

Press Release

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Report finds deep racial and social inequalities in matric results – IRR

The 2016 *South Africa Survey* published by the IRR this month has found deep-seated racial and social inequalities in South Africa's matric results.

According to data obtained from the Department of Basic Education, only 35% of matric candidates who wrote mathematics in 2014 achieved a grade of 40% or above. When the data was broken down by race group it became apparent that 83% of white candidates obtained a grade of 40% and above as opposed to 69.7% of Indian candidates, 46.3% of coloured candidates, and just 28.5% of African candidates.

According to the CEO of the IRR, Dr Frans Cronjé, “the data reveals that 20 years into our democracy not nearly enough has been done to deliver high-quality education to black people”.

The IRR report also broke down levels of educational achievement by living standards quintile. The data showed strong correlations between living standards and educational outcomes. For example, in the poorest quintile, only 5.9% of candidates passed mathematics in matric with a grade of 60% or higher. In the wealthiest quintile, the figure was 23.3%.

Dr Cronjé said: “The quality of mathematics education generally is very poor in South Africa despite the fact that the economy is transitioning away from less-skilled primary and secondary industries towards the more highly-skilled tertiary sector. This will continue to depress economic growth levels and job creation while hobbling any expansion of the middle class. South African policy makers must also be careful that other African economies do not become preferred destinations for high-tech and high-skilled investment.”

He added that “the IRR has made several proposals on how to improve the quality of schooling in South Africa – especially via voucher systems and contract schooling – but to date policy makers seem intent to persist with a model of State-led schooling that is failing”.

The South Africa Survey has been published annually by the IRR since 1948 in the interests of advancing fact-based policy making. Copies can be obtained exclusively through the IRR.

Ends.
