

# The impact of inequality and COVID-19 on education and career planning for South African children of rural and low-socioeconomic backgrounds

**Author:**Indira Pillay<sup>1</sup> **Affiliation:**

<sup>1</sup>Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

**Corresponding author:**

Indira Pillay,  
indirapillay25@gmail.com

**Dates:**

Received: 14 Feb. 2021

Accepted: 09 Apr. 2021

Published: 18 May 2021

**How to cite this article:**

Pillay, I. (2021). The impact of inequality and COVID-19 on education and career planning for South African children of rural and low-socioeconomic backgrounds. *African Journal of Career Development*, 3(1), a36. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajcd.v3i1.36>

**Copyright:**

© 2021. The Authors.  
Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

**Read online:**

Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

**Background:** South African youth in poor and rural communities have faced serious challenges, and the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has worsened their situation. The odds are stacked against them as they try to obtain an education, and eventually a career. Many students struggle to complete their studies amidst the pressure of the pandemic, and concerns over career possibilities weigh heavily on their shoulders.

**Objectives:** The need for this research is to highlight the challenges faced by youth within the education system. It is also to explore the failings of the South African government and its education sector.

**Method:** A brief overview of the current and historical literature was conducted. Relevant literature was reviewed and critically analysed.

**Results:** Eight major themes emerged from the literature surveyed. These included access to education, difficulties faced by girls, racism, infrastructure problems in poor and rural schools, child-headed households, education during COVID-19, food security and the absence of career guidance in low-income schools.

**Conclusion:** In light of South Africa's difficult history, and the fact that it is 27 years after the fall of apartheid, the state of South Africa's education system is not conducive to education and promoting career development in young people. More attention needs to be given to education in poorer communities, and government needs to be held accountable.

**Keywords:** COVID-19; education; employment; inequality; South Africa.

## Introduction

In 2018, South Africa was regarded as the world's most unequal country (Beaubien, 2018), and it has not improved much since then. Ironically, this comes more than two decades after South Africa became a democratic country. This country's history of being colonised in the 1600s by Dutch settlers and its subsequent control by the apartheid government fed into the inequality that stands today. The apartheid government instituted segregation policies, separating citizens by race, but its systematic 'divide and rule' policy, with a hierarchical system of discrimination, resulted in black Africans being most marginalised (South African History Online, 2016). Fast forward to 2021, one would imagine a democratic government would bring about the necessary change, promote equality and redress, but little has changed. The South African Human Rights Commission (2018) noted that 10% of South Africa's population hold 90% of the country's wealth.

Very importantly, we need to remember that South Africa is not a poor country. South Africa holds vast mineral and other resources, and is a highly taxed country. The problem lies in the squandering of resources through corruption and inefficiency. The Zondo Commission is currently attempting to uncover some of the widespread looting and misuse of funds (Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, 2021) that should have been used to benefit the poor and address inequalities in healthcare, education and other basic services caused by apartheid. However, the government that many fought and died for has failed its people and especially its youth. Commenting on similar concerns over a century ago in the United States, renowned sociologist Du Bois (1899) noted that the quest to fit in with the trappings of modern societal life left the black bourgeoisie failing to aid in the betterment of their black communities. In the South African context, this is certainly not what the stalwarts of the great struggle intended.

## Research question

This article explores the inequality in education and obstacles faced by youth in their career aspirations, within the context of the deadly coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, which heightened the prevailing inequalities and further marginalised the poor. Children in rural and other low-socioeconomic communities face much hardship in accessing quality education and developing their career plans. The guiding (explorative) research question is as follows: How is the youth in South Africa impacted by the inequality in the education system in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and their career plans?

## Research methodology

I conducted a brief review of the literature. Data were gathered using an internet search that included keywords such as education, inequality, South Africa, career development. Data were collected and analysed until data saturation was reached (Booth, 2001). This review, which was a selective review of literature, rather than a systematic review, focused on scholarly works in journals and books, relevant media pages logged on the internet, as well as seminal critical theory sources. Inclusion criteria were sources addressing (1) inequality, (2) education and (3) career development. Exclusion criteria were articles not dealing with inequality, education or career development.

## Synthesis of the findings

Several major themes emerged from the literature and were found to have significantly impacted career development of young people, especially those from disadvantaged communities. These included access to education, the plight of girls in school, racism, infrastructure problems in poor and rural schools, child-headed households as a result of the long-standing human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) epidemic, education during COVID-19, food security, and the absence of school-based career guidance in low-income communities. Each of these themes is discussed in the context of career development as it affects South Africa's poor and marginalised communities.

### Access to education

The apartheid government differentiated citizens by race and, whilst white children attended some of the best schools in the country, black African children faced severe difficulties accessing quality education. Unfortunately, this discrepancy is still present after the fall of apartheid. This exacerbates the cycle of poverty in these communities (Spaull, 2015), because poor quality of education leads to a poor quality of life and this carries on to the next generation.

Children living in rural and low-income communities are forced to walk miles to school, spending a large amount of time walking along dangerous terrain and some even crossing swollen rivers. In his research in the Mpumalanga province, Mboweni (2014) found that young children aged

between 7 and 13 years walked a total of 16 km each day to and from school. Along these journeys, children face many possible dangers. In KwaZulu-Natal, children have been reported to be crossing a lake with hippos in order to reach school (Xolo, 2017). Although a boat was provided a few years ago, it often ran out of petrol. With all these safety issues and fatigue after the long journey, how likely are these children to succeed academically? Xolo (2017) reported the case of a high school student from KwaHlomula who had to start each day at 4 am to walk the 15-km journey to school. It is difficult to understand how such a journey could be conducive to learning. It is widely known that well-rested children do better at school (Centre for Educational Neuroscience, 2021), so it should not be surprising that children in South Africa's rural communities do not excel to the same extent as children in elite areas of the country. It is, therefore, unreasonable to expect children in such deprived contexts to focus on career planning in any significant way. They have to prioritise day-to-day issues of living.

The reality is children in low-income and rural communities cannot afford to access high-quality education, even if education is considered 'free' for some. There are other costs, including, uniforms, books, transport and so on. These are significant, especially when more than one child attends school, and are amongst the reasons why almost 50% of learners drop out before grade 12 (Weybright, 2017), which means that their career development prospects become quite limited. At the time of writing this article, the ongoing problem of schools withholding the report cards of learners with outstanding fees is rearing its head again (Shuma, 2021). This is unfair to the children, almost all of whom are from families of limited financial means and unable to pay the school fees.

### The girl child in school

Like in some parts of the world where the education of girls is not prioritised, girls in poorer communities in South Africa face a battle for the opportunity to attend school. Many girls tend to miss almost 60 days of school per year because they cannot afford the sanitary products they need during their menstrual cycle (Khumalo, 2015). The embarrassment of not being able to afford adequate sanitary products and resorting to using old fabric, rags and even torn pieces of paper weigh heavily on these young girls whose focus should, instead, be on matters such as education and contemplating careers. The reality is that many families cannot afford to buy the sanitary products that their girl children need. Poverty is such a significant issue in South Africa, cutting across all aspects of life, and yet the improvements expected post-apartheid have not been forthcoming. The latest data released from Statistics South Africa (2020) shows that 62.1% of South African children are 'multidimensionally poor' with black African (68.3%) and double orphan (77.3%) more affected.

As a result of girls' menstruation-related absenteeism, they are likely to fall behind in their schooling and not progress as well, or on the same timeline, as their peers – a serious gender

and social inequality within education. The girl child in poor communities is doubly disadvantaged relative to boys and girls of higher socioeconomic backgrounds. Although some important initiatives have been underway to support young girls and provide sanitary products, much more work is needed, including the provision of better sanitation facilities, help with the management of menstrual pain and the important opening-up of discourse that can destigmatise menstruation in school contexts (Macleod, Du Toit, Paphitis, & Kelland, 2020). The fact that such conversations need to be initiated in schools means that the education system is still structured around the boy child, a relic that society has not yet addressed. Unless the place of girls is firmly established within the school system, their education and career planning may not receive the attention it deserves.

### Racism in schools

Racism is a serious issue, with a long history in South Africa, given its colonial and apartheid past. Although racism may appear to be less of an issue within rural and other schools historically reserved for black African children because of obviously reduced opportunity, the mere fact that in post-apartheid South Africa there are many schools attended by only (or mainly) black African children is an indication of how pervasive the country's race problems have been. Furthermore, the post-apartheid era of integrated schools has seen racism very evident in urban schools. There is increasing recognition that there is a structural basis to racism, especially considering it is embedded over time in social policy (Bailey, Feldman, & Basset, 2020).

In 2016, a prominent historically white girls' school in Pretoria courted national controversy over its hairstyle rules that was considered discriminatory towards black African learners (BBC News, 2016). Learners had also complained that teachers called them derogatory names, and chastised them for using their mother tongue. These are direct consequences of our colonial past and an attempt to impose the will of a few, showing no respect for human rights or the South African Constitution that regards the nation's diversity as its greatest asset. Such abuses from agents of power within a school environment do not foster positive race relations amongst learners, and serve to demean children. Although controversial in some of his views on schooling, Du Bois (1935) noted that the bullying, neglect and other racist responses in schools can cause 'complete ruin of character, gift, and ability' in the black child (p. 331).

Whilst the separation of schoolchildren by race was outlawed with the fall of apartheid, recent years have witnessed various incidents showing that racism is still very prevalent. An example was at a primary school, where a teacher was accused of separating students in the class according to race. Pictures of black children seated around a table in a corner of the class quite removed from the tables where white children sat in the middle of the class went viral on social media (Joorst, 2019). Racism is also prevalent in the country's private schools, with prejudice, bullying and even allegations

of attempts to coerce black students against excelling in rugby 'so that everyone could be happy' (Masweneng, 2020, webpage).

It is critical that racism is viewed in the context of what it does to children. The American Academy of Paediatrics noted that, amongst other consequences, racism erodes children's self-esteem and increases stress levels through the anticipation of future violations against them (Trent et al., 2019). The effects on the developing child's self-esteem and ability to progress along expected developmental pathways are serious. Du Bois (1903) used the term 'double consciousness' to describe the experience of looking at the self through the eyes of others and evaluating oneself with the criteria applied by contemptuous others. Children have reduced chance of progressing in education and career aspirations in such a context. Foucault (1973) argued that agents of power have the ability to socially construct the views and ideas of people on a particular subject, like race. With South Africa's history, its institutions became the fertile breeding ground for this problem. As a result, it can be difficult for children in challenging circumstances to carve out successful futures, and therefore, much work is needed to support children from such contexts in mapping out sustainable career options.

### Infrastructure in rural and poor urban schools

Quality of schooling is one of the prime examples of inequality in South Africa. Education and facilities are very different in private schools or those government schools attended by white children compared to rural and other schools attended predominantly by black African children, with the latter generally very under-resourced. Whilst this is primarily because of the history of apartheid-based inequality in our country, it also reflects the failure of the democratic government to prioritise the development of affected schools. Many rural schools are dilapidated with broken desks and windows, inadequate sanitation, and many are unsafe environments for learning. Gardiner (2008) described education in South Africa as being in crisis, with the crisis being more serious for children in rural schools. Although there has been some improvement over the years, significant deficits remain. Du Plessis and Mestry (2019) noted that, in addition to the basic infrastructural problems such as electricity, water and sanitation, provincial governments were unable to provide rural schools with the needed financial support to provide quality education. They pointed out that parents were burdened with having to provide stationery and cleaning material, despite low incomes. Not only are the dusty and unhygienic environments unsafe, along with the lack of clean running water and toilets, but prolonged exposure to these environments have severe health consequences for learners and educators (Barrett, Treves, Shmis, Ambasz, & Ustinova, 2019).

Not receiving basic necessities for learning and large class sizes disadvantages children by negatively influencing scholastic development (Gardiner, 2008) and perpetuates the cycle of poverty. Whilst this is because of lack of funding

for infrastructure from the government, some of the underfunding of rural schools also relates to mismanagement. In his chapter on education funding, McLaren (2017) noted a 2015 report that 913 schools lacked electricity, 2854 had unreliable electricity, 452 schools had no water supply, 4773 had unreliable water supply, 128 schools had no toilet facilities and 10 419 had only pit or bucket toilets. Whilst the situation may have improved since that report, there are still very significant problems, especially with sanitation, amongst other concerns (Somdyala, 2020). McLaren (2017) stated further that since 2011, the Education Infrastructure Grant received between R5 billion and R9b each year, and provincial education departments were required to spend their allocations effectively. However, there was a mixed record on the spending and delivery of the grant, with some provinces underspending the grants, despite their infrastructure needs. Less than half of the grant was spent in its first 3 years of the programme.

In many rural schools, there are more than 45 learners per classroom, meaning a lack of individual attention (Gardiner, 2008). It is important to note that, in many cases, teachers may not be keen to teach within rural and low-income schools because of the infrastructure and under-resourcing issues, which place huge burdens on their shoulders to provide students with the best possible education (Berg, 2008). Teachers in rural schools face numerous challenges, including being subjected to multi-grade and multi-subject teaching. Unfortunately, these realities are found mainly in black African communities.

Pit toilets are another serious infrastructure concern within schools. These are dangerous, inhumane, unhygienic and uncondusive to learning. Pit toilets have been a significant cause of deaths within schools in rural black African communities. In 2020, there were over 4000 pit toilets still in use (Somdyala, 2020). Considering South Africa's technological capabilities, it is surprising that there are still communities, and especially children, having to suffer this injustice more than 26 years into democracy. In addition, the lack of private toilets for girls in schools is concerning. Access to private toilets specifically demarcated for girls could help reduce sexual assaults within schools. This is an example of structural violence and marginalisation that Farmer (2006) noted in the gender inequity that dominates several societies. Many toilets in rural communities are situated far from main buildings and, as a result, screams for help are not audible to assist children facing assault in toilets (Ngidi & Moletsane, 2018). South Africa has one of the highest rates of sexual violence against girls and women, so these contexts of vulnerability must be recognised and prevented. It is critical to realise that children attending such schools, unlike their counterparts in urban, better-provisioned schools, have more on their minds than education and contemplating their career plans and goals – they are more likely thinking about their safety and the risks to their lives. It is sad that a young child has to feel unsafe whilst using the toilet, something that is unheard of in other communities. It is a disgrace to our era of democracy, but this is the reality of inequality in South Africa.

## Child-headed households

Whilst we are all engrossed with the COVID-19 pandemic, we seem to have forgotten another global epidemic that has caused massive destruction and loss of life, namely HIV/AIDS, which affected thousands of South African families. Many families lost parents and breadwinners, which led to children having to drop out of school to take care of household chores and younger siblings (Mogotlane, Chauke, Van Rensburg, Human, & Kganakga, 2010). The burden of having to provide food for the family also falls on the shoulders of older children. It is developmentally unfair and inappropriate. Many spend their days trying to source food, so contemplating education, career options and their future are furthest from their young minds. Many girls end up leaving school to take care of household chores and to look after younger siblings – an injustice to young girls that perpetuates their subordinate position in society. From a young age, many girls are inducted into the roles of household caretakers (World Bank, 1999).

Amongst the problems with child-headed households is the feeling of disempowerment within the multiple challenges that children face, especially the increased responsibilities and shortage of resources (Pillay, 2016). All of the socioeconomic issues, such as financial instability, unemployment, food provision and not being able to afford medicine or healthcare are the major reasons children end up in the context of being responsible for their families. As older children have to leave school to perform household duties, the poverty cycle continues. With these challenges, the likelihood of children returning to complete their education and develop a career is very less. Those who do later in life, face problems such as not fitting in, feelings of embarrassment and financial pressures because of added responsibilities. The disempowerment of children in these contexts speaks to society's shortcomings within the context of Foucault's (1977) argument that individuals have the ability to make decisions and to change their lives. Society is failing children in not allowing them the opportunity to live their lives as children. Much more support needs to be given to help children achieve their education and develop their career plans in accordance with standard developmental expectations.

## Education during the coronavirus disease 2019

In March 2020, President Ramaphosa declared South Africa under a state of disaster because of COVID-19. As a result, schools and tertiary institutions were closed for most of the year, which meant teaching and learning for many children stopped completely. Very quickly, however, historically white and private schools took teaching and learning to an online platform, whereby students used smartphones, tablets and computers connected to the internet as a learning platform. This was easy because they had access to this technology and the funds to use them. However, only the privileged few benefit from using technology to facilitate homeschooling during the lockdown (Mdepa, 2020). The same cannot be said for the millions of children in



disadvantaged communities that can barely afford to educate their children in physical schools. They do not have the access or funds to facilitate virtual learning. The latest available data revealed that only 10.6% of South African households had internet access in the home (Statistics South Africa, 2018). The reality is that online learning is not an option that ensures equity in education in our country. For rural and poor children, online learning is virtually impossible and it certainly does not ensure equality in education. The impact of COVID-19 on schooling, and the inaccessibility to online learning by poor and rural children has simply enforced the old saying that the poor become poorer and the wealthy continue to prosper.

In terms of tertiary education, thousands of students residing in student housing in or around universities and colleges were forced to return to their homes when the country went into lockdown. They had not planned for this expense. The switch to online learning began, but this was not an easy one. Immediately after the lockdown began, 584 students de-registered at one university, whilst many rejected the online learning system, arguing that it was designed for the rich and that poor students will lose out (Monama, 2020). It is important to remember that apart from access to devices, internet connectivity in several parts of South Africa's non-urban areas is problematic. In many cases, students were in their final year of study, getting ready to start work and earn a much-needed income, but the COVID-19 lockdown raised further barriers. Their inherited context of inequality and social and financial pressures increased their struggles and left them even more disadvantaged compared to the country's more advantaged youth. Government needs to look urgently at the challenges facing education in the pre-COVID and the COVID-19 era because, if we believe that education is the way out of poverty, South Africa's poor must be prioritised, and given a fair chance at success.

### Food security during the coronavirus disease 2019

When COVID-19 made landfall in March 2020 in South Africa, many facets of society were forced to shut down, including schools. This resulted in the National School Nutrition Programme being put on hold. This programme ensured that over 9 million schoolchildren had access to one guaranteed nutritious meal in the day (South African Government, 2021). However, with not being able to attend school for safety reasons, millions of children were left without that guaranteed meal, meaning that food insecurity was now guaranteed. Although the programme is an essential one, it has also been riddled with corruption, like many other facets of governance in South Africa. Between 2012 and 2013, the South African school nutrition programme was allegedly defrauded of R2.9 million (South African Government News Agency, 2019).

With this type of corruption that takes away food from the mouths of children, the health and academic progress of children is seriously jeopardised. Successful academic study

on an empty stomach the entire day is unlikely. The single guaranteed meal helps to combat malnutrition and provide the nutrition the children need to develop physically, cognitively and emotionally, and to be able to formulate and succeed in their career plans. It even motivates school attendance. With the COVID-19 lockdown leading to school closure and the cancellation of the nutrition programme, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) had to take legal action, resulting in the Pretoria High Court ordering the government to restart the school nutrition programme (Wicks, 2020).

Historically, South Africa had large-scale poverty because of the inequality designed and carefully instituted by colonialism and apartheid. However, as a country we cannot continue blaming apartheid for the current situation whilst failing to take the necessary actions to correct past injustices. Civil society needs to hold the democratically elected government accountable for their actions. More of the kind of swift action by the NGOs in the school nutrition programme is needed in other areas of society.

### School-based career guidance in low-income communities

Although career guidance is essential in schools, most schoolchildren do not have this privilege. Maree (2020) argued for the provision of career counselling, which he views as a multidimensional process that should be contextualised and constantly innovated to be appropriate and relevant, especially in Global South contexts where colonisation took its toll. The deficiencies in career counselling services, especially in South Africa's non-urban communities, have also been criticised (Pillay, 2020). These low-socioeconomic communities have suffered historically in terms of service provision and continue to be marginalised by the current agents of power. Here, children receive little or no career guidance, which disadvantages them significantly.

Many schools across the country viewed the subject *Life Orientation* as a bridge to career guidance. However, little was done to train educators in assisting children with career guidance and development (Modiba & Sefotho, 2019). In South African schools, students at the Grade 9 level have to choose subjects that will facilitate their career choices. At 13 or 14 years of age, students are expected to have planned their lives without knowing important information about the fields they are contemplating or how suited they may be. This is not possible without professional assistance. As a result, many South African children, entering tertiary education simply do not have the relevant guidance and may not fully understand the career opportunities or their suitability. This lack of career guidance fails the youth in South Africa, especially those in poorer communities. It leads to young people being unhappy in their fields of study, many under-performing or dropping out, and many developing mental health problems like depression and suicide. In a recent study at a rural South African university, 20.5% of first-year students reported that they do not find study as interesting as they used to, 20.3% wondered whether life is worth living, and 7% thought of killing themselves (Pillay,

Thwala, & Pillay, 2019). These are concerning findings and reflect on the mental state of young students, very likely influenced by their study and career choices.

Career development should be discussed from an early age to adequately prepare young people for career possibilities and the challenges they may encounter (Maree, 2018), especially now with COVID-19 as a reality. Although South Africa has the technological capabilities to advance education, it also has the ability to influence and help inform children on possible career paths and development opportunities. We must remember that the majority of parents in our country have not had the benefit of tertiary education and may not be equipped to advise their children on career prospects and study requirements (Pillay, 2020). Career counselling services are needed.

### Limitations of the study

As this article is based on a selective review, it is acknowledged that certain sources may not have been available for inclusion. Nevertheless, the issues raised in this work are widely documented, especially in relation to social conditions such as inequality and impoverishments in education in sectors of our country.

### Implications for research, practice, policy and future research

This research is relevant to the field of career development and education and it should prompt further research into the area. High-quality education and appropriate career planning for the children of South Africa are vital if we are to ensure that our disadvantaged communities have better opportunities than previous generations marginalised by apartheid. Government needs to recognise the current problems and rapidly develop the necessary policies and practices to address the problems. Ensuring that funds are directed to the right places and avoiding corruption must be a priority. Holding officials accountable is also critical. Future research will need to evaluate the efficacy of implemented programmes in order to ensure that any changes made are the most beneficial ones.

### Conclusion

Given our difficult history, we need to be very concerned about job opportunities, preparation and career development of our youth. At various levels, forms of structural violence cause great harm and pose significant challenges to the development of our young people, especially those from rural and poor urban environments. The coronavirus disease 2019 entered our lives in a destructive manner and deepened the inequalities and injustices. The pandemic simply added to the corruption epidemic that ravaged South Africa and robbed the poor by stealing what was meant to benefit disadvantaged communities, including children. The mechanisms that could have addressed the inequalities and lifted children out of poverty have been destroyed by COVID-19 and especially by those who looted the country that, 27 years ago, stood high with potential. We are reminded of Fanon (1963) observing that:

[M]inisters grow rich, their wives doll themselves up, the members of parliament feather their nests and there is not a soul down to the simple policeman or the customs officer who does not join in the great procession of corruption. (p. 172)

Whilst some South African schools attended by white children are equal to the best schools in the world, some schools in predominantly black communities are uncondusive to learning. We must remember Nelson Mandela's legacy and his advocacy for high-quality education for all children. Therefore, the need for redress is urgent, not just against apartheid evils, but also against the recent corrupt practices that pilfered billions. Civil society has to insist on righting the wrongs of past, both distant and immediate, because it has the power to do so. It is important to remember that power is not located solely in one agent, but is multidimensional and all involved have some degree of power (Foucault, 1980). Securing a better, equal and high-quality education system is an important way of ensuring a better future.

### Acknowledgements

#### Competing interests

The author declares that she has no financial or personal relationships which may have inappropriately influenced her in writing this article.

#### Author's contributions

I.P. is the sole author of this research article.

#### Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for carrying out research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

#### Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

#### Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

#### Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated agency of the author.

### References

- Bailey, Z.D., Feldman, J.M., & Basset, M.T. (2020). How structural racism works – Racist policies as a root cause of U.S. Racial Health Inequities. *New England Journal of Medicine*. Retrieved from <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMms2025396>
- Barrett, P., Treves, A., Shmis, T., Ambasz, D., & Ustinova, M. (2019). *The impact of school infrastructure on learning a synthesis of the evidence*. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications.

- BBC News. (2016). 'Racist school hair rules' suspended at SA's Pretoria Girls High. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-37219471>
- Beaubien, J. (2018). *The country with the world's worst inequality is ...* NPR. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/04/02/598864666/the-country-with-the-worlds-worst-inequality-is>
- Berg, S.V. (2008). *Poverty and education policy series*. Paris: International Academy of Education and UNESCO.
- Booth, A. (2001). Cochrane or cock-eyed? How should we conduct systematic reviews of qualitative research? *Paper presented at the qualitative evidence-based practice conference, taking a critical stance*. Coventry University, May 14–16, 2001. Retrieved from <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00001724.htm>
- Centre for Educational Neuroscience. (2021). *Well-rested children do better at school*. Retrieved from <http://www.educationalneuroscience.org.uk/resources/neuro-myth-or-neurofact/well-rested-children-do-better-at-school/3>
- Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture. (2021). *The Judicial commission of inquiry into allegation of state capture*. Retrieved from <https://www.statecapture.org.za/>
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1899). *The Philadelphia Negro: A social study*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1903). *The souls of black folk*. Chicago, IL: A.C. McClurg & Co.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. (1935). Does the Negro need separate schools? *The Journal of Negro Education*, 4(3), 328–335. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2291871>
- Du Plessis, P., & Mestry, R. (2019). Teachers for rural schools – A challenge for South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 39(Suppl 1), S1–S9. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39ns1a1774>
- Fanon, F. (1963). *The wretched of the earth*. New York, NY: Grove Press.
- Farmer, P. (2006). On suffering and structural violence: A view from below. *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, 3(1), 11–28. [http://www2.kobe-u.ac.jp/~alexroni/IPDreadings%202017/IPD%202017\\_10/On%20suffering%20and%20structural%20violence.pdf](http://www2.kobe-u.ac.jp/~alexroni/IPDreadings%202017/IPD%202017_10/On%20suffering%20and%20structural%20violence.pdf)
- Foucault, M. (1973). *The birth of the clinic: Archaeology of medical perception*. London: Routledge Publisher.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Language, counter-memory, practice: Selected essays and interviews*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1980). The eye of power. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972–1977* (pp. 146–65). New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Gardiner, M. (2008). *Education in rural areas: Issues in education policy number 4*. Johannesburg: Centre for Education Policy Development.
- Joorst, J. (2019). *Racism is still rife in South Africa's schools. What can be done about it*. The Conversation. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/racism-is-still-rife-in-south-africas-schools-what-can-be-done-about-it-110195>
- Khumalo, G. (2015). *Fight to keep young girl at school*. South African News Agency. Retrieved from <http://www.sanews.gov.za/features-south-africa/fight-keep-young-girls-school>
- MacLeod, C.L., Du Toit, R., Paphitis, S., & Kelland, L. (2020). Social and structural barriers related to menstruation across diverse schools in the Eastern Cape. *South African Journal of Education*, 40(3), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v40n3a1663>
- Maree, J.G. (2018). Promoting career development and life design in the early years of a person's life. *Early Child Development and Care*, 188(4), 425–436. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2017.1345892>
- Maree, K. (2020). The need for contextually appropriate career counselling assessment: Using narrative approaches in career counselling assessment in African contexts. *African Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 2, a18, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajopa.v2i0.18>
- Masweneng, K. (2020). *Johannesburg private school called out for racism, says it is 'deeply saddened'*. Retrieved from <https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2020-06-17-johannesburg-private-school-called-out-for-racism-says-it-is-deeply-saddened/>
- Mboweni, L. (2014). Challenges and factors contributing to learner absenteeism in selected primary schools in Acornhoek. Unpublished Master's dissertation. University of South Africa. Retrieved from [http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/13941/dissertation\\_mboweni\\_l.pdf?sequence=1](http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/13941/dissertation_mboweni_l.pdf?sequence=1)
- McLaren, D. (2017). Funding basic education. In F. Veriava, A. Thom, & T.F. Hodgson (Eds.), *Basic education rights handbook: Education rights in South Africa* (pp. 37–73). Johannesburg: Section 27.
- Mdpepa, W. (2020). *I'm not against online teaching, but what about us?* Retrieved from <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2020-05-11-im-not-against-online-teaching-but-what-about-us/>
- Modiba, M.R., & Sefotho, M.M. (2019). Life orientation teacher training needs in career guidance at rural high schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 39(Suppl 2), a1538. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39ns2a1538>
- Mogotlane, S.M., Chauke, M.E., Van Rensburg, G.H., Human, S.P., & Kganakga, C.M. (2010). A situational analysis of child-headed households in South Africa. *Curationis*, 33(3), 24–32. <https://doi.org/10.4102/curationis.v33i3.4>
- Monama, T. (2020). *COVID-19: Universities say online learning has improved class attendance*. Retrieved from <https://www.iol.co.za/the-star/news/covid-19-universities-say-online-learning-has-improved-class-attendance-33796ff5-c4fa-45cd-9a81-016898ff622>
- Ngidi, N.D., & Moletsane, R. (2018). Bullying in school toilets: Experiences of secondary school learners in a South African. *South African Journal of Education*, 38(Suppl 1), a1588. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v38ns1a1588>
- Pillay, A.L. (2020). Prioritising career guidance and development services in post-apartheid South Africa. *African Journal of Career Development*, 2(1), a9. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ajcd.v2i1.9>
- Pillay, A.L., Thwala, J.D., & Pillay, I. (2020). Depressive symptoms in first year students at a rural South African University. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 265, 579–582. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2019.11.094>
- Pillay, J. (2016). Problematising child-headed households: The need for children's participation in early childhood interventions. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 6(1), a359. <https://doi.org/10.4102/saje.v6i1.359>
- Shuma, P. (2021). *Gauteng investigating schools that are allegedly withholding learners' report cards*. Retrieved from <https://www.sabcnews.com/sabcnews/gauteng-investigating-schools-that-are-allegedly-withholding-learners-report-cards/>
- Somdyala, K. (2020). Almost 4000 pit latrines in SA's schools, zero target set 'within the next 3 years'. *NEWS24*. Retrieved from <https://www.news24.com/news24/SouthAfrica/News/almost-4000-pit-latrines-in-sas-schools-zero-target-set-within-the-next-3-years-20190311>
- South African Government. (2021). *What is the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP)?* Retrieved from [https://www.gov.za/faq/education/what-national-school-nutrition-programme-n-snp?gclid=CjQKCQiApY6BBhCsARIsAO1\\_GjYocZbf71UuHUG0jBNAWTSrKKNwAEb3edh36GTeXhke2UHkMBRJ8waArzDEALw\\_wcB#](https://www.gov.za/faq/education/what-national-school-nutrition-programme-n-snp?gclid=CjQKCQiApY6BBhCsARIsAO1_GjYocZbf71UuHUG0jBNAWTSrKKNwAEb3edh36GTeXhke2UHkMBRJ8waArzDEALw_wcB#)
- South African Government News Agency. (2019). School nutrition programme defrauded of R2.9m. *South African Government News Agency*. Retrieved from <https://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/school-nutrition-programme-defrauded-r29m>
- South African History Online. (2016). *A history of apartheid in South Africa*. South African History Online. Retrieved from <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/history-apartheid-south-africa>
- South African Human Rights Commission. (2018). *10 percent of South Africans own 90 percent of the country's wealth – Report*. South African Human Rights Commission. Retrieved from <https://www.sahrc.org.za/index.php/sahrc-media/news/item/1446-10-percent-of-south-africans-own-90-percent-of-the-country-s-wealth-report#:~:text=Ten%20percent%20of%20South%20Africa's%20Thursday%2C%20Business%20Day%20reported>
- Spaull, N. (2015). *Schooling in South Africa: How low-quality education becomes a poverty trap*. [http://ci.org.za/depts/ci/pubs/pdf/general/gauge2015/Child\\_Gauge\\_2015-Schooling.pdf](http://ci.org.za/depts/ci/pubs/pdf/general/gauge2015/Child_Gauge_2015-Schooling.pdf)
- Statistics South Africa. (2018). *General household survey 2017*. Retrieved from <https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0318/P03182017.pdf>
- Statistics South Africa. (2020). *More than 60% of South African children are poor*. Retrieved from <http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=13438>
- Trent, M., Dooley, D.G., Dougé, J., AAP Section on Adolescent Health, AAP Council on Community Pediatrics, AAP Committee on Adolescence. (2019). The impact of racism on child and adolescent health. *Pediatrics*, 144(2), e20191765. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2019-1765>
- Weybright, E.H. (2017). Predicting secondary school dropout among South African adolescents: A survival analysis approach. *South African Journal of Education*, 37(2), a1353. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v37n2a1353>
- World Bank. (1999). *Gender, growth, and poverty reduction*. Washington, DC: Knowledge and Learning Centre.
- Wicks, B. (2020). *Government's feeding scheme excuse doesn't wash, say NGOs*. Retrieved from <https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/education/2344968/governments-feeding-scheme-excuse-doesnt-wash-say-ngos/>
- Xolo, N. (2017). *The learners who cross a lake with hippos in it to get to school*. Retrieved from <https://www.groundup.org.za/article/learners-who-cross-lake-hippos-get-school/>