

TOWARDS AN EQUITABLE APPROACH: TRENDS OF PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENTS' EXPENDITURE TOWARDS THE EXPANSION OF THE GRADE R PROGRAMME

Compiled by Mbali Buthelezi using data from 2010/11 - 2015/16

STUDY CONTEXT An assessment of how government is providing the right to basic education from a Grade R level

BACKGROUND

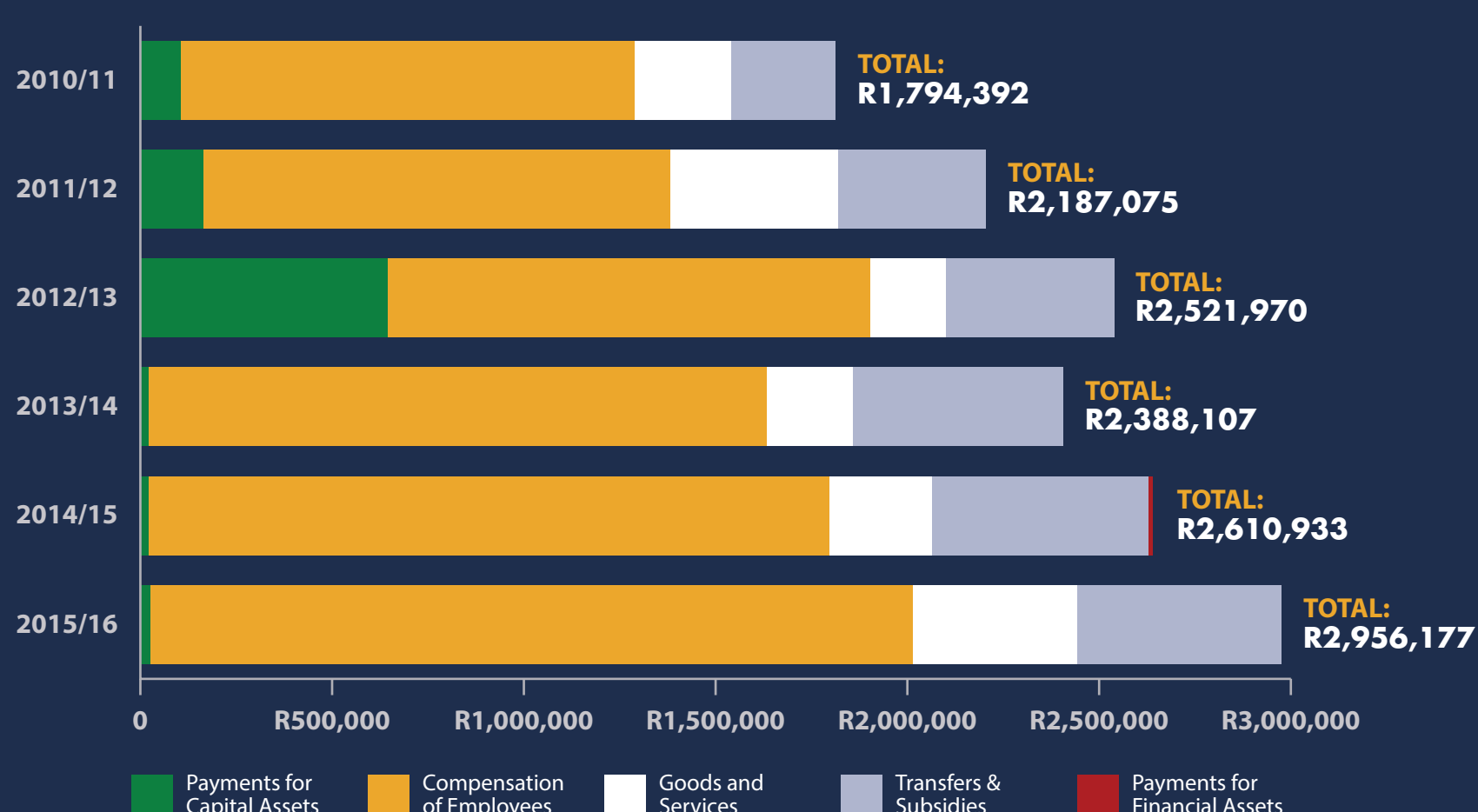
- The **National Curriculum Statement** and the **White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development (2001)** encouraged by former national **Minister of Education Kadar Asmal**, required **Grade R** to be compulsory for every child from 2010.
- According to the current national **Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)**, there are certain assessment standards that should be achieved by the end of the Grade R year.
- A Grade 1 learner is expected to be physically, cognitively, affectively, normatively, socio-culturally and linguistically ready for a solid start to his or her school career

FUNDING FLOWS

The national **Department of Basic Education** does not directly provide any funding to provinces for the implementation of Grade R. It mainly supplies Grade R resource kits (themed posters, weekly CAPS-aligned lesson plans, plus assessment activities for the year etc.)

The main funding flows for the delivery and/or implementation of the Grade R programme flows from provinces down to schools

EXPENDITURE ANALYSIS



OVERALL SPENDING IN PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION ON **GRADE R** INCREASED FROM **R1.79** BILLION IN 2010/11 TO **R2.6** BILLION IN 2014/15

THIS WAS MAINLY CAUSED BY COMPENSATION OF **EMPLOYEES** AND **TRANSFERS AND SUBSIDIES** WITH A REAL ANNUAL GROWTH RATE OF **11% AND 20% RESPECTIVELY**

THE GROWTH WAS AS A RESULT OF THE INCREASE IN STIPENDS PAYABLE TO PRACTITIONERS FOR **GRADE R**, AS WELL AS **TRANSFERS AND SUBSIDIES** MADE FOR PROVISION OF GRADE R IN **COMMUNITY CENTRES** AND **ECD SITES** RESPECTIVELY

IMPROVING THE QUALIFICATIONS OF GRADE R PRACTITIONERS

- In 2013, it was found that **12,336** of **21,207 (58.2%)** Grade R practitioners were found to be in need of qualification upgrading, either in the form of a **Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) - Foundation Phase** degree or Grade R Diploma
- KwaZulu Natal having the most at **4,504** and Gauteng the least at, **30** who needed qualification upgrades
- A total of **21,542** Grade R practitioners have **ECD** qualifications in all provinces excluding North West which employs qualified teachers. The totals per level of **Grade R** practitioner qualifications are as follows: **10,933** are at Level 4, **4,619** at Level 5, **4,191** at Level 6 and **1,799** above Level 6 as at the end of 2014/15.
- Fees payable as at 2015 in **North West University** to get a Bachelor of Education degree (Foundation phase) requires **R30,950** per annum, amounting to **R92,850** per person over three years. To get all **15,552** practitioners to NQF Level 6 would require **R1.4 billion** over three years, or **R481.3 million** annually
- To bring the learner-teacher ratios (**1:30**) an additional **18,715** teachers is need at a cost of **R1.7 billion**
- The national enrolment rate for Grade R in 2015 stood at **75%**. Grade R attendance went from **767,865** in 2012 to **859,158** learners in 2015

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The costing has illustrated that there is a huge funding shortfall as opposed to a surplus for Grade R. Instead of making savings or trade-offs, the Grade R programme is in need of additional funding.

The differences in spending patterns across provinces may be due to the misdirection of funds. Provincial education departments and schools may be guilty of cross-subsidization, with money earmarked for Grade R finding its way to other educational needs.

Higher standards and more testing do not by themselves, improve teaching. Teachers, working alone, with little or no feedback on their instruction will not be able to improve significantly, no matter how much professional development they receive