

The role of the media in Social Accountability Advocacy

Understanding the impact and visibility in the case of education service delivery in the Eastern Cape

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The Eastern Cape Education context

- Nov 2013 Basic Education Minister publishes legally binding Norms & Standards for School Infrastructure...BUT...
- “The Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) underspent its 2015/16 budget allocation of R1.2 billion by an estimated R 574 million. This underspending is representative of the dire lack of capacity on the side of both the ECDoE and the implementing agents with which the ECDoE works to deliver school infrastructure. Underspending, in part, resulted in the ECDoE building only three of the twenty-four schools it had planned to build” (PSAM)
- 53% of all schools with no water supply are located in the Eastern Cape along with 73% of those with no ablution facilities
- The Eastern Cape Plan (for implementing Norms & Standards for School Infrastructure) has a paragraph heading (paragraph 4.3) called “Backlog Analysis” under which no content appears

The Eastern Cape Education context

○ Kalalo Primary School – Teacher report (Mqanduli - Eastern Cape)

“There are 437 learners at our school. We are 11 teachers including the principal but we are not enough and this means that our classes are overcrowded. I teach grades 4, 5 and 6. Presently there are 50 learners in my grade 4 class and 45 learners in my grade 5. The physical environment within which I work is not easy. Our school does not have internet, a fax machine or landlines. There are only two ways in which we are able to contact the education district office in Mthatha, we can use our personal cell phones or we can travel into Mthatha about 65km away... Some of our learners have to walk quite far to get to school. Some walk a total of five hours to and back from school. On rainy days learners who have to walk far often do not come to school. When the Mbashe river is full then there are learners who are forced to stay home or risk their lives crossing the river...The seven mud structure classrooms were built by the community in the late 1990's. I teach my grades 4 and 5 in the mud structures and my grade 6 in the other structure. It is horrible teaching in the mud classrooms”

But, many schools still suffer without the infrastructure they need:

171

schools have no water supply

5004

schools have an unreliable water supply



569

schools have no electricity

2923

schools have an unreliable electricity supply



68

schools have no toilets

4986

schools have only pit latrines



1399

schools have no fencing at all



18106

schools have no libraries



20292

schools have no laboratories



**EXTENSIONS
TIME TO
DELIVER!**

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What can be done? The role of Social Accountability

- The broad range of actions and mechanisms **beyond voting** that citizens can use to hold the state to account
- Accountability that relies on civic engagement, namely a situation whereby ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability
- Emphasizes political and socioeconomic rights of citizens
- Focus is on the relationship between the demand and supply side.

Social Accountability

- Social accountability is about the interaction between the different stakeholders in the social contract between citizens and the state.
- Social Accountability relies on both demand and supply side actors interacting with each other to ensure accountability.
- Citizens, CSOs, media and communities monitor behaviour and decisions of duty bearers and exact accountability on various issues that affect their lives
- A core premise of the PSAM approach is that **social accountability** is not only essential to the realisation of all core human rights but should also be considered **as a right** in itself
- Is the right of citizens to demand explanations & justifications for the way public resources are spent, and demand corrective action where necessary

Accountability, Journalism, Transparency

- Journalists have been criticized for being too critical of the ANC and its service delivery failures. “One of the biggest arguments, made consistently in the documents analysed, was that the media were adopting an anti-transformation, anti-developmental and anti-ANC stance.” (Malila 2014)
- But research has shown that journalists in South Africa “considered the media’s role as a watchdog (i.e., a traditional libertarian model of the role of the media) as important, the results showed that journalists also believe it is important (though moderately so) to support national development and government policy (i.e., a developmental model of the role of the media).” (De Beer, Malila, Beckett & Wasserman 2016)
- So, what role could journalists be playing in holding poor and ineffective education service delivery to account?

Reporting on Education in the Eastern Cape

- Pilot study
- N = 147
- Analysis of newspaper reports between 2005 – 2016
- National & regional, daily & weekly
- Quantitative content analysis (counting types of sources used, actors, tone towards actors/sources, topics covered etc)

E Cape schools in mega 'crisis'

Education lobby group Equal Education (EE) and the Equal Education Law Centre (EELC) have, in a submission to the joint constitutional review committee, recommended amendments to section 100 of the constitution.

According to online publication *Spotlight*, when provinces fail to deliver on their constitutional obligations, the national government may intervene. The basic rules for such intervention are described in section 100.

EE yesterday said the proposed amendments address the remedy gaps that result from failures in the implementation of

tion was widespread.

"The intervention did manage to resume scholar transport and school nutrition programmes, but there are still widespread teacher shortages, appalling infrastructure conditions, [pupils] in need not receiving transport and non-delivery of textbooks," the EE said.

"Further, the ECDoE itself is still extremely weak. There are vacancies in important technical and leadership positions, corruption, weak lines of accountability, and an inability to plan and spend funding effectively."

The parties further contend that accountability and effective-

Education threatened with legal action again

By **MSINDISI FENGU**
Education Reporter

THE Legal Resources Centre (LRC) has threatened to resume legal action against the national Department of Basic Education (DBE) over its alleged failure to build permanent structures in seven schools in the former Transkei.

The LRC released a statement on Monday claiming the DBE has not com-



R1m luxury for Education officials

By **BONGANI FUZILE**

THE Eastern Cape Department of Education has spent more than R1 million in a year to accommodate two acting senior officials at upmarket East London accommodation.

The officials are acting superintendent-general Professor Harry Nengwekhulu, who has

For Mavuso, the department paid monthly costs of:

- R16 731 in meals and accommodation;
- R11 880 on car hire; and
- R11 547 for air travel.

Mavuso has been in the position for about a year.

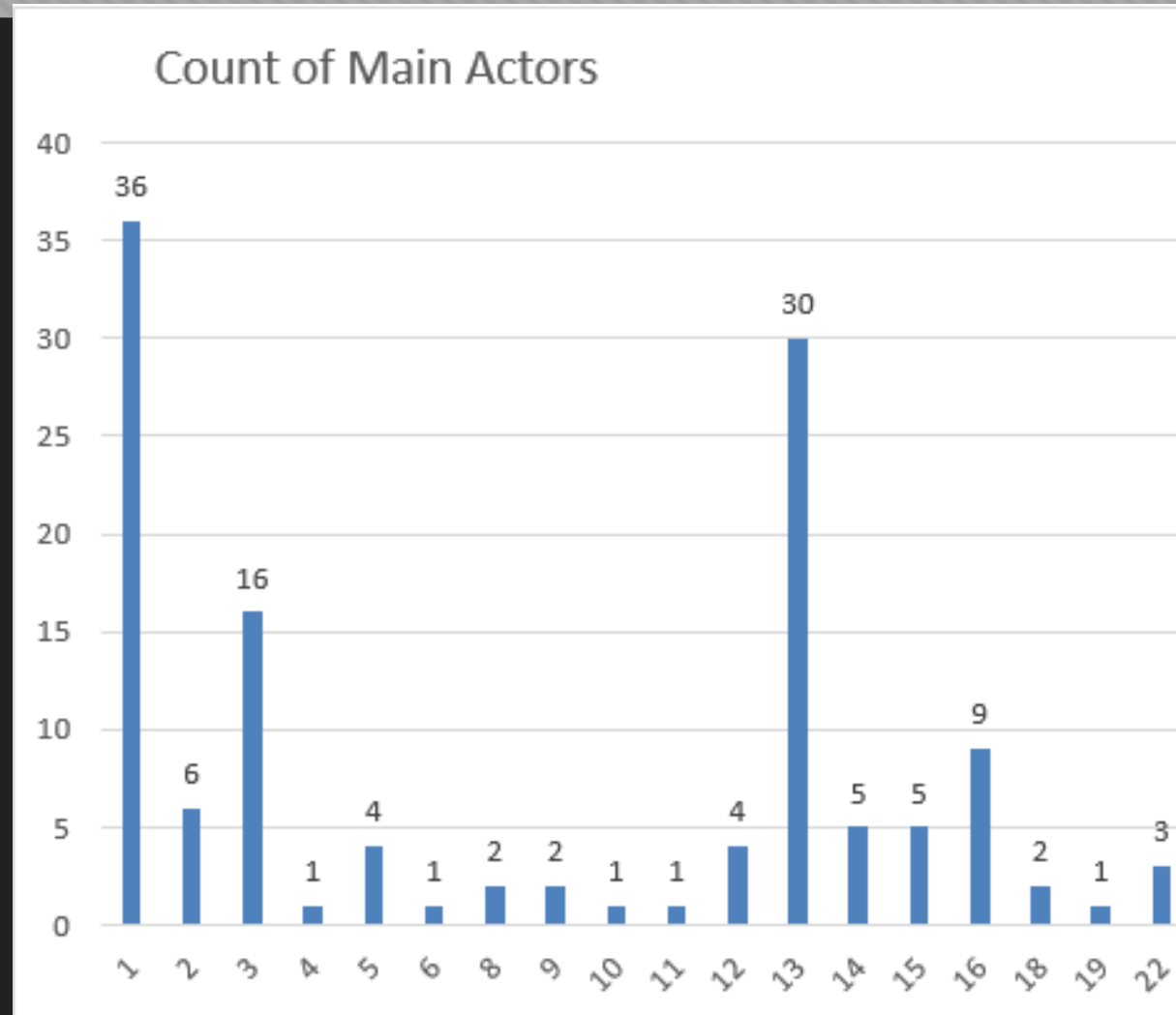
Departmental spokesperson Loyiso Pulumani confirmed that the department had been footing

house or a flat, we would still be obliged to provide groceries, somebody to both cook and do washing and ironing for these officials, an altogether tedious and unworkable arrangement in our circumstances."

Pulumani said both officials' roles were crucial. "We are not paying these people's salaries as the Eastern Cape Department.

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Reporting on Education in the Eastern Cape



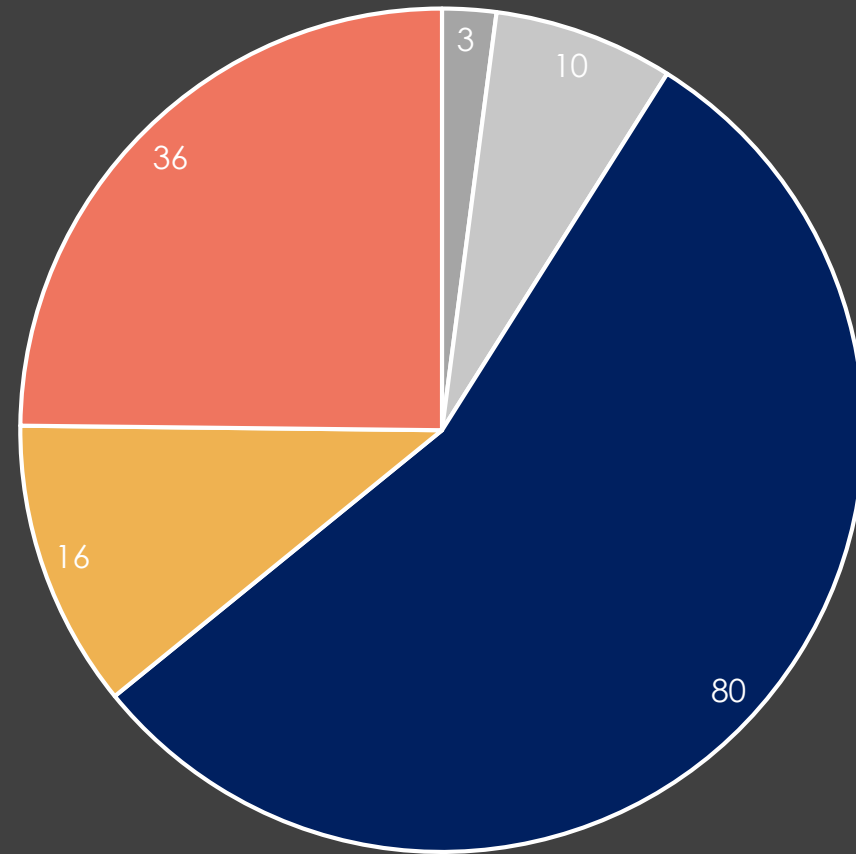
- 1 Provincial government office
- 3 National government official
- 13 Learner
- 16 Teacher Union

Reporting on Education in the Eastern Cape

Tone towards main actor

- *Slightly Positive* (3)
- *Mostly Positive* (10)
- *Neutral* (80)
- *Slightly Negative* (16)
- *Mostly Negative* (36)

Tone towards main actor



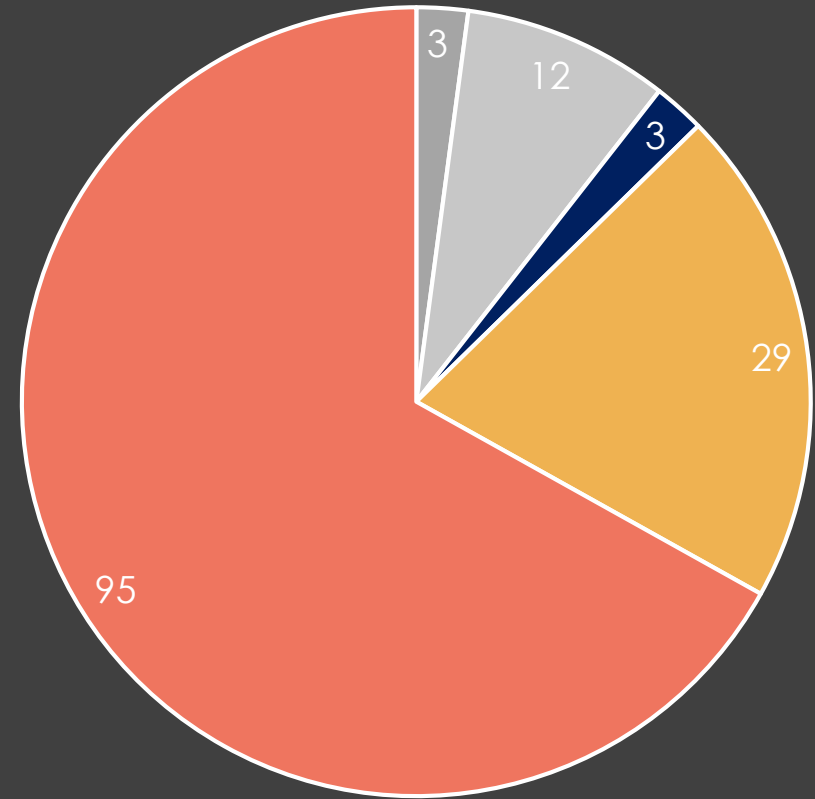
□ Slightly Positive □ Mostly Positive ■ Neutral ■ Slightly Negative ■ Mostly Negative

Reporting on Education in the Eastern Cape

Type of Journalism

- *Calling for Change* (3)
- *Finger pointing* (12)
- *Lack of analysis* (3)
- *In depth* (29)
- *Information only* (95)

Type of journalism



□ Calling for change

□ Finger pointing

□ Lack of analysis

□ In depth

□ Information only

The Education crisis continues?

- Persistent need for 'balanced' reporting
- Lack of understanding of the Public Resource Management (PRM) system
- Failure to recognize systemic issues rather than events at crisis level
- Empowerment of citizens is lacking – information should be relevant, useful, accessible, contextual

The Education crisis continues?

- Filling the Information Gap rather than the Power Gap – “The target of media advocacy is the power gap. It attempts to motivate broad social and political involvement rather than changes in personal health behaviour” (Wallack)
- Addressing individual events/crises AS individual and NOT social issues
- “It is hard to escape from the fact that the media generally do follow the tastes and interests of their audiences and also the needs of their sources and clients, including politicians and governments who are supposed to look after the public interest...we cannot be sure that, even with more opportunities, the public would welcome ‘better’ media or embrace the more desirable forms of accountability which requires some continuing effort on their part “ (McQuail) (Accountability of media to society?)

Future directions

- Qualitative content analysis
- Theoretical framework which bridges understandings of media's role in society AND the place of social accountability in society
- Literature review – very little is written outside of health reporting
- Questions...Comments