Supporting best practices to improve teaching and learning outcomes in challenging, under-resourced and disadvantaged contexts.

The impact of the
School Development and Support Project
on 8 Primary Schools

Supporting + coaching + mentoring (school leaders + teachers) + providing (textbooks for every learner + teacher guides for every teacher) = improved (school functionality + learner performance + learner results) √

Kariem, V; Langhan, D; and Mpofu, N

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Introduction

In April 2009 the Foundation reported on the findings of a 6-month Baseline Study (July – December 2008) conducted as part of its School Development Project in 8 Primary Schools and 6 High Schools in 4 Provinces (Kariem, Langhan and Mpofu, 2009a). The report, subtitled: *Towards identifying the curriculum implementation support schools need*, compares the actual functionality of the 16 Project Schools with the Department of Education's expectations of them in terms of:

- The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) guidelines and the Foundations for Learning Programme

- The emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy through annual Systemic Assessments

- The Whole School Evaluation (WSE), Improving Quality Management System (IQMS), National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) and Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) Policy guidelines

In October 2009, the Foundation reported on the results of the Project's Grade 3 and 6 Literacy and Numeracy assessments administered as part of the same Baseline Study in October 2008 (Kariem, Langhan and Mpofu 2009b). The purpose of the assessments was to determine the learners' (and their school's) ability to fulfil NCS expectations. The paper, subtitled: *What learners are not learning, why, and what to do about it,* provides a detailed analysis of learner performance in the Project schools in 2008.

This report:

- Provides a summary of school development and support needs emerging from the 2008 Baseline Study.

- Describes the Foundation's School Development and Support Model and how it aims to address these needs.

- Describes the impact of the Model on the Project Schools after 1 year of implementation.

Trends from 2008 Baseline Study

School Functionality

Schools	2 relatively advantaged schools (Quintile 4)	1 previously advantaged school (still Quintile 4)	5 disadvantaged schools (Quintiles 1 – 3)
Functional	Leadership and management IQMS and NCS administrative compliance Curriculum management systems Curriculum implementation Teaching practices Good learner results	Leadership and management IQMS and NCS administrative compliance Foundation Phase teaching practices	
Partly functional	School Management Team	School Management Team Curriculum management systems Intermediate and Senior Phase teaching practices	Leadership and management **In 1 school only:** IQMS and NCS administrative compliance Educator Portfolios
Dysfunctional	NCS compliant Educator Portfolios dislocated from actual classroom practice	NCS compliant Educator Portfolios dislocated from actual classroom practice Weakest learner results of 8 schools	**In all 5 schools:** Curriculum leadership and management School Management Teams **In 4 schools:** IQMS and NCS administrative compliance Educator Portfolios Curriculum management systems Teaching practices Average to poor learner results

It is interesting to note the differences between the school's perceived main challenges:

	2 relatively advantaged schools	1 previously advantaged school	5 disadvantaged schools
Perceived main challenges	Lack of parental involvement Increasing impact of socio-economic conditions on learner behaviour	Impact of socio-economic conditions on learner results	Impact of socio-economic conditions on teaching, learning & learner results

Learner results
Across the 8 Project Schools, learners performed at between 30 - 35% of NCS expectations for both Literacy and Numeracy.

There were however, significant differences between the results of the more advantaged and the disadvantaged schools:

In the 2 more advantaged schools	Of the six disadvantaged schools
Most Grade 3 learners performed at between 50 - 70% of the NCS expectations. Almost half of the learners at one of the schools performed at between 30 - 50% of expectations.	In 3 schools, most Grade 3 learners performed at between 15 - 35%. In the other 3, most Grade 3s performed at between 30 - 50%
Grade 6 learners' achieved results around 15% lower than the Grade 3s.	In 3 schools, most Grade 6 learners performed at between 15 - 35%. In the other 3, Grade 6 learners scored between 20 – 35% lower than the Grade 3s.

These results, achieved using the Foundation's assessment instruments, are consistent with each of the school's results records for recent years, and with trends reported in:

- The Department of Education's Systemic Assessments of Literacy and Numeracy in Grades 3 and 6

- Three international surveys comparing learner performance in Mathematics, Science and Language competencies - the TIMMS, PIRLS and SAQMEC surveys.

What learners are not learning
A detailed analysis of the 2008 Baseline Study learner results indicates that, in relation to NCS requirements, learners in the 6 disadvantaged schools are generally not learning:

- Basic Literacy and Numeracy skills

- Thinking, reasoning, calculating or problem solving skills

- Enough content

- A broad range of learning or assessment activity types

- Integrated content or skills across Learning Areas

The 2008 Literacy results indicate that:

- The majority of the learners have poor listening and speaking skills

- About a fifth of the learners were unable to engage with any of the reading and writing activities and scored 0 (zero) for most activities. Of the learners who did engage with them:

    Most coped reasonably well with activities requiring:
    - One-word answers
    - Completing sentences
    - Extracting information directly from passages

    Most struggled with activities requiring:
    - Interpretation
    - Reasoning
    - Comparing
    - Independent thinking
    - Expressing opinions
    - Problem solving
    - Re-expressing information in other formats
    - Content knowledge and skills from other Learning Areas

The 2008 Numeracy results indicate that:

- About a quarter of the learners were unable to engage with any of the activities and scored 0.

- Most of the other learners coped with activities requiring basic understanding and operations.

- Most struggled with activities that included:
    - Using more than one operation
    - Dealing with more than one concept
    - Engaging in thinking and calculating at intermediate and advanced levels
    - Using mathematical instruments (in Grade 6)
    - Familiar content or concepts presented in unfamiliar ways

Poor teacher performance = poor learner results
The Baseline Study findings identified widespread poor teacher performance in the disadvantaged schools. They also suggest a direct relationship between poor learner results and what teachers routinely expose their learners to during teaching time. Apart from the Foundation Phase of the only previously advantaged school on the Project, most teachers in all 3 Provinces routinely exposed their learners to remarkably similar classroom routines, generally characterized by:

- Authoritarian attitudes

- The 'teacher is the expert' approach

- Shouting

- Lecturing as the main teaching method

- Very low expectations of the learners

- Very little content coverage

- An extremely narrow repertoire of teaching, learning and assessment experiences

- 70 - 80% of the teacher input in an African language during English medium classes in all Learning Areas

Typically, lessons in all 6 schools were structured around:

- Listening to lengthy teacher explanations

- Copying teacher's notes from the chalkboard

- Copying 5 questions from the chalkboard, receiving the answers through teacher lectures, and repeating them back to the teacher in chorus

- Frequent class chorusing

Apart from in the Foundation Phase classes already mentioned at 1 school, the following were notably absent in all 6 schools:

- Charts, posters or learner's work on the walls

- The use of Teacher's Guides

- Consistent use of English in English medium classes

- Regular exposure to, or use of, textbooks or other learning materials

- Other listening, speaking, reading or writing activities

- Thinking, reasoning or problem solving activities

- Independent, peer or group learning opportunities

These findings confirm that it is necessary to:
- Do much more classroom observation to understand exactly what is happening in classrooms.
- Provide training, coaching, mentoring and support to enable teachers to become better educators.
- Provide training, coaching and mentoring to enable School Leaders and District Officials to provide this kind of support to their schools.

Poor teacher support = **poor teacher performance**
The Baseline Study findings, together with observations from a year of school-based project implementation in the 6 disadvantaged schools, confirm that there are more than just Education System factors impacting on teacher performance in general, and on uptake of the NCS in particular. Just some of these include:

Socio-economic factors

- The impact of socio-economic factors on the daily lives of both educators and learners, and on teaching and learning cannot be underestimated. For example: poverty, hunger, poor health, frequent illness, absenteeism, lethargy/tiredness, increasing numbers of orphans, neglected learners, abused learners, widespread illiteracy, long distances, limited transportation options, and limited opportunities for personal and professional development.

Community beliefs about good education practice

- There may have been a fundamental mismatch between the foundational approaches and practices required by the NCS on the one hand; and deeply held community beliefs about what constitutes good education practice. For example:

  Community and school norms and practices around respectful relationships between adults and children are potentially in conflict with the learner-centred, participatory, interactive approach encouraged by the NCS. While observed practices in classrooms confirm that learners are expected to listen to educators respectfully and not to question or challenge them, or express independent opinions; the NCS expects learners to engage in interactive communication, critical thinking and express independent opinions.

  Similarly, norms and practices around the ways in which knowledge is passed on and learned are potentially in conflict with the NCS's facilitating and mediating approach. While observed practices confirm a widely held belief that educators should transmit knowledge to learners; the NCS expects them to engage learners in constructing knowledge for themselves.

  Many School Leaders and District Officials appear to be as disconnected from, or perhaps as bewildered by, the expectations of the NCS as their educators appear to be. This plays a role in diminishing the system's capacity to provide the necessary curriculum support.

These observations go some way towards explaining what appears to have been a widespread lack of initiative on the part of most role players (Community Leaders, Officials, School Leaders, Teacher Unions, educators and learners) to take ownership of, or responsibility for:

  Developing their own understanding of the NCS and its requirements

  Driving the transformation required of their own and their educators' practices in order to fulfil them.

However, as the pressure to produce better results increases, educators appear to have become the 'fall-guys' - taking the brunt of the blame for not implementing an Education system that requires transformations that they, the system's Officials and School Leaders have appeared to be resistant to, or perhaps lacking in confidence to embrace and implement in practice.

District support
- District support for curriculum implementation has been inadequate or non-existent in many disadvantaged contexts.

- What District support there is, emphasizes administrative compliance while paying little or no attention to practical curriculum implementation guidelines, or classroom practice.

- Many District and Circuit Officials require, and have expressed the need for support in understanding and meaningfully interpreting the practical implementation requirements of the NCS.

- As a consequence, there are often severe dislocations between 'officially compliant' Educator Portfolios, and actual classroom practices.

School leadership and management
- School leaders (including School Management Teams, HODs, Phase Heads and Learning Area Heads) need orientation to their roles and responsibilities as curriculum leaders and managers, and practical training and mentorship in implementing them.

- Most require as much support as teachers do in understanding, meaningfully interpreting and implementing the practical requirements of the NCS.

Teacher training and support
- Many educators are overwhelmed by, and unfamiliar with the NCS requirements.

- Poor training has produced educators lacking confidence, language competence (in the case of English medium instruction), content knowledge and skills.

- Educators have not had practical training in, experience of, exposure to, or modelling of the teaching or assessment methods and styles required by the NCS.

- Few educators have had the specific, practical Learning Area training they require to adapt their previous Subject training for their new Learning Areas.

- Educators receive little or no classroom implementation support.

- School leaders and educators require regular personal and professional development training, support and mentoring.

Mixed messages about the use of textbooks
- Mixed messages from National, Provincial and District Officials about the use of textbooks and Teacher Guides has resulted in a lack of confidence in the value of textbooks.

- Late delivery of textbooks to schools undermines reliance on textbooks.

- As a consequence, learner and teacher support materials that schools actually have are severely under-utilized.

- Rigid compliance requirements to frequently changing Provincial work schedules, undermines the systematic use of textbooks.

Medium of instruction challenges
- Many teachers who teach through the medium of an African language face significant challenges in teaching multi-language classes of learners.

- Many teachers who are required to teach through the medium of English require significant support to improve their own English competence.

- Schools receive little or no advice about selecting appropriate school language policies, or support to implement them meaningfully.

The combined impact of these sorts of interrelated factors provides insights that may help to explain why teachers in disadvantaged contexts have not enabled their learners to fulfil more of the NCS requirements. (For details about these factors, see Appendix 1.)

First steps towards addressing this broad range of factors impacting on teacher performance require, at least, finding ways to:

- Nurture fundamental attitudinal changes towards the NCS at school, community and District Office levels.

- Enable District Officials and School Leaders to model and support more appropriate and effective approaches to supporting teachers in their curriculum leadership, management, implementation, and monitoring roles.

- Provide necessary support to build educators' confidence in the NCS, and to enable them to embrace its effective implementation in their classrooms.

The School Development and Support Model

The summary of factors impacting on teacher performance emerging from the Baseline Study provides a useful framework for redirecting efforts to support teachers in disadvantaged schools. Based on this framework, the Foundation's School Development Project has developed, and begun implementing, a model that aims to explore how to address these factors in ways that could:

- Provide solutions

- Be replicated or adapted by Provincial and District Offices

The Table overleaf lists the interventions in the model, and the specific challenges each targets. (For details about how the interventions actually address each challenge, see Appendix 2.)

The Foundation's School Development and Support Model

Intervention	What it targets
Alternating 1 and 2-day school support visits to each school, every 5 to 6 weeks of the school year (to be maintained for a period of 3 years).	Lack of Curriculum management and implementation support
Train and support School Management Teams	Lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities as curriculum leaders and managers Absence of curriculum leadership and management
Facilitate personal and inter-personal development around implementing new leadership roles	Poor implementation of leadership and management responsibilities
Facilitate the exchange of leadership and management skills and experience between schools	Leadership and management challenges
Clarify administrative support roles	Under utilization of administrative staff
NCS orientation and training	Lack of curriculum training
Provision of series of approved NCS learner and teacher support materials	Lack of systematic textbook use
Practical, hands-on training in curriculum planning	Lack of curriculum planning and coordination
Practical, hands-on training in the use of learner and teacher support materials	Lack of training in the use of LTSMs
Practical hands-on support with developing Educator Portfolios	Dislocation between Educator Portfolios and classroom practice Inefficiencies in unnecessary writing and re-writing of work schedules, lesson plans etc Lack of focus on preparing to teach and facilitate learning
Practical support with developing a body of learning and assessment evidence	Limited repertoire of learning and assessment activities learners are exposed to
Discuss school language policy choices	African language and English Medium of instruction challenges for teachers and learners
Liaise with District Officials about all of the above	One-dimensional 'policing' relationships with schools, with emphasis on administrative compliance

Impact of the Model on the Schools in year 1

Prioritizing the focus areas

The 2008 Baseline Study findings indicated significant degrees of dysfunction in both general school functionality and curriculum implementation. For this reason, it was necessary to place the primary emphasis on setting up and strengthening systems and procedures that impacted on general school functionality and curriculum planning in the first year of the 3-year programme. This meant that although classroom-based curriculum implementation was addressed during 2009, it was secondary to:

- Clarifying, demonstrating and demystifying IQMS and NCS expectations and how to implement them.

- Clarifying and demonstrating related leadership management and general school administration roles and responsibilities.

- Setting up systems and procedures to facilitate curriculum management.

- Coaching and mentoring School Management Teams in implementing these systems.

- Initial LTSM orientation and basic training.

- Ensuring that Educator Portfolios complied with official expectations but also properly aligned LTSMs with NCS requirements.

Measuring the impact

Significant improvements in school functionality

Following a partnership approach to implementing the programme in the 6 disadvantaged schools, the project partners negotiated the priority interventions, their sequence and pacing for the year. It was agreed that the Model would be implemented more or less as follows:

- Year one - focused mainly on clarifying and setting up roles, responsibilities, relationships, systems and procedures for effective curriculum management; delivery of LTSMs; training in the use of LTSMs; and some emphasis on curriculum implementation in classrooms.

- Year two - focused on consolidating the above and a stronger emphasis on curriculum implementation.

- Year three - will focus on consolidating both and ensuring sustainability.

The following improvements have been recorded:

End of first quarter of 2009:
- All educators were much more clear about their respective roles and responsibilities - Educators showed more pride and urgency about their curriculum planning, preparation and implementation. - All teachers had begun to align the NCS requirements with the newly provided LTSMs in their Educator Portfolios. - All teachers had begun to plan Learner Portfolios (still required in 2009) that aligned NCS assessment requirements with their LTSMs. - Most learners were using Learner's Books, Workbooks and Readers for every Learning Area in every Grade. - Some teachers began using Teacher's Guides, while many preferred to use the Learner's Books as the main means of teaching.

- Most teachers were experimenting with using LTSMs more systematically. This automatically involved implementing an expanded range of teaching styles and methods, and exposing learners to a broader range of learning activities.

End of the second quarter of 2009:
- Most learners had completed more written activities in their exercise books and Learner Portfolios than they had by September of 2008. However, the quality of their engagement with many of the activities did not demonstrate significant improvement over 2008 standards.

- Most SMTs had made first steps towards functioning more in line with the curriculum leadership and management roles and responsibilities outlined in the IQMS post levels requirements.

End of the third quarter of 2009:
- Most Educator and Learner Portfolios were up-to-date, aligned with the LTSMs being used in classrooms, and close to full compliance with Departmental requirements.

- There was evidence of regular internal moderation by School Management Teams in many, but not all, Educator Portfolios.

- Most teachers reported spending much more time on lesson preparation than on writing up work schedules and lesson plans.

- Most teachers demonstrated increasing confidence in their ability to fulfil NCS requirements.

- Many teachers were using Teacher's Guides reasonably confidently and working through the LTSMs with their learners systematically, with variations from one class to another.

- Many, but not all teachers, were using a significantly expanded range of teaching methods and techniques, as suggested in the Teacher's Guides, to varying degrees of effectiveness.

- Most learners' exercise books and Learner Portfolios included at least four times as many completed and marked written activities than they did at more or less the same time in 2008.

- There was evidence that learners were being exposed to a broader range of learning and assessment activities.

- In a number of schools, there was evidence of learners doing homework and using their textbooks to work ahead of their educators.

- There was evidence that teachers were regularly monitoring and marking homework, class and assessment tasks and activities.

- Although learners were being exposed to, and doing a much broader range of activities than in 2008, there was evidence that they were struggling with many of the activities.

End of the fourth quarter of 2009:
- Trends from the third quarter continued.

- The 2009 Grade 3 and 6 learners completed the same Literacy and Numeracy assessments that were administered to the 2008 learners. The results are discussed below.

Unexpected improvements in learner results

The context
The original Project plan did not include administering Literacy and Numeracy assessments at the end of the first year of Project implementation for three main reasons:

1) Because of the need to emphasize general school development and functionality in year 1.

2) Because of the major adjustments that both teachers and learners would have to make in learning to use LTSMs in completely new ways.

3) Because Project staff did not anticipate improvements in learner results in year 1 because of the history of little or no change in the schools over the last decade.

Nevertheless, we were persuaded by the Chairperson of the Foundation's Board of Trustees to administer the assessments in order to determine whether this phase of the intervention, as it was, had any impact at all on learner results.

Potential limitations
As part of the teacher development agenda of the Project, the teachers had access to the assessment instruments in 2008, and were taken through them by Project staff so that they understood what they aimed to reveal about how teachers were teaching and what learners were learning. This was a critical step towards consolidating the initial orientation and training provided to help the teachers to understand the NCS and its requirements more fully.

However, since it had not been part of the plan to assess the learners in 2009, the teachers were not expecting their learners to be assessed until a few weeks before the assessments were administered. Each school was approached about the change in plan in the fourth quarter, and all were eager to proceed with assessments. The assessments were administered two weeks later.

Although the schools were not aware that the 2008 assessment instruments would be used again, unchanged, it is likely that some teachers might have attempted to prepare their learners for them by 'teaching to' what they remembered about them from 2008. Since this is general practice in preparation for any assessment or examination anyway, we did not anticipate that this possibility would significantly compromise the results. (For details about the Learning Outcomes covered and the focus of the activities in the assessment instruments, see Appendices 3 – 5.)

2008 and 2009 Literacy and Numeracy results
This section provides graphs comparing the 2008 and 2009 Grade 3 and 6 Literacy and Numeracy results in terms of:

- Grade average percentage

- Grade pass rates

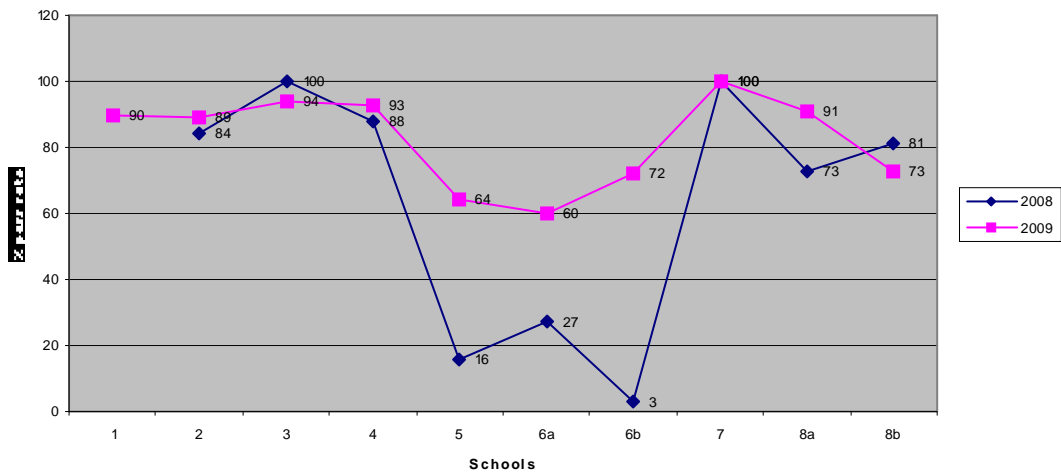- Number of learners scoring 0 (zero) per activity.

NOTES:
1) Learner enrolments remained roughly the same for 2008 and 2009, with a few minor variations, which do not impact significantly on the trends summarized in the graphs below.

2) There are eight participating schools. a) and b) next to the number symbolizing a school, represent results for two different language groups. 6a) and b) represent English and Zulu, and 8a) and b) English and Afrikaans respectively.
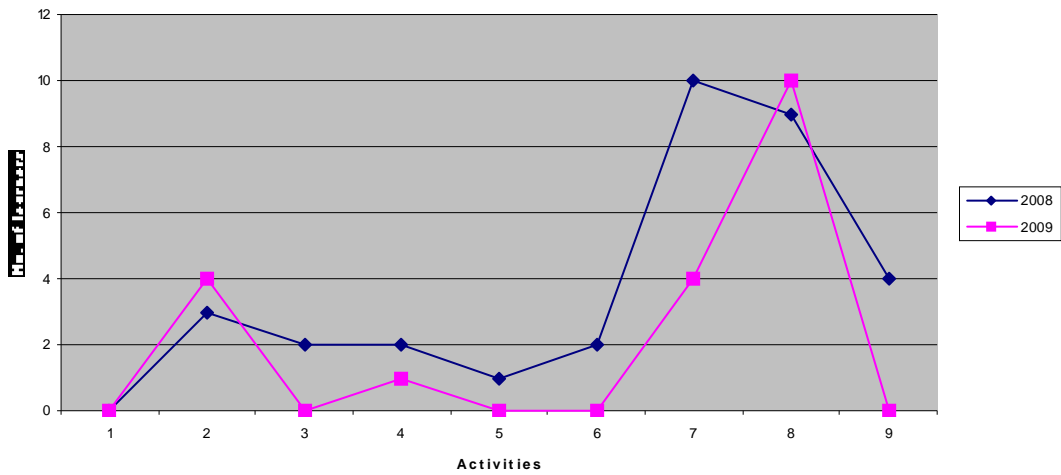
Grade 3 - Literacy

2008 & 2009 Grade 3 Literacy averages: Of 10 grades, 1 not compared, 7 improvements & 2 drops. Average increase across the 7 improvements - 9%. Average decrease across 2 drops - 10%
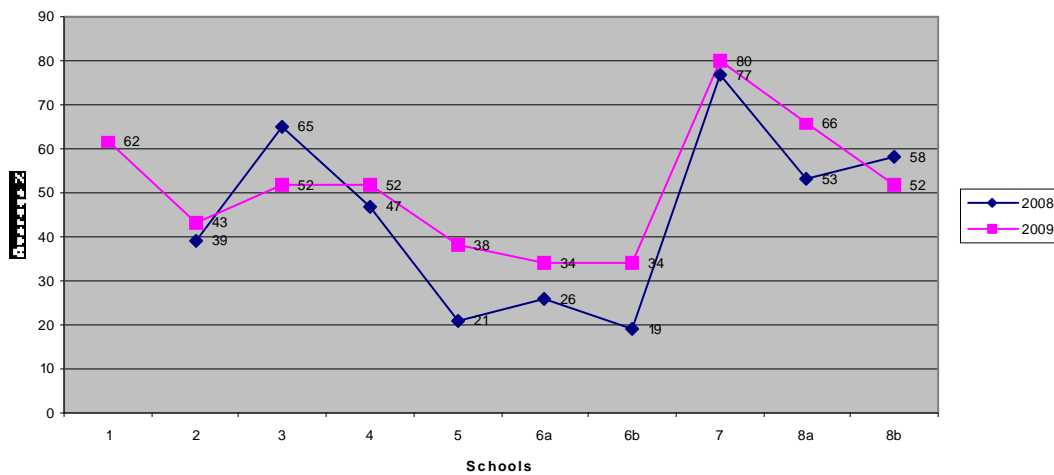
2008 & 2009 Grade 3 Literacy Pass Rates: Of 10 grades, 1 not compared, 6 improvements, 1 constant & 2 drops. Average increase in pass rate across the 6 improvements - 30%. Average decrease across 2 drops - 7%
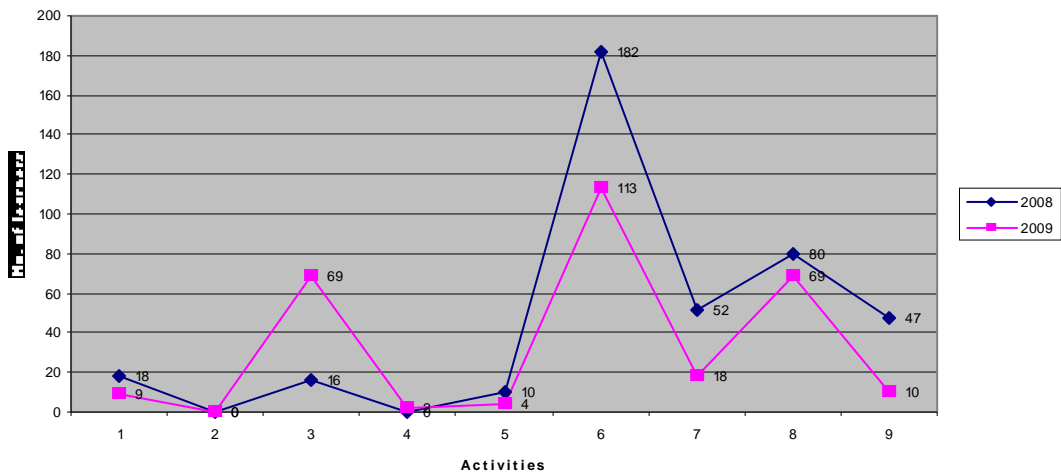

2008 & 2009 Grade 3 Afrikaans Literacy: Number of learners scoring 0 decreased for 6 of 9 activities, indicating improved performance of weakest learners

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2008 & 2009 Grade 3 English Literacy: Number of learners scoring 0 decreased significantly in all 8 activities, indicating much improved performance of weakest learners
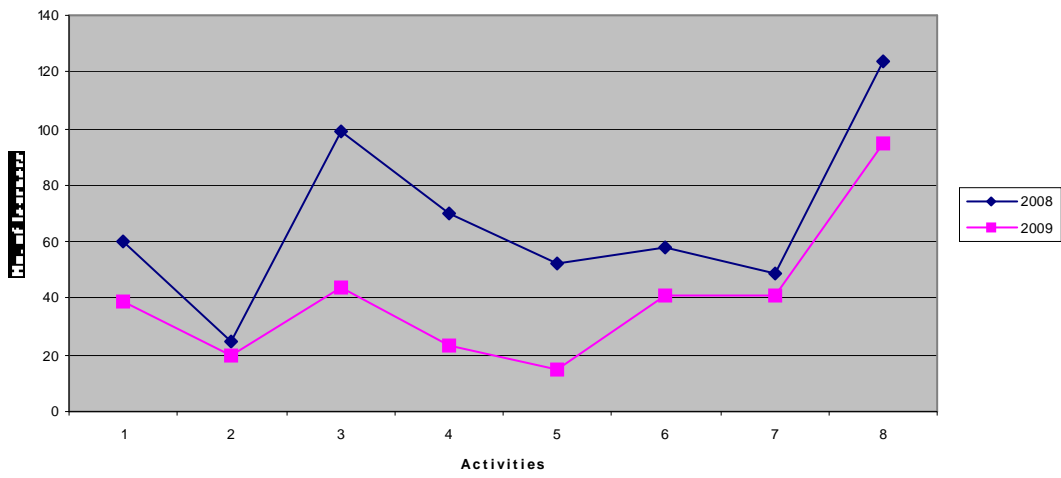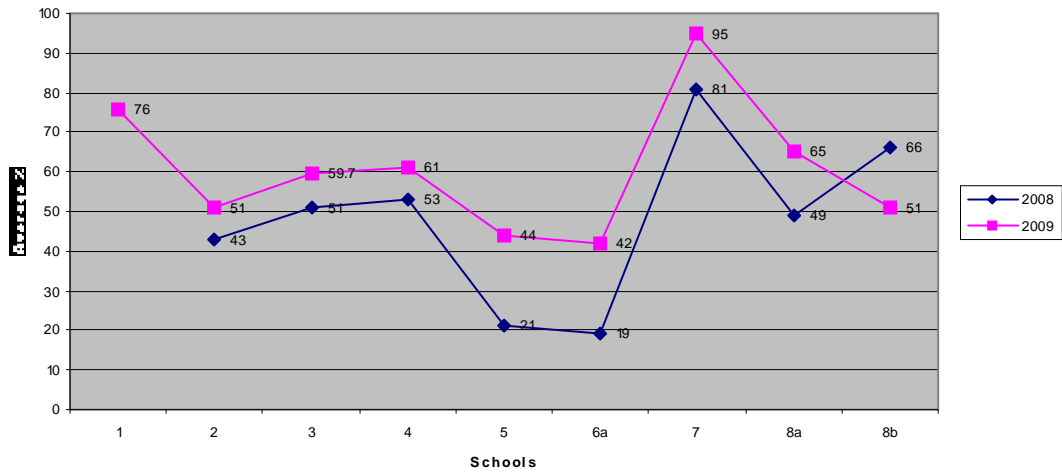

2008 and 2009 Gr 3 African Languages: Number of learners scoring 0 constant for 4 of 9 activities & decreased significantly for 4, indicating improved performance of weakest learners
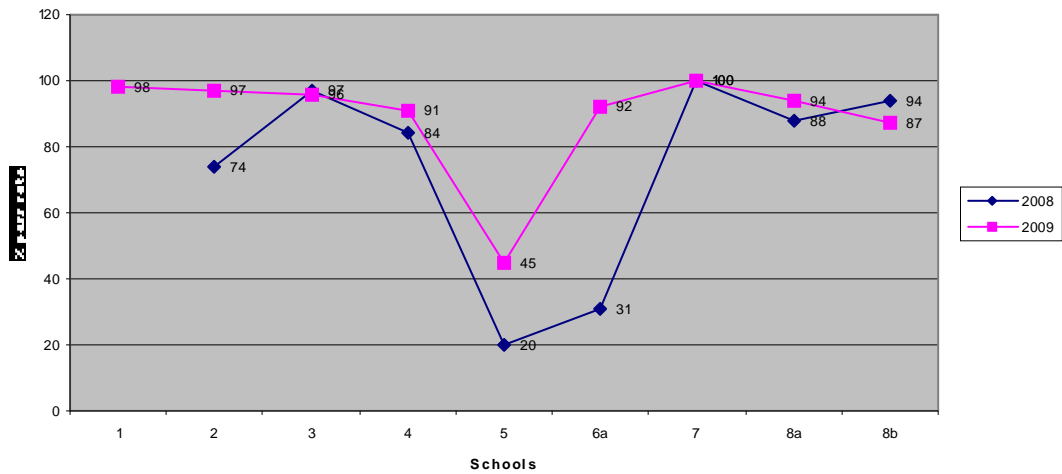

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Grade 3 – Numeracy

2008 & 2009 Grade 3 Numeracy averages: Of 9 grades, 1 not compared, 7 improvements & 1 drop. Average increase across the 7 improvements - 14%. 1 drop - 15%.

2008 & 2009 Grade 3 Numeracy Pass Rates: Of 9 grades, 1 not compared, 5 improvements, 2 constants & 1 drop. Average increase in pass rate across the 5 improvements - 25%. Decrease for 1 drop - 7%

2008 & 2009 Gr 3 Numeracy: Number of learners scoring 0 decreased significantly for 14 of 16 activities, indicating much improved performance of weakest learners
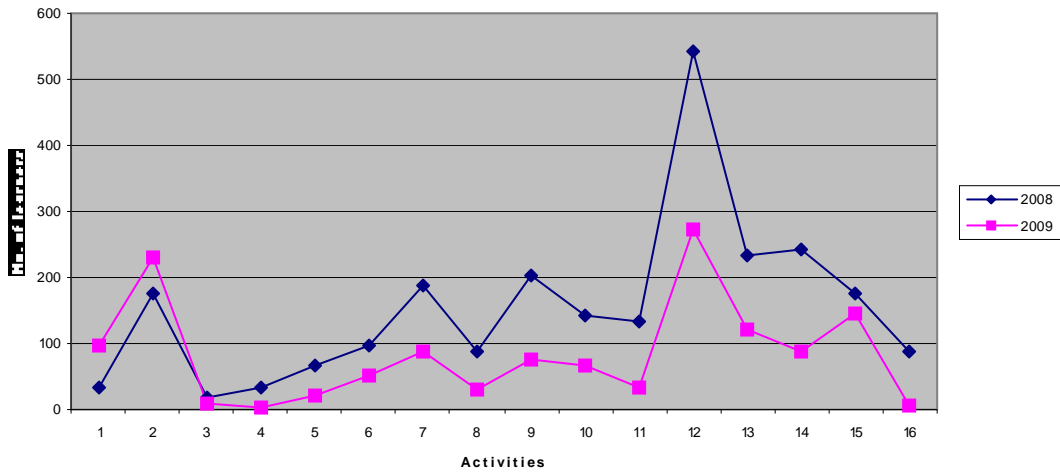
Grade 6 - Literacy

2008 & 2009 Grade 6 Literacy averages: Of 9 grades, 4 improvements, 1constant & 4 drops. Average increase across the 4 improvements - 4%. Average decrease across 4 drops - 9%

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2008 & 2009 Grade 6 Literacy Pass Rates: Of 9 grades, 4 improvements, 1 constant & 4 drops. Average increase in pass rate across 4 improvements - 25%. Average decrease across 4 drops - 12%

2008 & 2009 Gr 6 Afrikaans Literacy: Number of learners scoring 0 increased for 5 of 9 activities, indicating an overall drop in performance of weakest learners

20
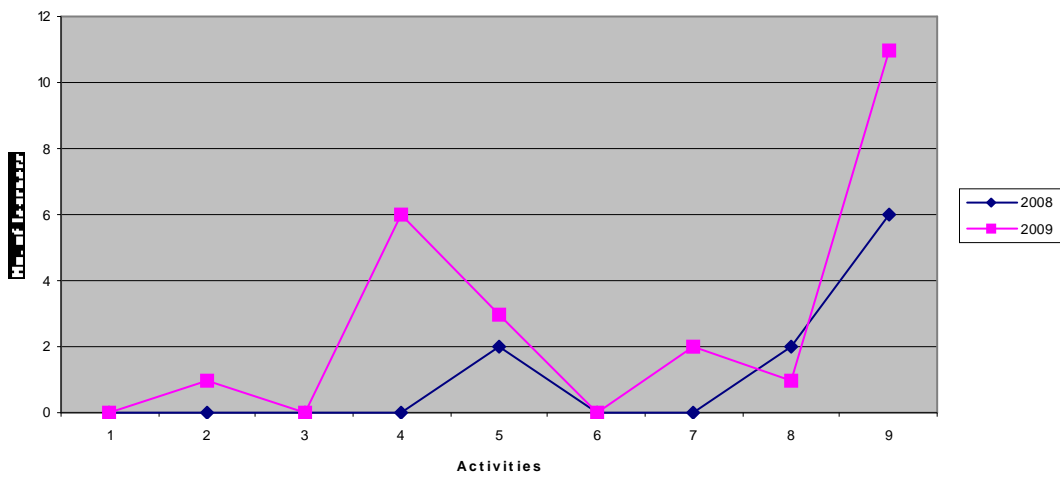
2008 & 2009 Gr 6 English Literacy: Number of learners scoring 0. Marginal decreases for 7 of 10 activities & dramatic increases for 2, indicate mixed performance of weakest learners

Grade 6 - Numeracy

2008 & 2009 Grade 6 Numeracy averages:Of 9 grades, 6 improvements & 3 constants. Average increase across the 6 improvements - 10%
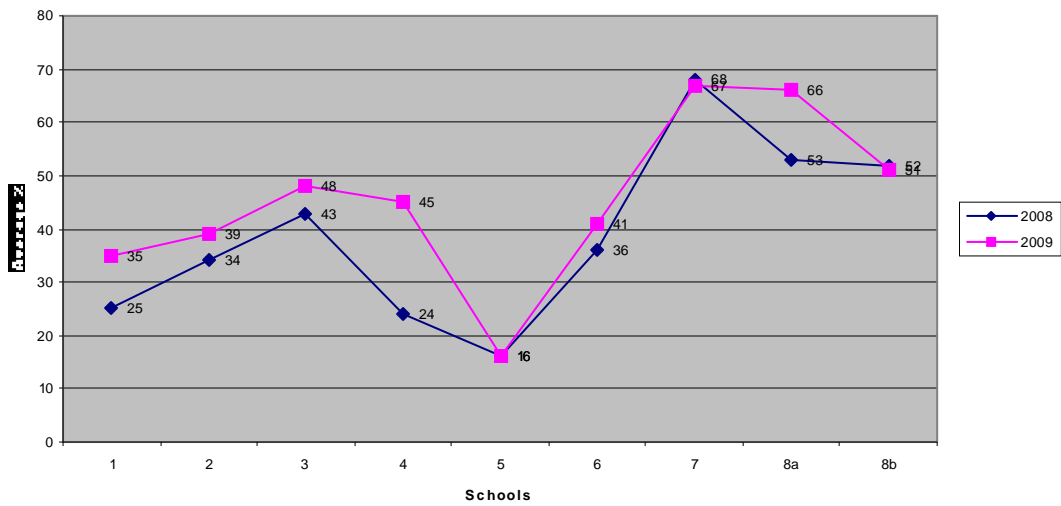
2008 & 2009 Grade 6 Numeracy Pass Rates: Of 9 grades, 6 improvements, 2 constants & 1 drop. Average increase in pass rate across 6 improvements - 30%. Decrease for 1 drop - 14%
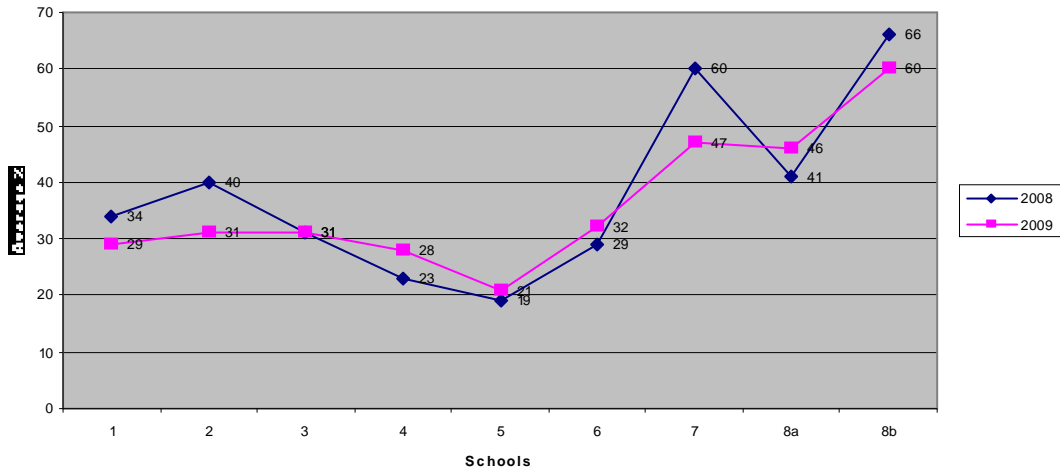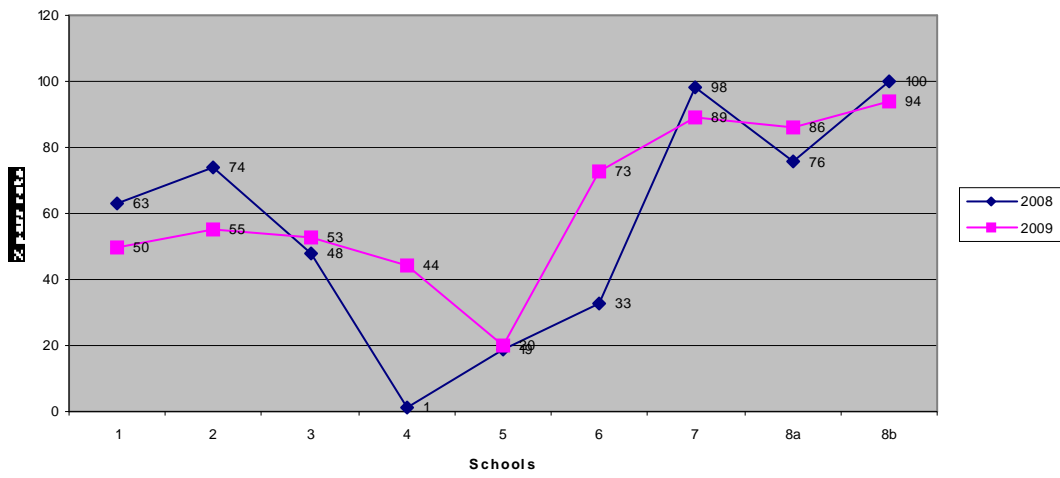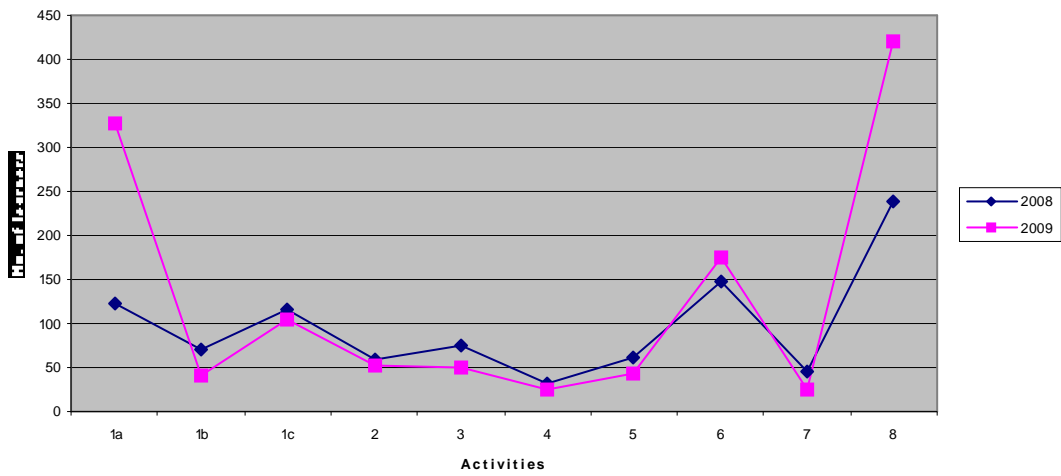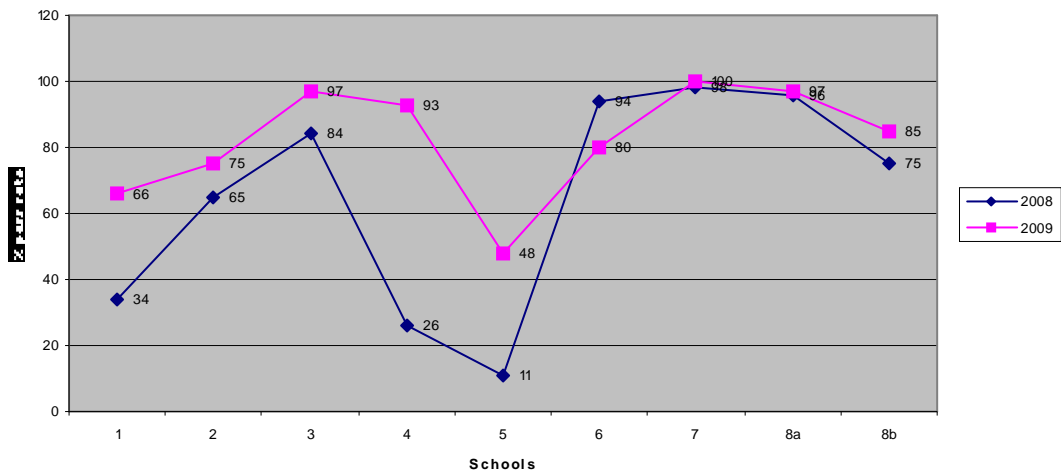

2008 & 2009 Gr 6 Numeracy: Number of learners scoring 0 remains constant for 6 of 20 activities & decreases significantly for 12, indicating much improved performance by the weakest learners

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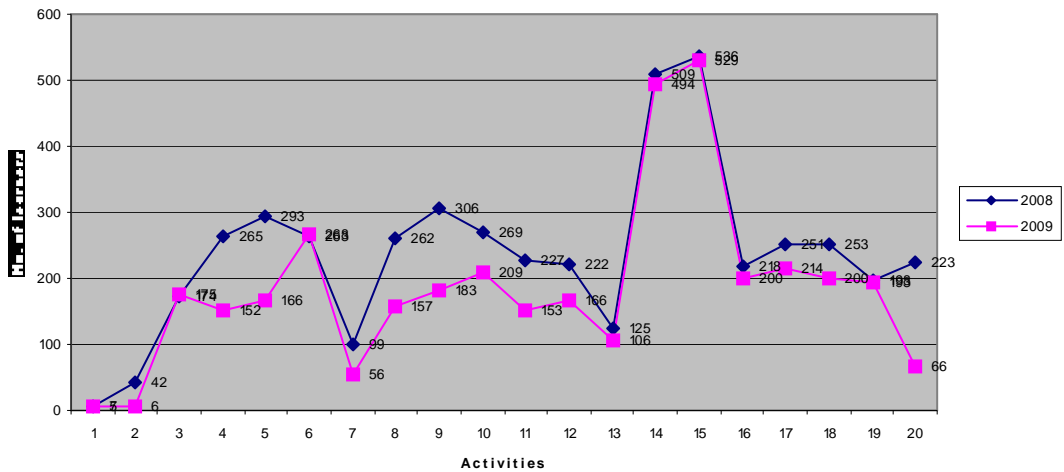
Emerging trends in year 1

Improved school functionality

Within 1 year, almost all of the disadvantaged schools have taken great strides towards:

- Taking on clarified leadership and management roles and responsibilities

- Setting up systems and procedures that comply with policy requirements and that impact directly on the way things are done in the schools and in classrooms

- Implementing them with commitment and enthusiasm to varying degrees of effectiveness

- Ensuring that their schools are functioning more effectively

The most significant challenges emerging from these changes seem to be associated with:

- Adapting to and taking individual responsibility for new roles and responsibilities

- Delegating and monitoring responsibilities

- Nurturing a supportive culture of accountability

Learner results

	Grade average improvements	Grade Pass rate improvements	Learners scoring 0
Grade 3 Literacy	Av increase across 7 of 9 grades that improved – **9%**	Pass rate improvement across 7 of 10 grades that improved – **30%**	**Afrikaans:** Decreased significantly for 6 of 9 activities **English:** Decreased moderately for 2 & significantly for 6 of 8 activities **Xhosa, Zulu & Sepedi:** Constant for 4 & decreased significantly for 4 of 9 activities
Grade 3 Numeracy	Average increase across 7 of 9 grades that improved – **14%**	Pass rate improvement across 7 of 9 grades that improved **– 25%**	**Afrikaans, English, Xhosa, Zulu & Sepedi:** Decreased significantly for 14 of 16 activities
Grade 6 Literacy	Average increase across 5 of 9 grades that improved – **4%**	Pass rate improvement across 5 of 9 grades that improved – **25%**	**Afrikaans:** 3 constant & decreased moderately for 1 of 9 activities **English:** Decreased moderately for 7 of 10 activities
Grade 6 Numeracy	Average increase across all 9 grades – **10%**	Pass rate improvement across 8 of 9 grades that improved – **30%**	**Afrikaans & English:** Constant for 6 & decreased significantly for 12 of 20 activities

So, in the first year of implementation, the 8 Project schools unexpectedly achieved the following improvements for Literacy and Numeracy in Grades 3 and 6:

- Moderate improvements in Grade averages of: 4 – 14%

- Significant improvements in Grade pass rates of: 25 – 30%

- Significant decreases in the number of learners scoring 0 (zero)

- Significant increases in the number of learners engaging more meaningfully with a broader range of the assessment activities

- The most significant overall improvements were achieved by the 3 schools that performed worst in 2008

- In qualitative terms, the Grade 3s achieved more significant improvements than the Grade 6s.

Given the Project's primary emphasis on school functionality in 2009, supplemented by less training and classroom-based support than is envisaged for 2010; these achievements can be largely attributed to teachers' and learners' first attempts at using the provided Teacher's Guides and textbooks systematically. Classroom observations confirm that using these LTSMs supported teachers to experiment with:

- Teaching through the medium of instruction more consistently

- Using a broader range of teaching, learning and assessment methods and techniques

- Providing learners with more structured conceptual development explanations/demonstrations prior to engaging with learning activities

- Engaging learners in a broader range of learning and assessment activities

- Engaging with and developing the competencies of more of the weak and average learners (who have typically made up the bulk of the learners who have been promoted before they are ready to proceed to the next Grade in the last decade)

Conclusions

In spite of the apparent resistance to, or the lack of confidence to embrace and implement the IQMS and NCS over the last decade or so, all of the District Offices the Foundation approached were eager to involve their schools in the Project.

Similarly, all of the schools the District Officials nominated to participate in the Project were eager to receive and embrace the kind of support proposed in the School Development and Support Model.

This implies that, among others, four critical factors may have contributed to the poor uptake of the IQMS and NCS in disadvantaged contexts in the last decade:

- Inadequate preparation of Education Officials to support practical implementation in schools.

- An imbalance in the approach to monitoring and supporting implementation - with too much emphasis on policing administrative compliance; and far too little on providing adequate initial teacher training and ongoing, practical, school-based support.

- Mixed messages about, and distrust of the value of Teacher's Guides and textbooks that embody and support the NCS.

- A consequent lack of confidence among all key role-players.

Compared to the lack of progress in implementing the IQMS and NCS in the disadvantaged schools over the last decade or so, the progress made within the first year of implementing the Model is remarkable, and the schools are to be congratulated on their achievements.

These kinds of achievements, within 1 year, confirm that with the right kinds of support, School Leaders and teachers are both willing, and more than capable of implementing the IQMS and NCS much more effectively.

As always, new and possibly unanticipated challenges can be expected to emerge from this change process. These will need to be embraced constructively, and perhaps courageously, in order to adapt and develop the ways in which schools require support.

Appendix 1

Poor teacher support = poor teacher performance

Reason	Explanation
District support for curriculum implementation has been inadequate or non-existent	In the three disadvantaged groups of schools, Curriculum Advisors were appointed for the first time in 2008. Many teachers felt intimidated by Departmental Officials, rather than supported by them. Few schools experience more than one or two official visits to their schools in any school year. All of these visits are too brief to include more than superficial engagement around compliance requirements. Few officials understand the curriculum requirements better than the teachers, and few seemed able to provide practical implementation support or mentorship in classrooms.
District support to schools emphasizes administrative compliance at the expense of supportive practical curriculum implementation guidelines in the classroom.	District officials emphasize and check administrative requirements, check Educator and Learner Portfolios against predetermined checklists from National or Provincial Offices, and tick boxes on forms; rather than supporting teaching, learning and assessment practices in classrooms. Teachers spent more time working on preparing and updating their Educator and Learner Portfolios to ensure that they comply with administrative requirements than they spend on preparing to teach.
Lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities in relation to curriculum leadership and management at schools	Few School Management Teams, Heads of Departments, or Learning Area Heads had a clear understanding of their roles as either school leaders and managers, or curriculum leaders and managers. There was little or no curriculum leadership and management at the level of individual teachers, within Learning Areas, or across Phases.
Most teachers are overwhelmed by, and unfamiliar with the NCS requirements	Very few teachers had received adequate NCS training, support or mentorship. Most teachers are overwhelmed by the administrative requirements associated with the NCS. Most teachers did not have their own copies of the Curriculum Guideline Documents for their Learning Areas. Many teachers found the sheer number of NCS documents overwhelming and confusing. Many found the level of detail in them, and the repetition across them very confusing. Many had begun, but never completed reading the NCS documents. Many teachers were not familiar with, or confident that they understood the NCS requirements for their Learning Areas. Very few teachers knew, or were confident about how to implement the NCS requirements practically.
Little or no classroom implementation support	None of the teachers had received any practical, hands-on support from Curriculum Advisors, or their own school leaders, that demonstrated how to implement and achieve curriculum expectations in terms of: - Facilitating effective teaching, learning and assessment activities. - Organizing and managing classrooms effectively. - Using learner and teacher support materials to fulfil NCS requirements.
Severe dislocations between official administrative requirements and actual classroom practices	Most teachers admit to a significant dislocation between the content of the portfolios they have to prepare to comply with administrative requirements, and what they actually do in their classrooms. Few Curriculum Advisors are aware of the dislocation between the content of the Educator's Portfolios and their classroom practices. Partly they seldom, if ever, enter classrooms.
Poor training has produced teachers lacking in confidence, with limited English competence & poor content knowledge and skills	Many teachers have limited reading, writing and speaking competencies in English. Many teachers who were trained in the old 'subject areas' lack confidence in their content knowledge in the new Learning Areas they are responsible for.
Mixed message about the use of textbooks and Less	The National Department requires that all approved LTSMs be developed so as to embody curriculum expectations and provide systematic support to enable teachers

from National, Provincial and District Officials	to implement the curriculum, and learners to fulfil its expectations. Yet it does not appear to encourage it officials to encourage teachers to use such materials systematically. At the same time, many officials support the implicit expectations of Curriculum 2005 and NCS - that teachers should not work through a single textbook systematically; but instead use a range of resources to develop their own lessons. The problem for teachers is that very few schools have the sort of range of resources to support such an approach, or easy access to a broad range of resources. Some officials discourage the use of textbooks if they do not at first glance appear to comply exactly with prescribed sequences in National or Provincial Guideline documents. The way some Officials have used the 2008 Foundations for Learning Guideline Documents provide a classic examples of this. Other officials require that teachers use materials to follow the sequence suggested in official documents, rather than the sequence in already approved NCS textbooks. This means that teachers, who did try to follow textbooks systematically, were under pressure to compromise the conceptual development sequence that specialist authors had developed in such textbooks.
Poor supply and management of learner and teacher support materials	Very few schools had enough textbooks and most of the books they did have were kept, unused, in storerooms. Very few ordered materials actually arrive in time for use at the beginning of a school year. Few teachers seem to be aware of the resources that are available to them in school storerooms, and few seem to make use of them.
Learner and teacher support materials are severely under-utilized	Very few teachers used Teacher's Guides, textbooks, or learner's books systematically. Teachers who did use textbooks or Learner's Books, did so without referring to accompanying Teacher's Guides, thus depriving learners of much of the content included in the Teacher's Guides as preparation for activities in Textbooks or Learner's Books. Many teachers 'taught' learning activities instead of allowing the learners to do them as intended, thus depriving them of opportunities to engage with a broad range of activities. Similarly, teachers who used textbooks or Learner's Book as the 'teaching textbook' did not provide the learners with their own copies of the book, thus depriving them of daily opportunities to read from the books.
Medium of instruction challenges	Teachers and learners are placed at a significant disadvantage in schools where the medium of instruction changes from an African language to English from Grade 4 onwards. In these Grades, much, if not most of the teaching and learning in English medium classrooms takes place in African languages. This is partly because many teachers lack exposure to English and lack the confidence to teach in English. Learners are significantly disadvantaged in schools where English is the medium of instruction from Grade 1, when English is not the first language or the teachers, and when English the language of the teachers, but not the language of the learners or their families. In the former, because teachers teach mainly through an African language; and in the latter, because the teachers are unable to mediate between English and the learners' Home language. In both cases, the lack of support for English in the home environment exacerbates the situation.

Appendix 2
The Foundation's School Development and Support Model

Intervention	What it targets	What is aims to achieve
Alternating 1 and 2-day school support visits to each school, every 5 to 6 weeks of the school year (to be maintained for a period of 3 years).	Lack of Curriculum management and implementation support.	Regular school-based monitoring and support over an extended period that incorporates: - Needs assessments - Ongoing, predictable and negotiated training, mentoring and support to address needs identified by schools. - Allocating agreed upon SMT and educator responsibilities and actions between visits. - Holding SMTs and educators accountable for these actions by reflecting on progress made, providing guidance and planning future actions for successive visits.
Train and support School Management Teams	Lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities as curriculum leaders and managers Absence of curriculum leadership and management	Orientation to IQMS post level responsibilities for curriculum and teaching responsibilities. Support school leadership to set up SMTs to function more effectively and to allocate curriculum leadership and management responsibilities among its members. Demonstrate and mentor practical implementation of these roles and responsibilities with SMT. Agree on SMT tasks for doing the same with their teachers.
Facilitate personal and inter-personal development around implementing new leadership roles	Poor implementation of leadership and management responsibilities	Demonstrate and mentor constructive, motivating ways to delegate and monitor responsibilities and to hold staff accountable for tasks.
Facilitate the exchange of leadership and management skills and experience between schools	Leadership and management challenges	Facilitate a school Leadership and Management Exchange Programme including regular joint SMT meetings between schools to create opportunities for: School leaders and SMTs to share best practices. SMTs and District Officials to collaborate to develop their own strategies to address the curriculum implementation challenges they face.
Clarify administrative support roles	Under utilization of administrative staff	Clarify administrative functions of non-educator staff. Mentor setting up and implementing efficient administrative systems and procedures.
NCS orientation and training	Lack of curriculum training	Orientation to NCS Learning Area and Assessment documents. Confidence building through demystification and simplification of aims and essential NCS requirements.
Provision of series of approved NCS learner and teacher support materials	Lack of systematic textbook use	Delivery of materials at the beginning of the school year. Provision of LTSMs for every teacher and every learner, for every Learning Area, in every Grade. This includes approved NCS Teacher's Guides, Textbooks/Learner's Books, Workbooks and Readers.
Practical, hands-on training in curriculum planning	Lack of curriculum planning and coordination	Facilitate planning of teaching and learning with NCS frameworks and approved LTSM materials to ensure integration, progression and continuity within and across Phases.
Practical, hands-on training in the use of learner and teacher support materials.	Lack of training in the use of LTSMs	Show teachers how NCS approved Teacher's Guides and textbooks/Learner's Books: - Embody coherent curriculum planning - Ensure integration, progression and continuity between Learning Areas and across Grades. Show teachers how Teacher's Guides and learner materials meet and cover curriculum requirements. Demonstrate how to use Teacher's Guides and learner materials systematically in order to: - Facilitate effective teaching, learning and assessment practices. - Organize and manage classrooms effectively.

		- Cover required content and skills. - Prepare learners adequately for activities with adequate conceptual development input. - Expose learners to the full range of learning and assessment activities.
Practical hands-on support with developing Educator Portfolios	Dislocation between Educator Portfolios and classroom practice Inefficiencies in unnecessary writing and re-writing of work schedules, lesson plans etc Lack of focus on preparing to teach and facilitate learning	Explain what policy and curriculum documents are required in Educator Portfolios and ensure that they are understood and included. Demonstrate how to incorporate work schedules and lesson plans provided in NCS approved Teacher's Guides, into Educator Portfolios to reduce administrative burden. Demonstrate how this achieves alignment of Educator Portfolio with the NCS, LTSMs and teaching, learning and assessment practices in the classroom. Demonstrate how to prepare for daily teaching and learning using Teacher's Guide and learner materials to. - Improve teacher's content knowledge. Demonstrate how to teach and facilitate learning using the LTSM materials to: - Expose learners to the full range of learning and assessment activities. - Prepare them better for examinations and formal systemic assessments.
Practical support with developing a body of learning and assessment evidence	Limited repertoire of learning and assessment activities learners are exposed to	Show and clarify what the NCS assessment requirements are for each Learning Area per term. Ensure that learning and assessment activities are aligned with NCS requirements. Demonstrate how to fulfil assessment requirements by systematically working through the teacher and learner support materials with learners.
Discuss school language policy choices	African language and English Medium of instruction challenges for teachers and learners.	Discuss and consider ways of addressing the challenges presented by medium of instruction choices that disadvantage learners, particularly in multi-language African language classes. Explain how thorough lesson preparation using the LTSM materials (for all languages), and their systematic use during classes will help to: - Improve teacher's reading skills. - Help teachers to use the English provided in the LTSMs while teaching English medium classes. - Provide learners with more consistent exposure to English during English medium classes.
Liaise with District Officials about all of the above	One-dimensional 'policing' relationships with schools, with emphasis on administrative compliance	Share with officials, and offer to demonstrate how to balance administrative compliance requirements and classroom implementation support and mentorship needs.

Appendix 3

Grade 3 Literacy: Learning Outcomes covered and in the assessment activities

	Afrikaans	English	Sepedi IsiXhosa/IsiZulu
Activity 1	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Identify and label body parts on diagram	LOs 3, 4, 6 - Jumbled shopping list. Rearrange jumbled phrases in a list to show understanding of meaning.	LOs 3, 6 - Rewrite a paragraph filling in the correct pronouns.
Activity 2	LO 6 - Complete sentences in past tense	LOs 3, 6 - Rewrite a paragraph filling in the correct pronouns.	LOs 3, 5 - Understand instructions, interpret a picture, and distinguish between abilities and disabilities.
Activity 3	LO 6 - Look at pictures, interpret them and choose the correct prepositions.	LOs 3, 4, 5, 6 - Use the dictionary to complete a table.	LOs 3, 5 - Read and interpret a map, find information, do a mental calculation.
Activity 4	LO 6 - Read, view, select pairs of opposites.	LOs 3, 5 - Interpret a bus timetable and route map to solve problems.	LOs 3, 5 - Read a table, read and understand a number of options, select correct options to complete the table.
Activity 5	LOs 3, 4, 6 - Interpret a picture, understand and select nouns to complete sentences.	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Use visual clues to sequence jumbled sentences to give instructions in the correct order.	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Understand a key for a map, interpret a map, and work out problems.
Activity 6	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Read questions, interpret a picture to find the answers to the questions and give an opinion.	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Work out the sequence for jumbled sentences, rewrite sentences in the correct order.	LOs 3, 5 - Follow instructions, work out the sequence for making things.
Activity 7	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Gather information from textual and visual clues, think and reason to complete word sums.	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Use visual clues to interpret sentences, select the right time from a set of options.	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Interpret a picture to write directions.
Activity 8	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Sequence jumbled pictures and sentences to tell a story.	LOs 3, 5 - Read story sums and solve word sum problems.	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Compare information, make choices, give reasons for the choices, do calculations.
Activity 9	LOs 1, 2, 5 - Listen to and retell a story in own words - A man and a lion that help each other.	LOs 1, 2, 5 - Listen to a story and answer questions about the story verbally to show understanding and independent thinking.	LOs 3, 5 - Read and interpret a bus timetable, do calculations.
Activity 10	LO 3 - Read the story out loud.	LO 3 - Read the story aloud.	

Appendix 4

Grade 6 Literacy: Learning Outcomes covered in the assessment activities

	Afrikaans	English
Activity 1	LOs 6 - Select 'shall' or 'will' to complete sentences.	LOs 3, 4, 5, 6 - a. Read a non-fiction passage for information. b. Correct punctuation and spelling. **c.** Comprehension questions, express an opinion, compare.
Activity 2	LO 6 - Join words & give plural and diminutive forms of words.	LO 3 - Use visual and verbal cues and clues to work out meanings of words
Activity 3	LO 6 - Punctuate a brief report.	LOs 3, 5 - Use an extract from a telephone directory to find information.
Activity 4	LOs 3, 4, 6 - Interpret a picture story, join sentences, and anticipate what characters in the picture story might say.	LOs 3, 5 - Read a dialogue, answer questions to show understanding, match sentences with reasons
Activity 5	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Read time in jumbled pictures, arrange in correct order, write in sequence.	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Read an advertisement, answer questions to show understanding, compare things.
Activity 6	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Read a diary, answer questions and express opinions.	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Read and show understanding by listing advantages and disadvantages.
Activity 7	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Read, view, select information to complete a diagram showing values.	LOs 3, 5 - Interpret an organogram.
Activity 8	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Read, compare different opinions, think, reason, and write arguments for and against a situation.	LOs 3, 4, 5 - Re-express information in a flow diagram, summarize.
Activity 9	LOs 1, 2, 5 - Listen to a story about good deed, tell story in own words, identify emotions in the story.	LOs 1, 2 - Listen to a description of how fossils are formed, tell in own words how fossils are formed to show comprehension.
Activity 10	LO 3 - Read the story out loud.	LO 3 - Read the text out loud.

Appendix 5

Grade 3 Numeracy: Learning Outcomes covered in the assessment activities

	Afrikaans/ English/ Sepedi/ IsiXhosa/IsiZulu
Activity 1	LO 1 – Ordering numbers from smallest to biggest
Activity 2	LO 1- Ordering numbers from smallest to biggest
Activity 3	LO 2 - Counting to 1000 in 100, 50,99
Activity 4	LO 3 - Complete the pattern, squares, circles and triangles
Activity 5	LO 2 - Join the dot and show how many dots and lines
Activity 6	LO 1 - Place Values
Activity 7	LO 1 - Expanded Notation
Activity 8	LO 1 - Fractions
Activity 9	LO 1 - Fractions
Activity 10	LO 4 - Time
Activity 11	LO 1 - Round off to nearest 10
Activity 12	LO 1 - Round off and calculate
Activity 13	LO 1 - Basic operations of add, subtract, multiply + divide
Activity 14	LO 1 - Expanded Notation
Activity 15	LO 5 - Complete the table
Activity 16	LO 2 - Identify light and heavy animals

Grade 6 Numeracy: Learning Outcomes covered in the assessment activities

	Afrikaans/ English
Activity 1	LO 1 - Common Fractions
Activity 2	LO 1 - 8 + 9 digit numbers
Activity 3	LO 1 - Place Values
Activity 4	LO 1 - Place Values
Activity 5	LO 1 - Rounding off to 5, 10, 100 + 1000
Activity 6	LO 1 - Round off, estimate, calculate and difference
Activity 7	LO 5 - Area and population
Activity 8	LO 5 - Area and population
Activity 9	LO 2 - Solve + complete the number sentence
Activity 10	LO 2 - Solve + complete the number sentence
Activity 11	LO 2 - Translate the numbers into words
Activity 12	LO 3 - Identify the shapes
Activity 13	LO 4 - Measure the sides and angles
Activity 14	LO 4 - Problem solving with mass
Activity 15	LO 4 - Calculate the volume
Activity 16	LO 4 - Which volume is more
Activity 17	LO 4 - Identify the time
Activity 18	LO 4 - Translate from digital to analogue
Activity 19	LO 4 - Illustrate the analogue time
Activity 20	LO 5 - Tallying

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