
3.4 Dropout rates from the programme

3.4.1 The average dropout rate for KRG was 21% for the 2008 – 2013 period, as reflected in table below. This average dropout rate as well as the annual dropout rates for 2008-2010 campaign was higher than the 19% estimated by the Ministerial Committee.

Dropout rate:	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
Enrolled	381 862	634 003	611 281	639 449	600 164	702 306	3 569 065
Lap submitted	239 137	497 830	491 280	520 252	508 663	566 364	2 823 526
Dropped out	142 725	136 173	120 001	119 197	91 501	135 942	745 539
% drop out	37%	21%	20%	19%	15%	19%	21%

Although the department set the acceptable norm at 19%, no evidence was provided supporting how these deviations in excess of the norm was investigated and what remedial action was taken. The dropout learners costed the department R657,3 million over the period 2008 to 2013.

3.5 Recommendation

3.5.1 The department should investigate the reasons for dropout learners in excess of the norm and take appropriate remedial action.

3.5.2 The department should enhance their recruitment efforts and reduce the dropout rates to achieve their targeted number of learners each year.

3.4 Dropout rates from the programme

Dropout rate:	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
Enrolled	381 862 357195	634 003 613 643	611 281	639 449	600 164	702 306 673516	3 569 065 3498053
Lap submitted	239 137 312 405	497 830 545 666	491 280	520 252 601029	508 663 628839	566 364 661407	2 823 526 3270221
Dropped out	142 725	136 173	120 001	119 197	91 501	135 942	745 539 227832
% drop out	37%	21%	20%	19%	15%	19%	21% 3,4%

John has compiled the following report. I have however updated the AG's data in red in the above table. I don't know where they get the enrolment rates for 2008, 2009 and 2013.

Also they have used Danie's LAP return rate. The LAP return rate supplied by Willem shows the number of LAPs received – in their crude state.

They can't calculate the loss in Rm if they don't know for how many months learners attended or what the per capita cost was in each year.

We need to know which of their stats to change. If Yash can find out where they got their data. As John says, each time we get a report from them, they use different data!

See John's comment below:

The Ministerial Committee did indeed estimate and plan for a 19% dropout.

Estimating what the actual dropout was depends on accurate figures of those who enrolled at the beginning of the programme and of those whose persistence with the programme is indicated by the submission of a LAP at the end of the programme.

The table supplied in the "Communication of performance audit findings no 9 of 2014" is highly problematic a means to calculate dropout rates for several reasons. Firstly it does not state what the particular source (or sources) of the data is. Second, in other communications different figures are used from other parts of the draft report.

The year 2008 is particularly problematic. SAB&T's latest set of statistics state that there were 357 195 learners and that 312 405 LAPs were returned. This gives a dropout rate of 12.5% NOT 37%.

There was another set of factors which may have led to a severe overestimation of the dropout for this year. It was only decided to use the LAPs as an assessment tool late in the year. And the final batch went out very late. The SAQA verification on 4 to 5 January 2009 took place before all the LAPs had come in. A decision was made to remark all the LAPs where the learner had achieved less than 40% (that is, had "failed"). These remarked LAPs were returned to SAB&T. Professor McKay recalls a total of about 16 000 final failures and it is possible that these corrected marks were not used to update the database. More 2008 LAPs came in during 2009. It is unclear if the data from these was captured. It is possible that they were captured in 2009 as "new learners" and then rejected as being duplicates of "2008" learners.

With the years 2009 to 2013, subject to the caveat that all these figures seem to be contentious, the drop-out rates estimated by the AG are all close to the 19% preliminary estimate.

It is therefore unfortunate that the draft report states that "dropout learners cost the department R657,3 million over the period 2008 to 2013" as if this was severe fault of the campaign. Dropout is an inevitable occurrence in literacy campaigns and compared to international experience the KRG dropout was small. Naturally each dropout is a cost, as it is in every field of education from schooling to higher education, but it is predictable and inevitable. (Does the AG do similar calculations on the drop out rates of university students, or on the number of repeaters in the school and university sector or in the ABET sector or among the SETAs?)

The campaign has throughout made every effort (subject to budgetary constraints) through its systems, training and monitoring to keep the dropout as low as possible.

It would normally be expected that dropout rates would rise in a campaign operating over several years (as the more committed and responsive are reached first and the hard to reach and more vulnerable later). That this has not happened is in fact a tribute to the campaign having in fact taken appropriate action to reduce dropout.