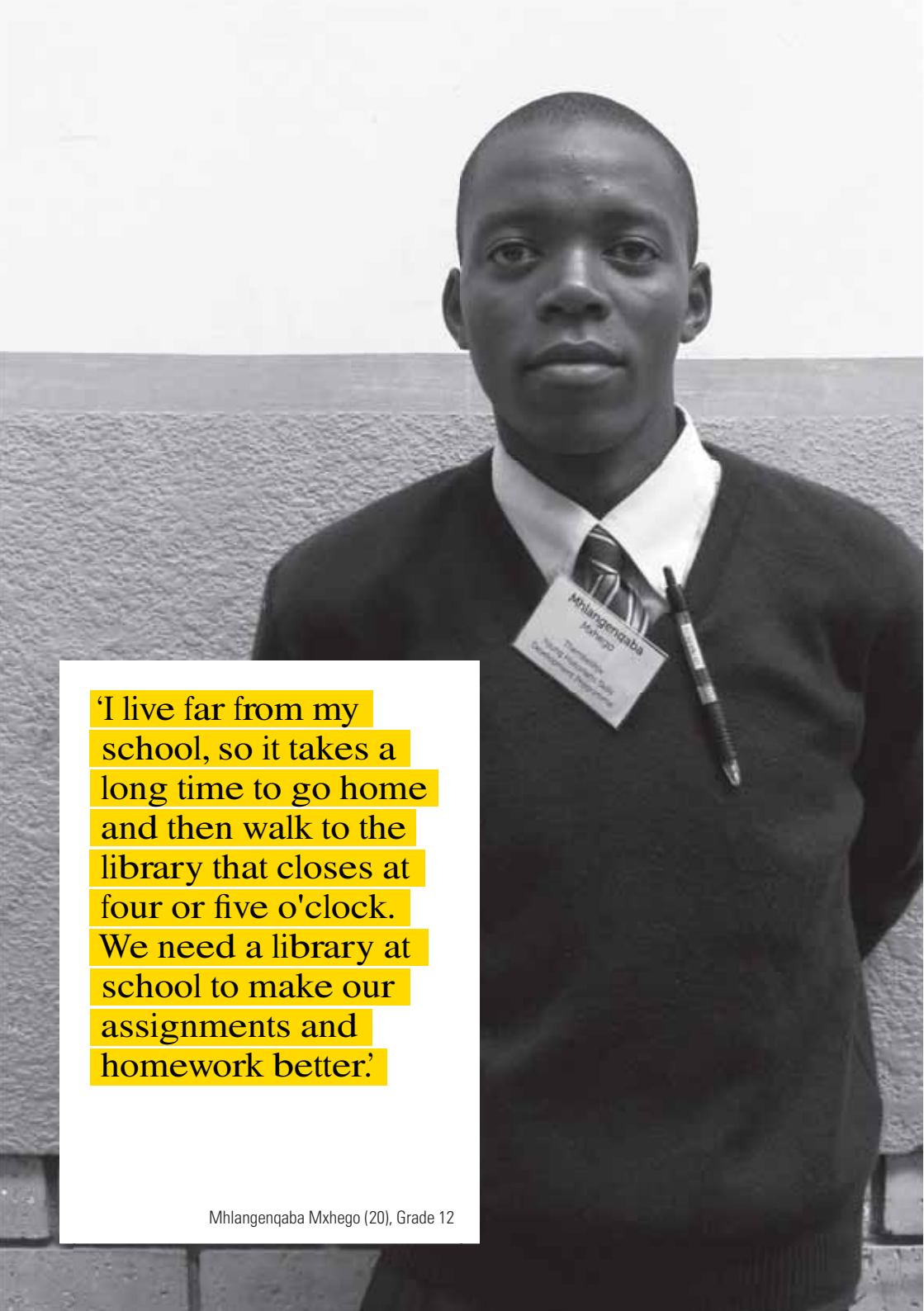
Beyond direct academic benefits, libraries offer social advantages too. In EE's own research, over 50% of learners identified school libraries as places where they would do homework and study for exams. Sinalo Dala, a grade 8 learner at Kwa-Mfundo High School in Khayelitsha, noted some of the difficulties she faces when resorting to public (as opposed to school) libraries: 'We wait in queues and are given a few minutes to do our research. We have to walk long distances to get there and along the way there are often gangs who take our money.' In communities where homes lack books and quiet spaces, school libraries offer stable environments for learning.

18 Bhorat, Haroon, & Oosthuizen, Morne, 'Determinants of Grade 12 Pass Rates in the Post-*Apartheid* South African Schooling System', in *Journal of African Economies* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, December, 2008), 17.

19 Taylor, Nick, 'Equity, Efficiency and the Development of South African Schools', in Townsend, T. (ed.), in *The International Handbook of School Effectiveness and Improvement* (Springer, Dordrecht, the Netherlands and New York: 2007), 534.

20 *A Draft Strategy Paper Developed for the 1-3 July 2009 Education & Skills Conference*, Reviewing COSATU'S Engagement with the Education and Training Landscape (COSATU, 12 July 2009), 24.

Young learners reading books at their school library in Khayelitsha.




‘I live far from my school, so it takes a long time to go home and then walk to the library that closes at four or five o'clock. We need a library at school to make our assignments and homework better.’

Mhlangenqaba Mxhego (20), Grade 12

# 3. The state of school libraries in South Africa

## 3.1. Background

**BANTU EDUCATION WAS** purposely designed by the apartheid government to intellectually dispossess the black population. Libraries therefore did not factor into what was at the time deemed appropriate for the developmental needs of the majority of learners. In the early years of democracy South Africa implemented an Outcomes Based Education (OBE) system under the banner of Curriculum 2005, which has been through a number of iterations. Unfortunately, with massive post-apartheid school infrastructure backlogs and severe financial constraints, the heavily resource-demanding nature of this new curriculum, in which library resources are essential to the completion of projects and portfolios, meant it was implemented at an untimely juncture.[21]

Nevertheless, the shift in educational ethos which came with South Africa's political transition might still have held great promise for the future of school libraries. As recently as May 2006 the then Minister of Education Naledi Pandor stressed the need for these resources in schools:

> Anecdotal evidence suggests that the high schools with the worst results are surrounded by primary schools that do not have the resources to teach effectively. It is important to stress that resources does not refer to money; it may refer to teacher competence, to an inadequate or absence of a library.[22]

21 Jansen, J., *Curriculum Reform in South Africa: A Critical Analysis of Outcomes-Based Education*, (Carfax Publishing Co., Taylor and Francis: 1998), 25.

22 Pandor, Naledi, MP, Minister of Education, 'A Challenge to Excellence in Honouring the Youth of 1976', *Introducing the Debate on the Education Budget*, Vote 15, National Assembly (19 May 2006).

> The improvement of the quality of education requires an injection of new resources. Research evidence points to a clear correlation between learner achievement and the richness of teaching and learning materials and resources, both teaching and physical resources.[23]

And yet, despite such unequivocal acknowledgements, school libraries, the traditional home of 'learning materials and resources' have been hopelessly neglected by the South African government. The DoE's School Libraries Unit was closed in 2002.

In 1997, it was estimated in the government-produced *School Register of Needs* that 8 million of South Africa's 12 million learners did not have access to libraries.[24] In the same year, and again a year later, the first and second drafts for a national school library policy were tabled, both proposing 'a complex sliding scale of seven models'.[25] It was suggested that each school, in conjunction with its surrounding community, develop a model best suited to its specific context and needs – a proposal which essentially implied that the provision of functional libraries in every school was an unrealistic objective. Nevertheless, in the end, neither of these policy drafts, nor any of the three which followed in subsequent years, was adopted by the DoE. EE's view, as outlined in this paper, is that through the development of a national policy, government should take the lead in conceptualizing and implementing a standard approach, based on a simple model which is easily understood and appreciated.

Owing to the protracted delays in the release of a national school library policy, from 2004 the KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Free State provincial governments have taken creditable steps towards addressing this issue

23 Pandor, *An Address Delivered at the Opening of the Moletsane Secondary School Hall, Soweto* (22 May 2006).

24 See *School Register of Needs Survey* (DoE; Human Sciences Research Council; Research Institute for Education Planning, University of the Free State: 1997). It is important to note that this figure took into account the 350,000-odd learners from the country's independent schools, of which in 1997 some 50% had functional libraries (See Hart, Genevieve & Zinn, Sandy, 'The Conundrum of School Libraries in South Africa', in Bothma, T., Ngulube, P., & Underwood, P. (eds.), *Libraries for the Future: Progress and Development of South African Libraries* (LIASA: Pretoria, 2007), 93).

25 See *A National Policy Framework for School Library Standards: A Discussion Document* (DoE, Directorate: Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education: 1997, 1998).

themselves. But, as explained by Professor Genevieve Hart of the University of the Western Cape (UWC)'s Department of Library and Information Science at an EE public meeting:

> Officials in these services acknowledge that their progress is hampered by the lack of national policy – specifically for school librarian posts. Schools cannot appoint dedicated school librarians from their staffing allocations when their classes are still so large. Officials are confronted with the question: *How can a full-time teacher run the school library?*[26]

Therefore, even if effective programmes for placing books in schools are established, as has happened with QIDS UP in the Western Cape, such resources are either unutilized or under-utilized.

Recent years have seen moves towards a framework policy. An amendment to the SA Schools Act in December 2007 introduced into the Act a new section, 5A, which empowered the Minister to prescribe, through regulations, minimum norms and standards for school infrastructure, making clear, in terms of Section 5A(2)(a)(vi) of the Act, that there 'must' be 'a library'.

Draft minimum infrastructure regulations were published for comment in November 2008. These make clear the need for every school to include a library or media centre. Not yet signed into law, these regulations cannot be enforced. EE has therefore identified the promulgation of these regulations as a keystone of the Campaign for School Libraries.[27]

Although incomplete, these moves give weight to the '1 School 1 Library 1 Librarian' principle. Further support for this is found in the DoE's draft *National Policy for an Equitable Provision of an Enabling School Physical Teaching and Learning Environment*, published in November 2008, which notes the 'intolerably

26 Hart, Genevieve, *School Library Policy Development*, Speech delivered at an EE Campaign for School Libraries public meeting with Western Cape MEC for Education Donald Grant, Kraaifontein (2 November 2009).

27 See 'Call for Comments on National Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure' (in terms of Section 5A of the SA Schools Act 84 of 1996, as amended by Education Laws Amendment Act, No 31 of 2007) published by the Department of Education in the *Government Gazette*, No. 31616 (21 November 2008), 81-85.

high proportion of schools' lacking facilities 'that are critical to teaching and learning such as libraries'.[28]

In 2008, the former Minister of Education Naledi Pandor and the former Minister of Arts and Culture Pallo Jordan officially approved the *Library and Information Service (LIS) Transformation Charter*, in which an entire chapter is dedicated to the shortage of school libraries in South Africa. The primary objective of the Charter was 'to define the challenges facing the sector and to provide a clear framework of principles and mechanisms for effecting the changes needed for the sector to contribute to the elimination of illiteracy and inequality, and build an informed and reading nation'.[29]

In November 2009, Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga indicated a move away from resource-hungry activities like projects and portfolios.[30] Nevertheless, the centrality of materials, books and information remains. There is not one successful educational system in the world without these basic necessities. Most crucially, as government shifts the emphasis back to literacy, it must be ensured that young people, from their first year of school, have materials in order to develop basic skills and a love of reading.

Despite much positive activity, there remains neither a policy nor a clear-cut strategy for the integration of school libraries into the education system. Implementation schemes have been drafted and redrafted, but all have either been suspended or abandoned, for the most part owing to alleged financial constraints.[31]

28 See 'Call for Comments on the National Policy for an Equitable Provision of an Enabling School Physical Teaching and Learning Environment' Notice 1438, *Government Gazette*, No. 31616 (21 November 2008), 16.

29 *Library and Information Services (LIS) Transformation Charter*, 7.

30 See Motshekga, Angie, 'We've Signed OBE's Death Certificate' – *Statement by Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, on Curriculum Review Process*, National Assembly (5 November, 2009), http://www.ecdoe.gov.za, accessed: November 2009.

31 See *Annual Report 2008-09*, DoE, www.education.gov.za, accessed: October 2009.

## 3.2. The current state of affairs

The DoE's 2007 *National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS)* Report highlights the severe backlogs in the government's provision of school facilities in all nine provinces. It reveals that only 7.23% of South African public ordinary schools had functional libraries in 2006; and that as little as 32% of schools had computers. All calculations in this paper (see Table 1 below) combine percentages determined in the NEIMS Report with more recent data drawn from *Education Statistics in South Africa 2007* published by the DoE in January 2009.[32] Table 1 provides an initial breakdown of the status of school libraries in each province:

***Table 1: Status of school libraries in public ordinary schools (2007 Assessment)***

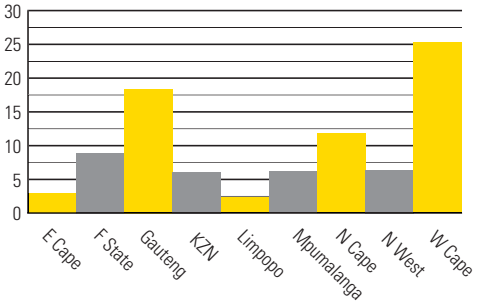
| Province | Public Ordinary Schools | (A) Schools with no library space, no library materials & no librarians | (B) Schools with space but no materials nor librarians (unstocked libraries) | **(A) + (B) Schools with no materials and no librarians** | Schools with stocked, staffed & functional libraries |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E Cape | 5723 | 5179 | 378 | **5557** | 166 |
| Free State | 1681 | 1262 | 271 | **1533** | 148 |
| Gauteng | 1990 | 835 | 789 | **1624** | 366 |
| KZN | 5877 | 4677 | 841 | **5518** | 359 |
| Limpopo | 4035 | 3740 | 198 | **3938** | 97 |
| Mpumalanga | 1893 | 1595 | 182 | **1777** | 116 |
| N Cape | 599 | 424 | 104 | **528** | 71 |
| N West | 1730 | 1399 | 220 | **1619** | 111 |
| W Cape | 1451 | 697 | 387 | **1084** | 367 |
| **Total (2007)** | **24979** | **19808** | **3370** | **23178** | **1801** |
| **%** | **100.00%** | **79.30%** | **13.47%** | **92.77%** | **7.23%** |

32 *National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS)*, 39; *Education Statistics in South Africa 2007* (DoE, Sol Plaatje House, Pretoria: January 2009), 22-3. See Appendix A1 for an explanation of data sources and method.

Table 1 indicates that in 2007, of the total 24,979 public ordinary schools in South Africa, an estimated 79.3% did not have any form of library infrastructure, meaning that only 20.7% of schools had a room available for library purposes. Broken down further, 13.47% had a library space without resources, while only 7.23% had a functioning library. It is important to note that this 7.23% largely represents the former Model-C schools which charge substantially higher fees and are therefore able to maintain libraries and employ librarians through their own resources.

While the overall percentage of South African public ordinary schools with functioning libraries amounts to 7.23%, the situation varies by province.[33] In terms of having no library space at all, the two worst affected provinces were the Eastern Cape (90.5%) and Limpopo (92.7%). Figure 2 (below) charts the percentage of public ordinary schools in each province which are reported to have stocked school libraries:

***Figure 2: Percentage of public schools with stocked libraries in each province***

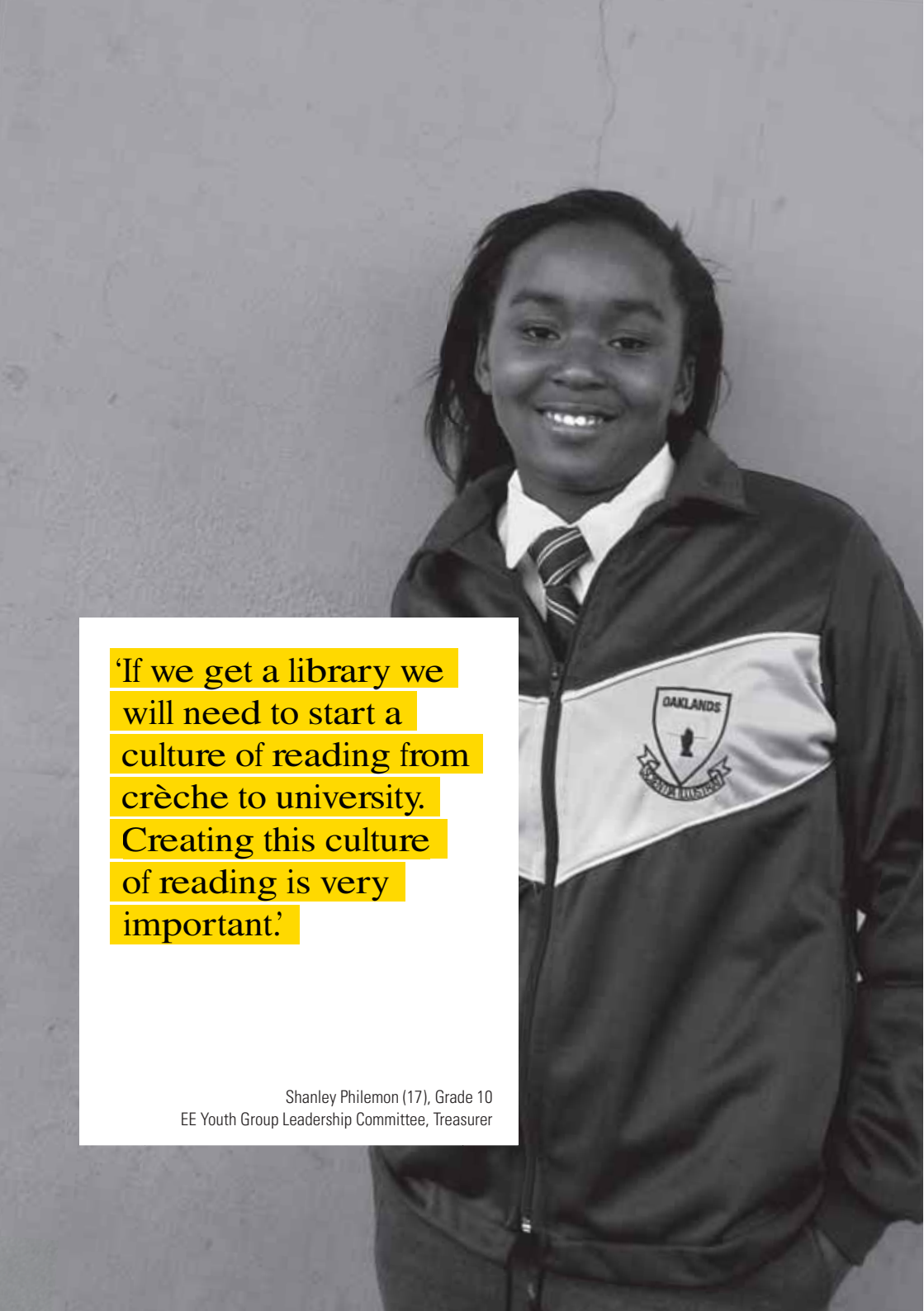



| | |
|---|---|
| Eastern Cape | 2.9% |
| Free State | 8.9% |
| Gauteng | 18.4% |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 6.1% |
| Limpopo | 2.4% |
| Mpumalanga | 6.2% |
| Northern Cape | 11.8% |
| North West | 6.4% |
| Western Cape | 25.3% |

It is again worth noting that the somewhat better (although still unacceptable) situations in the Western Cape and Gauteng are linked to their having a higher number of fee-charging former Model-C schools.

33 All calculations in this paper are based on data by province and school level. Where only national figures appear in the body of the paper, see the Appendix for greater detail.

A new, but poorly stocked, library space.




‘If we get a library we will need to start a culture of reading from crèche to university. Creating this culture of reading is very important.’

Shanley Philemon (17), Grade 10
EE Youth Group Leadership Committee, Treasurer

# 4. Estimating the cost of provision

**THIS SECTION PROPOSES** a tentative guideline of estimated costs for the nationwide provision of functional school libraries in every public ordinary school. It is hoped that these calculations might serve as building blocks for a programme of implementation that will rejuvenate the beleaguered education system. The estimated costs of provision have been divided into four parts: namely, library infrastructure; library materials; librarian training; and librarian salaries. For simplicity's sake, infrastructure, materials and training have been taken as once-off costs, whereas the cost of librarian salaries is taken as a continuous annual expense.

## 4.1 The cost of library infrastructure

The various DoE school library policy drafts have all considered different forms of library infrastructure. Among these are a centralized facility within a cluster of schools, a classroom collection, a mobile library, and a container library. The establishment of any of these would be an improvement on the current situation; however, for a number of reasons, EE recommends a permanent, furnished structure in each school. These reasons include: the need to integrate the library with the school curriculum and teaching practice; the need to coordinate library use with the school timetable; easy access for learners and teachers; reducing over-crowding, which is a chronic problem in over-stretched public libraries; and ensuring that the functionality of the library is preserved and does not degenerate into another classroom or storeroom. Given the shortage of space in most schools, a library can quite easily be encroached upon for other purposes.

According to the NEIMS Report (see Table 1), 7.23% of public ordinary schools in South Africa have functional libraries, while 13.47% have a library space without materials or a librarian. This leaves a residual of 79.3% (approximately 19,808 public ordinary schools) without any form of library infrastructure. The

> 7.23% of public ordinary schools in South Africa have functional libraries, while 13.47% have a library space without materials or a librarian. This leaves a residual of 79.3% (approximately 19,808 public ordinary schools) without any form of library infrastructure.

task of establishing a library in all of these institutions places significant financial constraints on the size and form of the building. EE's PCR Department has therefore produced a blueprint design as an example of an adequate school library.[34] Within the prescribed spatial constraints this structure recognizes the essential functions of a school library, beyond that of mere book storage, while maintaining an environment that is both welcoming and quiet, where learners can work as well as read for pleasure.

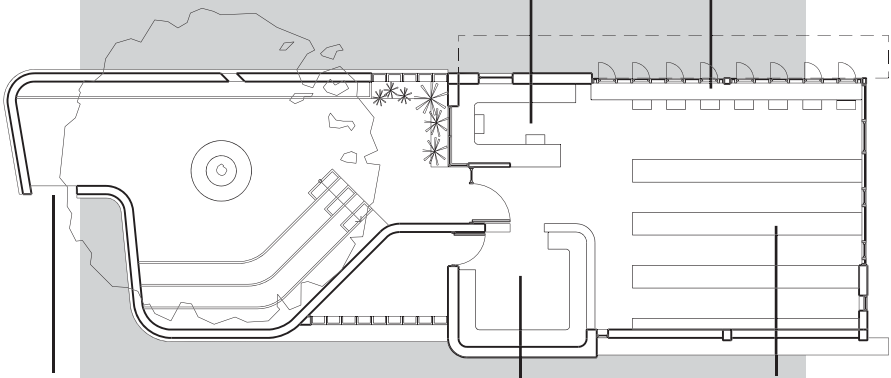
According to the draft *National Minimum Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure* (2008), every large school is required to have a library of 80m$^2$ and a media centre of 120m$^2$, whereas small- and medium-sized schools only require a media centre.[35] Modern schools do not distinguish these two concepts. Therefore, for the purposes of the present study, the minimum norm of 80m$^2$ applies for every school. Working within these parameters, EE offers the following low-cost design:

34 Neither EE, nor any of its Board or members, have a financial interest in school libraries. This design is offered free to government to use or adapt in the furtherance of the goal of a functional library for every school.

35 See *Call for Comments on National Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards*, 81-85.

**THE LIBRARIAN'S OFFICE**
is located next to the entrance, and opens up to the interior space, which allows it to serve the dual purpose of an information and issuing desk.

**WORK STATIONS**
provide well-lit space for individual study.



**THE COURTYARD ENTRANCE**
insulates the interior library space from the noise and visual distractions of the school grounds beyond its walls.

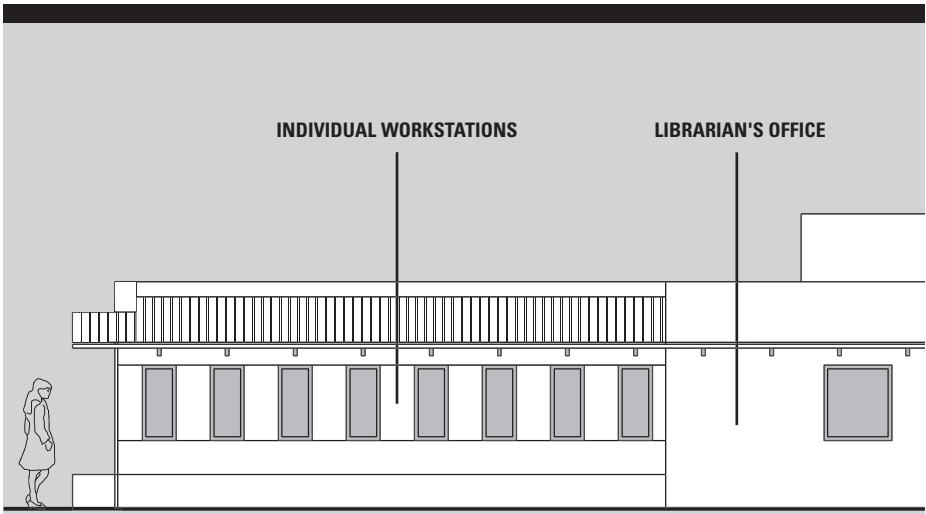
**INFORMAL READING SPACE**
with seating along the wall, as well as a display space for new books which contains a storage section beneath it.

**THE BOOKSHELVES**
accommodate more than the minimum requirement of materials, leaving space for future growth.

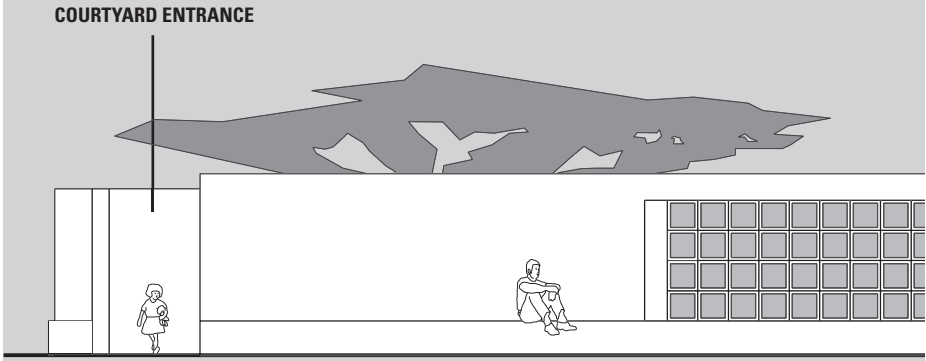
N

**Floor Plan**
Scale: 1 : 200

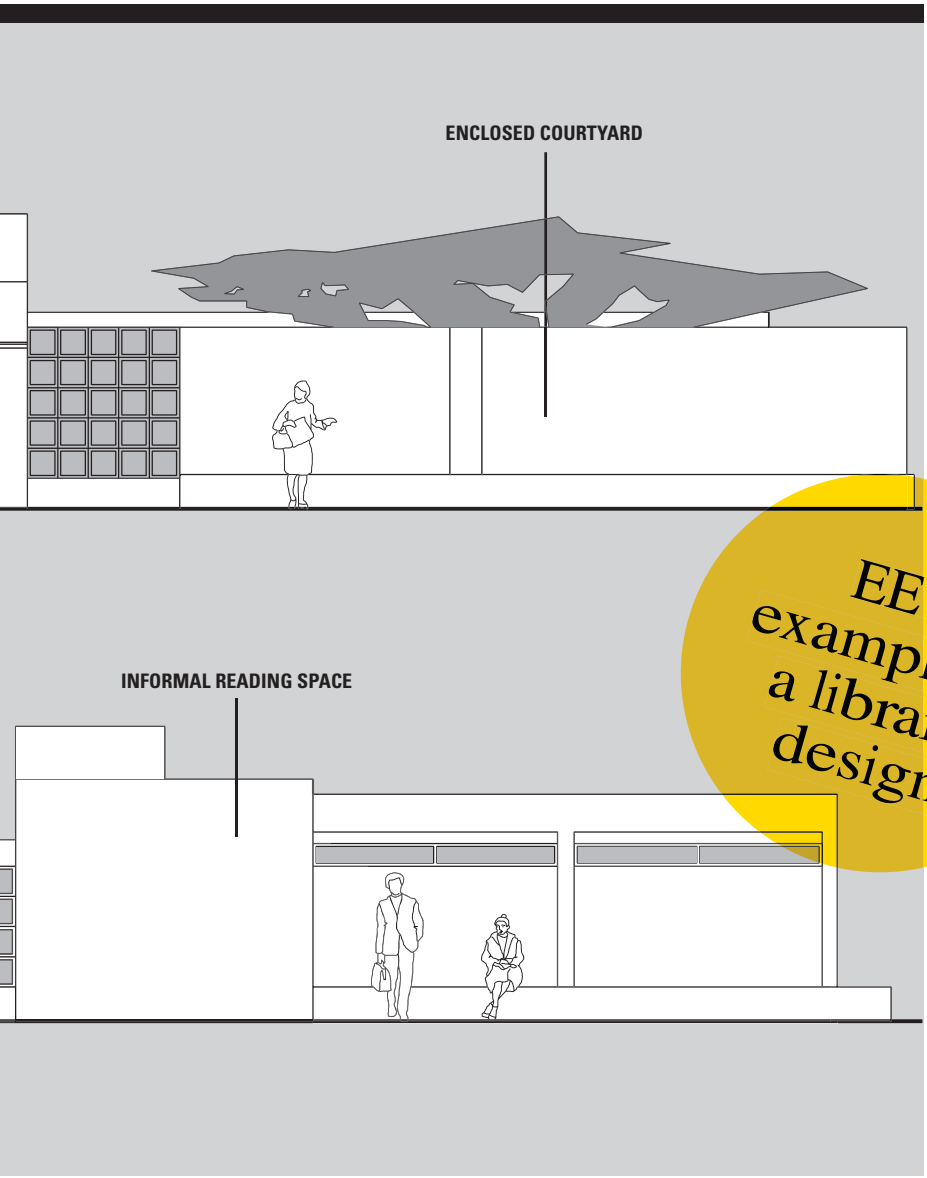
Through fieldwork conducted in a sample of Khayelitsha schools, EE members learnt from teachers and part-time librarians that the day-to-day activities which take place in any school library necessitate sufficient space and seating for a full class, of usually between 40 and 60 learners. This is the purpose of the courtyard (above) with its own stepped seating from which learners might comfortably interact with their librarian, library administrator or teacher as a collective group. The inclusion of this outside space as a walled courtyard becomes a key element in the overall design by creating a practical library space without the additional costs of a roofed structure. It also functions as a pleasant space where students can sit and read under the shade of trees, separate from the noise and activity of the school, while remaining under the care and supervision of their librarian. The courtyard space is an addition to the 80m$^2$ of library space.




**North Elevation**
Scale: 1 : 100




**South Elevation**
Scale: 1 : 100




EE's example of a library design

Providing every public ordinary school with a library such as the one presented above, costed at R5000 per square metre,[36] is estimated to be the following:

***Table 2: Estimated cost of building library structures at each school level*** [37]

| School Level | Total no. Schools | No. Schools without library space | Cost of building library per square metre | Floor space (square metres) | Total Cost |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 14,957 | 11,696 | 5,000 | 80 | R 4,678,400,000 |
| Secondary | 5,484 | 4,333 | 5,000 | 80 | R 1,733,200,000 |
| Combined | 3,544 | 3,049 | 5,000 | 80 | R 1,219,600,000 |
| Intermediate | 994 | 730 | 5,000 | 80 | R 292,000,000 |
| **Total** | **24,979** | **19,808** | **5,000** | **80** | **R 7,923,200,000** |

Table 2 reveals the acute shortage of school library infrastructure in South Africa at each school level.[38] The total cost of building a structure with an interior surface area of 80m$^2$ is calculated to be approximately R400,000. Providing each of the 19,808 schools without library infrastructure with such a building would therefore amount to approximately R7,923,200,000.

Expanding on Table 2, Table A2 (see Appendix) incorporates a breakdown of infrastructural costs by province as well as by school level.

36 This estimated cost per square metre was reached through consultations between EE, the Department of Public Works and built environment professionals who have experience in low-cost developmental construction.

37 Statistics based on the *NEIMS Report* (2007) and *Education Statistics in South Africa 2007* (2009).

38 Data at school levels have been extrapolated from the overall situation in each province.

## 4.2. The cost of library materials

The *IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto* (2006) stipulates that a school library should hold at least ten books per learner.[39] However, given the extreme shortage of library resources in South Africa, EE has instead called for three books per learner, to improve upon the existing standard of two books per learner set by the DoE's QIDS UP programme.[40]

Table 3 (below) indicates the proportion of South African public ordinary schools at each school level that do not offer library materials (92.77% overall). The number of schools without library materials is reached by adding two of the columns in Table 1 – namely, the number of schools without a library space and the number of schools with an unstocked library space. These calculations are then based on the average number of learners at each school level; the recommended endowment of three library materials per learner; and a recommended average cost per library material of R60:[41]

***Table 3: Estimated costs of providing school library materials at each school level[42]***

| School Level | Total No. Schools | No. Schools without library materials | Avg. no. learners per school | Avg no. library materials required per school | Average cost per school for materials | Total cost |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 14,957 | 13,817 | 409 | 1,227 | R 73,620 | R 1,017,207,540 |
| Secondary | 5,484 | 5,086 | 676 | 2,028 | R 121,680 | R 618,864,480 |
| Combined | 3,544 | 3,384 | 462 | 1,386 | R 83,160 | R 281,413,440 |
| Intermediate | 994 | 891 | 409 | 1,227 | R 73,620 | R 65,595,420 |
| **Total** | **24,979** | **23,178** | **475** | **1,426** | **R 85,559** | **R 1,983,080,880** |

Note: Total average number of learners per school has been rounded off for ease of presentation.
The calculations were carried out using the full decimal expression.

39 *IFLA / UNESCO School Library Manifesto* (2006), http://www.ifla.org/VII/s11/pubs/manifest.htm, accessed: November 2009.

40 Refer to footnote 9.

41 The figure of R60 per library material was arrived at in consultation with Biblionef South Africa, an organization experienced in donating books to libraries and children's funds.

42 Statistics based on the *NEIMS Report* (2007) and *Education Statistics in South Africa 2007* (2009). See Appendix A1 for an explanation of the mathematical methodology used in this paper.

The highest per-school cost is at secondary school level, owing to the high number of learners enrolled per school. However, the highest overall cost is at primary school level due to the much larger number of schools.

'Materials' can be understood as books, although it may include videos, wall charts and other media. The average total of library materials per school is 1,426 with an average cost per school of R85,559. This is the initial cost to stock each school library. Thereafter the collections can be maintained and updated if 10% of each school's LTSM allocation is ring-fenced for library materials.

Table A3 (see Appendix) provides a provincial breakdown of material costs.

## 4.3. The cost of training a full-time librarian / library administrator

A key reason why there are so few school libraries in South Africa is that there are too few librarians to service them.[43] EE estimates that only 7.23% of schools have full-time librarians. This is inferred from Table 1, assuming that schools with 'stocked' libraries employ librarians or library administrators, while the rest do not. The centrality of this issue in the LIS Charter, and in the interviews of teachers and learners conducted by EE, places it at the very heart of this campaign.

There are a number of ways in which a school library can be staffed. Many private and former Model-C schools employ full-time librarians in posts funded internally by school fee collection.

In the case of working class and rural schools, most provinces have made limited attempts at a second model – the so-called 'teacher-librarian' model. These are teachers who retain their teaching responsibilities but receive training in setting up a library and are usually expected to do so in their spare time. This

43 Barth, K.T., et al., *South African School Library Survey*, National Report for the DoE (Human Sciences Research Council: Pretoria, 1999), 25; Hart, Genevieve & Zinn, Sandy, *Conundrum of School Libraries,* 92-93, 102.

appears to be an unrealistic approach. Of 50 UWC teacher-librarian graduates surveyed in 2008, none had a full-time librarian post and only three had any time to administer a library in addition to teaching.[44] The reliance on teacher-librarians therefore caters neither for the realities of teacher-librarians nor does it incentivize prospective full-time librarians.

There are currently only two universities in South Africa where teacher-librarian training programmes are available: the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and UWC both offer Advanced Certificates in Education (ACE), with specializations in 'School Library Development' and 'Management and School Librarianship' respectively. In 2002, the University of South Africa (UNISA) established a Diploma in 'Information Services for Children and Youth'; however, owing to poor enrollment, the programme has been done away with. This is of course due to the absence of school librarian posts, a deficiency which the EE campaign aims to address. Greater school librarian employment opportunities will stimulate greater demand for training. The logical solution is therefore to establish new libraries, which would open up new positions and simultaneously create a greater incentive for aspiring librarians to enroll for training.

In Section 4.4, two models of full-time school library management are considered, the first being a librarian with three years of training, the second a library administrator with the equivalent of one year of training. In this section, only the costs to train a school library administrator for one year are considered. The figure of R15,000 is used, which is the cost to enroll for an ACE in School Librarianship at UWC in 2010.[45] Training costs for three-year university-level qualifications need not be taken into account here as these would be borne by the individuals concerned, as in the case of any professional qualification.

44 *Library and Information Services (LIS) Transformation Charter*, 79.

45 This figure covers one year of full-time or two years of part-time study. Another model worth considering is the one currently used in the Free State which employs 100 'Information Officers' (library administrators) and trains them at district level. Each Information Officer is responsible for 5 schools. EE believes that such a model, although inferior to full-time posts in every school, has promise and should be further experimented with.

Table 4 displays the total cost, at each school level, of training library administrators at R15,000 per individual:

***Table 4: Estimated costs of training a full-time library administrator at each school level*[46]**

| School Level | Total No. Schools | Schools without full-time librarian or library administrator | Cost of Training (per person) | Total Cost |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Primary | 14,957 | 13,817 | R 15,000 | R 207,255,000 |
| Secondary | 5,484 | 5,086 | R 15,000 | R 76,290,000 |
| Combined | 3,544 | 3,384 | R 15,000 | R 50,760,000 |
| Intermediate | 994 | 891 | R 15,000 | R 13,365,000 |
| **Total** | **24,979** | **23,178** | **R 15,000** | **R 347,670,000** |

The cost to train library administrators for all 23,178 public ordinary schools without library staff is therefore approximately R347,670,000. For a more detailed, provincial breakdown, see Table A4 in the Appendix.

## 4.4. The cost of employing a full-time librarian / library administrator

During the early 1990s, school librarianship was a viable choice of profession; however, today there is not even a recognized salary for a school librarian or library administrator in the *Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD)* for the teaching profession. EE therefore proposes two options for employing librarians to staff the roll-out of school libraries:

46 Statistics based on the *NEIMS Report* (2007), *Education Statistics in South Africa 2007* (2009), and EE's consultations with Sandy Zinn at UWC.

## OPTION 1:

Employ *library administrators* who have completed the equivalent of one year of university training. It is recommended that the government peg the annual remuneration package for library administrators at R51,488 p/a, a figure equal to the entry level salary for an M + 1 teacher as stipulated in the OSD.[47] This is marginally higher than the package offered to the 100 'Information Officers' in the Free State who each administer five school libraries (see footnote 45).

## OPTION 2:

Employ fully-qualified *librarians* who have completed the equivalent of a three-year university degree in library and information science. It is recommended that the government peg the initial annual remuneration for fully-qualified librarians at R115,276 p/a, which, according to the OSD, is the stipulated entry level salary for a teacher with a three-year undergraduate degree.[48]

47 See 'Occupation Specific Dispensation: New Salary Scales for Different Levels of Educators (Annexure D)', in *ELRC Collective Agreements* (2008), http://www.elrc.co.za/UploadedDocuments/Collective AgreementNo1of2008AnnexD.pdf, accessed: November 2009.

48 Ibid.

Table 5 (below) illustrates the average annual costs of these scenarios, by multiplying the number of schools at each level by these respective recommended salaries:

***Table 5: Estimated costs of employing a qualified school librarian or a library administrator at each school level*[49]**

| School Level | Total No. Schools | No. Schools without librarian or library administrator |
|---|---|---|
| Primary | 14,957 | 13,817 |
| Secondary | 5,484 | 5,086 |
| Combined | 3,544 | 3,384 |
| Intermediate | 994 | 891 |
| **Total** | **24,979** | **23,178** |

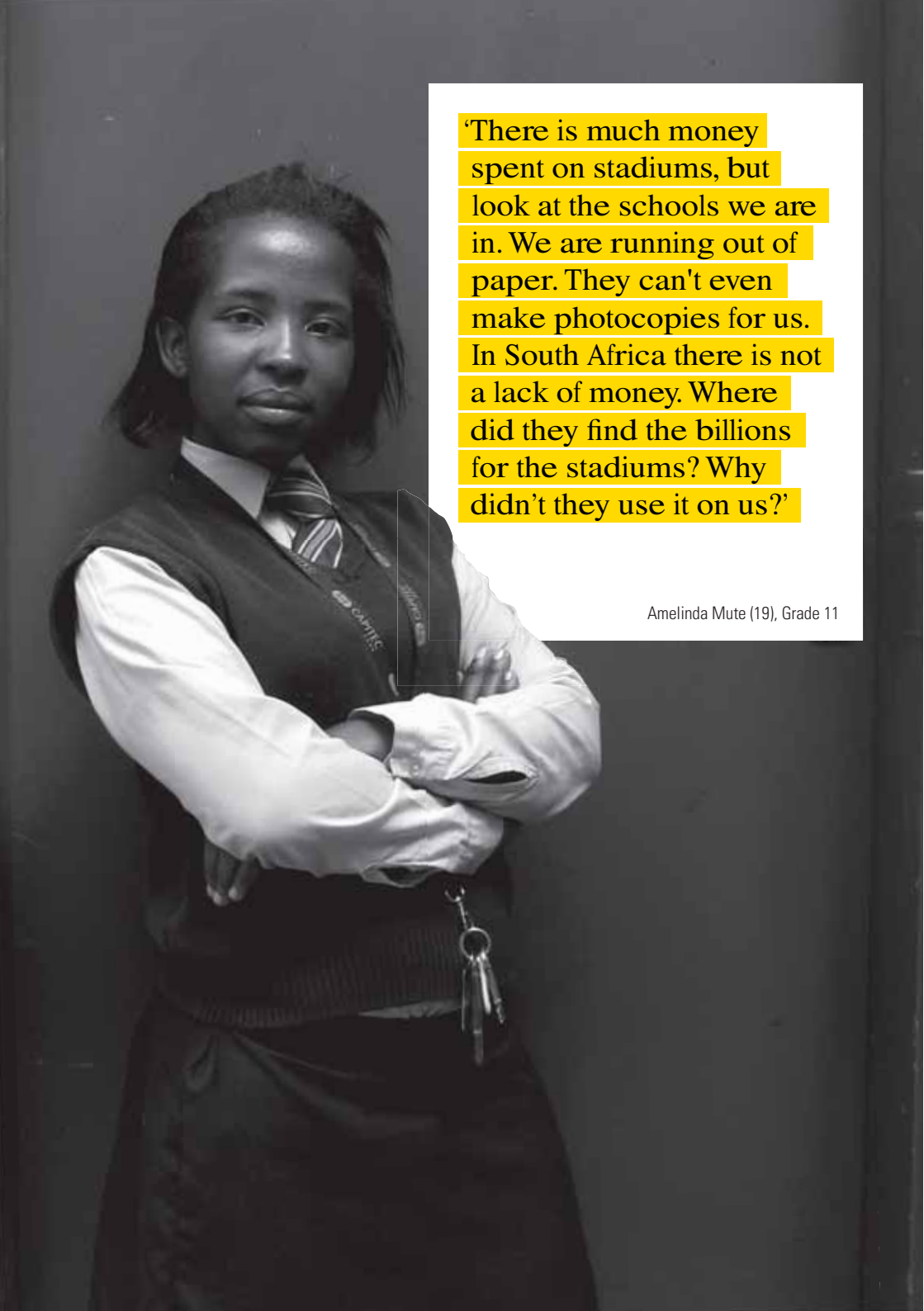
| **Library Administrator (Option 1)** | |
|---|---|
| Salary (per person) | Total Cost |
| R 51,488 | R 711,409,696 |
| R 51,488 | R 261,867,968 |
| R 51,488 | R 174,235,392 |
| R 51,488 | R 45,875,808 |
| **R 51,488** | **R 1,193,388,864** |

| **Librarian (Option 2)** | |
|---|---|
| Salary (per person) | Total Cost |
| R 115,276 | R 1,5 92,768,492 |
| R 115,276 | R 586,293,736 |
| R 115,276 | R 390,093,984 |
| R 115,276 | R 102,710,916 |
| **R 115,276** | **R 2,671,867,128** |

The estimated total cost of employing qualified librarians or library administrators in every public ordinary school in South Africa therefore amounts to either a minimum of R1,193,388,864 per year or a maximum of R2,671,867,128 per year. Tables A5 and A6 (see Appendix) present these salary costs by province as well as by school level.

49 Statistics based on the *NEIMS Report* (2007), *Education Statistics in South Africa 2007* (2009), and the *OSD* (2008).

A learner waits while the librarian issues her book.



‘There is much money spent on stadiums, but look at the schools we are in. We are running out of paper. They can't even make photocopies for us. In South Africa there is not a lack of money. Where did they find the billions for the stadiums? Why didn’t they use it on us?’

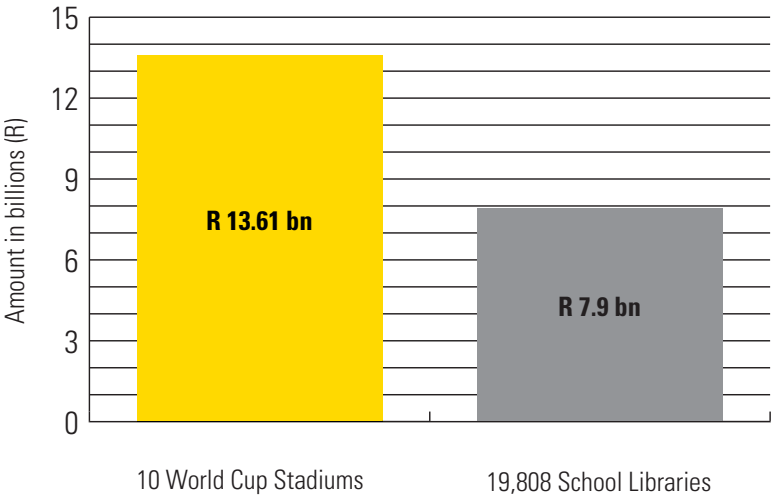
Amelinda Mute (19), Grade 11

# 5. Paying for the libraries

**THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE** for each category therefore amounts to the following: *infrastructure* (R7,923,200,000); *materials* (R1,983,080,880); *librarian training* (R347,670,000); and *librarian salaries* (between R1,193,388,864 and R2,671,867,128).

It is instructive to compare the cost of infrastructure for 19,808 libraries with that of South Africa's 2010 World Cup football stadiums:

***Figure 3: Cost of 2010 World Cup stadiums v cost of library infrastructure***




In March 2007, the national government allocated R8.4 billion to the World Cup stadiums. According to our own calculations, cross-referenced by various sources, total government expenditure on stadiums was R13.61 billion. This sum went towards the construction of five new stadiums and the renovation of five existing ones. As is evident in Figure 3 (above), it would cost less to ensure

Based on the calculations presented in this paper, the total cost for building and stocking a single library is R485,559. This is equivalent to just seven seats in the 68,000 capacity Cape Town Stadium, which cost R4.5 billion to build.

that every public ordinary school in South Africa has a new library space.[50]

Based on the calculations presented in this paper, the total cost for building and stocking a single library is R485,559. This is equivalent to just seven seats in the 68,000 capacity Cape Town Stadium, which cost R4.5 billion to build.

Some schools might be able to fundraise in order to construct, stock and staff libraries immediately, rather than waiting for a government roll-out. If a single school is able to pay off the construction and stocking of their library over a ten-year period, while at the same time training and employing a library administrator, the

50 See *News from Parliament: Treasury Caps Cost on 2010 World Cup stadiums at R8.4bn*, Finance Committee, National Parliament (9 March 2007), http://www.sabinet.co.za, accessed: November 2009. This R8.4 billion figure is the National Treasury allocation. The host cities contributed additional billions. Reports are also that National Treasury has since had to increase its contribution by at least R2bn. See Hill, Matthew, '2010 FIFA World Cup Stadiums to Cost Extra R2bn', in *Engineering News* (13 August 2008), http://www.engineeringnews.co.za, accessed: November 2009.
At the time of writing, estimates were:
Cape Town – R4.5bn – http://www.timeslive.co.za/news/local/article233459.ece;
Bloemfontein – R305m – http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/free-state-stadium-upgrade-approaches-climax-2009-02-20;
Durban – R3.1bn – http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/moses-mabhida-stadium-2009-12-04;
Jhb Ellis Park Stadium – R250m – http://www.timeslive.co.za/sundaytimes/article121446.ece;
Jhb Soccer City – R1.5bn – http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKL1778950120070117;
Nelspruit – R710m – http://en.structurae.de/structures/data/index.cfm?ID=s0022670;
Polokwane – R700m – http://www.safa.net/index.php?page=petermokaba;
Port Elizabeth – R2.1bn – http://www.sa-venues.com/2010/port-elizabeth.htm;
Rustenburg – R350m – http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=6&click_id=2200&art_id=qw1156866662397S163;
Tshwane – R100m – http://www.worldcup.tribalfootball.com/page/NewsDetail/0,,12952~1887589,00.html;
All of the above sources accessed: December 2009.

school would require approximately R100,000 per year for ten years. After those first ten years, having paid off the capital costs, the annual amount drops to R50,000 per year per school. In addition, the school would use 10% of its LTSM budget to replenish the books and other materials.

For the country as a whole, if the once-off costs of infrastructure, materials and training, as they have been calculated in this paper, are added together and then divided into annual installments spanning a decade, approximately R1.02 billion is needed annually for ten years.[51] This figure, which excludes salaries, amounts to less than 1% of the DoE's current annual budget of R139.8 billion.[52] After the first ten years, only salary expenditure would remain. Library collections could be maintained through the ring-fenced 10% of LTSM which schools receive already. When all costs, including library administrator salaries, are taken into account, the nationwide provision of functional school libraries would amount to R2.22 billion annually for the first decade, accounting for 1.6% of the DoE's budget over the ten-year period, before declining to 0.85% thereafter. (If full librarian salaries are preferred the percentages rise to 2.6% and 1.9% for the first decade, and subsequent period, respectively.)

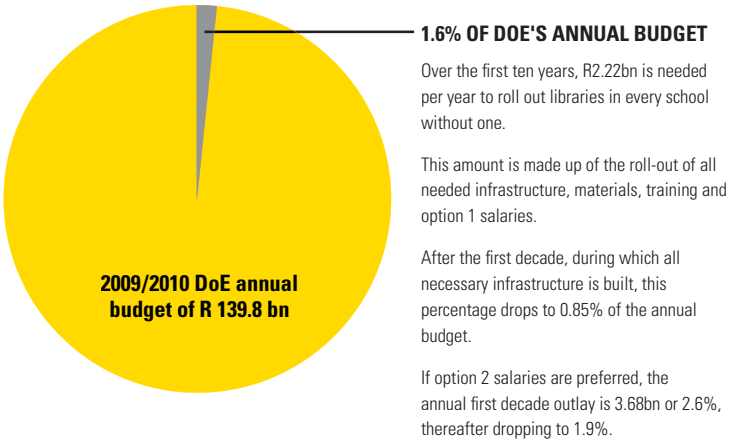
When all costs, including library administrator salaries, are taken into account, the nationwide provision of functional school libraries would amount to R2.22 billion annually for the first decade, accounting for 1.6% of the DoE's budget over the ten-year period, before declining to 0.85% thereafter.

51 An amount equivalent to half of this, approximately R500m is spent each year on public libraries (which are not to be confused with school libraries). See Dominy, Graham, *The Community Libraries Grants: Presentation to Select Committee on Education and Recreation*, Department of Arts and Culture (16 September 2009), 9. As noted at the end of Section 2 (above), public libraries cannot adequately service the communities in which they are situated if they are also burdened with the 20,000 schools that lack school libraries.

52 *Presentation to the Education and Recreation Select Committee*, Department of Basic Education & Department of Higher Education and Training, Strategic Plans and Budgets (30 June 2009), 12.

Using salary option 1 (for a library administrator), Figure 4 (below) illustrates the total costs (once-off and continuous), per year for the first decade, of providing functional school libraries in every public ordinary school, as a proportion of the DoE's 2009/2010 annual budget:

***Figure 4: Library and library administrator costs as a proportion of the DoE's 2009/2010 annual budget***




Even in the absence of additional funding, these costs are affordable. However, EE still suggests that additional resources can be found, beyond those which are readily available to the DoE. For example, the infrastructure, materials and training costs could be covered by a Conditional Grant, in much the same way as the National School Nutrition Scheme, which, at R2.4 billion, is more than double the annual cost of rolling out school libraries.[53] Secondly, salary costs for library administrators could be funded by the Expanded Public Works Programme of the Department of Public Works, as these are essentially semi-skilled jobs for those with matric qualifications and one year of additional training.

53 *Reply by Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, on Questions Posed in National Assembly for Written Reply,* Question No. 1068 (4 September 2009), http://www.search.gov.za/info/, accessed: November 2009.

As the title of this paper suggests, given the proven links between literacy, human rights and economic development, the question is no longer whether South Africa can afford to provide school libraries, but whether we can afford not to.

Boxes of donated books await unpacking in an otherwise empty library.

Having a library is not a favour that the government gives us, it's our right. My parents voted. I want their vote to be heard. We are marching but we have done this before. Why must we shout for what we need?

Ntombesizwe Mkonto (17), Grade 12
EE Youth Group Leadership Committee, Chairperson

# 6. Conclusion and key recommendations

**THE LACK OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES** in South Africa is a legacy of apartheid. The 7.23% of public schools with functional libraries charge relatively high school fees and are therefore able to fund their own libraries and librarians. The lack of libraries is also the result of three poor policy choices: the introduction of an OBE curriculum which did not prioritize basic literacy; the removal of specialist educator posts including school librarians; and the lack of priority given to the establishment of school libraries. Reversing the inequalities of apartheid is vital, as is undoing the mistakes of recent years, in order to build a culture of reading and learning. This culture is crucial to both national development and human rights.

The price of a national plan to provide school libraries is high, but the price of not doing so is higher. As the grade 6 literacy results on page 5 show, the majority of learners are not learning to read. A major issue at the heart of this is the simple inaccessibility of books. Unequal access characterizes the schooling system, as indicated by each year's highly skewed matric results. Khayelitsha is a case in point. With only 5 school libraries in 54 schools, and 5 public libraries serving a community of over 700,000 residents, local learners queue for long hours, have nowhere to do their homework, and often spend weekends travelling into the city centre to use the central library. The 54% Khayelitsha matric pass rate in 2008, which was 10% below the national average, suggests that these underprivileged learners are being failed by the system itself.

The 54% Khayelitsha matric pass rate in 2008, which was 10% below the national average, suggests that these underprivileged learners are being failed by the system itself.

The availability of learning resources in schools, provided they are well managed, has a direct bearing on learning outcomes.[54] Libraries are among the most significant of these resources. The local and international literature reviewed in Section 2 unequivocally reinforces the claim that the provision of well-stocked school libraries and qualified full-time librarians exponentially increases the average outcome of learners.

The costs of a full national roll-out, as detailed in this paper, are therefore as follows: *infrastructure*, which consists of the furnished library structure itself (R7,923,200,000); *materials*, which consists of the prescribed allotment of 3 books per learner (R2,012,503,781); *librarian training*, for which a one-year UWC programme is used as a model (R347,685,000); and *librarian salaries*, a continuous annual cost which varies according to each candidate's qualification (between R1,193,440,352 and R2,671,982,404).

With careful financial planning, it is feasible for the government to phase in functional school libraries countrywide. This could be done on a progressive basis, according to a strict timetable.

## Key recommendations

A national policy on school libraries, backed up by a plan for national implementation. The policy should carry the force of law, to drive a national roll-out of school libraries on the basis of minimum norms and standards. This should provide for:

1. A library for every school.

2. Human resources: A trained librarian or library administrator, working full-time in each school library.

3. New and improved sites of training to staff the school library roll-out, which must include university training for librarians and library administrators as both degree programmes and short courses.

54 See Van den Berg, Servaas, 'How Effective are Poor Schools? Poverty and Educational Outcomes in South Africa', in *Stellenbosch Economic Working Papers*, Department of Economics, University of Stellenbosch: June 2006.

4. Books and equipment: Expand QIDS UP so to provide shelving, computers and 3 books per learner in every public ordinary school library.

5. Operational funding: Legislate that each school must allocate 10% of its Learning Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) funding for updating and maintaining the school library collection.

6. Workshops for teachers, parents, learners and SGB members concerning the role of the library and its place in the school programme.

7. A weekly library period built into the curriculum for every class in every school.

8. The monitoring and evaluation of the school library roll-out in order to ensure its effective implementation, and measure its impact.

9. Reopen the DoE's School Libraries Unit which can in turn oversee the development of a national policy on school libraries as well as an implementation plan.

10. Sign into law the regulations called for by Section 5A of the South African Schools Act as the first step towards a national plan for school libraries.

## Secondary recommendations

11. The DoE should investigate purchasing books directly from publishers, rather than through book-sellers who significantly increase the price of their books before selling them on to government.

12. The Minister of Finance should investigate whether a VAT exemption on books bought for school libraries would assist schools and provincial education departments without adversely harming government revenue.

13. The Department of Trade and Industry should consider lowering import tariffs on books for school libraries.

This paper shows what it would cost to make libraries, books and reading a reality for every child in South Africa. To the best of our knowledge, no other study has gone to these lengths in addressing our country's drastic shortage of functional school libraries. And yet this still constitutes little more than a starting point from which, it is hoped, the national and provincial education departments might take the baton from us, refine our strategy, make adjustments, and ultimately transform this vision into the country's reality.

There is little doubt that South Africa's youth will never reach their full potential unless they become capable readers within their first few years of school. This basic requirement implicitly necessitates the access to good quality, appealing and well-looked-after books. Particularly in their later school years, learners need access to written resources for project work and for developing the skills of information literacy that are crucial to any young person who hopes to become globally competitive or successful at university. These aspirations, and many others, are all made possible by the safe and work-conducive space of a stocked and staffed school library.

Equal Education is committed to South Africa's development and to ensuring that development serves the dignity and rights of its people. In the modern world reading is a stepping stone to personal and collective freedom; our movement of learners, parents, teachers and community members will not rest until there are books, libraries and librarians for all.

Young learners during a reading lesson.

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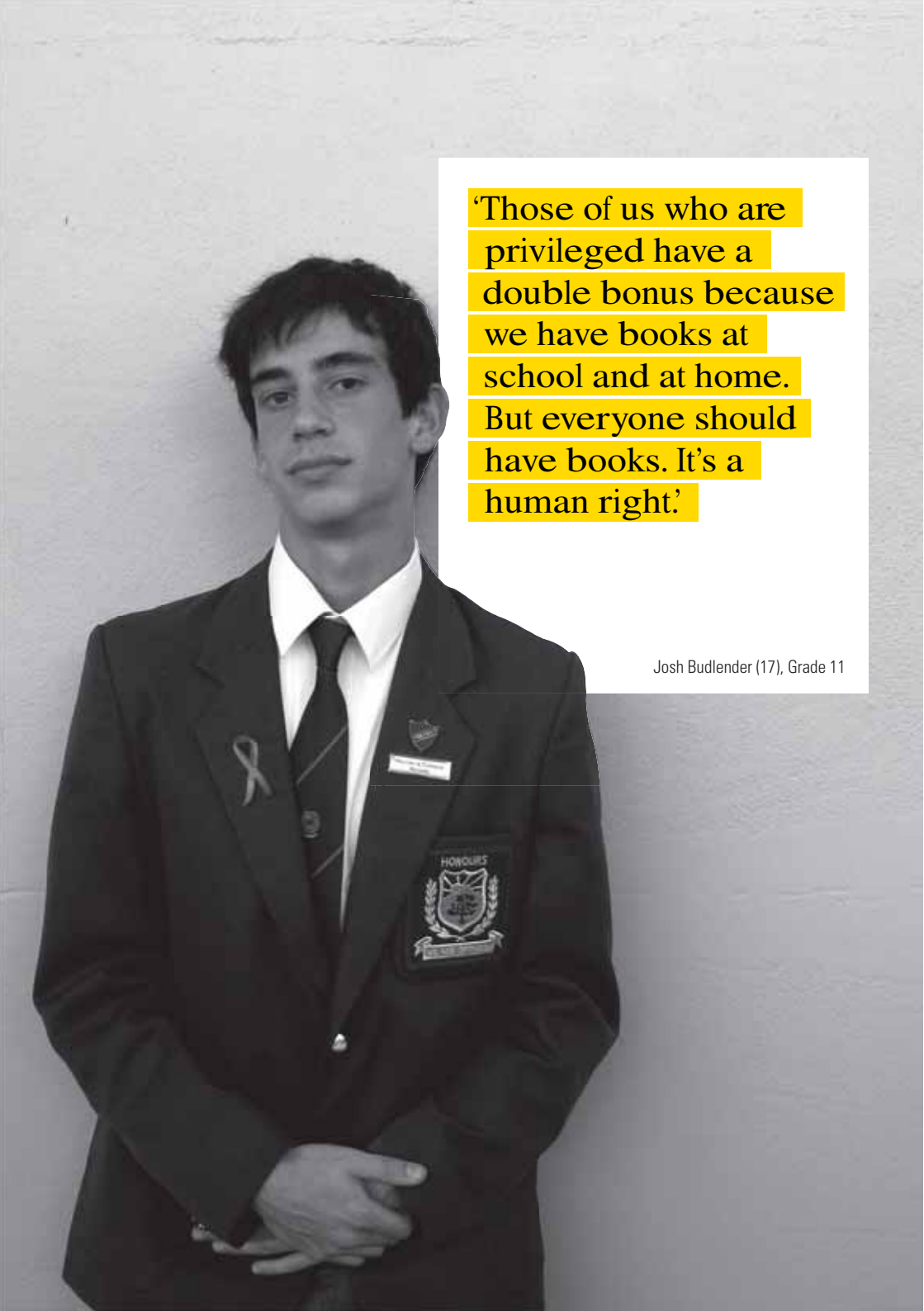

‘Those of us who are privileged have a double bonus because we have books at school and at home. But everyone should have books. It’s a human right.’

Josh Budlender (17), Grade 11

# Appendix

## **A1:** Data, assumptions and methodology

There are two primary data sources used in this paper. Both were compiled by the Department of Education (DoE), namely:

- *National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS),* National Assessment Report on Public Ordinary Schools (DoE, Sol Plaatje House, Pretoria: September, 2007).
- *Education Statistics in South Africa 2007* (DoE, Sol Plaatje House, Pretoria: January 2009).

The first, hereafter referred to as *NEIMS*, provided us with data about the provision of libraries in each province. The *NEIMS* data was deficient in two respects. Firstly, *NEIMS* gave data per province, but not per *school level. NEIMS* gives, for instance, the number of schools with a fully-stocked library in Limpopo but it does not show the number of *primary schools* with a fully-stocked library in Limpopo. Secondly, although *NEIMS* was the most up-to-date data in terms of school library provision, it was not the most up-to-date in terms of the total number of schools in each province.

Therefore we also relied on the second data set listed above, hereafter referred to as *Statistics 2007.* This data, published in 2009, was the latest data at the time of writing.

The *Statistics 2007* numbers were used as the source data for the numbers of schools and learners at each school level in each province. In order to calculate the number of schools with and without library infrastructure and materials, we projected the ratios for each of these categories from the *NEIMS* data onto the more up-to-date *Statistics 2007* data. In other words, for each province we calculated the ratio *'number of schools without libraries'* to *'number of schools with unstocked libraries'* to *'number of schools with fully-stocked libraries'* from *NEIMS* data; and used this ratio to calculate the number of schools in the *Statistics 2007* data in each of these three categories.

This process produced Table 1, as shown in the body of the paper.

Various assumptions were necessary:

- Because *NEIMS* only reported at the *provincial* level and not at *school levels*, it was necessary to assume that, within a given province, the percentage of schools lacking libraries or materials at one school level (e.g. primary) was the same as at another school level (e.g. secondary).
- It was also necessary to make the assumption that for each school category (e.g. primary schools in the Free State), the number of learners per school is independent of whether the school has a library or not.
- It was also necessary to assume that the ratio of schools with a full-time librarian was the same as the ratio of schools with a stocked library space, according to *NEIMS*.

In short, the ratios for the current provision of libraries in *NEIMS* were projected onto the *Statistics 2007* source data to produce a new dataset (Table 1). The resulting figures were rounded off to the nearest integer for ease of presentation. This did not have a significant impact on the output in the costing model.

Having calculated a base set of numbers, each of the four costing exercises was undertaken: infrastructure, materials, librarian / library administrator training, and librarian / library administrator salaries. These costing exercises are elaborated in the body of the paper. The first three are regarded as once-off costs, and represented as such, although in the paper it is recommended that these costs be spread over a ten-year period. *Salaries,* of course, is a recurring cost.

Although materials need to be continually replaced, this will be achieved by each school allocating 10% of its Learning Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) funding, received annually, and therefore the initial investment need only happen once. Since the beginning of the campaign, the 10% LTSM figure has been officially adopted by the Western Cape Education Department. Similarly, although librarians and library administrators will need to be trained continuously, it was most instructive to imagine this happening as an initial cost, paid off over ten years like infrastructure and materials. Once there is a trained pool of school librarians it will be maintained like any profession, without the need for extraordinary investment by the state.

# **TABLE A2:** The estimated cost of infrastructure*

| | E Cape | Free State | Gauteng | KZN | Limpopo | Mpuma-langa | N Cape | N West | W Cape | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **No. Primary Schools without library space** | 2,151 (2377) | 907 (1207) | 559 (1331) | 3,080 (3870) | 2,402 (2591) | 1,042 (1237) | 247 (349) | 862 (1066) | 446 (929) | 11,696 (14957) |
| **Cost of Infrastructure in Primary Schools** | R 860,400,000 | R 362,800,000 | R 223,600,000 | R 1,232,000,000 | R 960,800,000 | R 416,800,000 | R 98,800,000 | R 344,800,000 | R 178,400,000 | R 4,678,400,000 |
| **No. of Secondary Schools without library space** | 727 (803) | 189 (252) | 216 (514) | 1,160 (1458) | 1,191 (1285) | 373 (443) | 72 (102) | 256 (316) | 149 (311) | 4,333 (5484) |
| **Cost of Infrastructure in Secondary Schools** | R 290,800,000 | R 75,600,000 | R 86,400,000 | R 464,000,000 | R 476,400,000 | R 149,200,000 | R 28,800,000 | R 102,400,000 | R 59,600,000 | R 1,733,200,000 |
| **No. Combined Schools without library or library space** | 2,236 (2471) | 131 (175) | 39 (94) | 357 (448) | 73 (79) | 125 (148) | 22 (31) | 46 (57) | 20 (41) | 3,049 (3544) |
| **Cost of Infrastructure in Co mbined Schools** | R 894,400,000 | R 52,400,000 | R 15,600,000 | R 142,800,000 | R 29,200,000 | R 50,000,000 | R 8,800,000 | R 18,400,000 | R 8,000,000 | R 1,219,600,000 |
| **No. Intermediate Schools without library or library space** | 65 (72) | 35 (47) | 21 (51) | 80 (101) | 74 (80) | 55 (65) | 83 (117) | 235 (291) | 82 (170) | 730 (994) |
| **Cost of Infrastructure in Intermediate Schools** | R 26,000,000 | R 14,000,000 | R 8,400,000 | R 32,000,000 | R 29,600,000 | R 22,000,000 | R 33,200,000 | R 94,000,000 | R 32,800,000 | R 292,000,000 |
| **Total No. Schools without library space** | 5,179 (5723) | 1,262 (1681) | 835 (1990) | 4,677 (5877) | 3,740 (4035) | 1,595 (1893) | 424 (599) | 1,399 (1730) | 697 (1451) | 19,808 (24979) |
| **Total Cost of Infrastructure in Schools** | R 2,071,600,000 | R 504,800,000 | R 334,000,000 | R 1,870,800,000 | R 1,496,000,000 | R 638,000,000 | R 169,600,000 | R 559,600,000 | R 278,800,000 | R 7,923,200,000 |

*The bracketed figures represent the total number of schools in each category. Any slight inaccuracies in the totals are due to rounding errors.

# **TABLE A3:** The estimated cost of materials*

| | E Cape | Free State | Gauteng | KZN | Limpopo | Mpuma-langa | N Cape | N West | W Cape | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **No. Primary Schools without materials** | 2,308 (2377) | 1,100 (1207) | 1,086 (1331) | 3,633 (3870) | 2,529 (2591) | 1,161 (1237) | 308 (349) | 998 (1066) | 694 (929) | 13,817 (14957) |
| **Cost of materials in Primary Schools** | R 169,914,960 | R 80,982,000 | R 79,951,320 | R 267,461,460 | R 186,184,980 | R 85,472,820 | R 22,674,960 | R 73,472,760 | R 51,092,280 | R 1,017,207,540 |
| **No. of Secondary Schools without materials** | 780 (803) | 230 (252) | 419 (514) | 1,369 (1458) | 1,254 (1285) | 416 (443) | 90 (102) | 296 (316) | 232 (311) | 5,086 (5484) |
| **Cost of materials in Secondary Schools** | R 94,910,400 | R 27,986,400 | R 50,983,920 | R 166,579,920 | R 152,586,720 | R 50,618,880 | R 10,951,200 | R 36,017,280 | R 28,229,760 | R 618,864,480 |
| **No. Combined Schools without materials** | 2,399 (2471) | 160 (175) | 77 (94) | 421 (448) | 77 (79) | 139 (148) | 27 (31) | 53 (57) | 31 (41) | 3,384 (3544) |
| **Cost of materials in Combined Schools** | R 199,500,840 | R 13,305,600 | R 6,403,320 | R 35,010,360 | R 6,403,320 | R 11,559,240 | R 2,245,320 | R 4,407,480 | R 2,577,960 | R 281,413,440 |
| **No. Intermediate Schools without materials** | 70 (72) | 43 (47) | 42 (51) | 95 (101) | 78 (80) | 61 (65) | 103 (117) | 272 (291) | 127 (170) | 891 (994) |
| **Cost of materials in Intermediate Schools** | R 5,153,400 | R 3,165,660 | R 3,092,040 | R 6,993,900 | R 5,742,360 | R 4,490,820 | R 7,582,860 | R 20,024,640 | R 9,349,740 | R 65,595,420 |
| **Total No. Schools without materials** | 5,557 (5723) | 1,533 (1681) | 1,624 (1990) | 5,518 (5877) | 3,938 (4035) | 1,777 (1893) | 528 (599) | 1,619 (1730) | 1,084 (1451) | 23,178 (24979) |
| **Total Cost of materials in Schools** | R 469,479,600 | R 125,439,660 | R 140,430,600 | R 476,045,640 | R 350,917,380 | R 152,141,760 | R 43,454,340 | R 133,922,160 | R 91,249,740 | R 1,983,080,880 |

*The bracketed figures represent the total number of schools in each category. Any slight inaccuracies in the totals are due to rounding errors.

# **TABLE A4:** The estimated cost of librarian training*

| | E Cape | Free State | Gauteng | KZN | Limpopo | Mpuma-langa | N Cape | N West | W Cape | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **No. Primary Schools without librarian** | 2,308 (2377) | 1,100 (1207) | 1,086 (1331) | 3,633 (3870) | 2,529 (2591) | 1,161 (1237) | 308 (349) | 998 (1066) | 694 (929) | 13,817 (14957) |
| **Cost of librarian training in Primary Schools** | R 34,620,000 | R 16,500,000 | R 16,290,000 | R 54,495,000 | R 37,935,000 | R 17,415,000 | R 4,620,000 | R 14,970,000 | R 10,410,000 | R 207,255,000 |
| **No. of Secondary Schools without librarian** | 780 (803) | 230 (252) | 419 (514) | 1,369 (1458) | 1,254 (1285) | 416 (443) | 90 (102) | 296 (316) | 232 (311) | 5,086 (5484) |
| **Cost of librarian training in Secondary Schools** | R 11,700,000 | R 3,450,000 | R 6,285,000 | R 20,535,000 | R 18,810,000 | R 6,240,000 | R 1,350,000 | R 4,440,000 | R 3,480,000 | R 76,290,000 |
| **No. Combined Schools without librarian** | 2,399 (2471) | 160 (175) | 77 (94) | 421 (448) | 77 (79) | 139 (148) | 27 (31) | 53 (57) | 31 (41) | 3,384 (3544) |
| **Cost of librarian training in Combined Schools** | R 35,985,000 | R 2,400,000 | R 1,155,000 | R 6,315,000 | R 1,155,000 | R 2,085,000 | R 405,000 | R 795,000 | R 465,000 | R 50,760,000 |
| **No. Intermediate Schools without librarian** | 70 (72) | 43 (47) | 42 (51) | 95 (101) | 78 (80) | 61 (65) | 103 (117) | 272 (291) | 127 (170) | 891 (994) |
| **Cost of librarian training in Intermediate Schools** | R 1,050,000 | R 645,000 | R 630,000 | R 1,425,000 | R 1,170,000 | R 915,000 | R 1,545,000 | R 4,080,000 | R 1,905,000 | R 13,365,000 |
| **Total No. Schools without librarian** | 5,557 (5723) | 1,533 (1681) | 1,624 (1990) | 5,518 (5877) | 3,938 (4035) | 1,777 (1893) | 528 (599) | 1,619 (1730) | 1,084 (1451) | 23,178 (24979) |
| **Total Cost of librarian training in Schools** | R 83,355,000 | R 22,995,000 | R 24,360,000 | R 82,770,000 | R 59,070,000 | R 26,655,000 | R 7,920,000 | R 24,285,000 | R 16,260,000 | R 347,670,000 |

* The bracketed figures represent the total number of schools in each category. Any slight inaccuracies in the totals are due to rounding errors.

# **TABLE A5:** The estimated cost of librarian salaries (Option 1)*

| | E Cape | Free State | Gauteng | KZN | Limpopo | Mpuma-langa | N Cape | N West | W Cape | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **No. Primary Schools without librarian** | 2,308 (2377) | 1,100 (1207) | 1,086 (1331) | 3,633 (3870) | 2,529 (2591) | 1,161 (1237) | 308 (349) | 998 (1066) | 694 (929) | 13,817 (14957) |
| **Cost of librarian salaries in Primary Schools** | R 118,834,304 | R 56,636,800 | R 55,915,968 | R 187,055,904 | R 130,213,152 | R 59,777,568 | R 15,858,304 | R 51,385,024 | R 35,732,672 | R 711,409,696 |
| **No. of Secondary Schools without librarian** | 780 (803) | 230 (252) | 419 (514) | 1,369 (1458) | 1,254 (1285) | 416 (443) | 90 (102) | 296 (316) | 232 (311) | 5,086 (5484) |
| **Cost of librarian salaries in Secondary Schools** | R 40,160,640 | R 11,842,240 | R 21,573,472 | R 70,487,072 | R 64,565,952 | R 21,419,008 | R 4,633,920 | R 15,240,448 | R 11,945,216 | R 261,867,968 |
| **No. Combined Schools without librarian** | 2,399 (2471) | 160 (175) | 77 (94) | 421 (448) | 77 (79) | 139 (148) | 27 (31) | 53 (57) | 31 (41) | 3,384 (3544) |
| **Cost of librarian salaries in Combined Schools** | R 123,519,712 | R 8,238,080 | R 3,964,576 | R 21,676,448 | R 3,964,576 | R 7,156,832 | R 1,390,176 | R 2,728,864 | R 1,596,128 | R 174,235,392 |
| **No. Intermediate Schools without librarian** | 70 (72) | 43 (47) | 42 (51) | 95 (101) | 78 (80) | 61 (65) | 103 (117) | 272 (291) | 127 (170) | 891 (994) |
| **Cost of librarian salaries in Intermediate Schools** | R 3,604,160 | R 2,213,984 | R 2,162,496 | R 4,891,360 | R 4,016,064 | R 3,140,768 | R 5,303,264 | R 14,004,736 | R 6,538,976 | R 45,875,808 |
| **Total No. Schools without librarian** | 5,557 (5723) | 1,533 (1681) | 1,624 (1990) | 5,518 (5877) | 3,938 (4035) | 1,777 (1893) | 528 (599) | 1,619 (1730) | 1,084 (1451) | 23,178 (24979) |
| **Total Cost of librarian salaries in Schools** | R 286,118,816 | R 78,931,104 | R 83,616,512 | R 284,110,784 | R 202,759,744 | R 91,494,176 | R 27,185,664 | R 83,359,072 | R 55,812,992 | R 1,193,388,864 |

*The bracketed figures represent the total number of schools in each category. Any slight inaccuracies in the totals are due to rounding errors.

# **TABLE A6:** The estimated cost of librarian salaries (Option 2)*

| | E Cape | Free State | Gauteng | KZN | Limpopo | Mpuma-langa | N Cape | N West | W Cape | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **No. Primary Schools without librarian** | 2,308 (2377) | 1,100 (1207) | 1,086 (1331) | 3,633 (3870) | 2,529 (2591) | 1,161 (1237) | 308 (349) | 998 (1066) | 694 (929) | 13,817 (14957) |
| **Cost of librarian salaries in Primary Schools** | R 266,057,008 | R 126,803,600 | R 125,189,736 | R 418,797,708 | R 291,533,004 | R 133,835,436 | R 35,505,008 | R 115,045,448 | R 80,001,544 | R 1,592,768,492 |
| **No. of Secondary Schools without librarian** | 780 (803) | 230 (252) | 419 (514) | 1,369 (1458) | 1,254 (1285) | 416 (443) | 90 (102) | 296 (316) | 232 (311) | 5,086 (5484) |
| **Cost of librarian salaries in Secondary Schools** | R 89,915,280 | R 26,513,480 | R 48,300,644 | R 157,812,844 | R 144,556,104 | R 47,954,816 | R 10,374,840 | R 34,121,696 | R 26,744,032 | R 586,293,736 |
| **No. Combined Schools without librarian** | 2,399 (2471) | 160 (175) | 77 (94) | 421 (448) | 77 (79) | 139 (148) | 27 (31) | 53 (57) | 31 (41) | 3,384 (3544) |
| **Cost of librarian salaries in Combined Schools** | R 276,547,124 | R 18,444,160 | R 8,876,252 | R 48,531,196 | R 8,876,252 | R 16,023,364 | R 3,112,452 | R 6,109,628 | R 3,573,556 | R 390,093,984 |
| **No. Intermediate Schools without librarian** | 70 (72) | 43 (47) | 42 (51) | 95 (101) | 78 (80) | 61 (65) | 103 (117) | 272 (291) | 127 (170) | 891 (994) |
| **Cost of librarian salaries in Intermediate Schools** | R 8,069,320 | R 4,956,868 | R 4,841,592 | R 10,951,220 | R 8,991,528 | R 7,031,836 | R 11,873,428 | R 31,355,072 | R 14,640,052 | R 102,710,916 |
| **Total No. Schools without librarian** | 5,557 (5723) | 1,533 (1681) | 1,624 (1990) | 5,518 (5877) | 3,938 (4035) | 1,777 (1893) | 528 (599) | 1,619 (1730) | 1,084 (1451) | 23,178 (24979) |
| **Total Cost of librarian salaries in Schools** | R 640,588,732 | R 176,718,108 | R 187,208,224 | R 636,092,968 | R 453,956,888 | R 204,845,452 | R 60,865,728 | R 186,631,844 | R 124,959,184 | R 2,671,867,128 |

* The bracketed figures represent the total number of schools in each category. Any slight inaccuracies in the totals are due to rounding errors.