

# TEACHERS WITHOUT CLASSROOMS: EDUCATION IN VENDA

BY  
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## FOREWORD

In 1994 educationist Heather Jacklin and sociologist Johann Graaff, both from the University of Cape Town, completed reports on rural education in each of the ten the homelands, and then a summary report – eleven reports in all. The overarching title of the set of reports was to have been *Rural education in South Africa: a report on schooling in the Bantustans*. Unfortunately the reports were never published, although photocopies did find their way to some researchers.

The titles and authors of the eleven reports are:

- Final report on homeland education (Jacklin and Graaff)
- Is Bop better? A case-study in educational innovation (Graaff)
- Schooling in KaNgwane (Jacklin)
- Inherit the wind: a report on education in Lebowa (Jacklin)
- Education as an instrument of war: the case of KwaZulu/Natal (Graaff)
- Schooling in KwaNdebele (Jacklin)
- Schooling in the Ciskei (Jacklin)
- Teachers without classrooms: education in Venda (Graaff)
- Klein maar getrain: education in QwaQwa (Graaff)
- Schooling in Gazankulu (Jacklin)
- Rural Education Project report: Transkei (Jacklin)

Linda Chisholm of the University of Johannesburg was one of the researchers who obtained a ring-bound photocopy of the eleven reports, and she has used them in her own research. She deemed them valuable enough to warrant digitizing, and in 2017 made the suggestion to me by way of her sister Alison (my deputy). Indeed, nothing as comprehensive as these reports had been published on education in the homelands. Further, though unpublished, a number of these reports have been cited.

In 2018 I was given the go-ahead to place them on the Wits institutional repository. Both Heather Jacklin and Johann Graaff readily gave Wits permission to do so. Heather also kindly provided MS Word copies of KwaNdebele and Ciskei, which we could turn into PDFs.

Mark Sandham  
Education Librarian  
University of the Witwatersrand  
August 2018.

## NOTE ON THE DIGITIZATION OF THESE REPORTS

The eleven unnumbered reports had not been amalgamated, and each is paginated individually. We have accordingly treated them as individual works. We supplied title pages, a foreword and this note. Where pagination or other details are missing from the photocopy of the manuscript, we have added these to the PDFs. The photocopies were reductions to A5 – we have kept them at this size.

Unfortunately the graphs in *Education in Venda* are unreadably faint, and there was no means of re-creating them. Page 5 was unclear, and so we retyped it. There is no Page 24 in the copy we worked from, but nothing seems to be missing. Most probably the bibliography was accidentally paginated 25 instead of 24.

The work was all done by the staff of the Wits Education Library.

Metadata by Mark Sandham and Alison Chisholm.

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# TEACHERS WITHOUT CLASSROOMS: EDUCATION IN VENDA

by JFdeV Graaff Sociology, UCT.

## 1. Introduction

In a nutshell, Venda is a small, rural and poor area set in a large, rural and poor province. Since the Smith Commission's report into the state of education in 1982, there has been a long period of inactivity. Very few of the Smith Commission's proposals were implemented. In the early 1990's there was a flurry of investigative activity. Three reports were commissioned examining teacher education, technical and vocational education and the classroom backlog. It remains to be seen how many of their recommendations will be implemented.

Venda's total and educational population has grown at quite a slow rate over the last decade and a half, and possibly because of this, it has been able to produce sufficient teachers for its schools. But it has a terrible record in schoolbuilding. Its teachers are poorly motivated and ill-disciplined. It has started out on implementing a Primary Education Upgrade Project (PEUP) with some good results, but has done hardly anything in the preschool area. Venda compares quite unfavorably with the other small, villagized ex-bantustan, Qwaqwa.

2. Methodological: writing these reports is significantly influenced by the amount and kind of information available. In this regard, documents like Commission Reports and Annual Reports are extremely valuable (although Annual Reports vary considerably in terms of length and quality). The overly quantitative nature of these reports dictates that our examination of education systems is also often overly quantitative. However, it is also a sign of the energy of a particular education department that reports are produced or commissioned. These are indications that thinking and planning has been happening, that it occurs on a grounded and systematic basis, that there are benchmarks against which to measure progress (an educational accounting process). In the Bop this rethinking process was, in the beginning at least, institutionalised in a concrete review body which was intended to produce periodic reports.

It is significant how sparse the 'thinking' material is in Venda, how brief and sometimes totally non-existent are the Annual Reports. One gets a spurt of activity in the early 1990's with reports on vocational and technical educational, on



schoolbuilding, on teacher education. The absence of documentation in the intervening decade following the Smith Commission of 1982 also indicates a certain inactivity in planning and initiative in the Education Department. White also notes the inadequacy of statistical data for planning purposes. (p.37)

### 3. How Rural is Venda?

By official Census standards, Venda is extremely rural. It is the least urbanised of all the ex-bantustans. The 1991 Census calculated Venda to be 95.3% rural. By this they meant that, out of a population of 559,000 people in 1991, only 26,484 were living in proclaimed towns. (Venda, 1991:1) In 1980 the South African Census put this figure much higher at 98%.<sup>1</sup>

By expanding the notion of urban to include those people who are dependent on urban (cross-border commuter) employment, the level of urbanisation for Venda rises somewhat. By this criterion Graaff calculated Venda to be 82.8% rural in 1980 (instead of 98%). This is so because a significant number of people were commuting daily from Dzanani I & II districts to work in Louis Trichardt. Geographically Venda is folded round Louis Trichardt on three sides. Economically speaking, Louis Trichardt is an integral part of Venda. A substantial number of people both work and shop there. (Graaff, 1986)

One can expand the notion of urban further by considering people's income from agriculture, and their dependence on urban remittances (i.e. money sent home by migrants from their places of employment). By this standard, Venda is significantly rural. Agriculture in 1991 only contributed 2% of average household income; whereas remittances constituted 12.9%. Pensions paid by government made up another 10.8% of income. (BMR, 1993) In 1992 there were 41,781 migrants from Venda, mostly to Johannesburg and Pretoria. This is about 20% of the Economically Active Population (EAP). Conversely, quite a high percentage of all household income (75%) derives from inside Venda. (BMR, 1993)

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<sup>1</sup> The 1991 figure is that produced by the Venda government's census. The 1980 figure is that produced by the South African government's.

All these considerations of rurality should be put alongside what one sees travelling through Venda. In this sense, both urban and rural take on quite different meanings. The capital of Venda, Thohoyandou, for example, the biggest urban complex, has an extremely small and elementary commercial and industrial centre. Thohoyandou's tourist centre, the Venda Sun, is primitive by most homeland Sun standards. The biggest buildings in the town serve government administration. The surrounding residential areas of the town look more like a sprawling tribal village than a town. That is to say, a large part of the town is made up of very small, often non-brick houses, each with a relatively large piece of land used for vegetables, fruit-trees and small livestock. Travelling further into the hinterland does not change the look of housing much. They all look much like the outskirts of Thohoyandou.

In short, Venda is not urban because there are very few proclaimed towns of any size, and such towns as there are have limited commercial and industrial activities. But it is not rural because agricultural has a tiny part of average household income, because households depend substantially on urban wages either from commuters to Louis Trichardt, or from migrants to Johannesburg and Pretoria, and on government pensions. It is a largely 'villagized' population.

#### 4 Dimensions of Poverty

Venda also has a very poor population, especially further north towards the Zimbabwe border in Mutale district. Put differently, by DBSA estimates for 1989, it was the poorest area in the poorest region in the country. The DBSA says of the old Region G:

"Of the nine identified development regions, Region G registered the lowest per capita GGP, the highest dependency ratio (ie the de facto population divided by the economically active population), the lowest percentage males in the 15-64 year age-group (implying that a relatively high number of economically active males are working outside Region G which indicative of inadequate local job opportunities). The incidence of typhoid fever ... is three to four times the rate that applies to Southern Africa." (DBSA, 1989:54)

Region G contained three homeland areas, Lebowa, Gazankulu and Venda. Among these, Venda had by far the highest rate of

unemployment (30.7% compared to 19.8% for Lebowa, and 18.5% for Gazankulu); and the lowest per capita expenditure, with R621 for Lebowa, R630 for Gazankulu, and R612 for Venda (which is an indication of income).

In 1991 87% of the total population had incomes of less than R2,000 p.a. in 1991 (Venda, 1991: 23). The table below shows the Bureau of Market Research's (BMR) estimation of the 1992 household income and per capita income in the various Venda districts.

District	Household Income p.a. 1992	Per Capita Income p.a. 1992	High Expenditure Items
Thohoyandou	R14,821	R2,462	Income Tax
Vuwani	R14,475	R2,290	Clothing
Dzanani	R14,453	R2,686	Furniture
Mutale	R 9,623	R1,578	Food
Total	R14,127	R2,370	R2.37

(Source: BMR, 1993)

The most startling thing about this table is the discrepancy that Mutale district shows from the norm. It is significantly poorer than the other three districts.

The second thing to note in this table is that standards of living are different in the three less poor areas, even though their income levels may be quite similar. This can be seen from the way people spend their income. The poorest people spend mostly on food. People in Mutale spend more than 40% of their already income on food. Mutale is a quite arid region in the north of Venda. Of the other three districts Thohoyandou has the highest expenditure on Income Tax. This is to be expected since Thohoyandou is the capital of the ex-homeland and houses the majority of civil servants. Dzanani has the highest figure for Furniture and Equipment (making it the second wealthiest). The reason for this is that Dzanani (made up of two bits, one north and one south of Louis Trichardt) is the origin of the commuters to Louis Trichardt. Vuwani is third with the highest expenditure among the four on Clothing and Footwear.

This table is interesting for two further reasons when compared



to the same figures from Qwaqwa, also in 1992. First average household income in Qwaqwa (at about R9 000 p.a.) was appreciably lower than that in Venda. Secondly, the average household income in Phuthatitjaba, the capital of Qwaqwa, at R31 502 p.a., was quite markedly higher than that in Thohoyandou, at R14 821. Considering that the well-off residents of homeland capitals are usually bureaucrats, it suggests that Qwaqwa's bureaucrats are a lot better paid than those in Venda.

Like Black households throughout the country, Venda's average household income has grown very fast in the last 17 years. Since 1977 it has grown at a rate of 21% per annum. Subtracting inflation, it has risen by 5.7% per annum in real terms.<sup>2</sup>

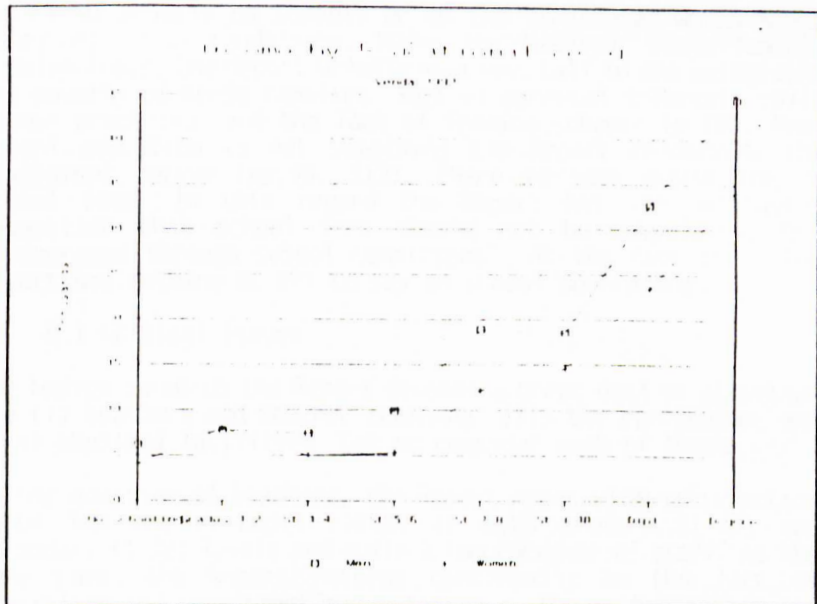
How does education influence poverty? The Figure below indicates the personal income derived from different levels of formal education for men and for women. It shows how individual incomes rise as formal education levels rise. And this is to be expected. There are three interesting things about this graph.

The first is that educational qualifications are differently remunerated for women and for men. The difference increases as incomes rise. The second point to note is that education begins to 'bite' quite late in an individual's educational career. People have to have passed Standard 5 before education makes any difference to their income. As far as income goes, people with a Standard 4 qualification might just as well be illiterate. Thirdly, it 'bites' at different levels for men and women. Men with Standards 5 or 6 earn appreciably more than those with Standards 1 to 4. For women it is the Standard 7 to 8 group which gains from education for the first time.

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<sup>2</sup> This is faster than Qwaqwa's real rate of 3.9%. I am quite puzzled as to why Venda's income should have grown so fast. There are few jobs to be had in Venda, or even in Louis Trichardt. Income from agriculture has declined in this time from 10.2% of household income to 2.0%. Both populations have to travel a long way to get to the PWV for jobs.

Judging by expenditure patterns, Mutale is the poorest area (highest expenditure on food); then Vuwani (expenditure mostly on clothing and footwear); then Dzanani (furniture and equipment); and the wealthiest is Thohoyandou (income tax). (BMR, 1993)



5. Apart from being rural and poor, Venda's population is also relatively stable. The overall population has grown at a relatively mild rate of 3.5% since 1970 (See Table<sup>3</sup>). This means that there has not been a great deal of population resettlement to this part of the country.

The same applies to the educational population. This has grown at 4.8% between 1983-93. The primary school population has grown at a relatively slow 3.0% in the 1983-93 period, and the high school population at 9.7%. By comparison, DET enrolment in the rest of the country grew at a much faster 5.9% in the 1983-93 period, primary school enrolments at 3.6% and high school enrolments at 14.4% (RIEP, 1993)

Year	Population Size/BMR	Population Size/CNU
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<sup>3</sup> DBSA estimates population growth rates for Venda's black population at: for the period 1980-5 - 3.30%; for the period 1985-90 - 3.26% (p.s 25)

1970	-----	272,452
1980		433,932
1985		459,819
1991	531,000	558,797
1993	557,000	

Sources      Venda      CNU  
 Statistics, 1991.      BMR      UNISA  
 1993 16

## 6. A First Assessment

The Smith Commission <sup>4</sup> gazetted in May 1981, delivered its final report in July 1982. It was composed of 15 members, 6 of whom were senior members of Venda's Dept of Education, another 5 were school principals, 3 were academics from other bantustan universities, and 1 from Wits University. The Commission was chaired by Prof RL Smith, a British academic working at the University of Bophuthatswana who also probably wrote the report. His style is very evident throughout. The Commission's thinking is significantly influenced by the Report of the de Lange Commission which appeared as it was deliberating.

The most remarkable thing about this report is what it omits. For an area which, even among bantustans, ranks as extremely rural, it says hardly anything about rural education in Venda. It does not once mention the system of state-subsidy for community schools (the R1-for-R1 system), the role of chiefs in it, or the profoundly destructive impact this system has on rural schools. On the contrary, the Report encourages community contributions to school-building (p.112, 203). The Report laments the appalling state of school facilities throughout the region but fails to make the connection between this and the system of state-aid. It makes one mention of special inducements and allowances for teachers who serving in rural schools (p.112). Its discussion of educational financing, in general, is extremely sparse beyond an admission that funds will be hard to get hold of (pp.190-193).

Equally astonishing is the Report's relative silence on the

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<sup>4</sup> Its full title was, The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the System of Education in Operation in the Republic of Venda.

impact of poverty on schools or on the strategies which might alleviate these conditions. Under the heading, Miscellaneous Problem Areas, the Report briefly mentions (all in one paragraph) the poverty of Venda families, lack of parental interest, child labour practices, and the lack of feeding schemes (p.70). Pre-school education is not something the Report recommends the government pursue (pp.90, 113). There is some discussion of school fees. In this regard the Report has the intriguing suggestion that school fees should not be compulsory, but "encouraged through school committees". At the same time, the Report has nothing at all to say on school governance.

## 6.1 Critical Issues

The topics on which the Report devotes a great deal of attention are (i) teachers and teacher training; (ii) the curriculum; and (iii) physical facilities. Let us consider each of these.

On the question of teachers, the Report notes with satisfaction quite low teacher-pupil ratios at both primary (1:42) and secondary (1:32) levels and quite a low turnover of staff. At the same time, the Report returns continually to the lack of discipline and commitment among teachers, their absenteeism and low morale (pp.17, 62, 207). (One of the Report's first recommendations is the introduction of a Professional Code of Conduct.) At the root of this problem, according to the Report, are, firstly, the inspection system. Inspectors play too much the role of disciplinarian watchdogs, rather than advisors or supervisors and encouragers.

Second, there is the matter of low teachers' qualifications, although the time devoted to part-time study by teachers during school times is also seen as a problem. In 1981 only 34% of primary teachers had matriculated, 16% had only a teacher's certificate, and more than 20% had no professional qualification at all (i.e they had not been trained as teachers). (p.16,36,41, Tables 8-9)

Third, many school principals were, as a result of too rapid promotion, young and inexperienced. They lacked either the training or the authority to properly manage their schools.

Fourth, teacher training at the colleges was poor. It was too theoretical and out of touch with reality. Appointments to the colleges are often made from 'semi-retired staff' (p.43) At the same time, there was insufficient in-service training. Teacher



training, says the Report, was "the most important developmental task confronting the Venda education system" (p 156). The establishment of the University of Venda was a critical development in this area.

On the question of physical facilities, the Report notes that the quantity of classroom space was satisfactory. Venda in 1981 was approaching universal primary education. It was the quality of these facilities which required attention. "Considerable financial investment will be required to bring the quality of Venda's physical facilities up to the standard of other Black African countries, let alone White provision in the RSA." (p 60). What was missing were laboratories, libraries, domestic science centres, woodwork and craft workshops, staffrooms. In 1978 only 67% of children had desks to sit on (p 23). Only 6 secondary schools had electricity, and 16 had water (p 60).

On the question of the curriculum, the Report sees the lack of clear aims and objectives as central to the planning process (pp. 29, 65, 83-7). Venda's curricula were inherited unreflectively from Bantu Education. There is, as a result, no central guiding principle - like development, national identity, or participation. The Report notes the example of Tanzania's Education for Self-Reliance, or Botswana's Education for Kagisano. In addition, the curriculum was dominated by service to excessive examination. There was no commitment to the transfer of cognitive and study skills. There had been no involvement by teachers or the people of Venda in the construction of these curricula (p. 18). One of the Report's strong recommendations, then, was the introduction of Venda Studies and African Studies as school subjects. It recommends that Venda establish its own examining authority to replace the Joint Matriculation Board.

It was also strong in its recommendation of a series of planning bodies to keep educational development, in general, and curriculum development, in particular, continually under review. This would entail a hierarchy of bodies which would include (i) a National Advisory Council for Education (NACE), (ii) a National Curriculum Board, and (iii) a number of curriculum Panels (p 186). On the establishment of a NACE the Report remarks, "The importance of this body and its close relationship to the executors of educational policy, the Department of Education, cannot be overemphasized." (p 197). Professor Smith was at this stage already involved in the work of a similar body established in Bophuthatswana.



## 7 Progress Made since 1982

What has been achieved in the 12 years since the publication of this Report? The overwhelming consensus is that very little progress has been made. In all my interviews with senior departmental staff this was the feeling. This is also the opinion of Don White in his evaluation of teacher training in Venda in 1992.

In his assessment of progress made up to 1992, White<sup>5</sup> has some positive things to say about the Venda education system. He estimates that almost all children of the appropriate age now attend Grade 1 (p.81) (although the Smith Report thought this had already been achieved in 1982)<sup>6</sup>. The number of children who were making it through a full seven-year primary cycle was 'creditable'. The number of unqualified teachers had dropped to only 5.5% of the teaching force (p.82). The number of teachers being trained was also quite satisfactory. (This is signalled by an extremely low TPR in 1993 of 1:34.8 at PS level, and 1:28.0 at the SS level. (Compared to 1:44.6 and 1:44.0 respectively for DET schools in 1993 (RIEP, 1993) Optimal TPR's are normally regarded as 1:40 and 1:35 at PS and SS respectively.)

He is also impressed by the quality of those who are in leadership positions in the Dept of Education. "They have the capacity to bring about real changes in Venda's schools and colleges." (White, 1992:17)

For the rest, however, many problems remained and some had been aggravated in this period. White reports that he "visited schools in a rural area of Venda and found them largely unchanged from the 1982 situation." (p.6) Elsewhere he repeats the sentiment. "Published statistics .. cannot prepare one for the dreadful conditions reported above." (p.10) Repeater rates had rocketed.

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<sup>5</sup> Don White was also a member of the Smith Commission, and therefore in a good position to assess changes over a period of time.

<sup>6</sup> With regard to levels of literacy, Venda's Census estimates that 65% of the total population had received either no education at all, or only up to st.3 in 1991 (Census p.13) DBSA estimates that in 1985 37.7% of the Venda population had had no education at all, and another 29.2% only primary education. (p.74)

(p 7) (More of this in a moment ) There were far too few classrooms. INSET was still completely underdeveloped (cf p 51). There was very little out-of-school education available. Matric pass rates had dropped sharply. There was still very little in the way of technical, commercial and agricultural training available. Nor did Venda yet have its own examining body. (p 82)

Most important, however, is still the question of teacher discipline. White has harsh things to say about the attitudes and laxness of inspectors, principals and teachers, and consequently also pupils (p 37, 43). Where the Smith Report was expansive, generous and 'educative', White's report is quite angry. Staff who are not performing properly should 'be replaced', 'lose their posts', 'find employment elsewhere' or 'be excluded' (p 43-4). "A strong message must come down from the top that (these malpractices) will no longer be tolerated." (p 44)

What are the roots of this lack of activity, even deterioration, since 1982 in the education system? From interviews, I was able to get no clear sense of this. Some senior education bureaucrats, when asked, spoke of a lack of funding from Pretoria, but there was no idea of why this was so. (Check these figures from SAIRR.)

Others spoke of the death of Mphephu, Venda's president, in 1988 as a crucial factor. Venda lost a leader who gave direction and demanded discipline. (Is it coincidence that Venda's matric pass rates collapsed in 1988? From maintaining a remarkably high 70+% throughout the mid-1980's, in 1988 they fell to the low 40%'s, and have remained there ever since.) Mphephu's successor, Ravele, was unable to instil any sense of coherence in the nation, so the theory goes. The military coup by Ramoshokane in 1988 aggravated matters by putting everything on hold in anticipation of a new ANC government. Even the department's Annual Reports stopped being produced.

The final straw, for many senior bureaucrats, was the arrival of SADTU as competition for TUATA. These interviewees were uniformly bitter and negative about SADTU's lack of cooperation and discipline. One of SADTU's actions has been to bar inspectors

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<sup>7</sup> More harsh words: "At present there is no discernible policy and very little financial provision for in-service training." (51)

from entering schools. This has, so they report, produced a further deterioration of discipline.

Whatever the reasons, Venda's Education Department speaks loudly of lack of direction and commitment, often in indirect ways. During my visit the department's buildings and their surroundings were poorly maintained and cared for. Old office refuse lay piled between office blocks. Bureaucrats forgot their appointments or simply abandoned them. Secretarial and clerical staff lounged around offices with nothing to do. The National Library (attached to Education both geographically and administratively) comprised two large rooms littered with piles of books that had not been returned to the shelves.

Once again, this compares unfavorably with Qwaqwa where almost identical buildings are neatly maintained, and bureaucrats honoured appointments, even those made for 4 pm. on a Friday afternoon. Like Venda, Qwaqwa's Annual Reports were not up to date, but those that had been produced were much more comprehensive and detailed.

Let us examine some of White's conclusions in more detail.

### 7.1. Universal Primary Education ?

How many of Venda's school-age children are not at school ? Very few indeed. From as early as 1980 almost all Venda's children have been attending school. In 1991 there were 236,429 children of schoolgoing age, i.e. 5-19. In the same year there were 242,525 children at school. In short, 103% of children in the schoolgoing age-category were at school. (Venda, 1991) (This might be difficult to credit. However, as can be seen from Table above, the Venda Census count correlates quite well with BMR calculations. Nor would it indicate children sent in from outside Venda since the Census counts these as well.)

If one compares previous Census counts with the school population, equally favorable results are obtained<sup>a</sup>. In 1991 the school population makes up 43.4% of the total population in

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<sup>a</sup> Since the breakdown by age-cohorts is not available for earlier Census counts, the only possible method is to compare the total population with the school population and compare these proportions.



Venda. For earlier Census counts the results are quite comparable. (See Table )

Year	Education Pop/ Total Popx100
1980	40.7%
1985	39.4%
1991	43.4%

### 7.2 Enrolment rates in Venda 1976-1994

Relative to other homelands and to the DET, Venda quite soon has a remarkable retention of pupils through the system. This can be (fairly crudely)<sup>9</sup> seen in the percentages which each standard (and sub-standard) makes up of the total in any one year. Typically, homeland systems (and the DET) start (in the 1970's) with SSA making up about 25% of all pupils and matric less than one percent. With time, the SSA percentage drops into the low teens, while the matric percentage approaches 5%. In Venda's case, the SSA figure in 1976 already stands at a remarkably low 19.6% and the matric figure at 0.5%. (See Table and Figure ) In that year, by comparison, the DET has x% and Bophuthatswana 17% (1977) Qwaqwa has just under 20%.

By 1986, ten years later and seven years into "independence", the SSA figure is down to 12.4%, and the matric figure up to 3.6%. In 1994, the SSA figure is further down to 10.8% and the matric figure up to 6.3% (In 1992, Bop's SSA figure is still 11% and its matric figure below 5%. Q has about 10.5% and close on 6%)

In short, by this quite rough standard, Venda retains its pupils remarkably well.<sup>10</sup>

### 7.3 Repeaters

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<sup>9</sup> Without more sophisticated figures detailing repeater rates, it is difficult even to do a proper cohort study

<sup>10</sup> I distinguish "Effective" and "Efficient" education systems. Effective ones are good at achieving their set goals. Efficient ones do it at a relatively low cost.

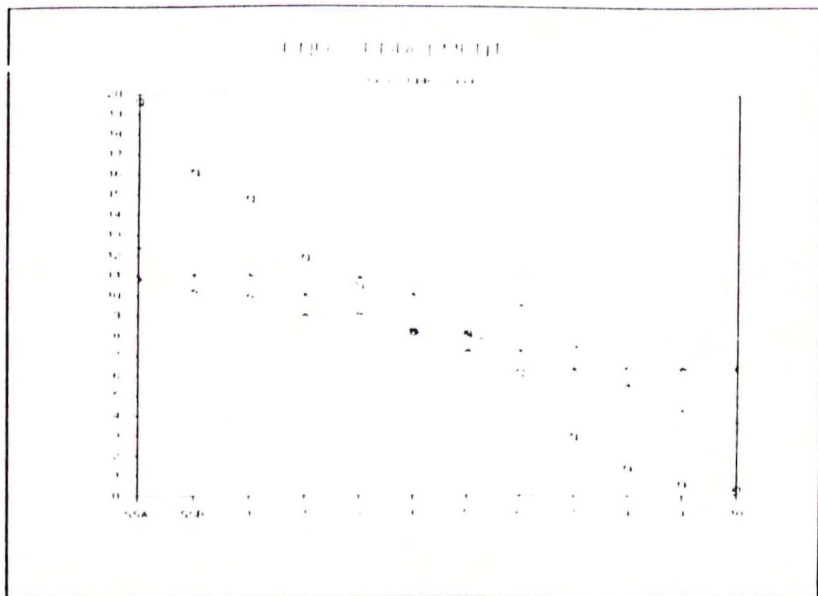
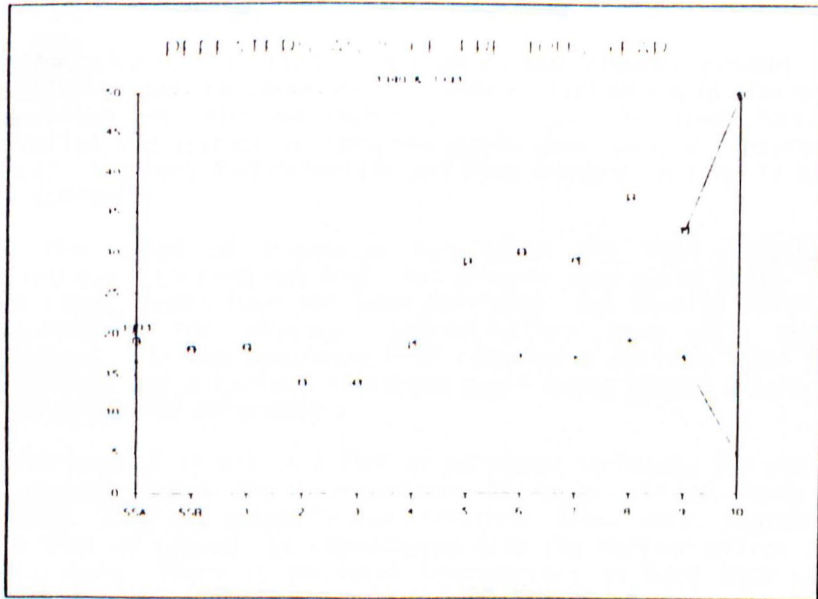


Figure 2: Enrolment Proportions in Venda

Figure \* shows the dramatic change in repeaters between 1980 and 1991. In particular the percentage of pupils repeating matric has soared from 4.5% in 1980 (which is exceptionally low by bantustan standards), to 49.8% in 1991 (which is exceptionally high). Comparatively, the Venda figures in 1991 are extremely high from st. 5 right through to matric. White concludes that "the phenomenon of drop-outs is numerically less serious than that of repeaters" (p.7).

#### 7.4 Teacher Qualifications

In this area there has been significant improvement since 1982. In 1981 21% of primary teachers were unqualified (i.e. they had had no teacher training), and 40% of secondary teachers. (Smith, 41) In 1991 these figures had dropped sharply to 6.5% and 3.6% respectively. (White: 8) The problem had shifted, says White, from a problem of lack of qualification, to one of under-qualification. For in 1991 65% of teachers were underqualified (i.e. they had less than the required M+3).



In short, concludes White, the colleges of education had been producing quite sufficient teachers each year, not only to provide for the growth in pupil numbers, but also to replace unqualified teachers with qualified ones. This is born out by Venda's low TPR's in 1991.<sup>11</sup>

However, as we have seen, the real problem is not one of qualification. It is far rather problems of commitment and of mastery of the required skills. Under- and unqualified teachers may be performing perfectly adequately. Conversely, fully qualified teachers may not be very effective teachers at all. (White, 83)

### 7.5 Pre-Primary Schooling

White notes that in 1990 there were very few children in

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<sup>11</sup> Among other homelands, it had the second lowest primary TPR. (And the 4th highest PCR.) At the secondary level, it had the lowest TPR, and the 5th best CPR. (White, 1992: 86, 87) In short, a serious shortage of classroom space at primary levels.



preschools, about 1000 (compared to a Grade 1 enrolment of 29,000), and that no pre-primary teachers were being trained that year. Much like the Smith Report, White concludes that preschool education is not important. "With Venda's other needs in mind, it would be unrealistic to set out on this road." (White, 1991:19)

White does not mention which 'other needs' these are, but his conclusion flies in the face of evidence from elsewhere, e.g. Bophuthatswana, and of the weight of literature on education in poverty-stricken areas. The dominant view is that preschools can produce dramatic improvements in both educational and life skills for children from impoverished backgrounds. (vd Berg & Vergnani) It would not be difficult to utilize the very evident surplus capacity in teacher training to the preschool area.

### 7.6 Junior Primary Schooling

This is a particularly problematic area since the entry level for teacher training was raised to matric, from st.8. Teachers are reluctant to enter this field for the main reason that salaries at this level are relatively low. (What does Bop pay its PEUP teachers?) This is the one area where there is a shortage in the supply of teachers (White, 1992:41). Pre-service training is of a very weak standard. There is no in-service training capacity for the junior primary level. White notes the recent entry of the Primay Education Upgrade (PEUP) system (from Bophuthatswana) into Venda, but predicts that its spread and influence will be slow. Overall, says White, "The junior primary sector remains the Cinderella of the school system." (White, 1991:23) A considerable strength in the system is the fact that education in Venda is 'virtually free'. "No child is denied a place in school because his parents are unable to pay." (White, 1992:18)

One of White's strong recommendations, then, is to find ways to upgrade the status and esteem of Junior Primary teachers, possibly through the introduction of degree course in primary education. (White, 1992:68)

In the event, White's prediction that the spread of PEUP would be slow, was wrong. PEUP with its base in the Molteno Project materials has spread very rapidly in Venda since its introduction in 1987. Its main problem has, in fact, been that the spread has been too rapid. Molteno materials and teaching methods are now used in all the primary schools of Venda. After Bophuthatswana, it is the area where Molteno has established itself most

strongly

In the schools I visited, there were clear changes evident in teaching styles. Children were actively participating in classes, separating out into independent work groups. Classrooms looked colourful and attractive (despite the evident lack of classroom space). Teachers had materials and were engaged in clearly set out schedules.

But the speed of expansion has taken its toll. Teacher motivation, starting out high, has dropped away quite badly. In some cases, books have not been available. The initial minimum requirements for physical infrastructure have also been abandoned. (In the beginning PEUP required a certain level of facilities and a certain classroom-pupil ratio before a school could enter the programme.)

At the base of it all is a lack of personnel to handle the work. At present there are 5 organisers to cover all of Venda's schools. They are patently overstretched. Their work, together with that of Lebowa, is coordinated from the Molteno office in Pietersburg. There is no local headquarters to back them up. (Molteno, 1993, interviews with Molteno staff)

A solution to this shortage of personnel may be to retrain and use School Inspectors in Molteno methods. As mentioned previously, they are presently barred from entry into the schools by SADTU action. They could be quite profitably used in a new environment, with updated training and a new approach to their work.

## 7.7 Senior Primary and Secondary Schooling

Although teacher qualifications in these areas have improved sharply over the years, says White, about 65% of teachers hold less than M+3 qualifications. In addition, many of these teachers do not have sufficient mastery of English, nor is their mastery of their subjects good. They are, in fact, not required to go beyond matric level in any subject except Venda. "... they are really at M+0". (White, 1991:32) The subjects in which they are trained are often in oversupplied areas. Very few are qualified to teach science and mathematics. Students get minimal instruction in educational psychology, sociology, philosophy or history. Few students have sufficient experience of practical teaching before entering the profession. In-service training at



this level is also "largely ineffective and totally inadequate". (White, 1991:34)

White's first priority recommendation for teacher training is to change the status of colleges of education. They need to become genuinely independent and tertiary institutions "responsible for designing their own curricula, formulating their own syllabuses and setting their own examinations" in association with a university. (White, 1992:45) This is very similar to the situation in Bophuthatswana where colleges of education are affiliated to the Institute of Education at the university, and not to the DET. In addition, says White, these colleges need to development their physical infrastructure, substantially improve their academic standards and provide administrative support to free rectors for planning and policy work. More dramatically, he then recommends the summary closure of Tshisimani and Ramaano colleges, while the retaining the remaining two, Makhado and VECO plus the university.

On in-service training for this level of teachers, White's recommendations are quite elementary. "Make a policy!" where there is none, and increase the financial allocation (White, 1992:51-2). The main elements of his recommended strategy are:

- (i) establish a core team of in-service teacher educators and trainers (TET); supplement this with selected practising teachers who are academically and professionally competent;
- (ii) use this team to redesign curricula for in-service with special attention to distance media;
- (iii) send TET teams out to schools to conduct courses locally;
- (iv) build in-services modules into teachers' promotion criteria; set a cut-off date beyond which teachers without adequate qualifications will lose their jobs; attach incentives to those courses where there are specific shortages.

## 7.8 Schoolbuilding: the real disaster

Although White's brief was to focus on teacher training, he does also point to a number of other areas needing urgent attention. One of these is the provision of schoolbuildings. At the time of the Smith Commission in 1982 this was not a serious problem. By 1992 it has assumed drastic proportions. This ration of pupils to classrooms had deteriorated to 58.7:1 at primary level, and

47 6 1 at secondary level

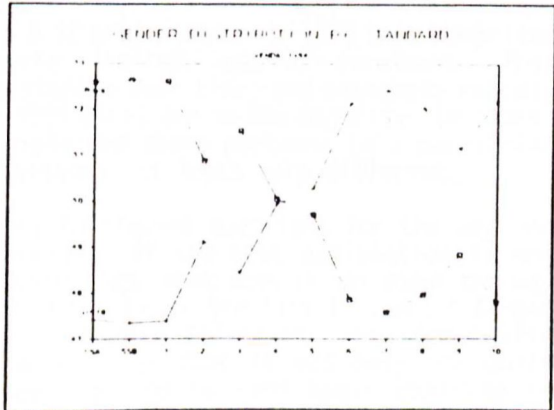
In order to bring these ratios down to an acceptable 40 1 at primary and 35 1 at secondary level, van Wyk & Louw estimate that 2.150 classrooms need to be added to the existing 4.633. Put differently, for every two classrooms in existence, one extra needs to be built. This is a desperate state of affairs.

The cost of this classroom-building programme would amount to R88 3 million (calculated at R46.000 per classroom). However, this does not take into account the cost of toilets, administration blocks, laboratories and home economics facilities also needed. To add these elements would add another R200 million to the cost. (Calculated at R122.000 for a laboratory, R117.200 for a home economics facility, and R79.000 for an admin block.) To eliminate the massive backlog in toilets would cost R24 4 million alone. (van Wyk & Louw, 1992)

### 7.9 Gender Differences

There is a common pattern of gender differentiation among African education systems in South Africa. This pattern typically has three phases to it. Figure 4 (over the page) shows this pattern for Venda in 1994. In

the first phase comprising the first six years of schooling, i.e. the grades and standards 1-3, boys are overrepresented. In this phase they make up 52-3% of the school population. During the second phase, which starts in st.5, the gender predominance switches and girls now are in the majority. This



majority increases until st.7 to about 53-4% of the school population. In the final phase, st.8-10, girls remain in the majority, but their majority shrinks slightly and is lowest in

the st.9 year.<sup>12</sup>

The reasons for this pattern have not been researched, and would probably need some detailed qualitative work to do it. The pattern does not reflect demographic patterns in the population. Population censuses do not show these imbalances even when labour migration is taken into account. The best explanation, for the third phase of the pattern, focuses on differential employment opportunities for boys and girls. Boys can get jobs at a younger age than girls and therefore, of their own accord, or with their family's encouragement, leave high school sooner. Often boys do not need much education at all to get jobs since unskilled employment is available to them, on farms, and in factories, while for girls there is only limited domestic work. For girls, those jobs which are available, in teaching and nursing, need some measure of secondary education.

This explanation has one problematic aspect. If boys can get jobs sooner, they would be also participating in migrant labour at high school age. In Venda, this does not show up in demographic patterns. Boys are not noticeably absent until they are older, i.e. of post-school age (Cf. Venda Census figures).

Detailed investigation of gender imbalances in Venda over time, and in space, produces some interesting variations on the usual pattern which may eventually help us to explain things more adequately. Consider first Figure 5 above. This shows the changing percentage of boys in the school population at various times from 1979 through to 1994. The most dramatic part of this

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<sup>12</sup> There are variations on these phases in each of the homelands. For Bop in 1990 the switch occurs in st.2, not st.4; and the predominance of girls in high school is more marked so that they form 58% of the st.9 class, instead of 53%. The highest differential is also in st.9 and not st.7.

The 1977 figures for Bop, by contrast, shows the switch happening in st.1; st.6 being the high point of differential at 59%. But there is another switch to male predominance in st.9-10, echoing the 1979 Venda pattern.

In Qwaqwa in 1991 the switch occurs in st.3, not st.4; the highest differential also occurs in st.7, and is even more marked than in Venda at 59%.



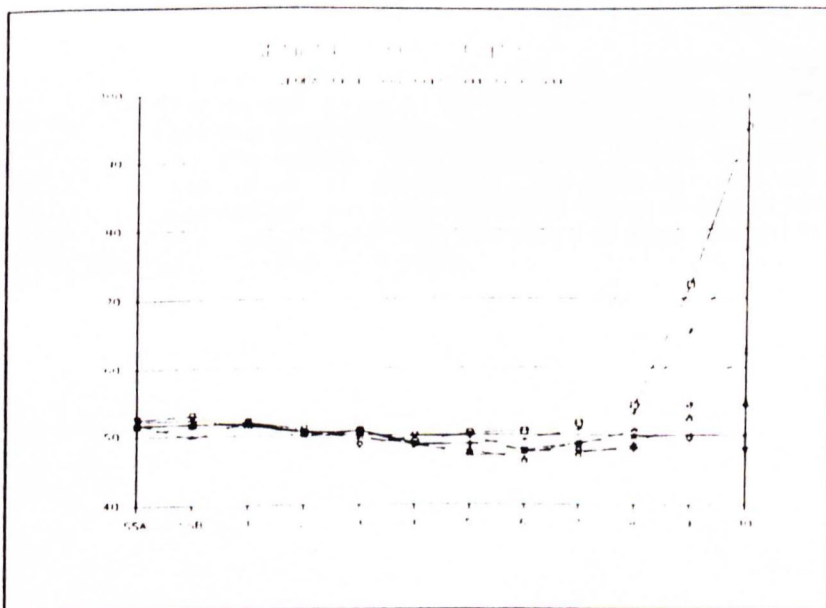


Figure 5 Gender Differentials Venda 1979-94

figure relates to the st 9-10 proportions. In 1979 boys comprised 93% of the, then quite limited, matric enrolment. This predominance drops consistently over time, and extremely rapidly to begin with, until in 1994 girls are in the majority. In short, the three-phase model explained above pertains to a particular time and place. In its history, it looks very different.

Now, this poses some very intriguing questions for the way one explains gender differentials. If the best explanation is one based on employment opportunities, what does it say about the way these opportunities have changed over the last 15 years? If one considers further that there were relatively very few matric pupils at this time, can one say that it was only the quite wealthy families who could afford to send their children to senior secondary schools, and that they considered matric appropriate for mainly boys?

The other part of the graph which is interesting is the early predominance of boys also at the junior secondary phase. Unlike the 1994 pattern, in 1979 boys are in the majority in st.6-8 as well. This is most marked in st. 8. Let us assume that in 1979

st.8 is for most what matric is in 1994, namely the major requirement for higher paid employment and the bridge to further training, although not to university.

Variations in gender differentials have an interesting spatial component in Venda. Figure 6 (over the page) shows the percentage of boys in the school system in 1994 at various stages and in two different regions. One of these regions is Mutale, the northern and poorest of Venda's regions. The other is Thohoyandou, the most urbanised region of Venda. The third line on the graph is that for boys in all of Venda.

The percentage of boys in the system follows the phases noted above, for Venda and for Thohoyandou. However, the pattern for Mutale shows a sharp variation from st.7 onwards. From this point the percentage of boys rises very quickly, until boys are in the majority again in st.8-10, albeit quite a small one of 52%. (There is a similar pattern for Mutale in the years 1989 and 1990.) In short, the rural pattern is similar to the patterns of the late 1970's and early 1980's as regards gender differentials. Is this because this rural area is more sexist, or poorer, than the others?

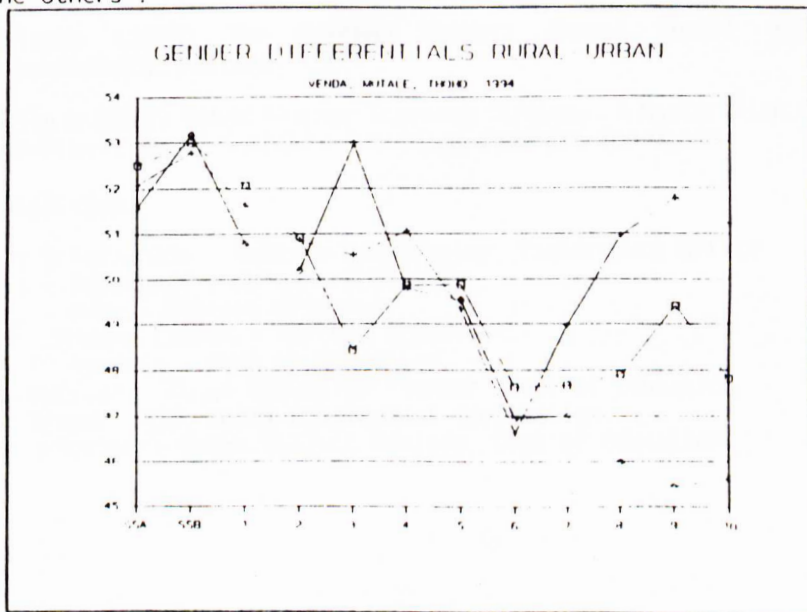


Figure 6: Gender Differentials Venda 1994

The answer to these questions will not be found through investigating statistical trends. It can only be done through qualitative interviews with parents and pupils who have been or are still part of the system. They need to be tested on their views on (i) the value of education, in general, and for employment, in particular, (ii) the different value of education for boys and girls - which ties into the place of boys and girls in the local social system as a whole.

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INTERVIEWS

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