

Report  
**Keeping Girls in School Programme**

Prepared for  
The Department of Basic Education  
by  
**MIET Africa**

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**basic education**  
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**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**



*Improving the lives of children and youth*

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## Abbreviations

DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
KGS	Keeping Girls in School
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
KZNDoe	KZN Department of Education
LO	Life Orientation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NACOSA	Networking HIV/AIDS Community of South Africa
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health

## 1 Summary of the Programme

The **Leveraging Partnerships to Achieve the Goals of South Africa's HIV&AIDS and STI National Strategic Plan 2012-16**, otherwise known as Keeping Girls in School (KGS), is a Department of Basic Education (DBE) initiative funded by the Global Fund. NACOSA (the Networking HIV/AIDS Community of South Africa) is the principal recipient, and MIET Africa is a sub-recipient. The programme commenced in October 2013 and ran until 31 March 2016.

As a sub-recipient of the KGS Programme, MIET Africa was responsible for the implementation of school-based activities that were developed in accordance with the National Strategic Plan 2012–2016 and the DBE's Integrated Strategy on HIV, STIs and TB (2012–2016), as well as the development of related materials. The focus was to strengthen the capacity of schools to support female learners academically, emotionally and socially so that they remained in school until the completion of Grade 12, and as result, prevent school dropout, a significant structural risk factor for HIV infection. Girls were targeted because of their heightened risk to HIV infection.

MIET Africa was responsible for bolstering the support systems of schools through the development and implementation of a school support programme for female learners, and the development of related training and educational materials on sexual reproductive health (SRH).

The school support programme provided: tutoring support; peer support networks for promoting SRH; out-of-school support agents to assist female learners in accessing health and social welfare services and other assistance needed to keep them in school; health education; career events ("jamborees").

Key programme activities included:

- Developing training materials and content for Peer Education
- Providing Health Education
- coordinating career jamborees
- Monitoring girls' participation in the programme's activities
- Providing the schools and the DBE with materials and systems that can be integrated into their efforts at keeping girls in school

The indicators used to measure the success of the programme were:

### **Primary indicator**

- Number of female learners in Grades 7–9 reached with an HIV combination prevention package

### **Secondary indicators**

- Number of girls reached with Peer Education by peer educators
- Number of girls reached with Health Education by health educators

- Number of girls reached with Homework Assistance by tutors
- Number of Grade 9 girls provided with career guidance through career jamborees

The programme was implemented in 286 schools and targeted 40 000 female learners in Grades 7–9 in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga provinces. Implementation was conducted by a team of trained staff that comprised peer mentors, health educators, homework tutors and peer group trainers. Activities were coordinated and managed by a supervisor based in each district and by Department of Education (DoE) district and provincial staff in the provinces. MIET Africa’s programme manager and the DBE’s Deputy Director of Health Promotion worked closely to oversee programme implementation, and provided monthly financial and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) reports to NACOSA.

## 2 Implementation

Implementation was divided into three main phases: preparation, programme implementation and close-out. The preparation phase, which ran from November 2013 until July 2014, included: selecting schools; recruiting staff; developing materials and M&E tools; training staff. Capacity per province varied, but from the onset of implementation it was evident that increased capacity was required to deliver all components of the package to learners in the selected schools. During discussions with provinces about recruitment, the Eastern Cape motivated to have its staffing model altered. Instead of recruiting peer mentors, health educators, homework tutors and peer group trainers, it chose to recruit only peer group trainers who would be responsible for implementation of all aspects of the programme in schools. As a result, the peer group trainers received higher stipends for a broadened scope of work. Mpumalanga and KZN chose to use the original staffing model. On comparing the two models, it was evident that staff turnover was much lower in the Eastern Cape, attributable primarily to the higher remuneration paid to the staff.

Staff were responsible for working directly with the schools and implementing the package of services. To ensure a high standard of programme delivery, a training programme was implemented for all staff. The programme comprised an initial two-and-a-half-day workshop, conducted in each of the provinces for supervisors, peer mentors and peer group trainers (only supervisors and peer group trainers were trained in the Eastern Cape as no peer mentors were recruited). The purpose of this training was to induct the field staff members on KGS activities and to train them on their roles and responsibilities, care and support, and the various monitoring and reporting tools. The training also provided an orientation to the *KGS Peer Mentors’ Guide* and *Peer Education Manual*.

A second two-day workshop was conducted for the supervisors and health educators in KZN and Mpumalanga, and supervisors and peer group trainers in the Eastern Cape. The purpose was to train staff on their roles and responsibilities, various monitoring and reporting tools, and the Health Education material.

### 3 Package of Services

The package of services provided to girls over the period of the grant comprised: a) career jamborees, targeting Grade 9 learners; b) Health Education sessions, targeting learners in Grades 7–9; c) Peer Education sessions for learners in Grades 7–9 that promoted the development of positive self-esteem and self-image;<sup>1</sup> d) Homework Assistance for learners in Grades 7–9 who were identified as struggling academically or were repeating grades; e) Home Visits conducted for girls who had either dropped out of school or were at risk of doing so.

#### a) Career jamborees

Two models were used for implementing jamborees with Grade 9 girls. In the Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga, learners were transported from schools to central venues, where exhibitors from various sectors (including government, business and tertiary education) were invited to make presentations on career options and to give advice on subject selection pertinent to various careers. The jamborees usually started with large assemblies of learners, at which representatives from the DoE, community-based and other organizations gave motivational speeches about staying in school and choosing the right subjects for specific careers. Learners then split up into smaller groups (by school) and visited each exhibitor's presentation in turn to discuss and learn about different career options. Various exhibitors distributed information pamphlets on career options. Once learners had visited the exhibitions they were given lunch and then transported back to school. These jamborees usually reached between 600 and 800 learners.

In KZN, in order to align the KGS model to the DoE's provincial strategy, the KZN Science Centre (a service provider already contracted to the KZNDoE) was contracted to run the jamborees in the three KGS districts. The Science Centre focused on career awareness, self-recognition and aptitude acknowledgement. It provided the girls with a toolkit of resources that helped them to make informed choices about their schooling and their careers. During the jamborees, the Science Centre invited industry experts to showcase their careers to the learners. The girls also participated in science shows, the aim of which was to promote science-related careers. The Science Centre visited each school and worked with 10 to 15 Grade 9 learners at a time. The presentations and activities lasted about two hours, and were conducted in the classroom. Learners were provided with pamphlets from various business and tertiary institutions.

Learners who attended jamborees were given a short questionnaire to complete. In all three provinces girls responded positively when rating their jamboree experience, with 79% of girls in the Eastern Cape and 81% in Mpumalanga giving the highest possible rating. In KZN, 100% of girls gave the highest possible rating, suggesting that the KZN Science Centre approach was more effective. However, both models have advantages and disadvantages. These are detailed in Table 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Both the Health and Peer Education sessions provided girls with opportunities for knowledge-based learning.

TABLE 1: ADVANTAGES / DISADVANTAGES OF THE TWO CAREER JAMBOREE MODELS

KZN MODEL		EASTERN CAPE AND MPUMALANGA MODEL	
ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<p>The KZN Science Centre visited every school in every district. This meant that learners did not have to be transported to the venue, thereby eliminating risks associated with transporting learners. It kept learners in the classroom and only interrupted classes for two hours. Because the groups were smaller, learners could ask questions, and career activities were focused.</p>	<p>Representatives from industry, business and tertiary institutions were reluctant to travel to rural schools, resulting in limited interaction between learners and industry representatives and tertiary officials.</p>	<p>Learners from the various schools assembled at a central venue. Representatives from industry, business and tertiary institutions attended and participated in the career jamboree because they were able to see large numbers of learners in a day and within one central venue. Learners were exposed to a more diverse set of career options since more than one exhibitor attended the career expo.</p>	<p>There were risks associated with transporting learners from school. Long distances to the venue meant that learners might be out of the classroom for an entire school day. Large groups of excited learners can be difficult to control. Learners sometimes felt intimidated to ask questions in large groups; finding sufficient time to answer all the learners' questions also proved a challenge. A lot of planning was required, especially with regard to transportation and catering. Problems often arose, e.g. stakeholders cancelling at the last minute.</p>

### b) Health Education

Health Education sessions included topics on puberty, pregnancy, contraception, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, and HIV counselling and testing.

Health Education materials were developed by MIET Africa, in consultation with the DBE, and included a health facilitation pack, take-home learner leaflets in six languages and classroom posters. Both the leaflets and posters reinforced knowledge and messages. The material strengthened and standardized Health Education messages on SRH and was delivered through the DBE's Integrated School Health Programme, using trained health educators (see description in [2 Implementation](#), above) to facilitate the KGS activities with girls in Grades 7–9.

### c) Peer Education

Peer Education material, developed by MIET Africa, included a peer educator manual in the form of a file. The contents included an introduction to the programme and facilitation tips, as well as session-related background information and session scripts for sharing information, generating discussion and practising skills. Take-home learner handouts were also



developed to reinforce knowledge, skills and messages, and a peer mentor guide was developed to support and monitor Peer Education programme delivery.

#### **d) Homework Assistance**

Homework support was provided to girls in Grades 7–9 who were identified as requiring additional academic assistance.

While specific materials were not developed to support this component, stationery was purchased and distributed to the girls. A physical space was provided after school for girls to do their homework. Homework tutors assisted girls and referred those who required additional support to the relevant subject teacher at the school. Homework sessions also provided the opportunity for learners to assist and learn from each other, with many learners starting their own study groups.

#### **e) Home Visits**

During the grant, 227 home visits were conducted across the three provinces (Eastern Cape 55, KZN 124 and Mpumalanga 48) for girls who had either dropped out of school or had been absent for a prolonged period. The aim of the home visit was to assist girls to return to, and stay in, school.

## **4 Programme Monitoring**

### **4.1 KGS database**

An important resource and project monitoring tool was a database that was used to track activities held at each school. This database (file name: *KGS data capture v12.accdb*) was used to capture information on types of activities held per school and attendance by learners at each of these activities. Attendance registers were completed by field staff and stamped by school officials, and this data was entered into the database.

The database consisted of three main tables: a **Schools** table listing all schools participating in the programme; an **Activities** table that recorded each activity (including activity name, facilitator and date) conducted at each school; an **Attendances** table that listed the name, surname and date of birth of each learner attending the activity.

The relationship between these tables is illustrated in Figure 1.

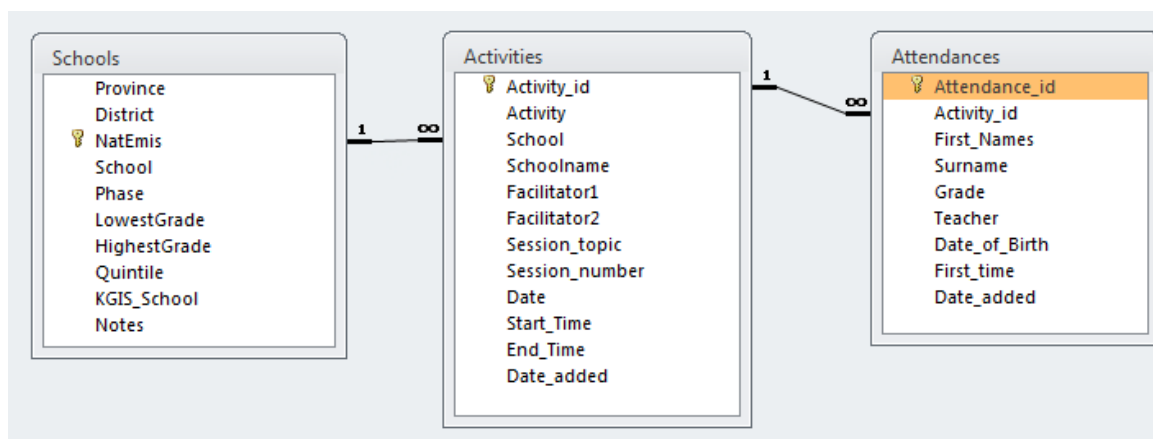


FIGURE 1: TABLE RELATIONSHIPS IN THE KGS DATABASE

Once data had been captured into the database it was possible to generate a range of project-related statistics, such as:

- Total number of females reached
- Total reach per month and per quarter
- Total reach per activity (Career Jamboree, Health Education, Homework Assistance and Peer Education)
- Total reach per activity, per grade and per month
- Attendances per activity
- Total reach to date (for user-specified date periods)
- New girls reached (for user-specified date periods)

A screenshot of the database Reports Menu is shown in Figure 2, and Figure 3 provides an example of a Province Summary Report.

FIGURE 2: KGS DATABASE REPORTS MENU

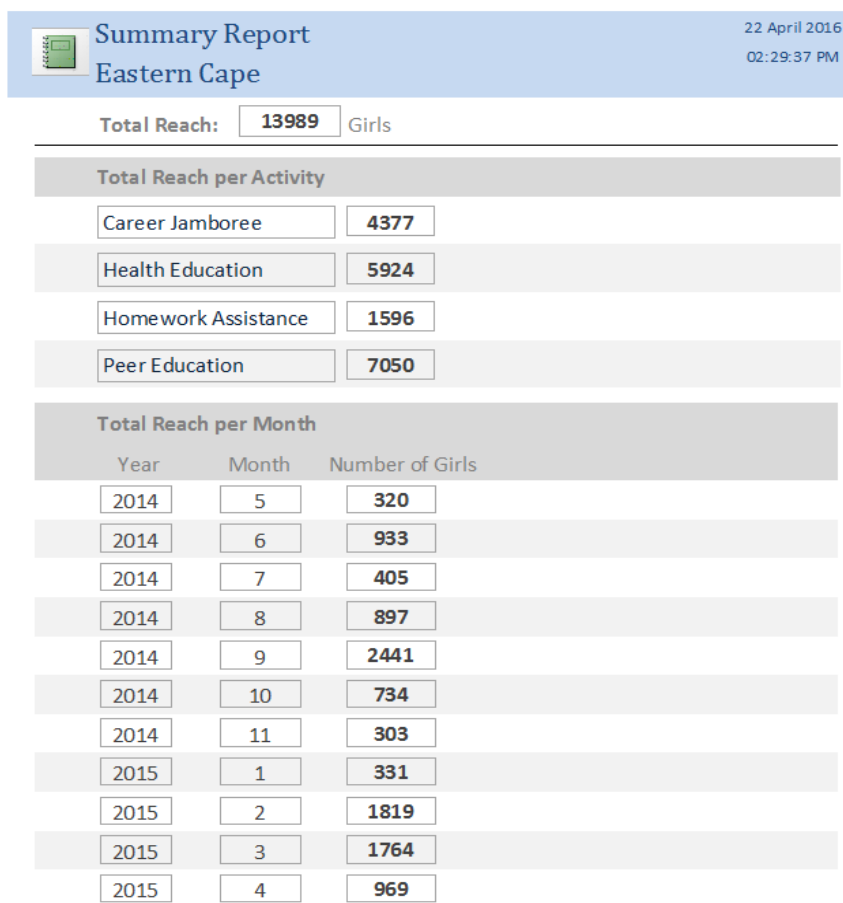


FIGURE 3: EXAMPLE OF A KGS SUMMARY REPORT

## 4.2 KGS database results

Schools were selected following four rounds of consultation meetings with provinces over three months (January to March 2014). The draft school selection presented to provinces used the following selection criteria:

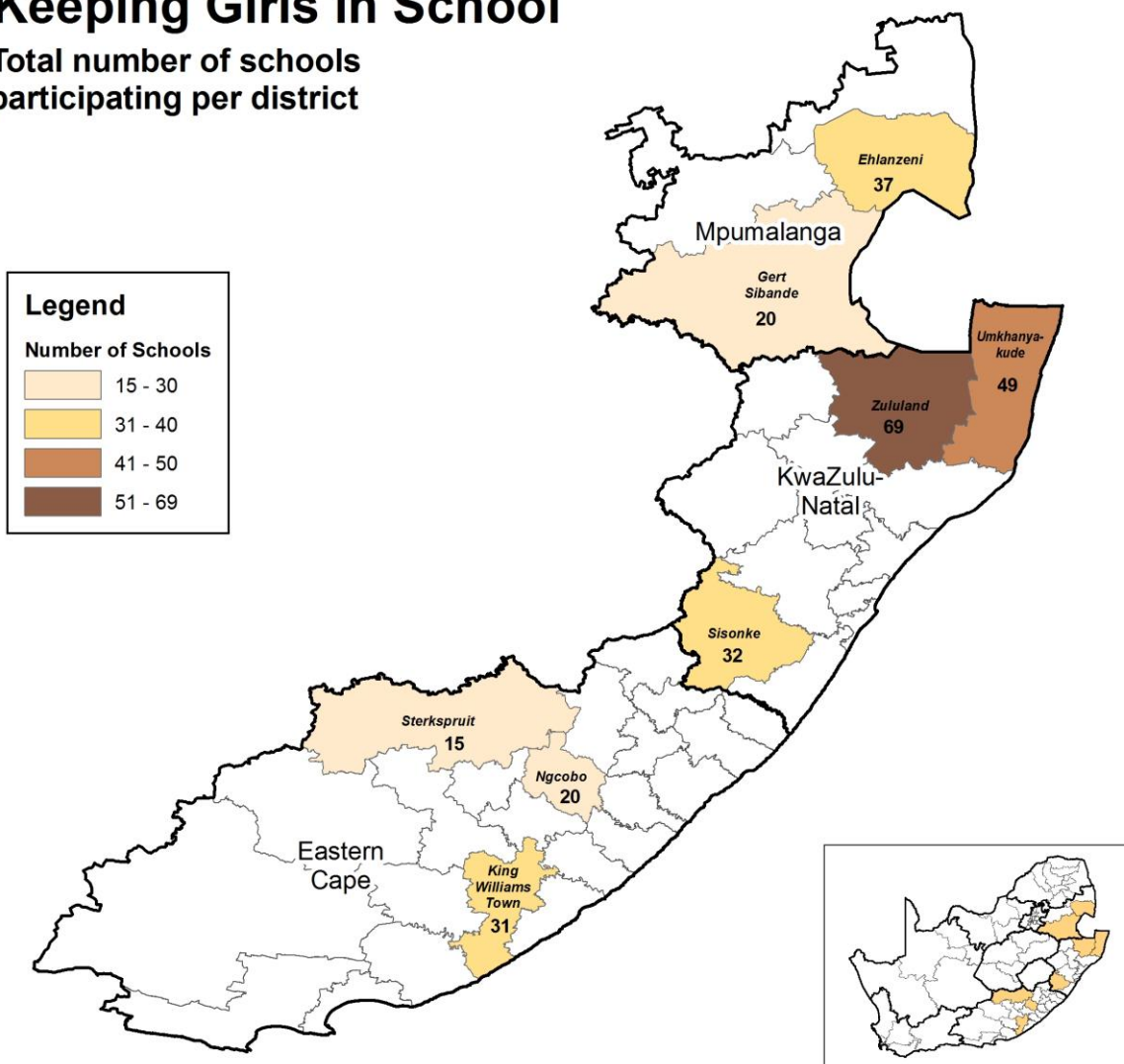
- School must be in one of the eight selected districts
- School must be in Quintiles 1 to 3
- School must have reported learner pregnancy data in either 2010, 2011 or 2012
- School must have female enrolment in Grades 7, 8 or 9

The final list of schools was approved by the DBE in March 2014.

Map 1 shows the number of schools per district that were active in the programme. The three largest districts in terms of schools were Zululand (69), Umkhanyakude (49) and Ehlanzeni (37). Sterkspruit had only 15 schools, while Gert Sibande and Ngcobobo had 20 each.

# Keeping Girls in School

Total number of schools participating per district



MAP 1: NUMBER OF SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAMME PER DISTRICT

Table 2 provides a numerical summary of key indicators per district from the KGS database. These include: number of girls reached; number of schools participating in the programme; total activities delivered; total attendances; average number of activities attended per girl; average number of activities delivered per school.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF KEY INDICATORS

DISTRICT	GIRLS REACHED	SCHOOLS IN PROGRAMME	ACTIVITIES DELIVERED	TOTAL ACTIVITY ATTENDANCE	AVERAGE ATTENDANCE PER GIRL	AVERAGE ACTIVITIES PER SCHOOL
King Williams Town	4 379	31	581	9 791	2.2	19
Ngcobo	4 935	20	591	12 348	2.5	30
Sterkspruit	4 675	15	350	8 279	1.8	23
<b>Eastern Cape</b>	<b>13 989</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>1 522</b>	<b>30 418</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>23</b>
Sisonke	4 759	32	590	12 119	2.5	18
Umkhanyakude	8 679	49	699	16 857	1.9	14
Zululand	12 422	69	1 224	29 041	2.3	18
<b>KZN</b>	<b>25 860</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>2 513</b>	<b>58 017</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>17</b>
Ehlanzeni	7 581	37	1 000	17 512	2.3	27
Gert Sibande	4 238	20	459	9 123	2.2	23
<b>Mpumalanga</b>	<b>11 819</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>1 459</b>	<b>26 635</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>51 668</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>5 494</b>	<b>115 070</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>20</b>

A total of 51 668 girls had been reached on completion of the programme. The districts with the highest number of learners reached were Zululand (12 422), followed by Umkhanyakude (8 679) and Ehlanzeni (7 581). The comparative programme reach per district is illustrated in Figure 4.

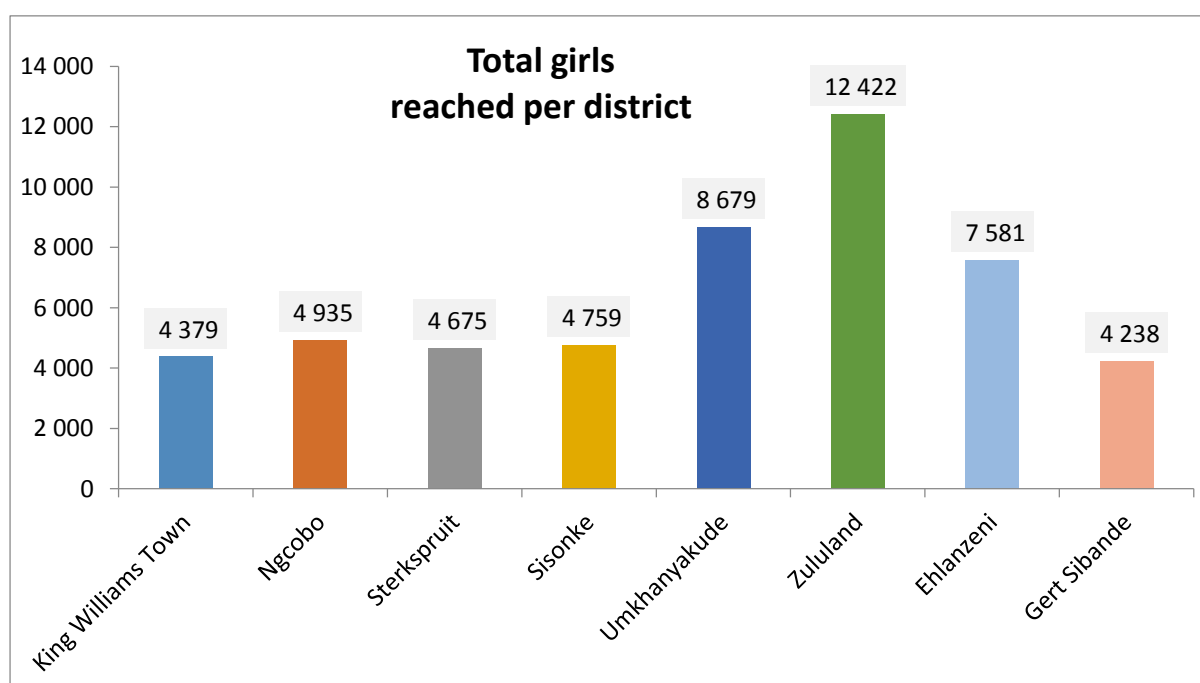


FIGURE 4: TOTAL GIRLS REACHED PER DISTRICT

Figure 5 reflects the total number of activities implemented in schools per district. It is important to note that number of activities per school and across districts are largely a result of capacity allocation and not an indication of the school's support for the programme. For example, due to large distances between schools and limited capacity some schools were only provided with one activity.

As can be expected, there is a strong correlation between the number of girls reached and the number of activities implemented. Anomalies worth noting are Ehlanzeni, third-place in terms of reach (7581 girls) but second place in terms of activities (1000 activities), and Umkhanyakude, second-place in terms of reach (8679 girls) but third place in terms of activities (699 activities)—hence the higher number of sessions attended per girl in Ehlanzeni (2.3) compared to Umkhanyakude (1.9).

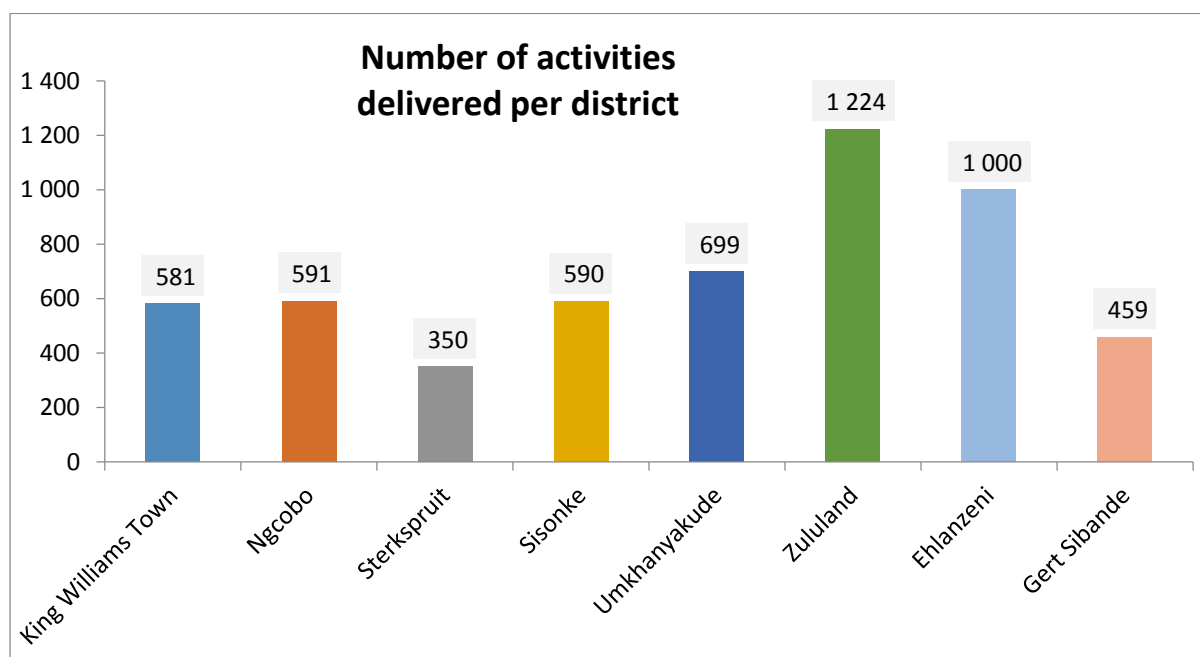
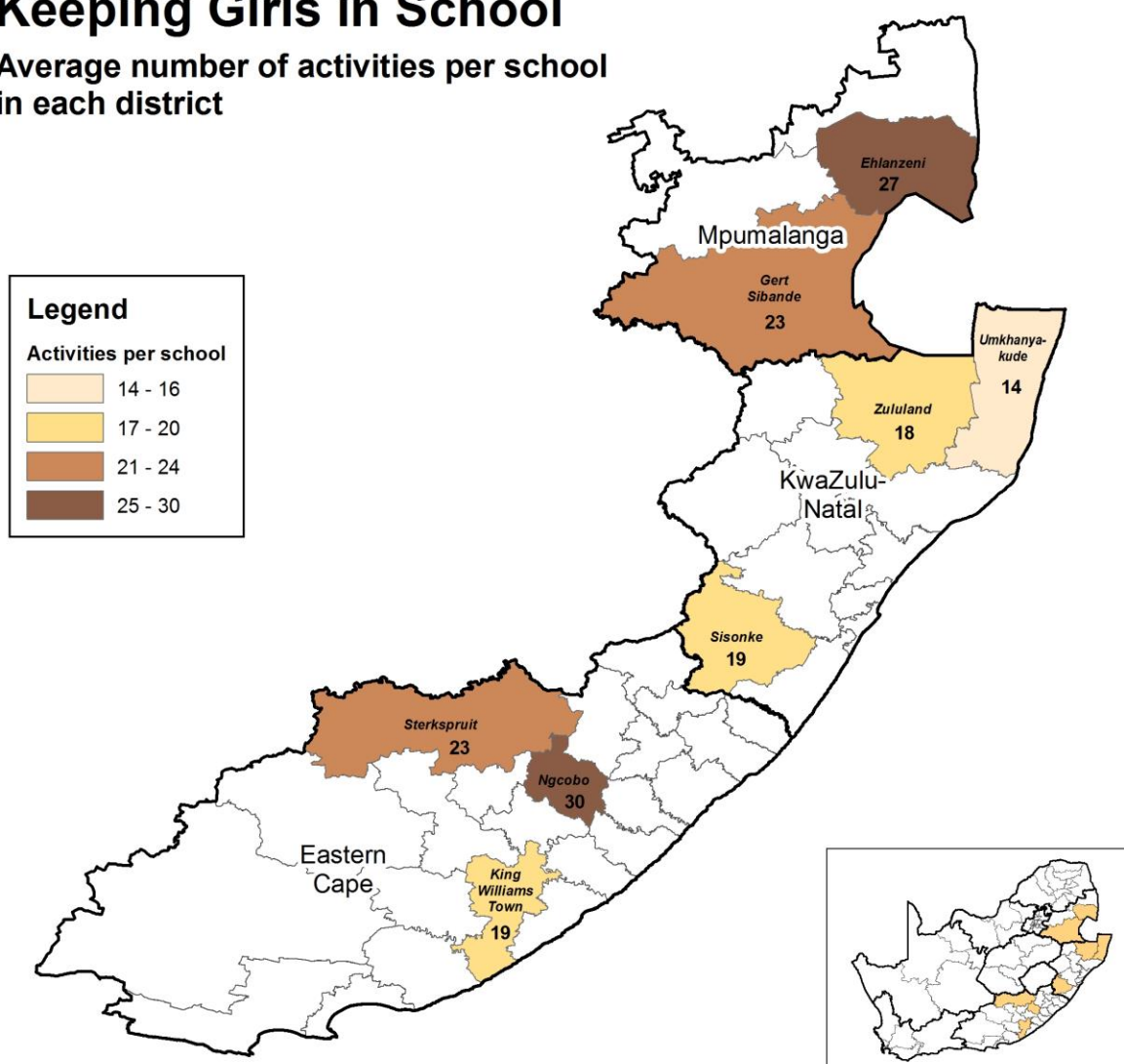


FIGURE 5: NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES DELIVERED PER DISTRICT

The average number of activities conducted per school varies considerably between districts. The highest was in Ngcobo in the Eastern Cape, where 591 activities took place in 20 schools, representing an average of 30 activities per school. The lowest was in Umkhanyakude, where 699 activities took place in 49 schools, giving an average of only 14 activities per school. These patterns are illustrated in Map 2.

## Keeping Girls in School

Average number of activities per school in each district



MAP 2: AVERAGE NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES PER SCHOOL IN EACH DISTRICT

Table 3 shows the number of girls reached by each activity type per district. The activity that reached the highest number of girls was career jamborees (27 396), followed by Health Education (17 015), Homework Assistance (12 994) and Peer Education (11 820). The proportion of learners reached per activity varied in each district, reflecting the differing priorities due to the contextual differences within districts.

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF GIRLS REACHED PER ACTIVITY TYPE PER DISTRICT

DISTRICT	CAREER JAMBOREES	HEALTH EDUCATION	HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE	PEER EDUCATION
King Williams Town	1 562	1 256	344	2 726
Ngcobo	1 619	1 966	896	2 774
Sterkspruit	1 196	2 668	356	1 543
<b>Eastern Cape</b>	<b>4 377</b>	<b>5 890</b>	<b>1 596</b>	<b>7 043</b>
Sisonke	2 797	1 139	559	1 190
Umkhanyakude	6 218	576	3 131	1 254
Zululand	8 921	4 101	2 963	1 311
<b>KZN</b>	<b>17 936</b>	<b>5 816</b>	<b>6 653</b>	<b>3 755</b>
Ehlanzeni	2 801	3 629	3 126	649
Gert Sibande	2 282	1 680	1 619	373
<b>Mpumalanga</b>	<b>5 083</b>	<b>5 309</b>	<b>4 745</b>	<b>1 022</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>27 396</b>	<b>17 015</b>	<b>12 994</b>	<b>11 820</b>

In the Eastern Cape districts of King Williams Town, Ngcobo and Sterkspruit, there was an emphasis on Peer Education activities. In Umkhanyakude (KZN) and Ehlanzeni and Gert Sibande (Mpumalanga) Districts, Homework Assistance accounted for close to a third of learners reached.

In the Sterkspruit District, nearly half the girls were reached through Health Education activities, as were two fifths of girls in Ehlanzeni. Girls in all districts participated in career jamborees, but the districts in KZN were particularly well-covered in terms of this activity. These proportional trends are illustrated in Figure 6.



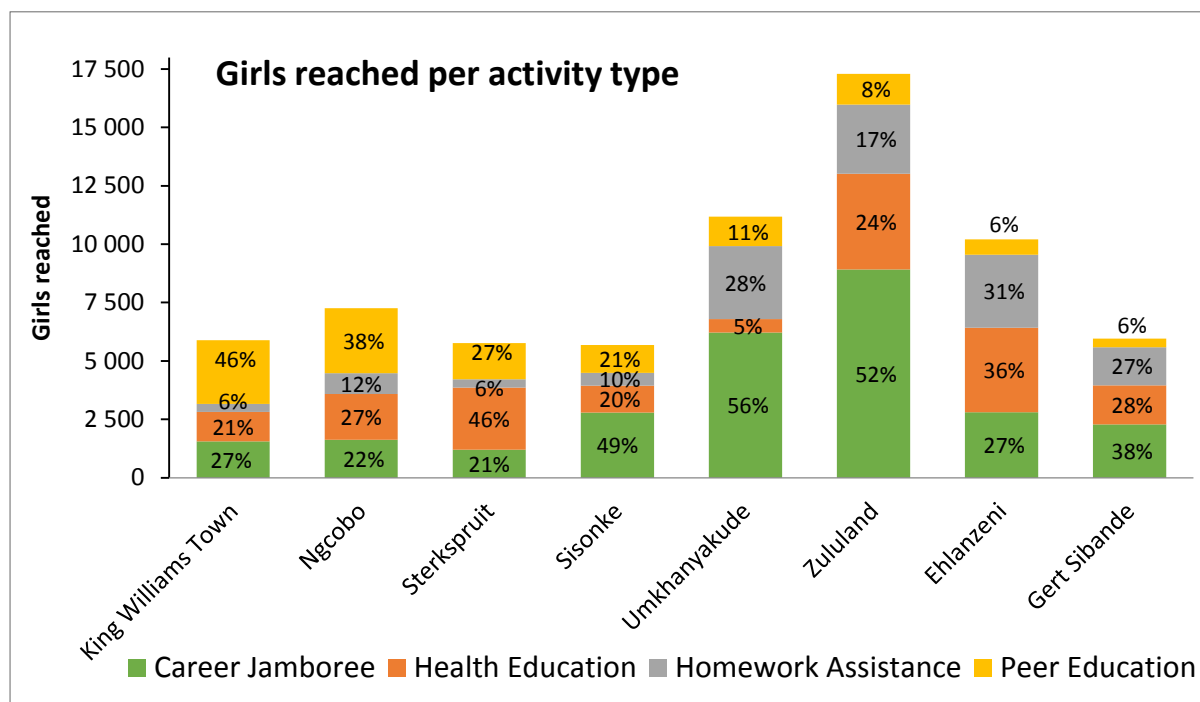
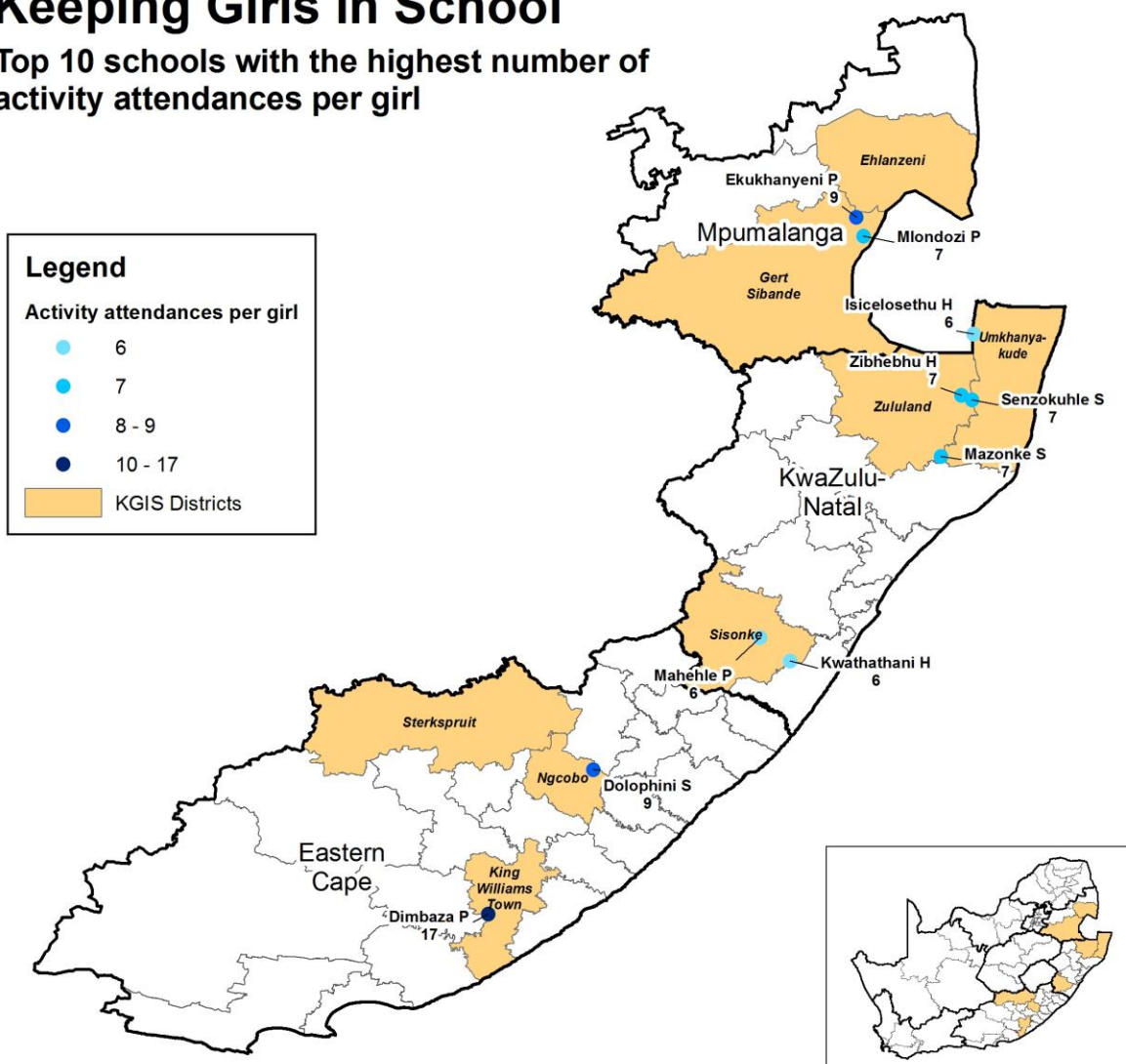


FIGURE 6: PROPORTION OF GIRLS REACHED PER ACTIVITY TYPE IN EACH DISTRICT

District-based indicators are useful for planning purposes, but they can mask significant variations between schools within a district. Although the number of activities attended per girl in the programme was an average of 2.2, there were many schools where these numbers were higher. Map 3 illustrates this, highlighting the top ten schools in terms of activity attendances per girl. The attendance for these schools ranges from 6 sessions per girl at Isicelosethu High in Umkhanyakude, to 17 at Dimbaza Primary in King Williams Town.

# Keeping Girls in School

Top 10 schools with the highest number of activity attendances per girl

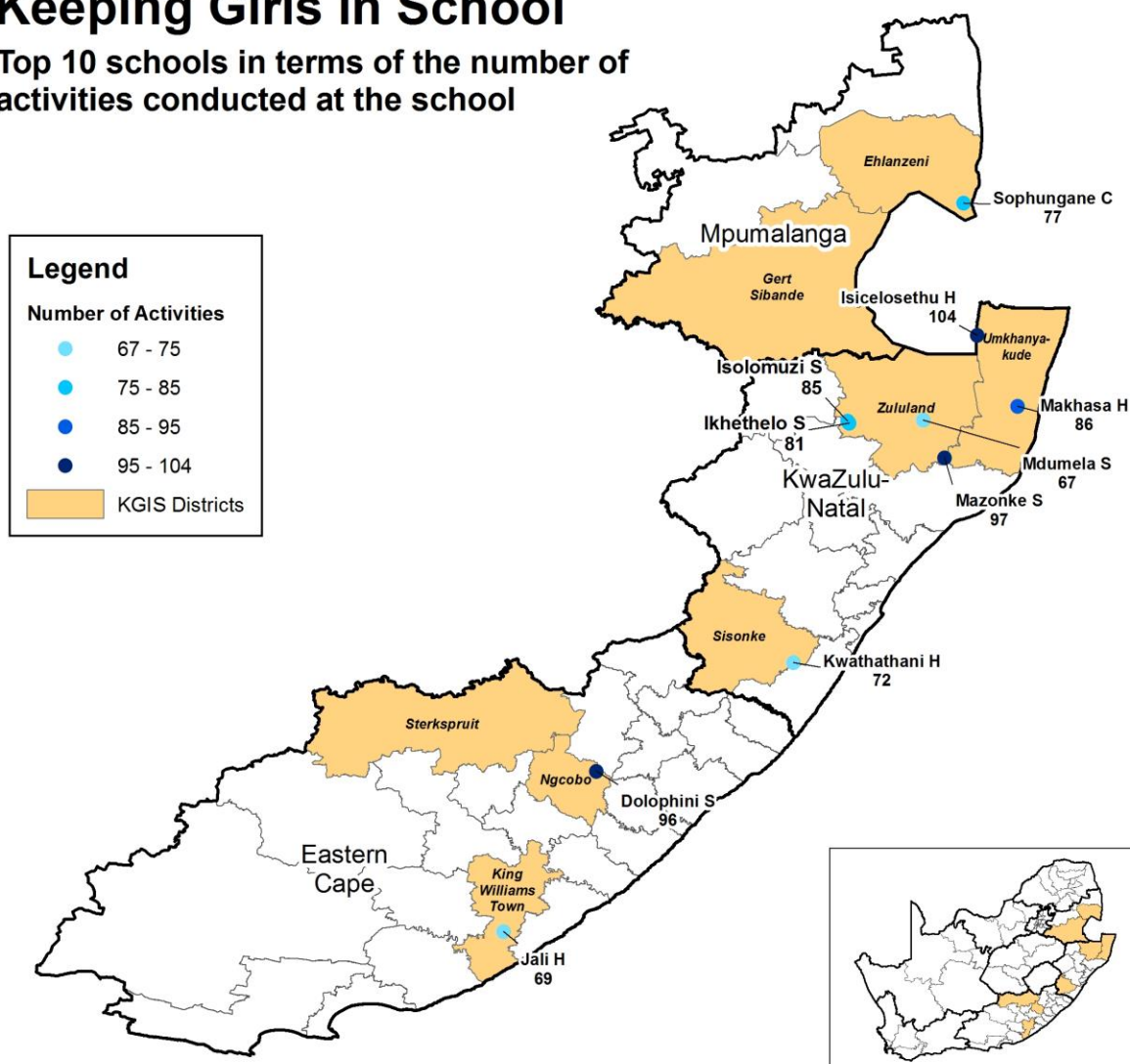


MAP 3: TOP 10 SCHOOLS WITH HIGHEST NUMBER OF ACTIVITY ATTENDANCES PER GIRL

With a few differences, the distribution of schools with the highest number of activities closely correlates with the top schools in terms of attendance. The top three schools for number of activity sessions held were Isicelosethu High in Umkhanyakude (104), Mazonde Secondary in Zululand (97) and Dolophini Secondary in Engcobo (96). Map 4 identifies the ten schools with the highest number of activities.

## Keeping Girls in School

### Top 10 schools in terms of the number of activities conducted at the school



MAP 4: TOP 10 SCHOOLS WITH HIGHEST NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES PER SCHOOL

## 5 Quantitative Data from Schools

Officials from the three Provincial Education Departments collected quantitative data on enrolment, pregnancy, dropout, promotion and repetition from 125 (49 in the Eastern Cape, 52 in KZN and 24 in Mpumalanga) of the 286 participating KGS schools. This data provided a means of assessing the impact of the programme during the implementation period.

Schools were asked to provide the following specific information for girls in Grades 7, 8 and 9 for years 2013, 2014 and 2015:

- Learner enrolment
- Learner pregnancy (number of girls who fell pregnant during the year)
- Learner dropout (number of girls who left school without completing the grade)
- Academic performance—promotion (number of girls **promoted** to the next grade)
- Academic performance—repetition (number of girls **repeating** the same grade)
- Qualitative information on aspects of the programme

The quality of data collection across the information areas varied. The data sets for enrolment, pregnancy and learner dropout were largely complete. The collection of data on academic performance was not as satisfactory, as this was interpreted by some schools to mean the average mark attained by learners in exams rather than the number of learners who passed. The data analysis for academic performance is therefore confined to those schools that provided the correct information.

### 5.1 Pregnancy

The data provided by schools indicates a decline in the number of pregnancies over the project period. Total pregnancies among schools that provided data (125 schools) declined from 301 (2013), to 256 (2014) and 202 (2015). Measured against enrolment, this represents a decline in the pregnancy rate from 2% to 1.3%, equivalent to a 35% decrease over the period.

Figure 7 provides a breakdown of pregnancy numbers by grade. The number of pregnancies among Grade 7 girls declined from 13 to 6, among Grade 8 girls they declined from 104 to 59, and among Grade 9 girls from 184 to 137. The biggest reduction in absolute numbers was in Grade 9 (47 fewer pregnancies), followed by Grade 8 (45 fewer) and Grade 7 (7 fewer).

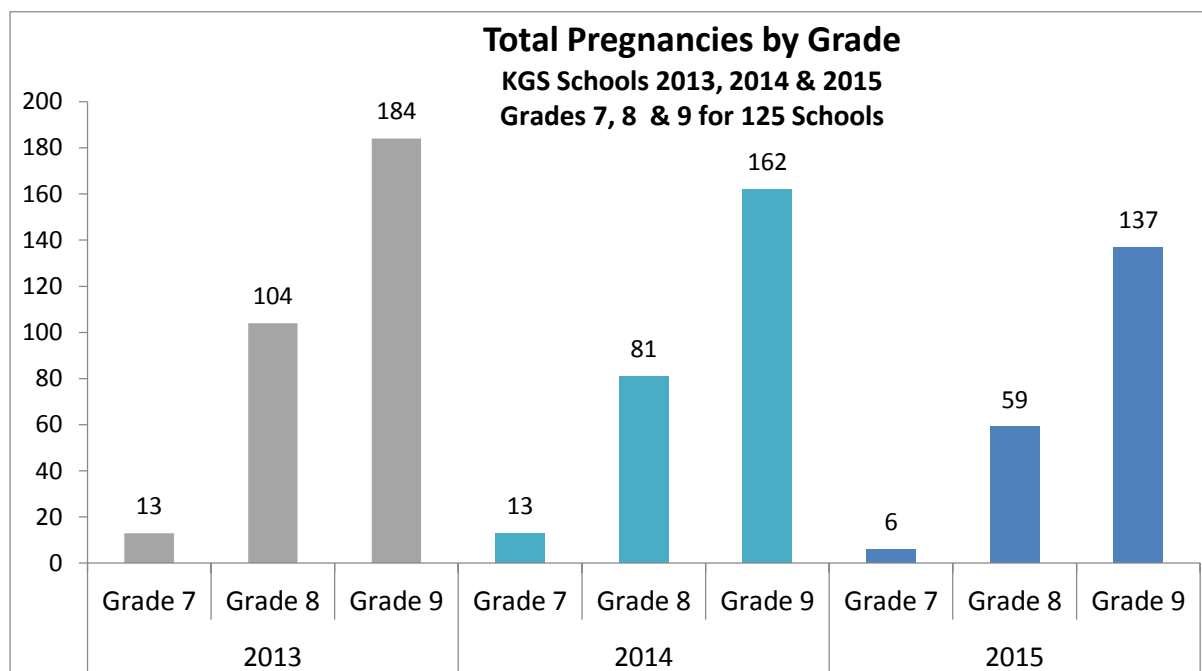


FIGURE 7: TOTAL PREGNANCIES BY GRADE

The provincial pattern, as reflected in Figure 8, indicates a steady year-on-year decline in pregnancies in the KZN and Mpumalanga schools. In the Eastern Cape, the number of pregnancies increased between 2013 and 2014 (from 79 to 85), and then decreased by a large margin to 53 in 2015.

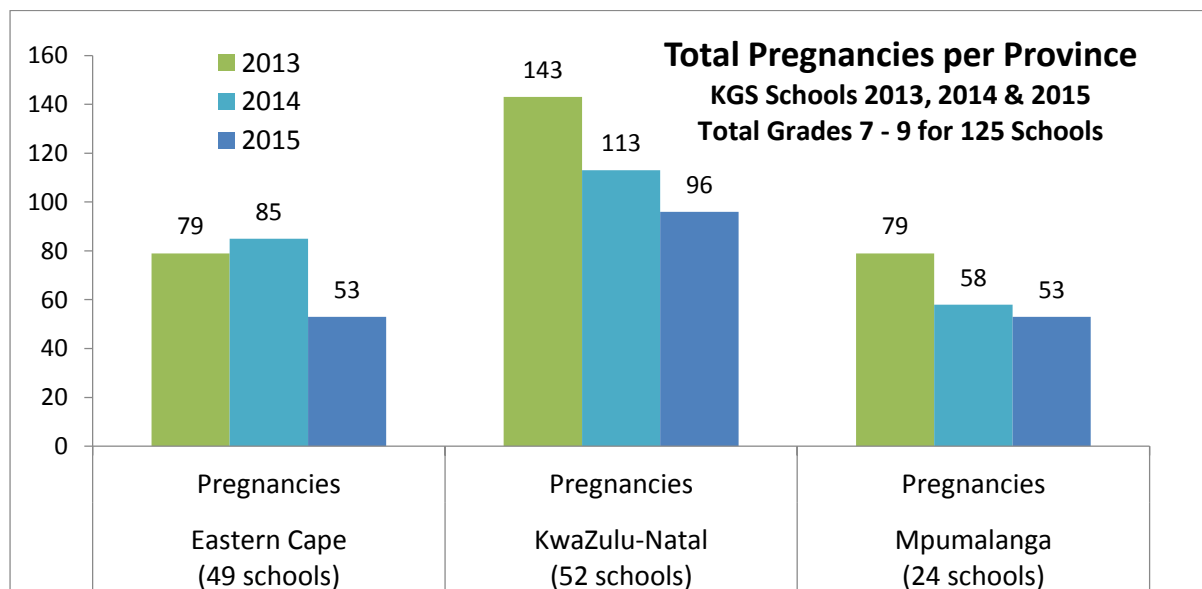


FIGURE 8: TOTAL PREGNANCIES PER PROVINCE

The trends in pregnancy rates per district are shown in Figure 9. In Umkhanyakude District there was very little change: pregnancies declined only slightly, from 39 to 36 among the 19 schools that supplied data in this district, while the pregnancy rate remained close to 1%. By comparison, Sterkspruit saw the number of pregnancies drop from 36 to 19 over the period, resulting in a halving of their pregnancy rate, from 1.8% to 0.9%.

Ehlanzeni and Zululand had pregnancy rates of 3% and 2.5% in 2013, but by 2015 these had dropped to 2% and 1.7%, respectively. The most dramatic drop in pregnancy rates was in Sisonke, where it declined from 3.8% to 0.5% (from 20 pregnancies to 3).

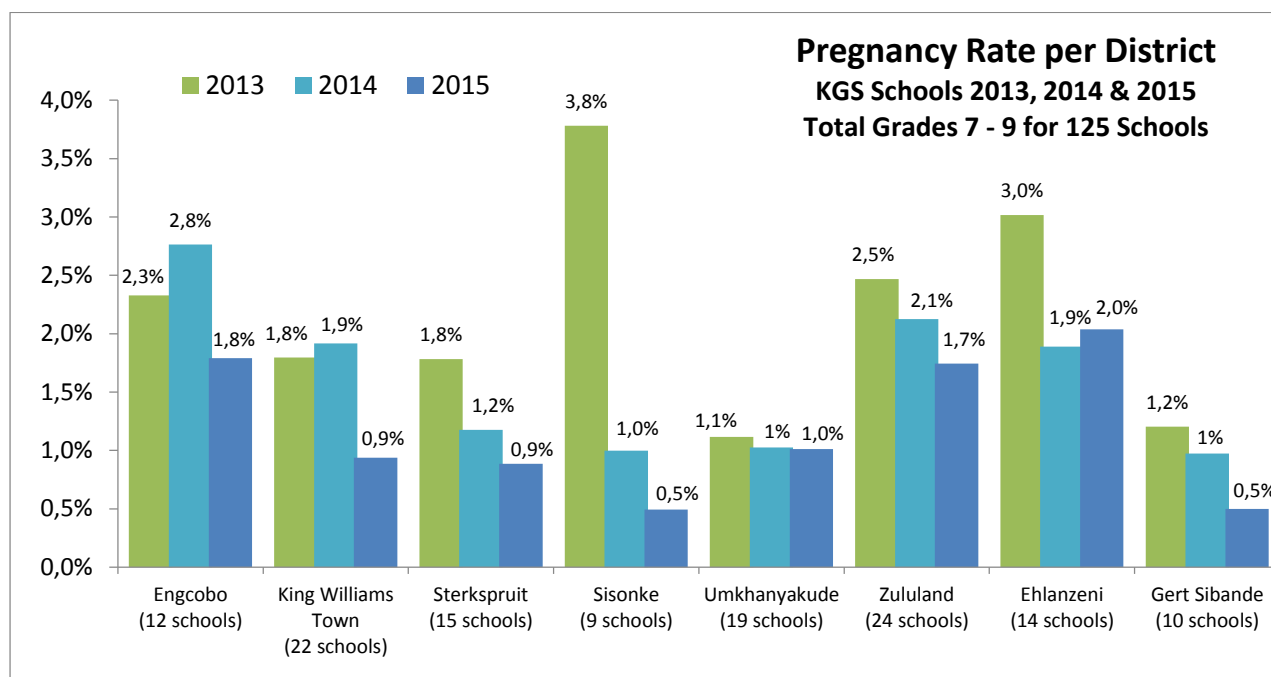
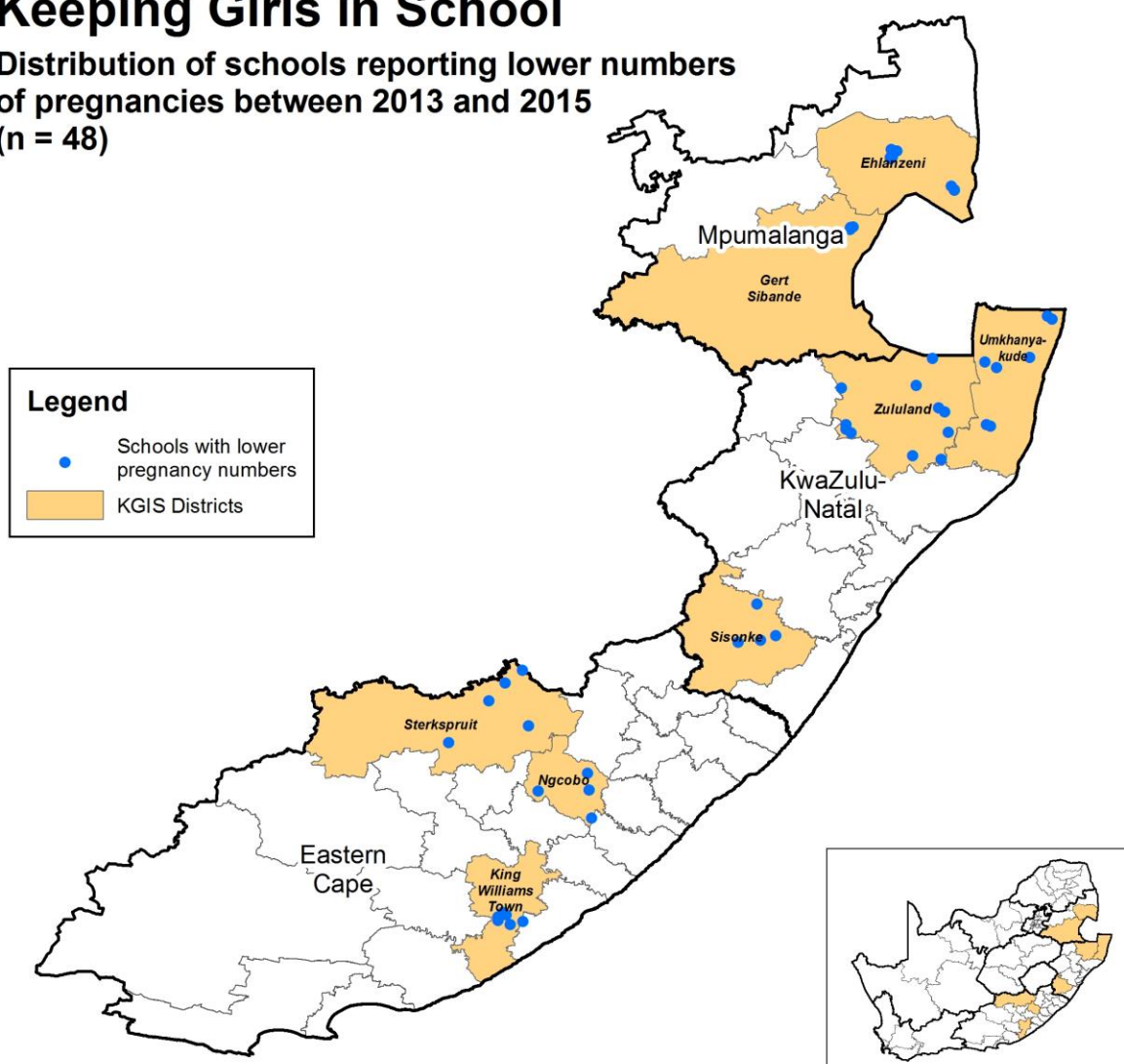


FIGURE 9: PREGNANCY RATE PER DISTRICT

Map 5 shows the distribution of schools in the eight districts that reported a decline in pregnancies from 2013 to 2015 (48 schools).

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Distribution of schools reporting lower numbers of pregnancies between 2013 and 2015 (n = 48)



MAP 5: SCHOOLS REPORTING LOWER NUMBERS OF PREGNANCIES BETWEEN 2013 AND 2015

### 5.2 Dropouts

Schools were asked to provide information on the number of girls who left school without completing Grades 7, 8 and 9 over the period 2013 to 2015. The total number of girls that dropped out declined from 401 in 2013 to 285 in 2015 (for 125 schools). Measured against enrolment, this represents a decline in the dropout rate from 2.7% to 1.8%.

Figure 10 provides a breakdown by grade. Dropouts among Grade 7 girls declined from 28 to 11, and among Grade 8 girls they declined from 163 to 114 and among Grade 9 girls from 210 to 160. The biggest reduction in absolute numbers was in Grade 9 (50 fewer dropouts), followed by Grade 8 (49 fewer), with Grade 7 having 17 fewer.

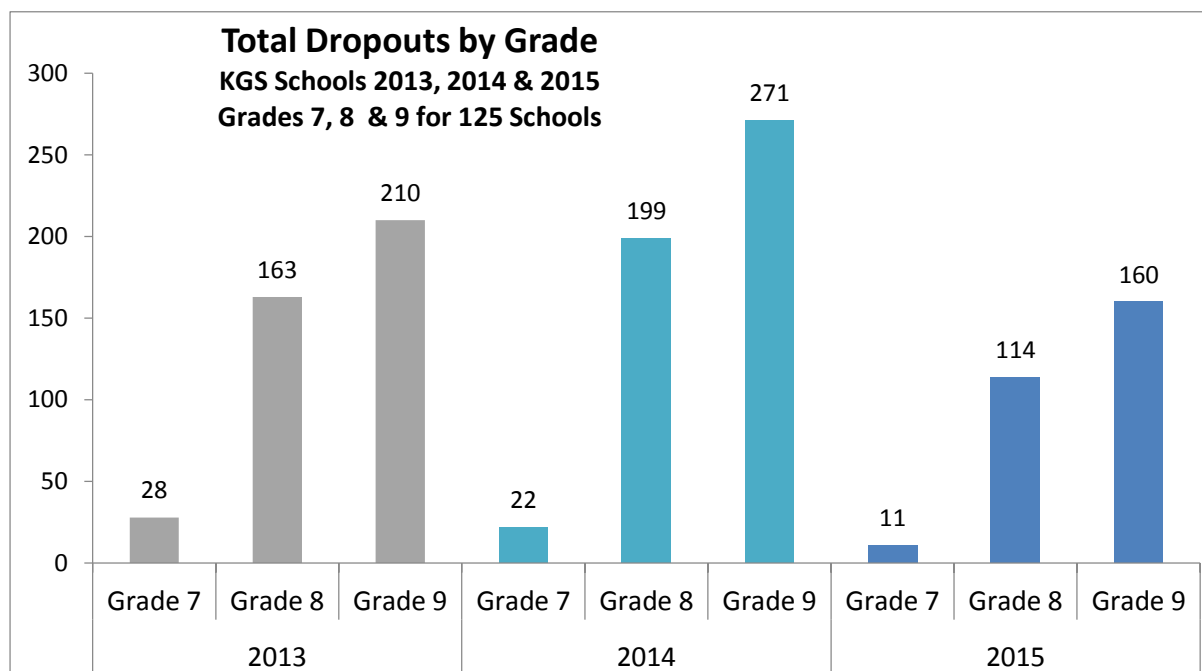


FIGURE 10: TOTAL DROPOUTS BY GRADE

Figure 11 reflects the total number of dropouts per province. The trend across all three provinces was an *increase* in dropouts from 2013 to 2014 (particularly so in the Eastern Cape) followed by a marked decrease from 2014 to 2015. The largest decrease was in Mpumalanga, where dropouts declined from 135 to 78, representing a 42% decrease among the 24 schools that supplied data.

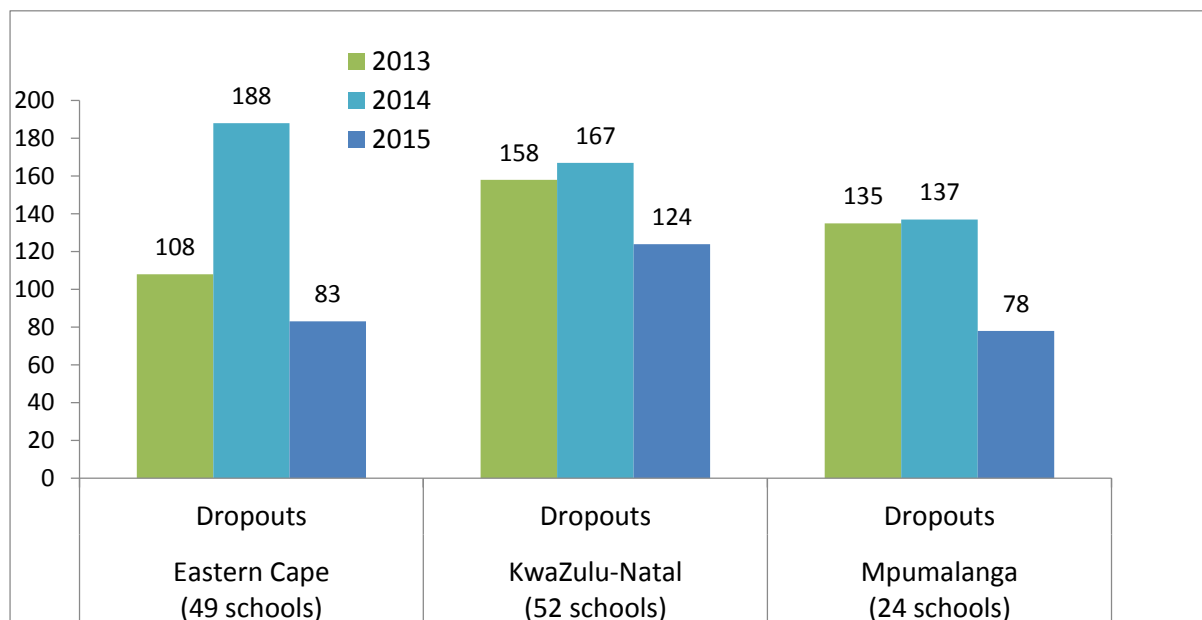


FIGURE 11: TOTAL DROPOUTS BY PROVINCE

The trends in dropout rates per district are shown in Figure 12. In some districts, such as Engcobo and Umkhanyakude, there was little or no change. In King Williams Town there was a large increase in dropouts from 2013 to 2014, followed by an even larger decrease from 2014 to 2015 (from 2.8% to 6.4% to 2.1%). The districts with the most significant



decreases in dropout rates were Gert Sibande (from 4% to 1.2%), Sisonke (from 6.8% to 4.3%), Ehlanzeni (3.8% to 2.6%) and Sterkspruit (3.1% to 1.9%).

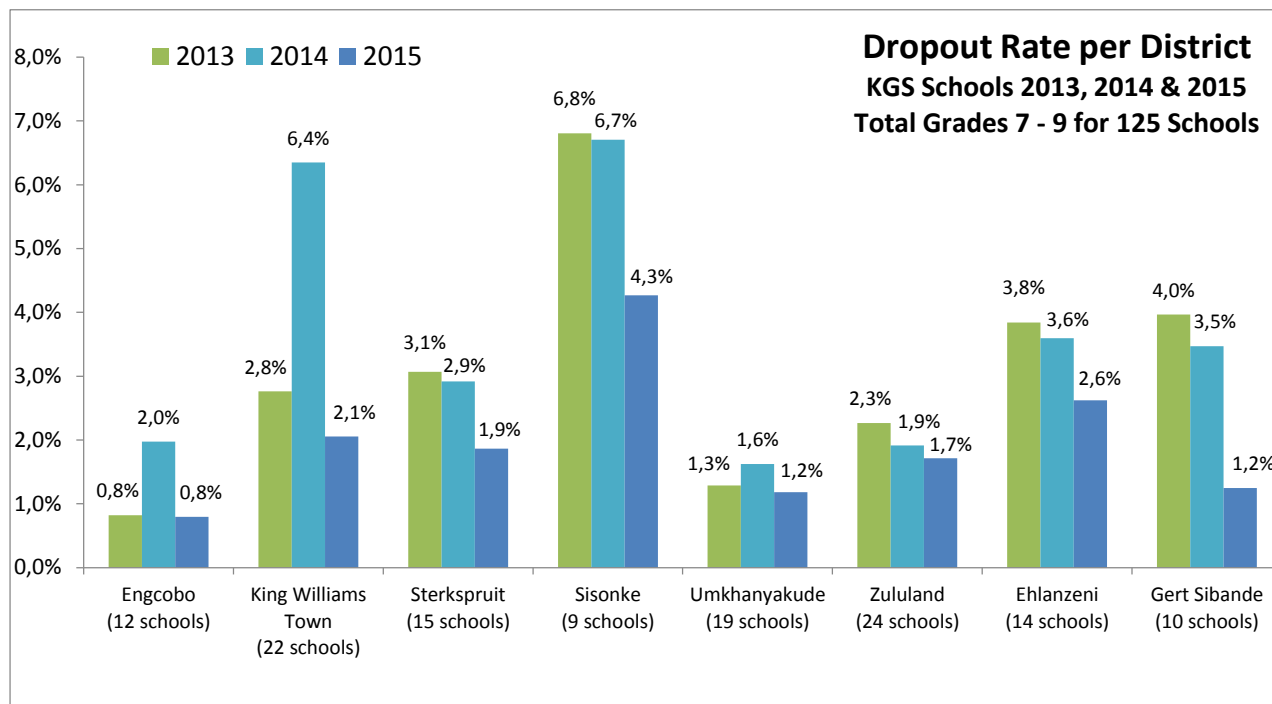


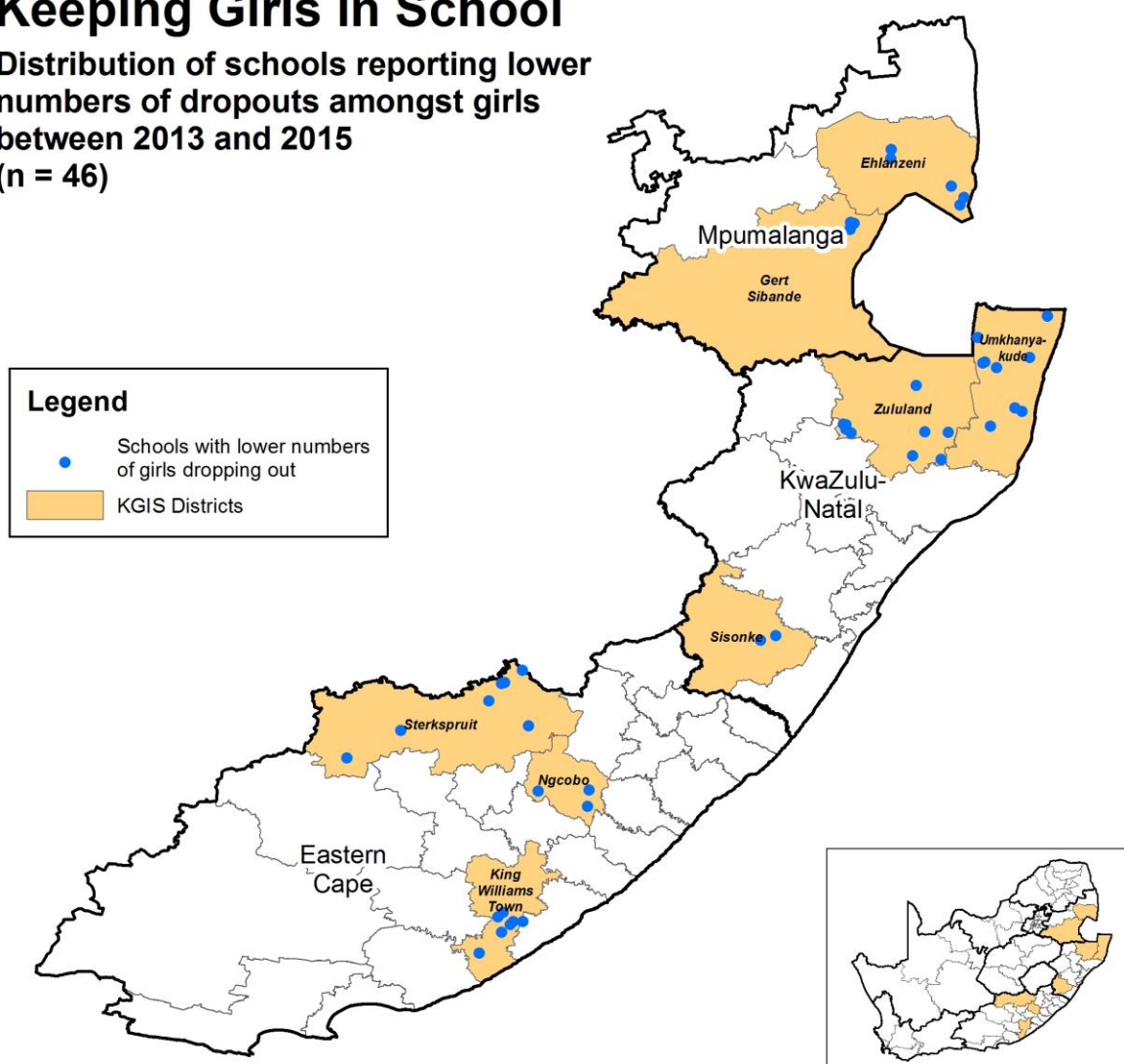
FIGURE 12: DROPOUT RATE PER DISTRICT

Map 6 shows the distribution of schools in the eight districts that reported reductions in dropout rates from 2013 to 2015 (46 schools).

## Keeping Girls in School

Distribution of schools reporting lower numbers of dropouts amongst girls between 2013 and 2015

(n = 46)



MAP 6: SCHOOLS REPORTING LOWER NUMBERS OF DROPOUTS BETWEEN 2013 AND 2015

### 5.3 Promotion and repetition

As previously mentioned, responses to the questions on promotion and repetition in the school survey were not consistent. As a result, analysis of promotion rates is based on the 71 schools that provided comparable data.

Figure 13 shows the percentage of girls for each year and grade that were promoted to the next grade. All grades showed a small improvement in promotion rates from 2013 to 2014, with no change observed between 2014 and 2015. The largest increase per grade was among Grade 8 girls, where the rate improved from 85% to 88%.

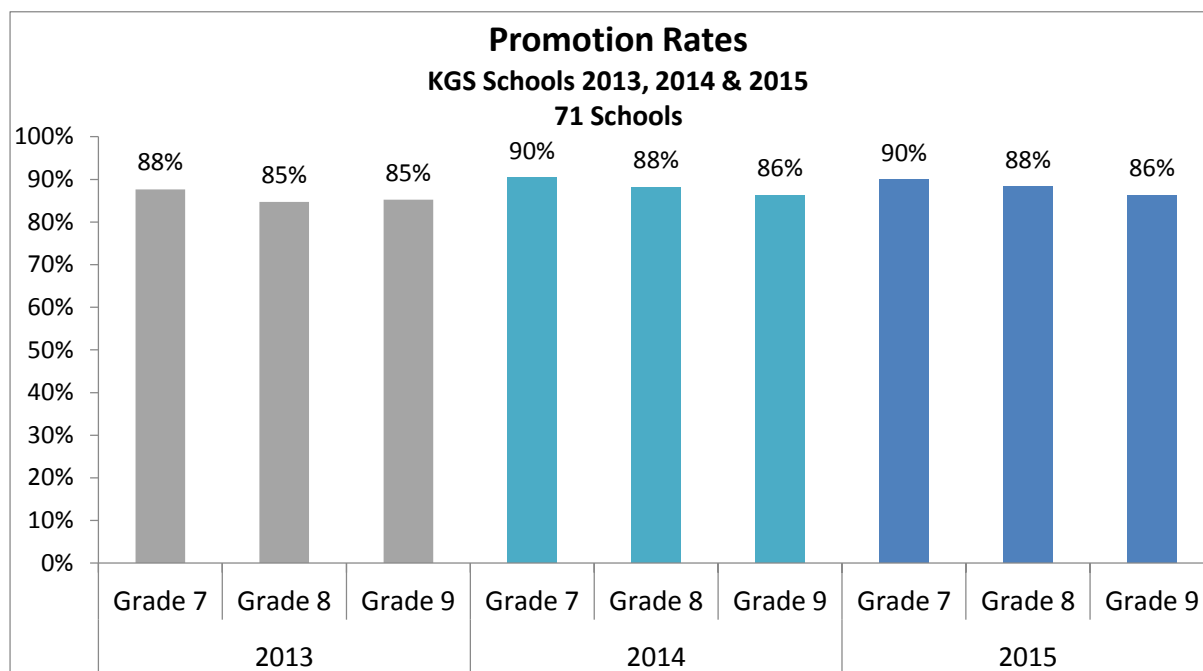


FIGURE 13: PROMOTION RATES

Figure 14 shows average promotion rates in 2013 and 2015 for the eight districts. As the data analysis was based on only 71 schools, it should be seen as indicative, rather than authoritative. In six districts the promotion rate increased, and in two it declined. The biggest improvement was in Sisonke (from 77% to 89%), followed by Gert Sibande (from 74% to 83%). The biggest decline was in Zululand (from 93% to 86%).

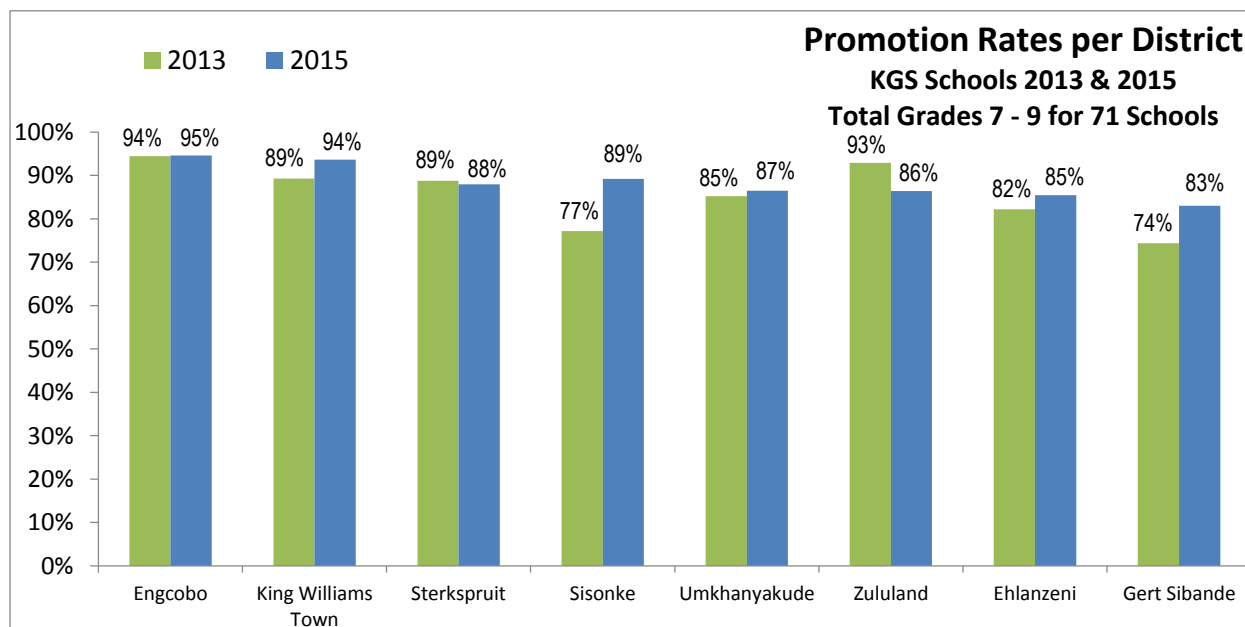


FIGURE 14: PROMOTION RATES PER DISTRICT

Only 36 schools supplied data on girls repeating grades, making it difficult to reach any firm conclusions. Figure 15 shows the total number of girls in these schools who were repeating grades. At 487 in 2012, it increased to 511 in 2013 and then decreased to 480 in 2014. The

highest numbers of girls repeating was in Grade 9, followed by Grade 8. The percentage of girls repeating Grades 8 and 9 was 8% in 2015 and for Grade 7 it was 6%.

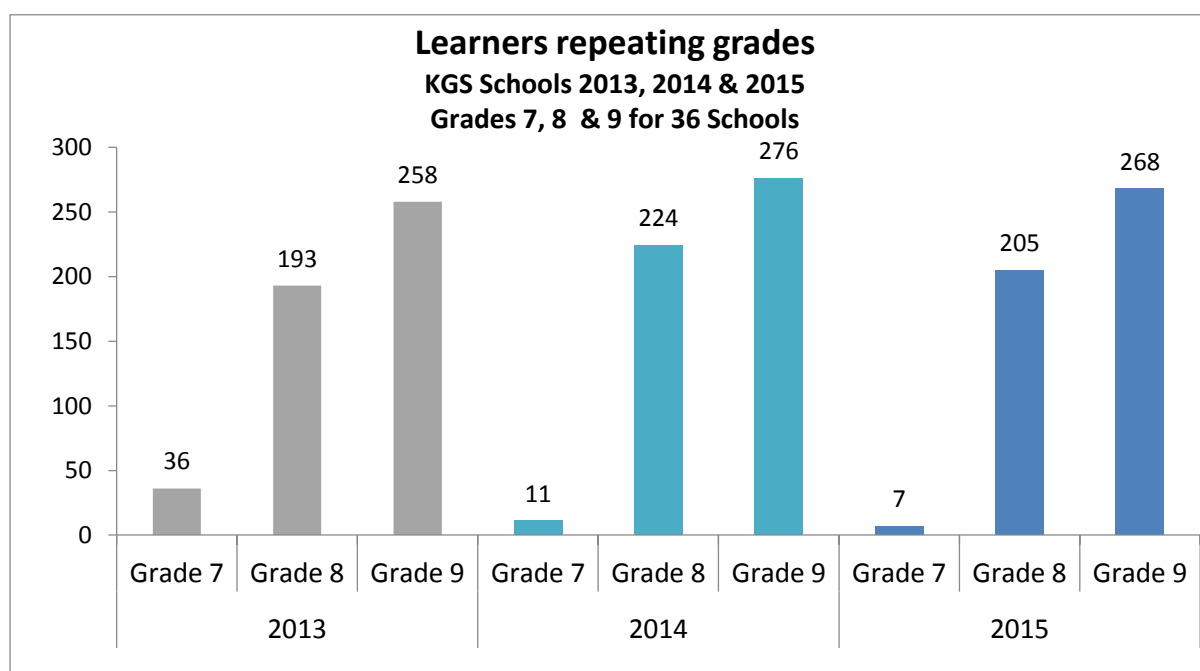


FIGURE 15: LEARNERS REPEATING GRADES

## 6 Comparing Programme Activity with Pregnancy and Dropout

It is instructive to compare the quantitative data that was collected from schools (particularly on pregnancy and dropout) with the level of programme activity that took place in these schools to ascertain if there is any relationship. The level of activity among the 125 schools that supplied data can be measured in terms of number of girls reached, the quantity of activities undertaken and the average number of attendances per girl (i.e. the intensity of activity).

A higher average attendance per girl is indicative of those schools where a broader range of services were offered and undertaken by girls. In some districts for example, there was a high reach for career jamboree (e.g. Umkhanyakude), but less so in terms of other activities, such as Health Education or Peer Education. In other districts (e.g. Ehlanzeni), there was a broad reach of *all* activities and a higher average attendance per girl.

Table 4 shows the number of girls reached for those schools that supplied quantitative data on enrolment, pregnancy and repetition. It also shows total session attendances, average attendances per girl and the change in pregnancies and dropouts reported. In the last two columns, a negative figure indicates a reduction in pregnancy and/or dropout and a positive figure indicates an increase.

The district with the lowest average attendance per girl (Umkhanyakude) also had the second lowest reduction in pregnancies. At the other end of the scale, the district with the highest average attendance per girl (Sisonke) had the second highest reduction in pregnancies. Zululand had the second highest average attendances per girl and the highest

reduction in pregnancies and third highest reduction in dropouts. Ehlanzeni showed similar trends with high numbers of girls reached, a good spread of activities undertaken by girls and a significant reduction in pregnancies and dropouts.

There were a few districts where the pattern was contradictory. One example is Ngcobo, which had relatively high attendances per girl (2.4) but no reduction in pregnancies or dropouts. Another is Gert Sibande District, which had the second lowest number of girls reached, but the highest reported decline in dropouts during the period.

TABLE 4: COMPARISON OF PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES TO PREGNANCIES AND DROPOUTS (125 SCHOOLS)

DISTRICT	GIRLS REACHED	TOTAL ATTENDANCE BY GIRLS	AVERAGE ATTENDANCE PER GIRL	CHANGE IN PREGNANCIES REPORTED	CHANGE IN DROPOUTS REPORTED
King Williams Town	3 687	8 182	2.2	- 10	- 5
Ngcobo	2 606	6 144	2.4	1	2
Sterkspruit	4 675	8 279	1.8	- 17	- 22
Sisonke	1 503	5 893	3.9	- 17	- 10
Umkhanyakude	4 431	9 472	2.1	- 3	- 3
Zululand	3 284	9 435	2.9	- 27	- 21
Ehlanzeni	3 974	9 220	2.3	- 17	- 21
Gert Sibande	2 384	4 707	2.0	- 9	- 36

Figure 16 compares districts in terms of their relative rankings for learner attendance, pregnancies and dropouts. A value of “8” denotes that the district was the best performing of all districts (highest attendance, biggest reduction in pregnancies or in dropouts). A value of “1” indicates the district was the worst performing. Districts such as Ehlanzeni were ranked the same for all three indicators. Zululand also showed consistency, whereas Sterkspruit and Ngcobo were more varied in terms of their rankings.

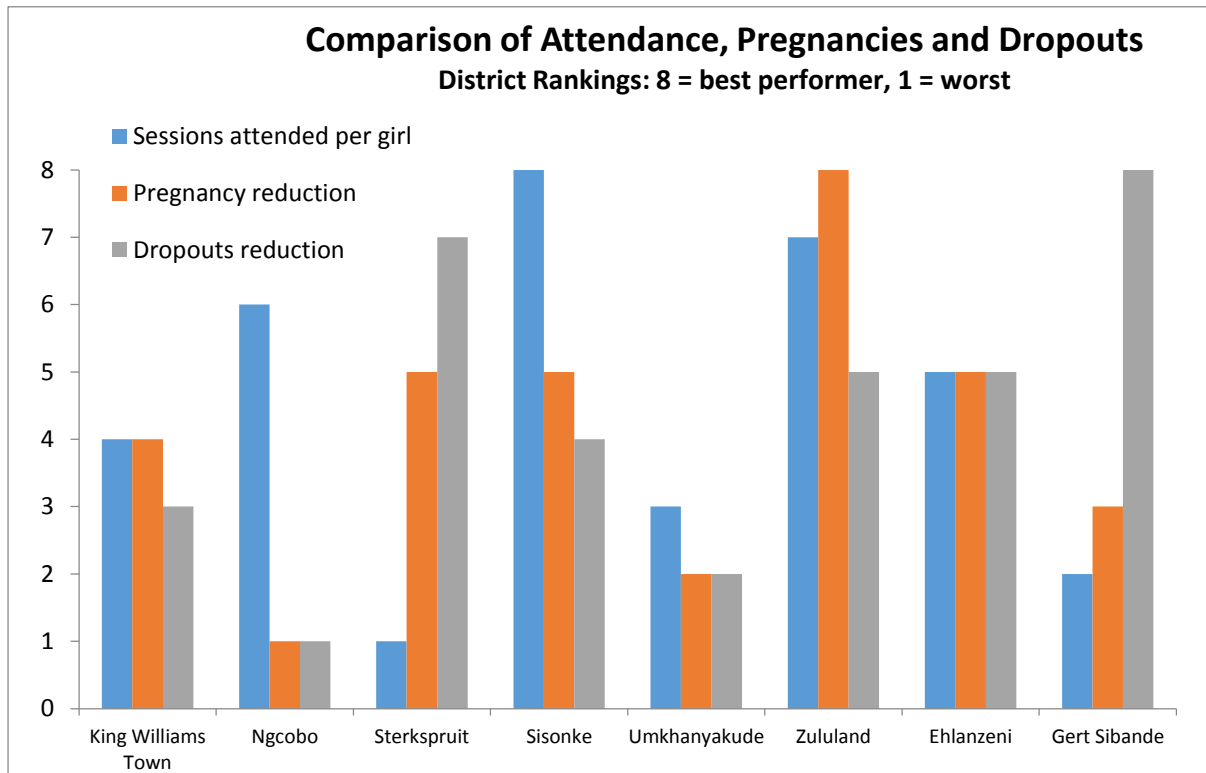


FIGURE 16: COMPARISON OF ATTENDANCE, PREGNANCY AND DROPOUT RANKINGS

Map 7 illustrates the distribution of districts in terms of number of girls reached, average attendances per girl and pregnancy and dropout trends.

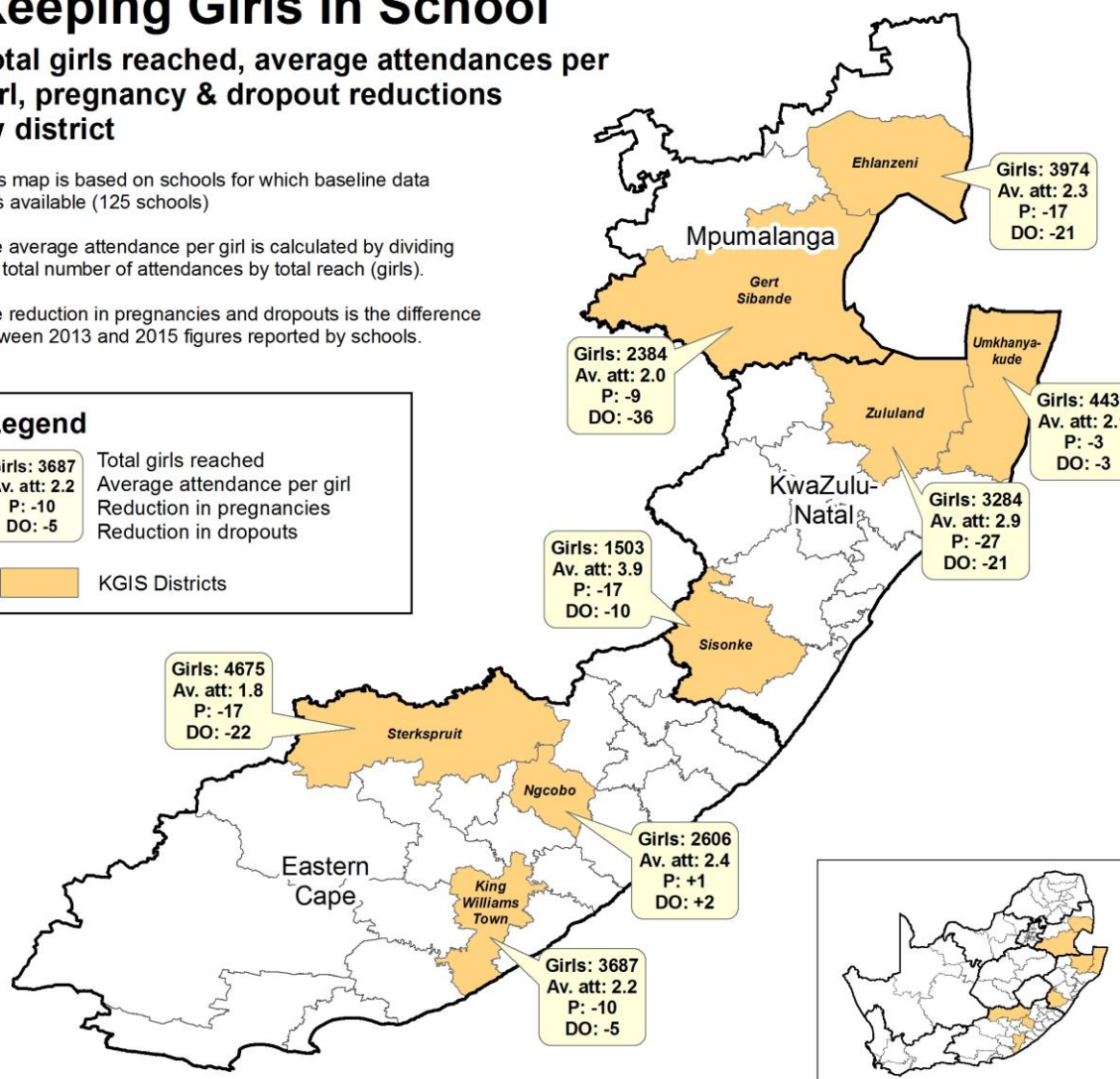
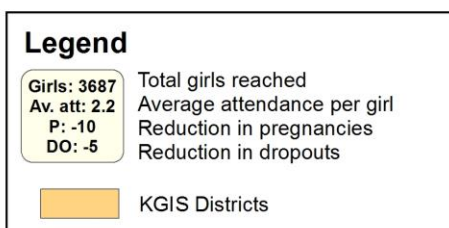
## Keeping Girls in School

### Total girls reached, average attendances per girl, pregnancy & dropout reductions by district

This map is based on schools for which baseline data was available (125 schools)

The average attendance per girl is calculated by dividing the total number of attendances by total reach (girls).

The reduction in pregnancies and dropouts is the difference between 2013 and 2015 figures reported by schools.



MAP 7: TOTAL GIRLS REACHED, AVERAGE ATTENDANCES PER GIRL, PREGNANCY AND DROPOUTS

## 7 Qualitative Data from Schools

Qualitative data was collected by MIET Africa's M&E specialist through focus group discussions with girl learners (39) and interviews with Life Orientation (LO) teachers (8), district officials from provincial DoEs (7) and KGS field staff (23).

The responses revealed a high level of satisfaction with the programme, with a general view that it assisted girls to manage the various social issues that affected them. LO teachers, district officials, field staff and learners all noted that the programme contributed to positive behaviour change. As a result of the positive reports they had received from principals, many district officials expressed the desire for the programme to be scaled up to all schools in their districts.

## 7.1 Pregnancy

The following examples highlight participants' views of the impact of the programme on pregnancies in schools.

### PREGNANCY

Girl learners were asked if they had noticed any changes in their friends since they started attending programme activities.

*Yes, there is a change because the pregnancy rate at our school has dropped.* MPUMALANGA LEARNER

LO teachers were asked what the most effective component of the package of services that was offered to girls was.

*Health Education, looking at the learners' behaviour, it has changed even the pregnancy rate has dropped.* MPUMALANGA TEACHER

LO teachers were asked if they saw pregnancies and dropouts as a major challenge in their schools.

*It is not the same, it is still there but the numbers have decreased.* KZN TEACHER

*Pregnancy is a major challenge but due to this programme, the rate has decreased.* EASTERN CAPE TEACHER

*Yes, pregnancy is a major challenge (not only at this school) but learners are advised not to quit school until the time of delivery. They are given 2 weeks to recover at home and then resume their classes.* MPUMALANGA TEACHER

## 7.2 School retention

Through the programme, awareness was raised amongst the girls about the importance of staying in school. This was confirmed during the focus groups, where several learners attributed the shift in their attitude towards attending and staying in school to the Health and Peer Education sessions. Learners at Jali School also noted that the programme motivated them to go to school, and that they were more engaged in their homework and school activities. This change in attitude toward school was corroborated by programme staff, district officials, and several LO teachers.

Respondents from each stakeholder group noted that they had observed some improvement in learners' academic performance, and attributed this to the Homework Assistance activities. Many learners face social challenges at home making it difficult for them to complete their homework. Of particular significance in this regard are the long distances many of them have to travel to and from school: by the time they reach home, it is often late and they are tired, all of which makes concentrating on homework difficult. Making it possible for learners to complete their homework at school, and providing them with additional support, mitigated against these challenges.

Feedback from the LO teachers and district officials across all three provinces highlighted stories of improved school retention and academic performance.



## SCHOOL RETENTION AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

LO teachers reported that homework tutoring was assisting learners to pass.

*The pass rate has increased because the learners are now doing their homework.* MPUMALANGA  
TEACHER

District Coordinators in both KZN and the Eastern Cape indicated that the programme was having an impact on school retention.

*Yes, learners do not disappear from school just because they are pregnant. They now disclose and hence get support from their peers and teachers.* KZNDOE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

*Reports from Principals are that learner pregnancy rate has dropped, learner retention has been sustained, academic performance has also improved and learner behaviour has improved.* EASTERN  
CAPE DOE DISTRICT COORDINATOR

### 7.3 Other changes in attitudes and behaviour

Stakeholders noted other ways in which the programme produced positive changes in learners.

The learners themselves reported that the programme had helped them to make wise decisions when being pressured by their peers: some reported having stopped drinking alcohol, while others said that they had more respect for their parents and for each other. For example, one learner said that “the relationship with our moms has specifically improved, we are now able to speak to them about anything that we weren’t able to before.”

LO teachers also noted the change in learners’ respect for others, as well as greater openness in talking about personal issues. For example, a teacher at Jali School said that learners are “now able to speak to us as teachers with respect; and they are now able to talk to me about anything that they could not open up about before.”

### 7.4 Success stories from learners

#### 7.4.1 From the Eastern Cape

##### **A 14 YEAR-OLD GRADE 9 LEARNER FROM BREIDBACH SSS SHARED HER STORY.**

I have been in the KGS programme since 2014 while I was doing grade 8, through the KGS sessions that were facilitated to us by the PGTs [peer group trainers] in our school, I have gained good self-esteem, self-confidence and developed strong morals and grounded values.

I learnt to share the information I received from the KGS session with others that are not part of the programme ...

I learnt that we are one despite that we come from different families and different parents. Sisterhood is key.

I learnt to control myself and to know the difference between love and lust, taking care of our bodies during menstruation is one of the lessons I learnt.

I learnt that abstinence is the best even though there are other ways of preventing pregnancy such as contraceptives

Homework clubs and home visits have made a great impact in our academic records as KGS schools.

- Out of the 5 components covered by the KGS programme, I enjoyed the career jamboree because it help us to choose subject for Grade 10
- The learner pregnancy rate has decreased because health education gives us more information on;
  - Puberty
  - Contraceptives
  - HIV & STI's

#### 7.4.2 From Mpumalanga

##### **A 14 YEAR-OLD GRADE 9 LEARNER FROM SOPHUNGANE COMBINED SHARED HER STORY.**

I would like to thank the Department of Education for introducing the KGS programme in our schools, I would also like to thank my Tutors who helped me with my homework, encouraged me to do my school work.

Before I was not interested in Mathematics, I used to get a level 3 in this subject; it was the only challenging subject. After attending homework sessions, I started obtaining the level 5 and it was the first time achieving this level. I did not know I was capable of achieving this much in Mathematics.

My tutors also taught me that if you respect, people will love and respect you as well. They also taught us mostly about puberty, adolescence stage, abstinence and how bad teenage pregnancy is. The KGS programme enabled me to deal with adolescence stage, not to take bad advices from my peers. The only thing that makes me realize the importance of the programme is when she told us that if you are a learner, you must have goals that you want to achieve in life. Now I am the girl of my dreams, following my enthusiastic goals. I was having a low self-esteem, not believing in myself, I was scared even to raise a hand in the class while knowing the answer, scared to stand in front of people but now I have gained self-confidence as you can see me now presenting right in front of you.

I do not regret joining KGS programme because it moulded, motivated and encouraged me with my school work, I am grateful and thankful.

To the officials of the Department of Education, Please let the programme stays, because it really helps, educates and motivate us.

#### 7.4.3 From KZN

##### **A 15 YEAR-OLD GRADE 9 LEARNER AT MAZONKE HIGH SCHOOL SHARED HER STORY.**

I started to be part of the KGS programme in 2015 when I was doing grade 8. Since then my life changed for the better, I am a different person than I was before attending the programme, not just me alone but for other learners that are also part of the programme. At our school, the learner pregnancy rate in 2014 was 20% and in 2015 it dropped to 9%. I barely spoke about my school to other learners because the rate of learners failing the grades was also high because there was a lack of knowledge and information from us as learners in my school but after the introduction of this programme which came with a lot of assistance in making our lives better.

With the help from KGS health educator in collaboration with other Government Departments, especially the Social Development Department, I and other learners from our school were able to get school uniforms. Our school is at the deep rural area and our parents cannot afford to buy us uniforms, these uniforms came in handy and were able to boost us to come to school every day and realized the importance of schooling.

KGS homework tutor also played a role in organizing career jamborees for us. I saw the importance of studying very hard to increase my pass percentage and also knowing about my career and choosing the right subjects.

It is very interesting to know that even the learners dropping out of school and bullying is no longer happening at our school.

## 8 Lessons Learnt

### 8.1 Grant implementation

High staff turnover was an ongoing challenge during implementation. At the start of the programme, this was identified as a “potential area of risk”. The payment of low stipends meant that staff were continually looking for other employment providing greater financial security. High staff turnover results in human resource management and financial control challenges. In addition, provincial staff were continually required to train new recruits. As mentioned ([2 Implementation](#), above), at the start of the programme, Eastern Cape officials motivated for an alternative staffing model, which was approved. Rather than recruiting homework tutors, health educators, peer group trainers and peer mentors who would be responsible for different activities, 23 peer group trainers were employed. They were paid a higher stipend and were responsible for all KGS activities in a set number of schools. As a result, staff turnover was not an issue in the Eastern Cape, and moving forward, it is proposed that this model be adopted.

Another challenge was the tight turnaround time for capturing data, coupled with the late submission of registers from districts. The recruitment of two additional data capturers assisted in minimizing the capturing time significantly, and provided the capacity to ensure that the completion of registers was kept up-to-date. Additional queries and reports were set up on the KGS database, which made monthly reporting and analysing data more efficient, reliable and user-friendly.

Although MIET Africa developed procedures and strategies to deal with many of the challenges, using a paper system (i.e. registers) to collect data will remain problematic. MIET Africa’s experience of implementing many complex programmes that require capturing large amounts of data has shown that using a biometric system eliminates most of the challenges associated with using a paper-based monitoring system.

Looking ahead to the next phase of the programme, MIET Africa therefore proposes using a biometric system that can efficiently identify a learner, yet keep the learner’s information confidential. It will eliminate the time-consuming capture of large amounts of data, and will make for easier monitoring of access to services and attendance at sessions. An additional benefit is that it will provide for real-time viewing of data, allowing partners to monitor day-to-day progress in the field.

The materials development process is a time consuming one, and the finalization of materials took longer than originally anticipated. However, provincial and national officials and learners were fully consulted, and materials were field-tested to ensure that the final product is one that can be rolled-out across all provinces: all the materials will be incorporated into the DBE’s library of SRH learning and teaching support material, for use in the various peer education, health education and life orientation programmes. This will assist the KGS model to be replicated and taken to scale.

## 8.2 Partnerships

MIET Africa has a longstanding relationship with the DBE, and has also worked extensively with provincial DoEs: this is seen as critical for sustainability and scale-up of pilot projects. The success of the KGS programme is due to the strong national, provincial and district DoE partnerships, as well as the ongoing support and guidance that MIET Africa received from NACOSA during implementation.

## 9 Conclusions and Recommendations

The KGS programme exceeded the target of 40 000 by reaching 51 668 Grades 7–9 girls with a combination HIV prevention package. Analysis of data collected from schools indicate a decrease in pregnancy rates and an increase in school retention. These positive findings have the potential to influence government plans to scale up the model nationally.

Looking ahead to the implementation of the next phase, key recommendations are:

- Consider alternative staffing models to eliminate high staff turnover.
- Geographic clustering of schools needs attention in order to eliminate as much as possible large distances between schools and the challenge this presents for implementation.
- Include a budget for programme M&E so that an M&E plan can be implemented from the outset.
- Include a budget for an external evaluation of the programme.
- Allow more time for materials development.
- Consider using a biometric system that provides an efficient way to identify a learner, but still allows for the learner's information to remain confidential.

This will also eliminate the time-consuming capture of large amounts of data and make for easier monitoring of access to services and attendance at sessions. A further benefit is that it will allow for real-time viewing of data, allowing all partners to monitor day-to-day progress in the field.