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PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NAMIBIA: SELECTED INDICATORS

FOREWORD

Our fundamental law - The Constitution - mandates that "Primary education shall be compulsory and the State shall provide reasonable facilities to render effective this right for every resident within Namibia, by establishing and maintaining State schools at which education will be provided free of charge". The Constitution goes further to state that, "children shall not be allowed to leave school until they have completed their primary education or have attained the age of sixteen (16) years, whichever is the sooner, save in so far as this may be authorized by Act of Parliament on grounds of health or other considerations pertaining to the public interest".

This EMIS Bulletin presents statistical information on the state of primary education in this country. The information contained here can be judged from a variety of perspectives. However, it may be useful to cast this information against the broad goals of education, culture and training in Namibia. These are: equity of access and opportunities in education; internal efficiency; pedagogical effectiveness; and democratic participation.

As far as access is concerned almost a quarter of the Namibian population spend their days at primary school. However, there is little homogeneity in our primary education system. Very substantial variations are found, for example, in the supply of schools and teachers, and in the way in which children pass from grade to grade. As far as the gender balance of teachers is concerned, sex ratios are highly skewed in all regions, either in favour of women or men. More girls are enroled at an early age than boys, especially in the Rundu and Ondangwa Regions. As a result of this and greater repetition by boys than girls, boys at primary school are older than girls.

With regard to internal efficiency, the system is seriously flawed. Large numbers of children seem to repeat over and over again, not passing through the system, depriving others of resources, and costing the country large portions of its budget. Drop-out rates are higher among boys in lower grades, but are higher among girls in Grades 6 and 7. Failure, repetition and drop-out rates in early grades are much higher in the Rundu and Ondangwa regions, so learners are generally over-aged in these regions compared to the rest of the country. We also find that in these two regions and in Katima Mulilo class sizes are bigger than elsewhere. In particular, Grade 1 classes are bigger than Grade 2 in the Ondangwa and Rundu regions.

Effectiveness in teaching is lacking, as evidenced by high failure and repetition rates, and the fact that over one quarter of primary school learners in Namibia are repeaters. About 64% of primary level teachers have professional teaching qualifications, but 51% of all primary level teachers have not completed Grade 12. In the Rundu Region, however, only 26% of teachers have completed Grade 12 or higher levels of academic training.

As far as democratic participation is concerned communities tend to believe that the government should provide everything. Community participation in school affairs is thus low.

The picture painted by these statistics is grim and depressing. It is against this background that the government, through the Ministry of Education & Culture, has embarked upon a massive programme of educational reform, renewal and development. In this regard a number of initiatives are underway aimed at improving the education system as a whole and primary education in particular. These include:

- Development of a Medium Term Plan for Education, Culture and Training.
- Reform of Primary School Curriculum; Instructional Materials Development; New Methodology of Teaching, etc.
- Rural Class Rooms Improvement Initiative in collaboration with communities.
- Reform of Basic Teacher Education and the improvement of Colleges of Education.
- Development of Teacher In-Service Training Programmes.
- Restructuring and Rationalization of the Management and Administration of Educational Services.

The information contained in this Bulletin will help decision makers, planners, administrators and managers to appreciate the complexity of the education situation in the country. The historical legacies of Apartheid and colonial deprivation will require a new resolve, commitment and determination to overcome them. This Bulletin is a must for all those interested in education in this country.

NAHAS ANGULA, Minister of Education & Culture

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INTRODUCTION

Primary education is important for several reasons: basic literacy skills are developed during primary schooling; these years set the foundation for later learning and development; the great majority of people being educated in Namibia are enroled in primary schools; more money is spent on primary education in Namibia than on any other stage of education; and the Namibian government, like others, has committed itself to achieving universal primary education.

Given the importance of primary education, as much relevant information about it should be made available. Such information should help to guide key policy makers, enlighten school staff on how their schools perform in relation to others, and show everyone where improvements are needed. This Bulletin provides a basic set of information on primary education for as wide a readership as possible.

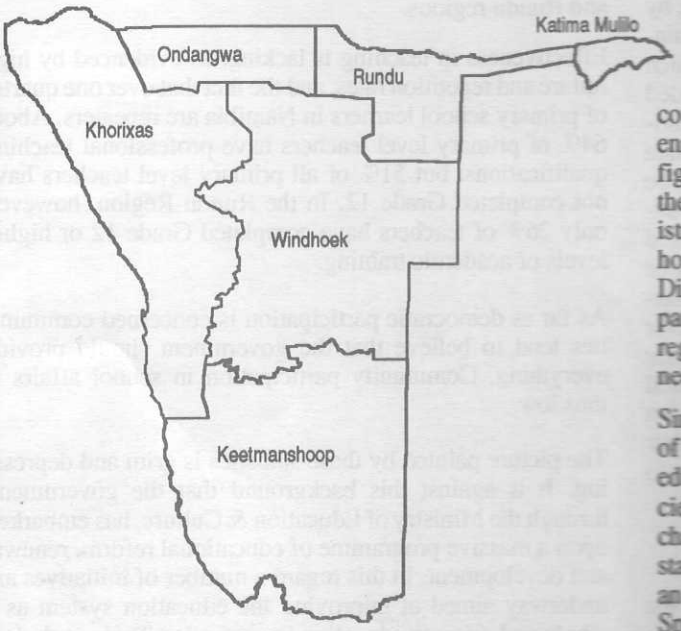

FIGURE 1
The six educational regions in 1992. The boundaries of these regions will be adjusted and a seventh region added in 1994

Primary education in Namibia is provided during the first seven grades of formal education. Five grades of secondary schooling follow, as well as various options for tertiary education in later years. Children are expected to enrol in the first grade when they are 5 or 6 years old (depending on their dates of birth). If they pass Grade 1 they will be promoted to Grade 2 and, likewise, move onto subsequent grades.

Much of the information presented here is intended to "indicate" how primary education is faring in Namibia. An "indicator" provides a yardstick for measuring conditions against certain goals or policies. For example, if education is to be provided equally to girls and boys, we could use various indicators to test if boys and girls are enroled in equal proportions. Most of the indicators present figures for Namibia as a whole, for boys and girls, and for the six educational regions in the country. These six administrative regions (Figure 1) provide useful units for seeing how education varies from one part of Namibia to another. Differences between regions only show general trends and patterns, however, and fail to show the great diversity within regions. The average values given for each region are not necessarily typical of every school and child in that region.

Since Namibia's independence in March 1990, the Ministry of Education & Culture has embarked on a programme of educational reform. Many of the proposed changes in policies and procedures are now being implemented, and changes will continue to be made over several years. The statistics from 1991 and 1992 presented here thus portray an education system in its earliest stages of transition. Special attention has been given to 1991 because the national Population & Housing census was conducted then. Results from the 1991 population census provide background information on children eligible for primary education. 1991 was also the first year that repetition, promotion

Table 1. Numbers of schools, learners and teachers in Namibia, 1992*

Region	Number of schools				Number of learners in:		Number of teachers
	Primary	Combined	Secondary	Total	Primary grades	Secondary grades	
Katima Mulilo	38	34	21	93	17 215	8 325	1 046
Keetmanshoop	52	18	10	80	17 842	4 914	1 160
Khorixas	60	11	8	79	19 938	5 426	1 151
Ondangwa	436	168	24	628	196 349	40 301	6 307
Rundu	234	17	5	256	37 085	4 882	1 429
Windhoek	106	33	22	161	60 832	20 733	3 661
NAMIBIA	926	281	90	1 297	349 261	84 581	14 754

*This information is for schools, learners and teachers at primary and secondary levels. Not shown here are the small numbers of schools, learners and teachers at pre-primary and tertiary levels. Combined schools offer both primary and secondary grades.

tion. 1991 was also the first year that repetition, promotion and drop-out rates could be calculated. Most of the information presented here was collected during annual education censuses, held in the second half of the 1991 and 1992 school years.

At the end of 1991 Namibia's population stood at just over 1,4 million people. A year later, 433 842 learners were counted in primary and secondary schools during the 1992 annual education census, of which 349 261 were in primary grades. Assuming a 3% growth in the population between 1991 and 1992, about 30% of the total population was enroled in school, and over 23% in primary school. These children attended 1 297 schools, and were taught by 14 754 teachers (Table 1). Comparing the six regions, over half of all learners are in the Ondangwa region, about 19% are in the Windhoek region, about 10% in Rundu region, and just over 5% each in Katima Mulilo, Khorixas and Keetmanshoop regions (Figure 2). Likewise, numbers of schools and teachers differ between the regions (Table 1). As a result of these differences, national figures are often biased by the large numbers of schools, teachers and learners in the bigger regions, especially the Ondangwa region. Averages for Namibia are therefore often more similar to those of Ondangwa than to any other region.

The degree to which primary level learners outnumber those in secondary grades varies from region to region (Figure 2). About 12% of learners in the Rundu region are in secondary grades, compared with nearly 33% in Katima Mulilo. Many so-called combined schools in Namibia offer both primary and secondary grades (Table 1), but there is considerable variation in the numbers of primary and secondary grades at these schools. Primary schooling was offered at a total of 1207 schools in 1992.

Many of the indicators in this Bulletin consider aspects of how children enrol in primary school, and how they pass through the grades or eventually drop out. Figures collected during the 1991 Population & Housing Census show how numbers of children at school increase with age in the early years, and then decline as some drop out while others complete their schooling (Figure 3). The challenge for primary school education in Namibia is to increase enrolments of young children, to reduce the number of failures and repeaters, and to reduce the number that leave school prematurely. We hope that information in this Bulletin will help those concerned with primary education to meet this challenge sooner rather than later.

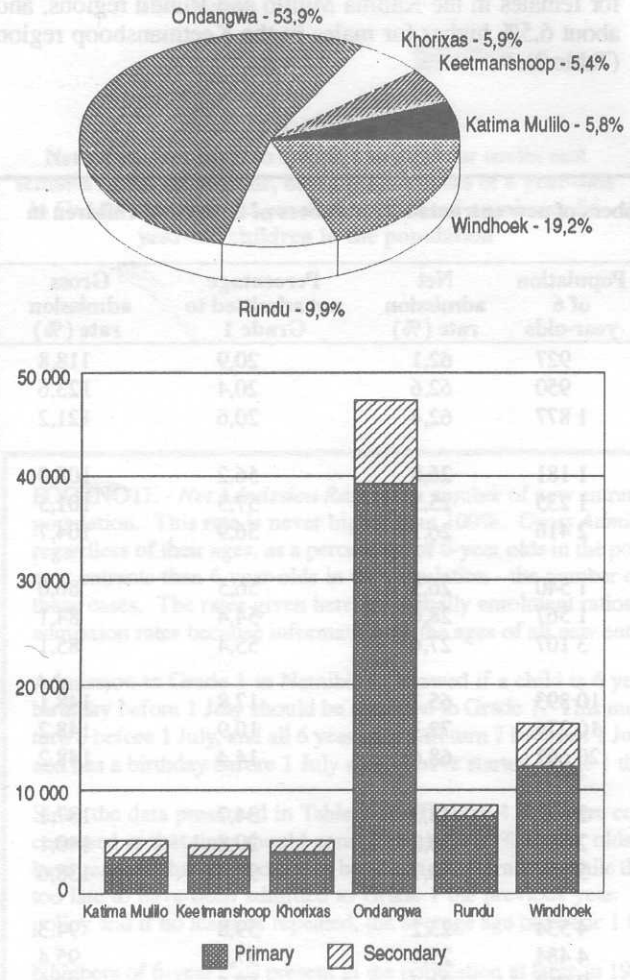

FIGURE 2
Proportions (as %) of all learners in the six regions (above), and numbers of learners in primary and secondary grades (below) in 1992

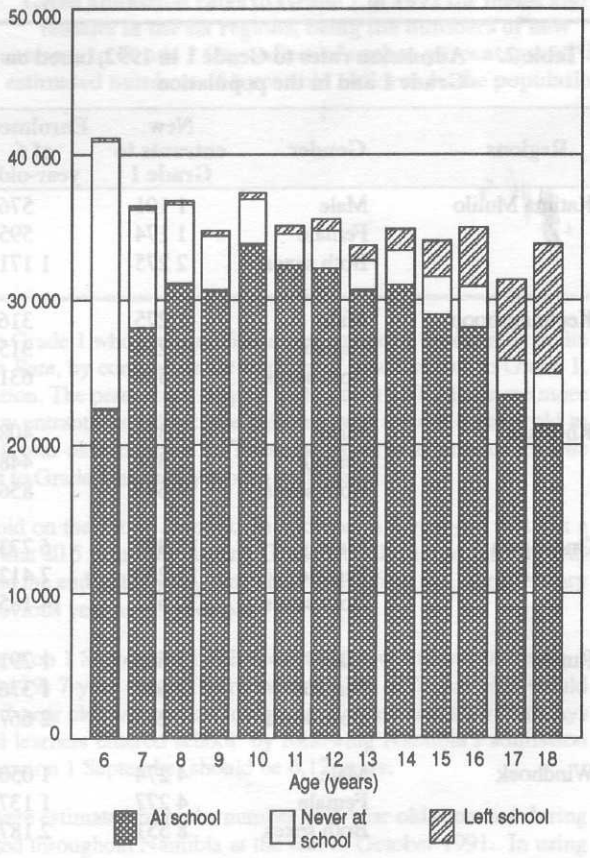

FIGURE 3
Numbers of people, aged 6-18, who were at school, who had never attended school, and who had left school during 1991

ADMISSION RATES

This first section looks at how effectively children are admitted to Grade 1, this being a critical first step in starting primary school. By comparing numbers of 6 year-olds in Grade 1 to numbers of 6 year-olds in the population we can estimate what proportion of this age group has been admitted to school. This proportion is known as the *Net Admission Rate.*

Because some learners in Grade 1 had already turned 7 by the time that the 1992 annual education census took place, the maximum, possible net admission rate for 6 year-olds in 1992 was not 100%, but 83% (see Footnote, p5). The Ondangwa region comes closest to achieving this rate, with an estimated 72% of girls and 65% of 6-year old boys in school. Katima Mulilo and Rundu regions also have relatively high admissions, while Khorixas, Keetmanshoop and Windhoek regions have much lower rates (Figure 4). About only one quarter of 6-year olds are in Grade 1 in these three regions. Nationally, 51,2% of 6 year-olds were at school in 1992, so about 31,8% (83 minus 51,2) of 6 year-olds were not at school when they should have been. Equivalent percentages of 6 year-olds not at school, shown in the second last column of Table 2, range from only 10,9% of girls in the Ondangwa region to 59,8% of boys in the Windhoek region.

With the exception of Keetmanshoop region, the net admission rate of girls was higher than that of boys (Figure 4). Admission rates about 5-7% greater for girls than boys in the Rundu and Ondangwa regions suggest that many girls are sent to school earlier than boys in these areas.

Gross admission rates provide a second measure by considering the number of all new entrants to Grade 1, regardless of their ages (see Footnote). High rates above 100% (Table 2) show that many more children start Grade 1 than there are 6 year-olds in these regions. In Namibia, 53 910 children started Grade 1 in 1992, but only 21 697 of these were aged 6 (Table 2). The remaining 32 213 Grade 1s consisted largely of children that were 7 or older, since only about 2 100 under-age 5 year-olds were enroled in Grade 1 during the second half of 1992.

The highest gross admission rates are in the Ondangwa (about 148%) and Rundu (about 139%) regions (Figure 5), so these regions have the largest numbers of older children starting Grade 1. The lowest gross admission rates are in the Windhoek and Khorixas regions. For Namibia as a whole, the gross admission rate is 127,3%. Comparing males and females, gross admission rates are 3-4% higher for females in the Katima Mulilo and Rundu regions, and about 6,5% higher for males in the Keetmanshoop region (Table 2).

Table 2. Admission rates to Grade 1 in 1992, based on numbers of new entrants and numbers of 6 year-old children in Grade 1 and in the population

Regions	Gender	New entrants to Grade 1	Enrolment of 6 year-olds	Population of 6 year-olds	Net admission rate (%)	Percentage not admitted to Grade 1	Gross admission rate (%)
Katima Mulilo	Male	1 101	576	927	62,1	20,9	118,8
	Female	1 174	595	950	62,6	20,4	123,6
	Both sexes	2 275	1 171	1 877	62,4	20,6	121,2
Keetmanshoop	Male	1 275	316	1 181	26,8	56,2	108,0
	Female	1 254	315	1 235	25,5	57,5	101,5
	Both sexes	2 529	631	2 416	26,1	56,9	104,7
Khorixas	Male	1 325	408	1 540	26,5	56,5	86,0
	Female	1 318	448	1 567	28,6	54,4	84,1
	Both sexes	2 643	856	3 107	27,6	55,4	85,1
Ondangwa	Male	15 397	6 773	10 393	65,2	17,8	148,1
	Female	15 230	7 412	10 274	72,1	10,9	148,2
	Both sexes	30 627	14 185	20 667	68,6	14,4	148,2
Rundu	Male	3 663	1 291	2 672	48,3	34,7	137,1
	Female	3 622	1 376	2 586	53,2	29,8	140,1
	Both sexes	7 285	2 667	5 258	50,7	32,3	138,6
Windhoek	Male	4 274	1 050	4 534	23,2	59,8	94,3
	Female	4 277	1 137	4 484	25,4	57,6	95,4
	Both sexes	8 551	2 187	9 018	24,3	58,7	94,8
NAMIBIA	Male	27 035	10 414	21 247	49,0	34,0	127,2
	Female	26 875	11 283	21 096	53,5	29,5	127,4
	Both sexes	53 910	21 697	42 343	51,2	31,8	127,3

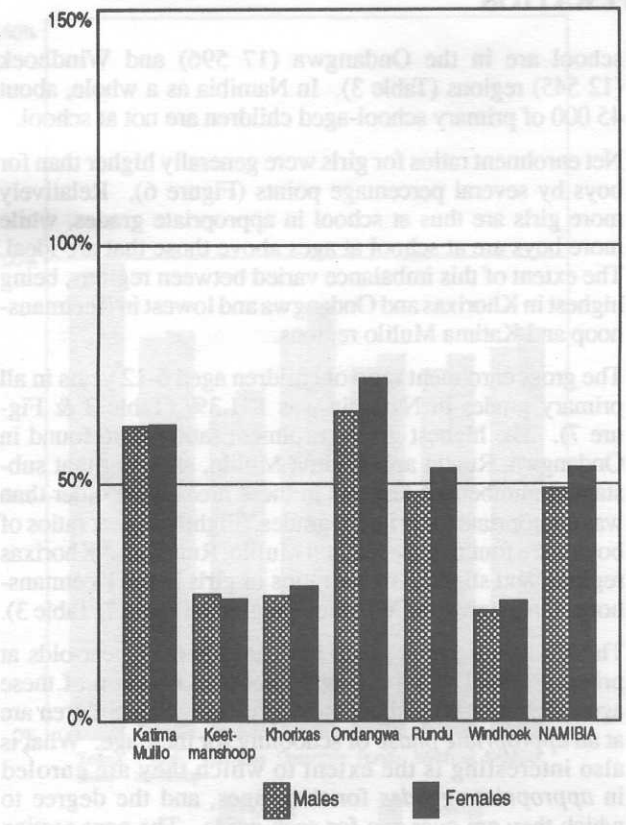

FIGURE 4
Net admission rates to Grade 1 in 1992 for males and females in the six regions, being the numbers of 6 year-olds in Grade 1 as percentages of the estimated numbers of 6 year-old children in the population

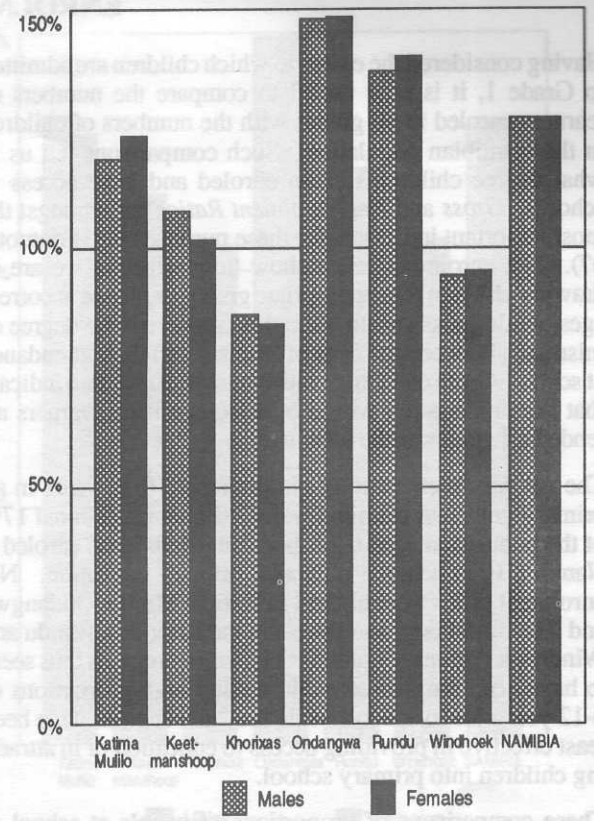

FIGURE 5
Gross admission rates to Grade 1 in 1992 for males and females in the six regions, being the numbers of new entrants to Grade 1 (regardless of age) as percentages of the estimated numbers of 6 year-old children in the population

FOOTNOTE - *Net Admission Rate* is the number of new entrants to Grade 1 who are aged 6 as a percentage of 6-year olds in the population. This rate is never higher than 100%. *Gross Admission Rate*, by contrast, is the number of new entrants to Grade 1, regardless of their ages, as a percentage of 6-year olds in the population. The percentage may be higher than 100 if there are more new entrants than 6 year-olds in the population - the number of new entrants would include children who are not 6 years old in these cases. The rates given here are actually enrolment ratios for 6 year-olds in Grade 1. These ratios serve as proxies for true admission rates because information on the ages of all new entrants to Grade 1 has not yet been collected.

Admission to Grade 1 in Namibia is allowed if a child is 6 years old on the 1st of January. In addition, a 5 year-old that has a birthday before 1 July should be admitted to Grade 1. This means that all 5 year-olds starting Grade 1 on the 1st of January will turn 6 before 1 July, and all 6 year-olds will turn 7 between 1 July and the end of the year. Any child that is 6 on the 1st of January and has a birthday before 1 July should have started Grade 1 the previous year as a 5 year-old.

Since the data presented in Table 2 and Figures 4 & 5 were collected on 1 September 1992, cohorts of new entrants to Grade 1 censused at that time should consist of about 83% 6-year olds and 17% 7-year olds. The remaining 17% of 6-year olds would have reached that age too late to be admitted to Grade 1, while those 7-year olds who are in Grade 1 would have had their birthdays too late to have been admitted to Grade 1 the previous year. If all learners entered school by following Namibia's admission policy and if no learners repeated, the average age of Grade 1 learners on 1 September should be 6,17 years.

Numbers of 6-year olds present in the population at large in 1992 were estimated from the number of 5-year olds counted during the 1991 Population & Housing Census. This census was conducted throughout Namibia at the end of October 1991. In using numbers of 5 year-olds counted in 1991 as the number of 6 year-olds in 1992, no allowance has been made for mortality, immigration and movements between regions. However, no official estimates of these rates are available, and any adjustments needed to account for changes over one year in this age group are assumed to be very small.

ENROLMENT RATIOS

Having considered the extent to which children are admitted to Grade 1, it is now useful to compare the numbers of learners enroled in all grades with the numbers of children in the Namibian population. Such comparisons tell us to what degree children remain enroled and have access to schools. *Gross* and *Net Enrolment Ratios* are amongst the most important indicators for these purposes (see Footnote, p7). Net enrolment ratios show how effective we are in drawing children into appropriate grades or phases at correct ages, while gross enrolment ratios can reveal the degree of mismatch between the ages of learners and their attendance at school. Gross enrolment ratios of over 100% also indicate that accommodation would be adequate if all learners attended all grades at the ideal age.

The net enrolment ratio of children aged 6-12 years in all primary grades in Namibia was 83,0%. An additional 17% of the population aged 6-12 therefore needs to be enroled if Namibia is to achieve universal primary education. Net enrolment ratios were highest in Katima Mulilo, Ondangwa and Keetmanshoop, and lowest in the Khorixas, Rundu and Windhoek regions (Figure 6). The former regions thus seem to have been most effective in getting high proportions of 6-12 year-olds to school, while the latter regions have been least effective in providing access to education or in attracting children into primary school.

These comparisons of proportions of people at school to those in the population, mask the actual numbers in each region. The highest numbers of children aged 6-12 not at school are in the Ondangwa (17 596) and Windhoek (12 545) regions (Table 3). In Namibia as a whole, about 45 000 of primary school-aged children are not at school.

Net enrolment ratios for girls were generally higher than for boys by several percentage points (Figure 6). Relatively more girls are thus at school in appropriate grades, while more boys are at school at ages above those that are ideal. The extent of this imbalance varied between regions, being highest in Khorixas and Ondangwa and lowest in Keetmanshoop and Katima Mulilo regions.

The gross enrolment ratio of children aged 6-12 years in all primary grades in Namibia was 131,3% (Table 3 & Figure 7). The highest gross enrolment ratios were found in Ondangwa, Rundu and Katima Mulilo, showing that substantial numbers of learners in these areas were older than was appropriate for primary grades. Slightly higher ratios of boys were found in the Katima Mulilo, Rundu and Khorixas regions, and slightly higher ratios of girls in the Keetmanshoop, Ondangwa and Windhoek regions (Figure 7, Table 3).

The enrolment ratios given here are for 6-12 year-olds at primary school. By pooling numbers of children of these ages, the ratios only show the degree to which children are at an *appropriate phase* of schooling for their age. What is also interesting is the extent to which they are enroled in *appropriate grades* for their ages, and the degree to which they are over-age for each grade. The next section considers these aspects by reporting information on the ages of learners.

Table 3. Enrolment ratios in primary school during 1992, based on the total number of children enroled in primary grades, and numbers of 6-12 year-olds enroled and in the population

Regions	Gender	Total enrolment - all ages	Total enrolment of 6-12 year-olds	Total population of 6-12 year-olds	Number of 6-12 year-olds not at school	Gross enrolment ratio (%)	Net enrolment ratio (%)
Katima Mulilo	Male	8 802	6 433	6 648	215	132,4	96,8
	Female	8 413	6 461	6 542	81	128,6	98,8
	Both sexes	17 215	12 894	13 190	296	130,5	97,8
Keetmanshoop	Male	8 882	6 439	7 740	1 301	114,8	83,2
	Female	8 866	6 441	7 621	1 180	116,3	84,5
	Both sexes	17 748	12 880	15 361	2 481	115,5	83,8
Khorixas	Male	9 927	6 387	9 361	2 974	106,1	68,2
	Female	9 993	6 862	9 467	2 605	105,6	72,5
	Both sexes	19 920	13 249	18 828	5 579	105,8	70,4
Ondangwa	Male	96 285	54 191	64 611	10 420	149,0	83,9
	Female	100 030	59 368	66 544	7 176	150,3	89,2
	Both sexes	196 315	113 559	131 155	17 596	149,7	86,6
Rundu	Male	18 796	11 602	15 104	3 502	124,4	76.8
	Female	18 289	11 981	15 054	3 073	121,5	79,6
	Both sexes	37 085	23 583	30 158	6 575	123,0	78,2
Windhoek	Male	29 848	21 658	28 355	6 697	105,3	76,4
	Female	30 269	22 517	28 365	5 848	106,7	79,4
	Both sexes	60 117	44 175	56 720	12 545	106,0	77,9
NAMIBIA	Male	172 540	106 710	131 819	25 109	130,9	81,0
	Female	175 860	113 630	133 593	19 963	131,6	85,1
	Both sexes	348 400	220 340	265 412	45 072	131,3	83,0

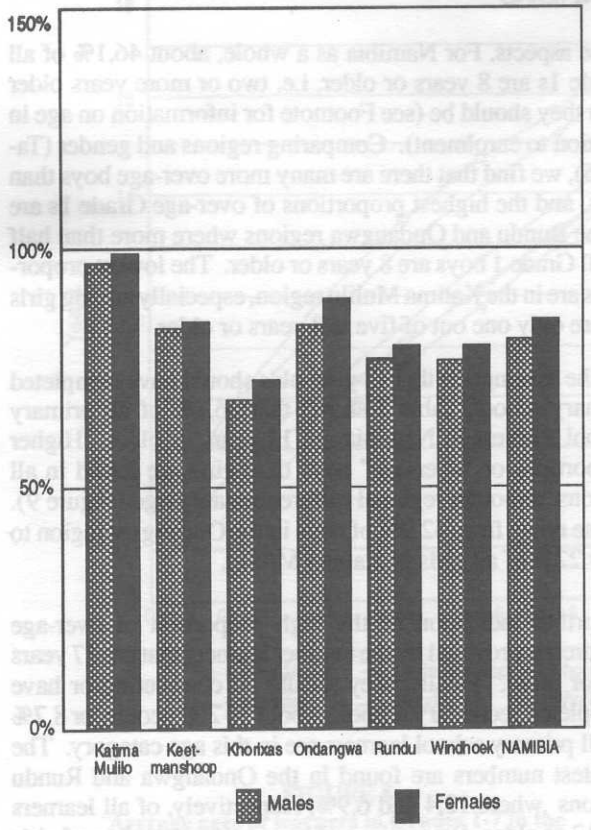

FIGURE 6
Net enrolment ratios for males and females in the six regions in 1992, as the total enrolment of 6-12 year-olds in primary grades as percentages of the estimated numbers of 6-12 year-old children in the population

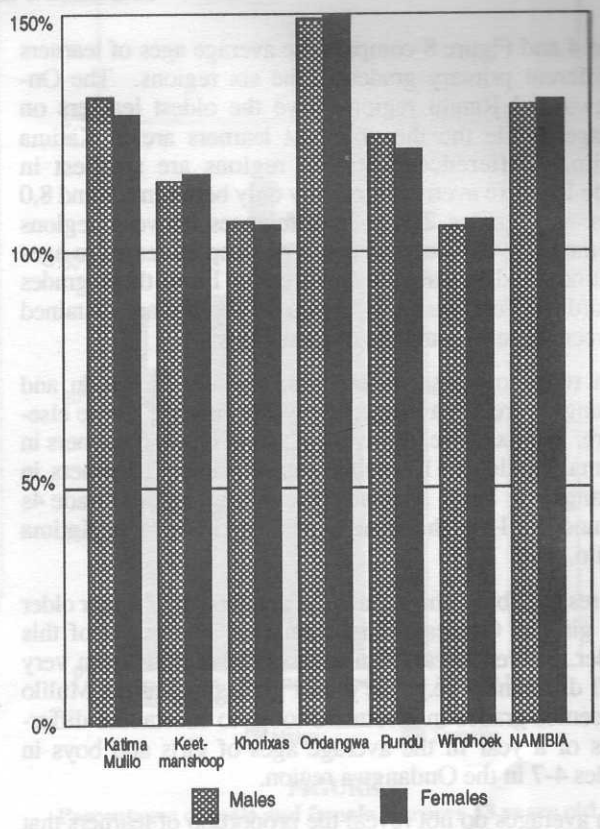

FIGURE 7
Gross enrolment ratios for males and females in the six regions in 1992, as the total enrolment of all ages in primary grades as percentages of the estimated numbers of 6-12 year-old children in the population

FOOTNOTE - *Net Enrolment Ratio* is the ratio (as a percentage) of the total number of 6-12 year-old learners at primary school to the number of 6-12 year-old people in the population. A *Gross Enrolment Ratio* is the ratio (as a percentage) of the total number of learners in primary school regardless of their ages to the number of 6-12 year-old people in the population. Gross enrolment ratios are often greater than 100% because over-age and under-age children at school are included in the calculation. Net enrolment ratios, by contrast, are never higher than 100% because they show the number of children of a certain age in an appropriate grade or stage as a percentage of those in the population of the same age.

Numbers of 6-12 year-olds present in the population at large in 1992 were estimated from the number of 5-11 year-olds counted during the October 1991 Population & Housing Census. In using numbers of 5-11 year-olds counted in 1991 as the number of 6-12 year-olds in 1992 no allowance has been made for mortality, immigration or movements between regions. As with the calculations for Admission Rates, adjustments for these factors are assumed to be small.

AGES OF LEARNERS

Table 4 and Figure 8 compare the average ages of learners in different primary grades in the six regions. The Ondangwa and Rundu regions have the oldest learners on average, while the the youngest learners are in Katima Mulilo. Differences between regions are smallest in Grade 1, where average ages vary only between 6,9 and 8,0 years. In Grades 2 and 3, differences between regions become more evident as a result of steep increases in ages in Rundu and Ondangwa (Figure 8). From these grades onwards, differences of 2-3 years on average are sustained between these two and the other regions.

As a result of these differences, learners in Rundu and Ondangwa are, on average, two years "behind" those elsewhere. For example, the average age of Grade 5 learners in Katima Mulilo is 11,8, while that of Grade 3 learners in Ondangwa is 12,0. Similarly, the average age of Grade 4s in Rundu is 13,0, the same as that of Grade 6s in Katima Mulilo.

Figures in Table 4 show that boys are about half a year older than girls in Grades 1-7 in Namibia. The extent of this gender difference varies in each of the regions from very small differences (e.g. the junior grades in Katima Mulilo and senior grades in Keetmanshoop) to substantial differences of a year in the average ages of girls and boys in Grades 4-7 in the Ondangwa region.

Such averages do not reveal the proportion of learners that are older than is appropriate for the grade in which they are enroled. Table 5 and Figure 9 provide some measures of these aspects. For Namibia as a whole, about 46,1% of all Grade 1s are 8 years or older, i.e. two or more years older than they should be (see Footnote for information on age in relation to enrolment). Comparing regions and gender (Table 5), we find that there are many more over-age boys than girls, and the highest proportions of over-age Grade 1s are in the Rundu and Ondangwa regions where more than half of all Grade 1 boys are 8 years or older. The lowest proportions are in the Katima Mulilo region, especially among girls where only one out of five is 8 years or older.

On the assumption that 13 year-olds should have completed primary school, Table 5 shows that 36,1% of all primary school learners in Namibia are 13 years or older. Higher proportions of "over-age" boys than girls are found in all regions, although regional differences are large (Figure 9). These range from 42,9% of boys in the Ondangwa region to only 22% of all girls in Katima Mulilo.

A further indication of the high proportion of over-age children is provided by the number learners that are 17 years old or more. Ideally, they should be completing or have completed secondary school. About 30 200 people, or 8,7% of all primary school learners are in this age category. The greatest numbers are found in the Ondangwa and Rundu regions where 12,4 and 6,9%, respectively, of all learners are 17 or older. Proportions of boys are greater than of girls in all except the Keetmanshoop region. One in every seven boys in the Ondangwa region is 17 or older.

Table 4. Average age of learners in Grades 1-7 during 1992

Region	Gender	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7
Appropriate age (see Footnote)		6,17	7,17	8,17	9,17	10,17	11,17	12,17
Katima Mulilo	Male	6,9	7,9	9,5	10,8	12,0	13,4	14,6
	Female	6,9	7,8	9,2	10,4	11,5	12,7	14,0
	Both sexes	6,9	7,9	9,4	10,6	11,8	13,0	14,3
Keetmanshoop	Male	7,4	8,8	10,0	11,2	12,3	13,4	14,3
	Female	7,3	8,5	9,7	10,9	12,0	13,2	14,3
	Both sexes	7,3	8,7	9,8	11,1	12,1	13,3	14,3
Khorixas	Male	7,8	9,2	10,5	11,7	13,0	14,1	15,2
	Female	7,4	8,8	9,9	11,1	12,5	13,6	14,8
	Both sexes	7,6	9,0	10,2	11,4	12,7	13,8	15,0
Ondangwa	Male	8,2	10,5	12,5	14,0	15,2	16,3	17,4
	Female	7,9	9,9	11,6	13,0	14,2	15,3	16,4
	Both sexes	8,0	10,2	12,0	13,5	14,7	15,7	16,8
Rundu	Male	8,1	10,1	11,7	13,1	14,4	15,5	16,7
	Female	7,9	9,8	11,4	12,8	13,9	14,8	16,0
	Both sexes	8,0	9,9	11,5	13,0	14,1	15,2	16,4
Windhoek	Male	7,5	8,8	10,0	11,1	12,4	13,4	14,5
	Female	7,3	8,6	9,6	10,8	12,0	13,1	14,2
	Both sexes	7,4	8,7	9,8	11,0	12,2	13,2	14,4
NAMIBIA	Male	8,0	9,9	11,5	12,9	14,0	15,0	16,1
	Female	7,7	9,5	10,9	12,2	13,3	14,4	15,5
	Both sexes	7,9	9,7	11,2	12,5	13,6	14,7	15,7

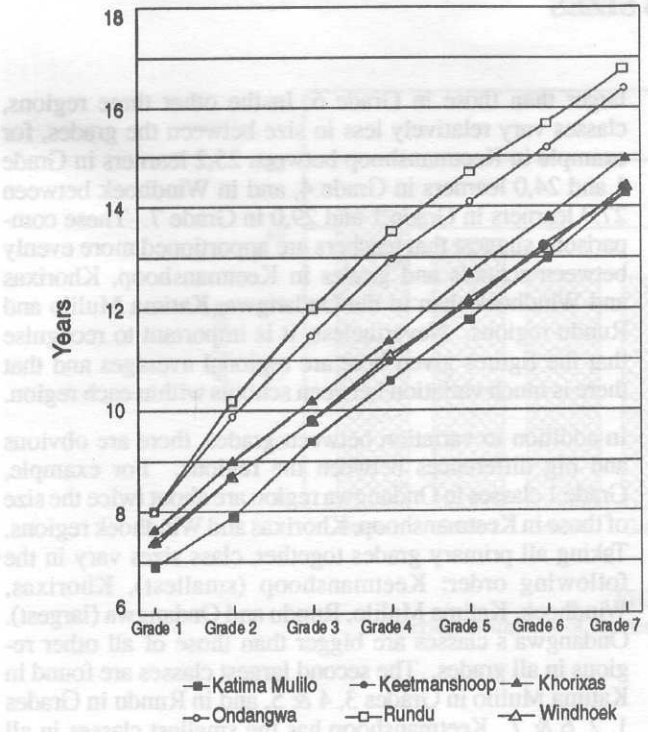

FIGURE 8
Average ages of learners in Grades 1-7 in the six regions in 1992

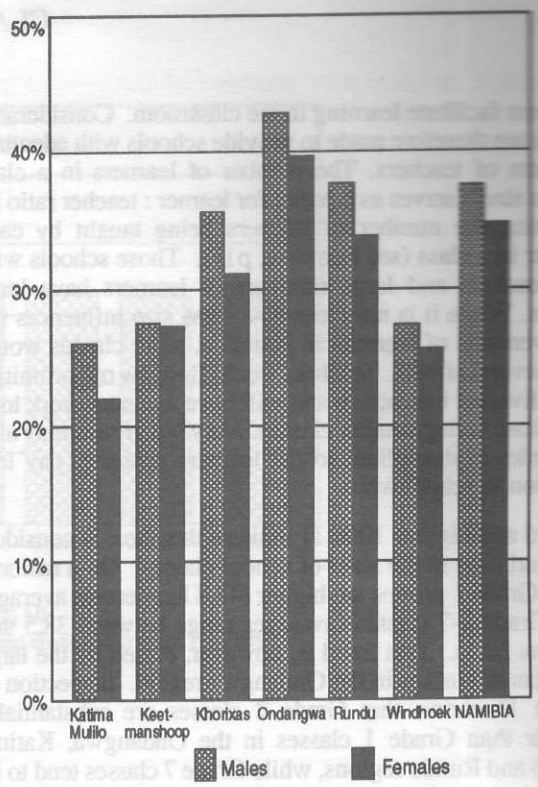

FIGURE 9
Percentages of male and female learners 13 years old and over in all primary grades in the six regions in 1992

Table 5. Percentages of learners 8 years and older in Grade 1, 13 years and older in all primary grades, and 17 years and older in all primary grades, 1992

Region	Gender	% 8 and over in Grade 1	% 13 and over in all primary grades	% 17 and over in all primary grades
Katima Mulilo	Male	23,8	26,0	4,9
	Female	20,5	22,0	2,1
	Both sexes	22,2	24,1	3,5
Keetmanshoop	Male	34,6	27,5	2,3
	Female	30,9	27,3	2,4
	Both sexes	32,9	27,4	2,3
Khorixas	Male	40,4	35,6	6,3
	Female	33,6	31,2	3,3
	Both sexes	37,1	33,4	4,8
Ondangwa	Male	52,5	42,9	14,4
	Female	47,7	39,8	10,4
	Both sexes	50,2	41,3	12,4
Rundu	Male	53,0	37,7	9,2
	Female	49,5	33,8	4,6
	Both sexes	51,3	35,8	6,9
Windhoek	Male	35,3	27,4	2,6
	Female	29,4	25,6	1,9
	Both sexes	32,4	26,5	2,3
NAMIBIA	Male	48,4	37,6	10,2
	Female	43,7	34,7	7,1
	Both sexes	46,1	36,1	8,7

FOOTNOTE - Since the data presented in Table 4 and Figure 8 were collected on 1 September 1992, cohorts of new entrants to Grade 1 censused at that time should consist of about 83% 6-year olds and 17% 7-year olds, and the average age of new entrants to Grade 1 should be 6,17 years (see Footnote to Admission Rates on page 5). Ideally, learners should be promoted to new grades each year, so the average, correct age of Grade 2s would be 7,17 years, Grade 3s 8,17 years, etc, through to 12,17 years for Grade 7s.

CLASS SIZES

Teachers facilitate learning in the classroom. Considerable efforts are therefore made to provide schools with adequate numbers of teachers. The number of learners in a class ("class size") serves as a proxy for learner : teacher ratio by reflecting the number of learners being taught by each teacher in a class (see Footnote, p11). Those schools with few teachers and large numbers of learners have large classes. While it is not clear how class size influences the achievements of learners in Namibia, large classes would have several effects. Teachers would find few opportunities for individual instruction and will have a greater work load than those facing smaller classes. Very big groups may also be harder to discipline, so the learners probably pay less attention to school work.

Table 6 and Figures 10 & 11 indicate that there is considerable variation in the sizes of school classes. On a national level, Grade 1 groups are bigger (42,8 learners on average) than Grade 2-7 classes (averages range between 38,5 and learners 32,3). This trend is, however, biased by the large numbers of classes in the Ondangwa region. Inspection of Figure 11 shows that Grade 2 classes are substantially smaller than Grade 1 classes in the Ondangwa, Katima Mulilo and Rundu regions, while Grade 7 classes tend to be larger than those in Grade 6. In the other three regions, classes vary relatively less in size between the grades, for example in Keetmanshoop between 25,2 learners in Grade 1 and 24,0 learners in Grade 4, and in Windhoek between 27,9 learners in Grade 1 and 29,0 in Grade 7. These comparisons suggest that teachers are apportioned more evenly between schools and grades in Keetmanshoop, Khorixas and Windhoek than in the Ondangwa, Katima Mulilo and Rundu regions. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that the figures given here are regional averages and that there is much variation between schools within each region.

In addition to variation between grades, there are obvious and big differences between the regions. For example, Grade 1 classes in Ondangwa region are about twice the size of those in Keetmanshoop, Khorixas and Windhoek regions. Taking all primary grades together, class sizes vary in the following order: Keetmanshoop (smallest), Khorixas, Windhoek, Katima Mulilo, Rundu and Ondangwa (largest). Ondangwa's classes are bigger than those of all other regions in all grades. The second largest classes are found in Katima Mulilo in Grades 3, 4 & 5, and in Rundu in Grades 1, 2, 6 & 7. Keetmanshoop has the smallest classes in all except Grade 1.

Table 6. Average number of learners per class in Grades 1-7, 1992

Region	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	ALL GRADES
Katima Mulilo	37,0	33,9	31,6	30,2	31,3	29,9	31,0	32,2
Keetmanshoop	25,2	24,9	24,7	24,0	24,9	24,4	24,3	24,7
Khorixas	25,0	26,0	26,1	27,4	28,1	26,9	29,8	26,9
Ondangwa	53,7	47,9	41,3	38,5	39,1	38,2	40,1	44,3
Rundu	40,1	35,0	29,6	30,0	31,1	32,0	35,4	34,2
Windhoek	27,9	28,4	28,5	28,6	28,9	27,9	29,0	28,4
NAMIBIA	42,8	38,5	34,1	32,9	33,2	32,3	33,7	36,2

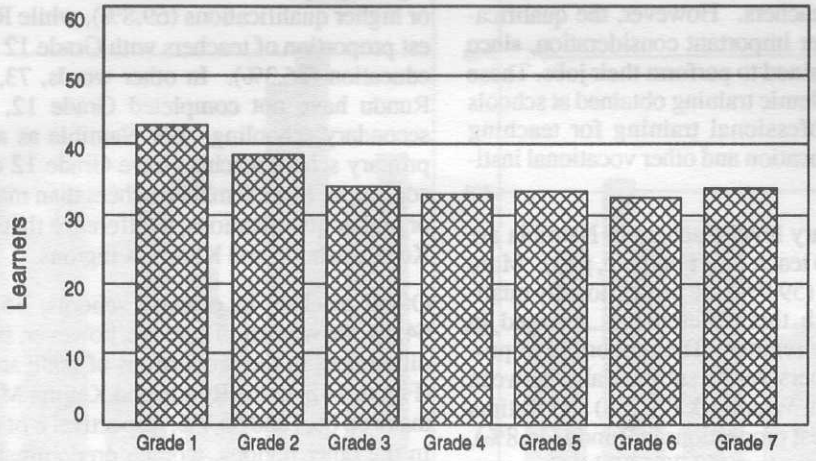

FIGURE 10
Average numbers of learners per class in Grades 1-7, 1992

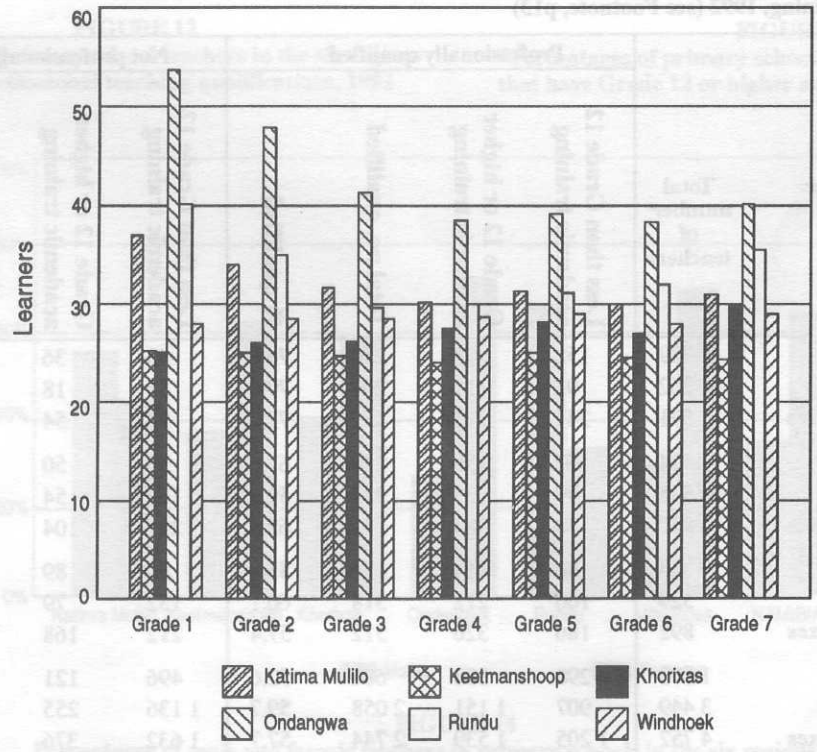

FIGURE 11
Average numbers of learners per class in Grades 1-7 in the six regions, 1992

FOOTNOTE - Information on class sizes is presented instead of learner : teacher ratios. The latter is a more usual indicator of the supply of teachers in relation to numbers of learners. Learner : teachers ratios could not be calculated readily for specific grades or separately for primary grades because many teachers in combined schools teach both primary and secondary classes.

TEACHERS

The section on class sizes provided an indicator on the comparative number of teachers. However, the qualifications of teachers is another important consideration, since teachers should be well-trained to perform their jobs. These qualifications include academic training obtained at schools and universities, and professional training for teaching provided at colleges of education and other vocational institutions.

About 63,4% of all primary level teachers in Namibia are professionally qualified to teach (see Footnote, p13). More women (65,3%) than men (59,9%) are professionally qualified (Figure 12), although this difference is reversed in Keetmanshoop and Rundu regions. The proportion of professionally qualified teachers varies substantially between regions, from the highest in Windhoek (79,2%) and Katima Mulilo (77,7%) to the lowest proportions in Rundu (46,8%), Khorixas (57,4%) and Ondangwa (57,7%) (Table 7).

Regional comparisons of academic qualifications show somewhat different results (Figure 13). Windhoek has the highest proportion of teachers that have obtained Grade 12 or higher qualifications (69,8%), while Rundu has the lowest proportion of teachers with Grade 12 or higher levels of education (26,3%). In other words, 73,7% of teachers in Rundu have not completed Grade 12, the final year of secondary schooling. For Namibia as a whole, 49,0% of primary school teachers have Grade 12 or higher levels of education. More female teachers than males have Grade 12 or higher qualifications, a difference that holds in all except Keetmanshoop and Khorixas regions.

Of all teachers in primary schools, 35,6% are men and 64,4% are women. There are, however, substantial regional differences in the proportions of male and female teachers (Figure 14). In the Rundu and Katima Mulilo regions, men make up 66,4 and 55,7%, respectively, of the teaching force. In the other regions, women predominate with the lowest proportions of men being in the Ondangwa (27,4%) and Windhoek (29,9%) regions. All of the regions therefore have quite different numbers of male and female teachers.

Table 7. The numbers of primary school teachers in the six regions, in relation to their professional and levels of academic training, 1992 (see Footnote, p13)

Region	Gender	Total number of teachers	Professionally qualified				Not professionally qualified			
			Less than Grade 12 academic training	Grade 12 or higher academic training	Total no. qualified	% qualified	Less than Grade 12 academic training	Grade 12 or higher academic training	Total no. not qualified	% not qualified
Katima Mulilo	Male	329	152	98	250	76,0	43	36	79	24,0
	Female	262	92	117	209	79,8	35	18	53	20,2
	Both sexes	591	244	215	459	77,7	78	54	132	22,3
Keetmanshoop	Male	324	69	150	219	67,6	55	50	105	32,4
	Female	538	89	233	322	59,9	162	54	216	40,1
	Both sexes	862	158	383	541	62,8	217	104	321	37,2
Khorixas	Male	363	80	114	194	53,4	80	89	169	46,6
	Female	529	106	212	318	60,1	132	79	211	39,9
	Both sexes	892	186	326	512	57,4	212	168	380	42,6
Ondangwa	Male	1 303	298	388	686	52,6	496	121	617	47,4
	Female	3 449	907	1 151	2 058	59,7	1 136	255	1 391	40,3
	Both sexes	4 752	1 205	1 539	2 744	57,7	1 632	376	2 008	42,3
Rundu	Male	799	266	123	389	48,7	329	81	410	51,3
	Female	405	110	64	174	43,0	182	49	231	57,0
	Both sexes	1 204	376	187	563	46,8	511	130	641	53,2
Windhoek	Male	837	177	454	631	75,4	94	112	206	24,6
	Female	1 960	338	1 245	1 583	80,8	235	142	377	19,2
	Both sexes	2 797	515	1 699	2 214	79,2	329	254	583	20,8
NAMIBIA	Male	3 955	1 042	1 327	2 369	59,9	1 097	489	1 586	40,1
	Female	7 143	1 642	3 022	4 664	65,3	1 882	597	2 479	34,7
	Both sexes	11 098	2 684	4 349	7 033	63,4	2 979	1 086	4 065	36,6

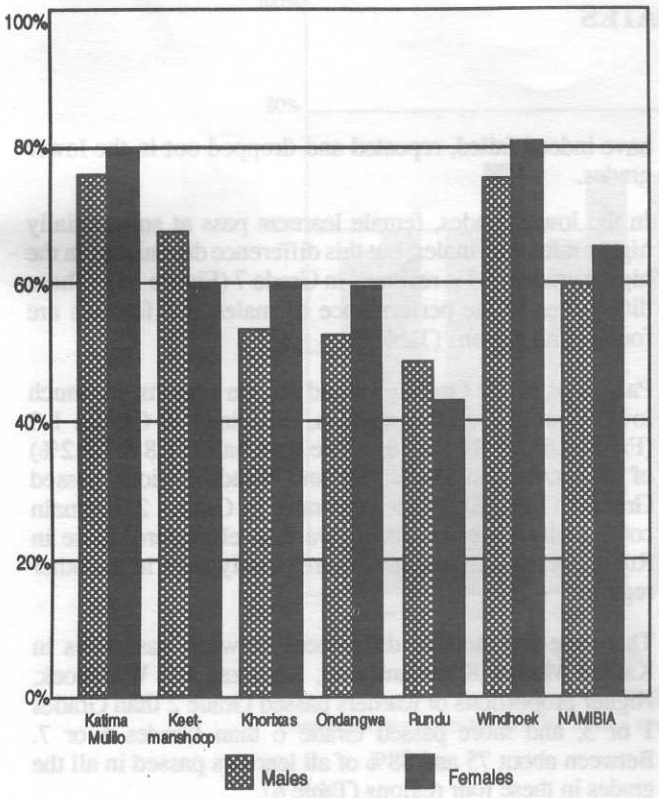

FIGURE 12
Percentages of primary school teachers in the six regions that have professional teaching qualifications, 1992

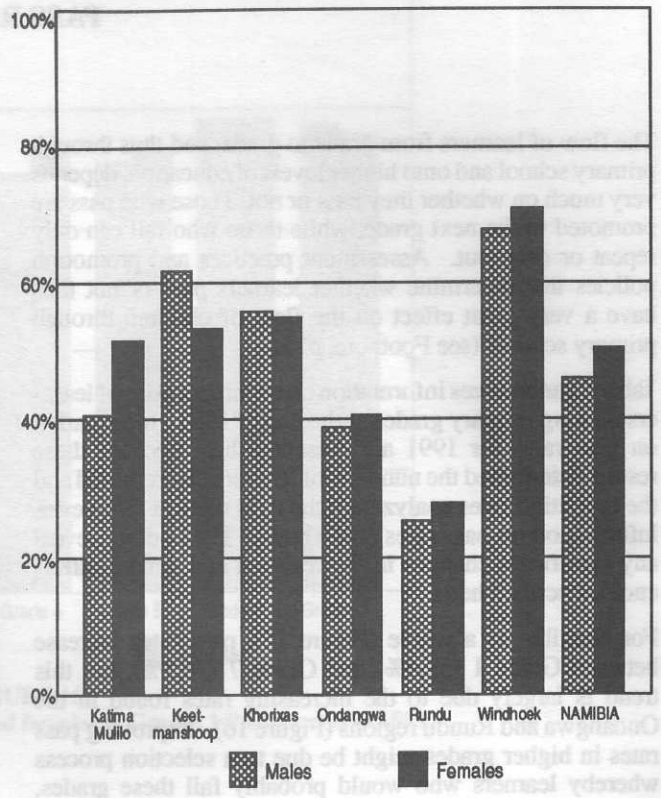

FIGURE 13
Percentages of primary school teachers in the six regions that have Grade 12 or higher academic qualifications, 1992

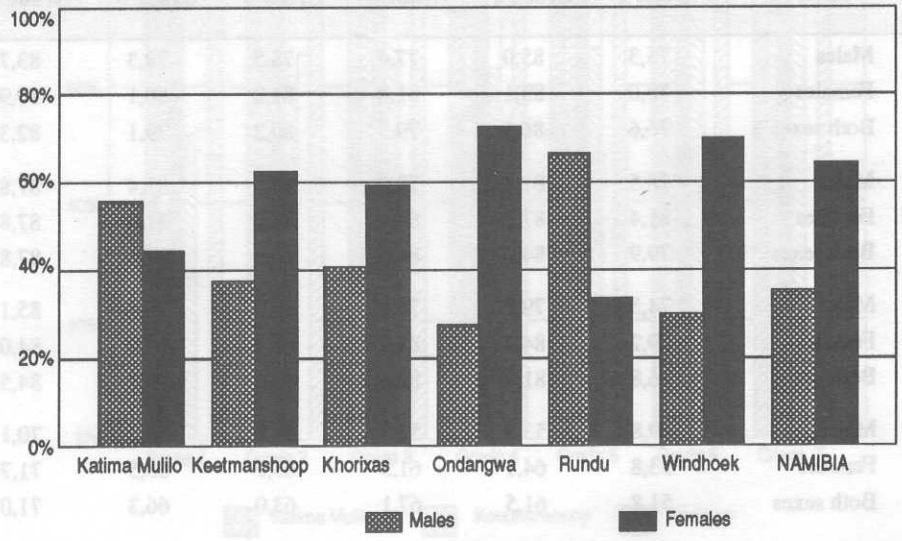

FIGURE 14
Percentages of male and female teachers in primary schools in the six regions, 1992

FOOTNOTE - For purposes of assessing the qualifications of teachers, two categories of qualifications are considered: their *professional* qualifications which reflect training to work as teachers, and *academic* qualifications which reflect the number of years of schooling at secondary and tertiary levels.

Teachers in Namibia have a variety of professional qualifications obtained from various teachers' colleges and universities, both in Namibia and in other countries. Levels of academic qualifications are equally varied, ranging from teachers who have less than 10 years of formal schooling to those that have higher degrees.

The statistics presented here are for all teachers that teach primary grades. Some of these, working in combined schools, also teach some secondary grades, but their qualifications do not differ significantly from those who teach only primary grades.

PASS RATES

The flow of learners from grade to grade, and thus through primary school and onto higher levels of education, depends very much on whether they pass or not. Those who pass are promoted to the next grade, while those who fail can only repeat or drop out. Assessment practices and promotion policies that determine whether learners pass or not thus have a very great effect on the flow of children through primary schools (see Footnote, p15).

Table 8 summarizes information on the proportions of learners passing primary grades at the end of 1991. Information on pass rates for 1991 are presented here because these results determined the numbers of learners that repeated and the repetition rates analyzed in the next section. However, information on pass rates at the end of 1992 do not reveal any significant changes in the regional and gender differences described here.

For Namibia as a whole (Figure 15), pass rates increase between Grade 1 (58,4%) and Grade 7 (76,5%), but this trend is largely due to the increasing rates found in the Ondangwa and Rundu regions (Figure 16). Improving pass rates in higher grades might be due to a selection process whereby learners who would probably fail these grades, have indeed failed, repeated and dropped out in the lower grades.

In the lower grades, female learners pass at substantially higher rates than males, but this difference diminishes in the higher grades and is reversed in Grade 7 (Figure 15). These differences in the performance of males and females are found in all regions (Table 8).

Pass rates in the Ondangwa and Rundu regions are much lower than in the other regions, especially in Grades 1-3 (Figure 16). Only slightly more than half (51,8 & 53,2%) of all learners in Ondangwa and Rundu regions passed Grade 1 (Table 8). While pass rates in Grades 2-7 remain consistently lower in Ondangwa than elsewhere, those in Rundu increase to resemble more closely rates in the other regions.

There are few notable differences between pass rates in Katima Mulilo, Keetmanshoop, Khorixas and Windhoek. Higher proportions of learners passed Grade 2 than Grades 1 or 3, and more passed Grade 6 than Grades 5 or 7. Between about 75 and 88% of all learners passed in all the grades in these four regions (Table 8).

Table 8. Pass rates as percentages at the end of 1991 for male and females

Region	Gender	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7
Katima Mulilo	Males	75,3	85,0	77,4	78,5	78,3	83,7	82,4
	Females	78,0	88,1	81,8	81,8	80,1	80,9	79,2
	Both sexes	76,6	86,5	79,5	80,2	79,1	82,3	80,9
Keetmanshoop	Males	78,5	81,4	79,9	85,6	81,4	87,8	83,3
	Females	81,4	87,3	84,6	87,6	81,8	87,8	80,0
	Both sexes	79,9	84,6	84,5	86,6	81,6	87,8	81,6
Khorixas	Males	74,5	79,2	76,8	80,0	76,6	85,1	80,0
	Females	79,2	84,4	81,9	81,1	76,9	84,0	78,4
	Both sexes	76,8	81,9	82,4	80,6	76,7	84,5	79,2
Ondangwa	Males	49,8	53,8	51,8	59,8	63,7	70,1	71,2
	Females	53,8	64,1	61,5	65,9	68,5	71,7	71,8
	Both sexes	51,8	61,5	67,1	63,0	66,3	71,0	71,5
Rundu	Males	53,2	53,2	53,2	73,5	76,7	85,1	84,0
	Females	53,2	65,1	65,3	71,3	73,3	83,3	77,8
	Both sexes	53,2	65,3	68,8	72,4	75,1	84,2	81,4
Windhoek	Males	79,1	83,6	81,2	81,6	78,9	84,6	83,5
	Females	83,6	86,8	84,3	84,2	82,9	86,1	82,3
	Both sexes	81,2	84,3	83,3	82,9	81,0	85,4	82,9
NAMIBIA	Males	56,8	60,1	58,4	69,4	71,2	78,2	77,5
	Females	60,1	71,0	68,9	72,9	73,7	78,1	75,7
	Both sexes	58,4	68,9	72,9	71,2	72,5	78,1	76,5

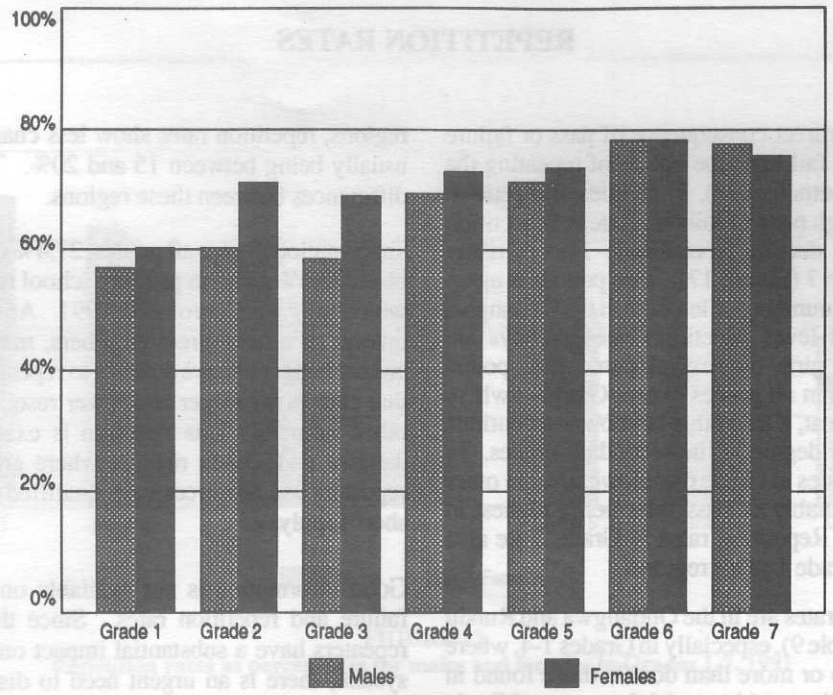

FIGURE 15
Pass rates as percentages for males and females in Grades 1-7 at the end of 1991

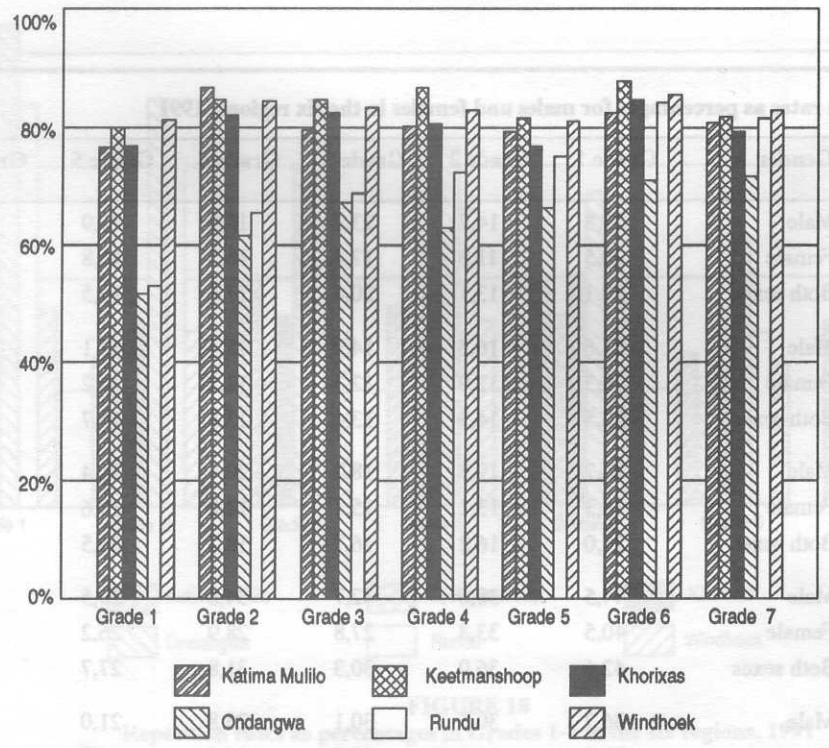

FIGURE 16
Pass rates as percentages in Grades 1-7 in the six regions at the end of 1991

FOOTNOTE - Although policies and procedures which determine whether a learner passes or fails are being amended, the data presented here reflect a system of evaluation and promotion in which learners pass as a result of internal examinations and assessments in all primary grades. At present there is no national assessment in any primary grade; differences in pass rates do not necessarily imply differences in standards or abilities between regions or schools. No limit was set on the number of times that a child failed and repeated a grade.

REPETITION RATES

Repetition rates are a direct consequence of pass or failure rates, since those who fail have the option of repeating the following year (see Footnote, p17). High rates of repetition are therefore due to high rates of failure. Rates of repetition in Namibia generally decline from Grade 1 to 6, rising slightly again in Grade 7 (Figure 17). This pattern is again influenced by the high numbers of learners in the Ondangwa region. On a national level, repetition rates of boys are higher than those of girls by several percentage points (Table 9). This is true in all grades except Grade 7, where slightly more girls repeat, a trend that is known to continue in a more exaggerated degree in the secondary grades. In all regions repetition rates in Grade 6 are lower than in other grades, a result presumably of pass rates being highest in Grade 6 (Figure 15). Repetition rates in Grade 2 are also lower than those in Grade 1 in all regions.

The highest repetition rates are in the Ondangwa and Rundu regions (Figure 18, Table 9), especially in Grades 1-4, where they are often close to or more than double those found in other regions. Generally speaking, a third or more of Grade 1-4 learners in these regions are repeaters. In the other regions, repetition rates show less change between grades, usually being between 15 and 20%. There are also fewer differences between these regions.

Taken nationally for all grades, 27,4% of all learners (29,2% boys, 25,6% girls) in primary school repeated the grades in which they were enroled in 1991. At these rates, over one quarter of all resources (teachers, materials, class rooms, annual budget etc) are devoted to repeaters. This also means that classes are larger and fewer resources are allocated to other learners. This situation is exacerbated in the Ondangwa and Rundu regions where greater proportions of repeaters use resources (e.g. qualified teachers) that are in short supply.

Good information is not available on the causes of high failure and repetition rates. Since the high numbers of repeaters have a substantial impact on the primary school system, there is an urgent need to discover the causes of these high rates. Solutions based on such discoveries could do much to reduce this impact.

Table 9. Repetition rates as percentages for males and females in the six regions, 1991

Region	Gender	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7
Katima Mulilo	Male	21,8	14,7	23,2	18,9	21,9	14,1	15,6
	Female	20,5	11,3	17,4	16,3	16,8	12,4	16,4
	Both sexes	21,1	13,1	20,4	17,6	19,5	13,2	16,0
Keetmanshoop	Male	21,6	16,3	14,9	15,4	17,1	11,9	11,4
	Female	19,3	12,0	12,3	12,2	16,2	10,5	13,5
	Both sexes	20,5	14,3	13,6	13,8	16,7	11,1	12,5
Khorixas	Male	23,7	19,3	18,2	20,4	21,4	11,1	17,0
	Female	18,3	13,1	15,1	17,0	19,6	12,1	13,7
	Both sexes	21,0	16,2	16,7	18,7	20,5	11,6	15,2
Ondangwa	Male	44,5	38,6	32,7	34,8	29,5	24,5	24,5
	Female	40,5	33,3	27,8	28,9	26,2	22,0	23,8
	Both sexes	42,6	36,0	30,3	31,8	27,7	23,1	24,1
Rundu	Male	36,2	30,5	30,1	25,8	21,0	15,2	17,3
	Female	35,0	31,1	27,3	26,9	21,5	14,9	26,0
	Both sexes	35,6	30,8	28,7	26,3	21,3	15,1	21,0
Windhoek	Male	19,7	17,7	18,1	16,9	17,8	12,9	12,9
	Female	14,6	12,9	12,5	15,4	14,5	11,6	13,9
	Both sexes	17,2	15,4	15,3	16,2	16,1	12,2	13,4
NAMIBIA	Male	38,5	31,4	27,4	27,6	24,4	18,3	19,0
	Female	34,8	27,0	22,8	24,0	21,9	17,3	20,0
	Both sexes	36,7	29,2	25,1	25,8	23,1	17,7	19,6

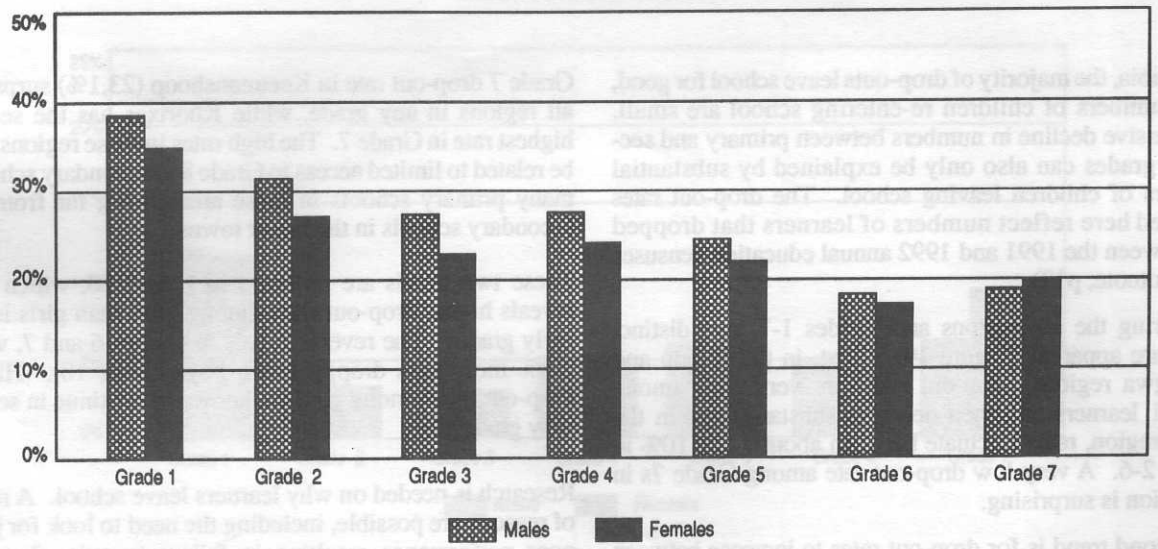

FIGURE 17
Repetition rates as percentages for males and females in Grades 1-7, 1991

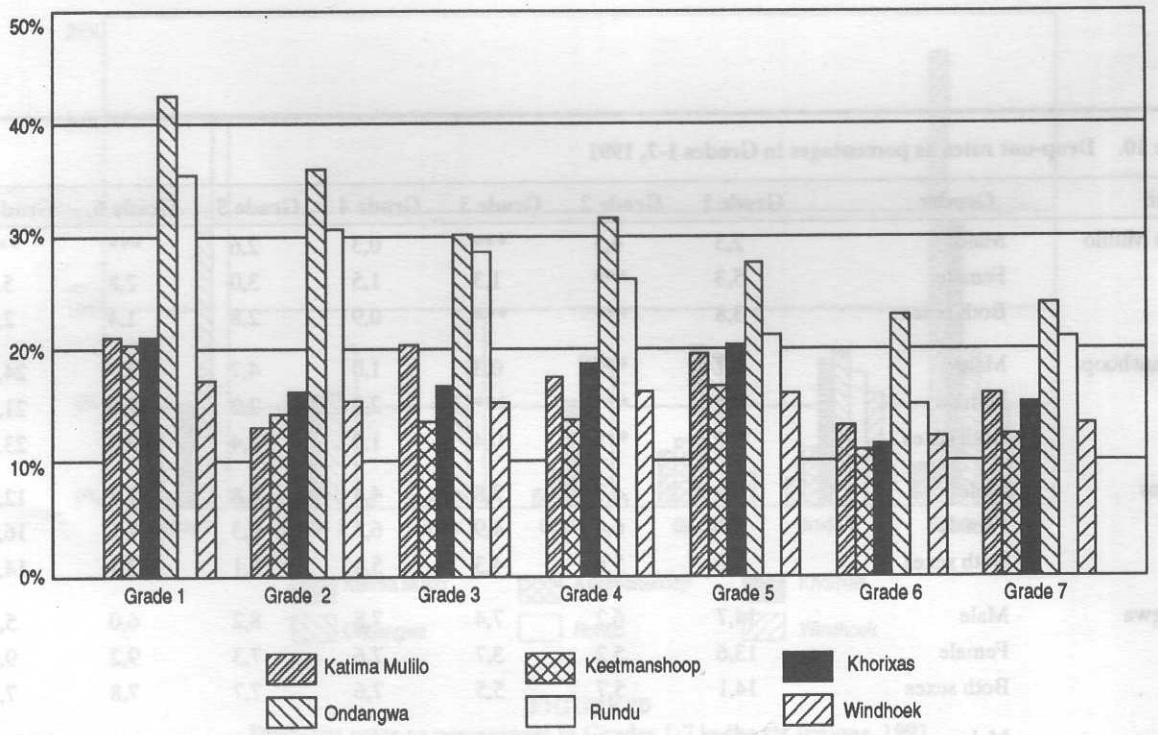

FIGURE 18
Repetition rates as percentages in Grades 1-7 in the six regions, 1991

FOOTNOTE - Repetition rates for 1991 are the numbers of learners repeating a grade in 1992 as a proportion of those that were enroled in that grade during 1991. By way of example, if there were 100 learners in Grade 2 during 1991, and 25 of them repeat Grade 2 in 1992, the repetition rate for 1991 Grade 2's is (25/100) x 100 = 25%.

The figures presented in Table 9 and Figures 17 & 18 include as repeaters the small number re-entrants who left school in previous years and then returned to be enroled in grades for which they were eligible on the basis of their previous schooling. The percentages of learners returning to primary grades in 1992 in relation to numbers enroled in 1991 was small: 1,9% females, 2,2% males and 2,0% for both sexes.

DROP-OUT RATES

In Namibia, the majority of drop-outs leave school for good, since numbers of children re-entering school are small. The massive decline in numbers between primary and secondary grades can also only be explained by substantial numbers of children leaving school. The drop-out rates presented here reflect numbers of learners that dropped out between the 1991 and 1992 annual education censuses (see Footnote, p19).

Comparing the six regions and Grades 1-7, two distinct trends are apparent (Figure 19). First, in the Rundu and Ondangwa regions, drop-out rates are very high among Grade 1 learners and then decrease substantially. In the Rundu region, rates fluctuate between about 7 and 10% in Grades 2-6. A very low drop-out rate among Grade 7s in this region is surprising.

The second trend is for drop-out rates to increase between Grades 4 and 7. Such increases are particularly evident in the Keetmanshoop and Khorixas regions (Figure 20). The Grade 7 drop-out rate in Keetmanshoop (23,1%) surpasses all regions in any grade, while Khorixas has the second highest rate in Grade 7. The high rates in these regions may be related to limited access to Grade 8 in secondary schools, many primary schools in these areas being far from the secondary schools in the larger towns.

These two trends are reflected in Figure 20, which also reveals higher drop-out rates among boys than girls in the early grades. The reverse is true in Grades 6 and 7, when 2-3% more girls drop out than boys (Table 10). Higher drop-out rates among girls are known to continue in secondary grades.

Research is needed on why learners leave school. A range of reasons are possible, including the need to look for jobs, poor performance resulting in failure to gain places in subsequent grades, steep competition for limited places in the next grades, illness, and a loss of interest in school.

Table 10. Drop-out rates as percentages in Grades 1-7, 1991

Region	Gender	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7
Katima Mulilo	Male	2,3	4,5	***	0,3	2,6	***	***
	Female	5,3	***	1,3	1,5	3,0	2,8	5,7
	Both sexes	3,8	***	***	0,9	2,8	1,4	2,1
Keetmanshoop	Male	0,7	***	0,3	1,0	4,7	2,9	24,7
	Female	***	***	***	2,9	2,2	2,9	21,6
	Both sexes	***	***	0,4	1,9	3,4	3,0	23,1
Khorixas	Male	5,0	4,7	3,8	4,4	6,8	7,7	12,3
	Female	5,4	6,4	4,9	6,5	9,3	7,1	16,1
	Both sexes	5,2	5,6	4,3	5,4	8,1	7,4	14,4
Ondangwa	Male	14,7	6,2	7,4	7,8	8,2	6,0	5,7
	Female	13,6	5,2	3,7	7,6	7,3	9,2	9,3
	Both sexes	14,1	5,7	5,5	7,6	7,7	7,8	7,9
Rundu	Male	19,0	9,1	8,6	6,1	5,9	2,4	***
	Female	20,9	7,4	10,7	7,8	9,5	11,5	2,8
	Both sexes	20,0	8,2	9,6	7,0	7,6	6,8	***
Windhoek	Male	***	***	***	***	2,1	5,8	4,2
	Female	***	***	***	***	1,4	5,5	6,0
	Both sexes	***	***	***	***	1,7	5,7	5,2
NAMIBIA	Male	12,1	4,6	4,8	5,2	6,0	5,1	6,2
	Female	11,7	3,3	3,0	5,1	5,9	7,6	9,4
	Both sexes	11,9	4,0	3,9	5,1	6,0	6,5	7,9

***see Footnote, p19

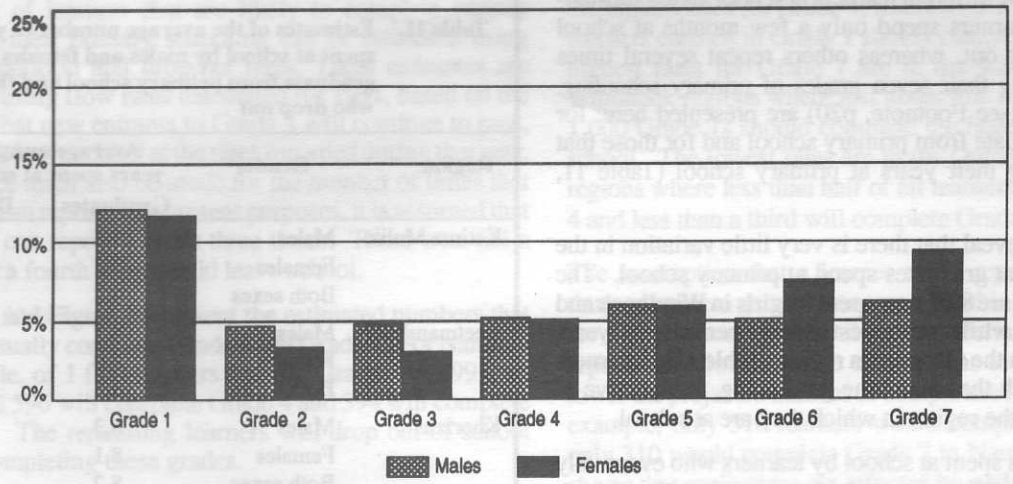

FIGURE 19
Drop-out rates as percentages for males and females in Grades 1-7, 1991

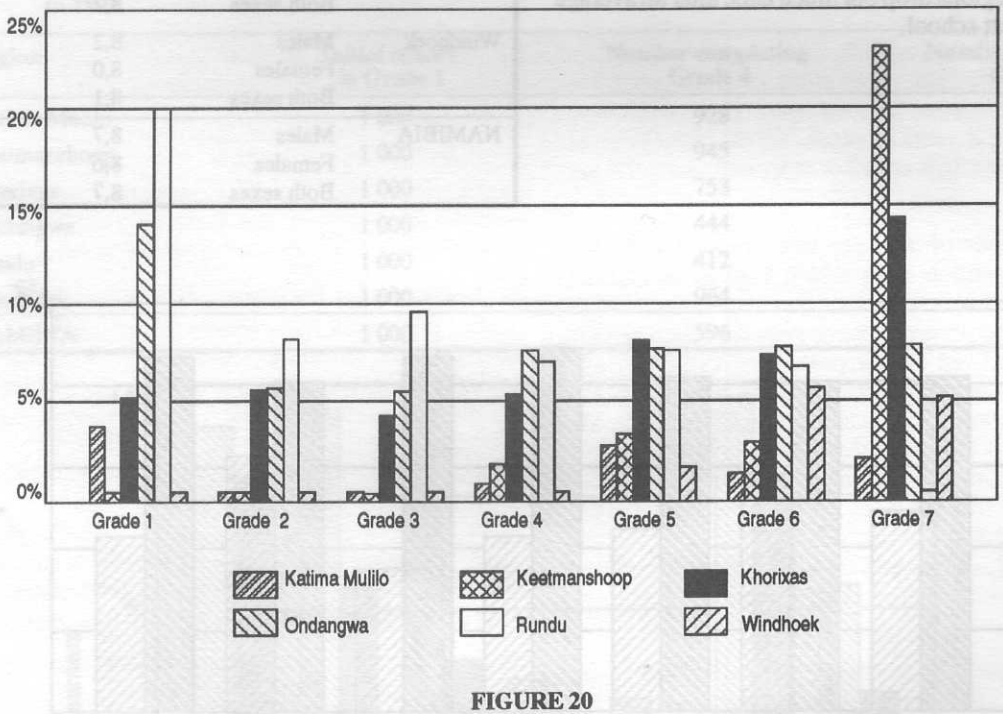

FIGURE 20
Drop-out rates as percentages in Grades 1-7 in the six regions, 1991

FOOTNOTE - Drop-out rates were calculated from enrolment and repetition data collected during the 1991 and 1992 annual education censuses. The rates therefore reflect learners who were enroled in 1991 but dropped out of school before the 1992 annual education census. Although the relatively small numbers could be affected disproportionately by small errors, additional data would probably support the general patterns shown here.

Drop-out rates are estimated by assuming that percentages of promotion + repetition + drop-out = 100%. Repetition rates were determined from the number of repeaters, while promotion rates were estimated from the numbers of new entrants reported for each grade. As a result of increased enrolment, some drop-out rates can be negative values and are shown in Table 10 as ***. This does not imply that no drop-out occurred, but simply that the number of drop-outs was less than the number of new enrolments and re-entrants.

DURATION OF STUDY

The time spent by different learners at school varies substantially. Some learners spend only a few months at school before dropping out, whereas others repeat several times while completing their seven grades of primary schooling. Two estimates (see Footnote, p20) are presented here: for those who graduate from primary school and for those that drop out during their years at primary school (Table 11, Figure 21).

The estimates reveal that there is very little variation in the average time that graduates spend at primary school. The shortest periods are 8,0 years spent by girls in Windhoek and Keetmanshoop, while the longest average period is 9,0 years spent by boys in the Ondangwa region (Table 11). Learners thus spend much the same time graduating, irrespective of their gender or the region in which they are at school.

Average periods spent at school by learners who eventually drop out are much more variable. As a result of high drop-out rates in the early grades, most drop-outs spend relatively short periods at school in the Ondangwa, Khorixas, Katima Mulilo and Rundu regions (Figure 21). The shortest average period of about 3,5 years is in the Rundu region. By contrast, learners in the Windhoek and Keetmanshoop regions drop out much later, after an average of about 6 years at school.

Table 11. Estimates of the average number of years spent at school by males and females that graduate from primary school and those who drop out

Region	Gender	Average number of years spent at school by:	
		Graduates	Drop-outs
Katima Mulilo	Males	8,3	4,8
	Females	8,2	4,4
	Both sexes	8,2	4,9
Keetmanshoop	Males	8,1	6,0
	Females	8,0	5,6
	Both sexes	8,1	5,8
Khorixas	Males	8,3	4,7
	Females	8,1	4,4
	Both sexes	8,2	4,5
Ondangwa	Males	9,0	4,3
	Females	8,8	4,4
	Both sexes	8,9	4,3
Rundu	Males	8,7	3,4
	Females	8,7	3,6
	Both sexes	8,7	3,5
Windhoek	Males	8,2	6,4
	Females	8,0	6,1
	Both sexes	8,1	6,3
NAMIBIA	Males	8,7	4,3
	Females	8,6	4,4
	Both sexes	8,7	4,3

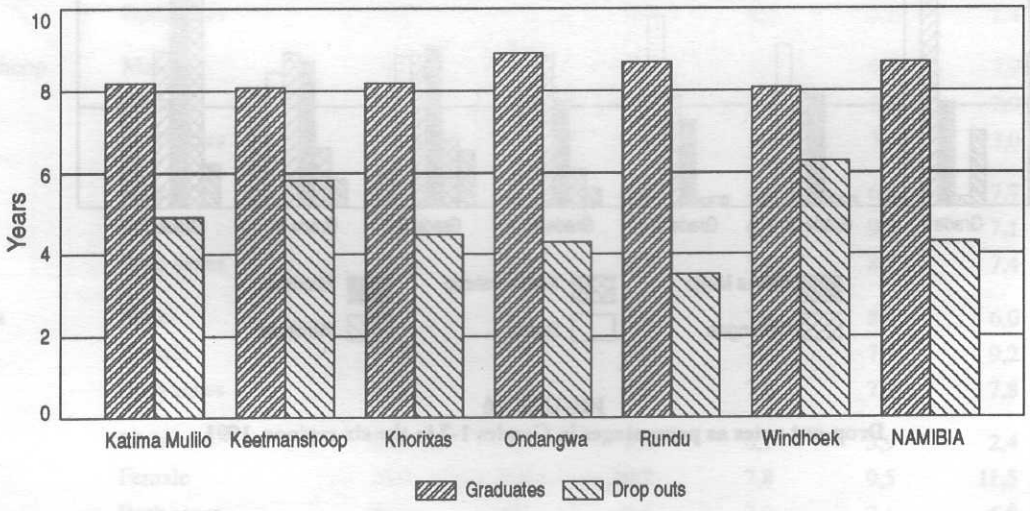

FIGURE 21
Estimates of the average number of years spent at school by learners that graduate from primary school and those who dropout

FOOTNOTE - Estimates of the number of years spent at school are derived by dividing the total number of learners graduating or dropping-out by the respective aggregated total number of learner-years that they spent before graduating or dropping-out. For example, 100 graduates that take a total of 900 learner-years (including years spent repeating some grades) spend an average of 900/100 = 9,0 years to graduate. All these estimates use enrolment and repetition rates recorded during the 1991 and 1992 annual education censuses, and estimated promotion, repetition and drop-out rates. It is assumed that a learner may only repeat a grade three times.

COMPLETION RATES

Numbers of learners that are likely to complete various stages of their primary schooling can be estimated using pass, repetition and drop-out rates. These estimates are obtained using flow rates calculated for 1991, based on the premise that new entrants to Grade 1 will continue to pass, repeat and leave school at the rates recorded during that year. Allowance must also be made for the number of times that a learner can repeat. For present purposes, it is assumed that a learner can repeat a grade three times. Those who fail a grade for a fourth time would leave school.

Table 12 and Figure 23 present the estimated numbers that will eventually complete Grade 4 and Grade 7. For Namibia as a whole, of 1 000 learners starting Grade 1 in 1991, an estimated 596 will complete Grade 4 and 394 will complete Grade 7. The remaining learners will drop out of school before completing these grades.

Completion rates vary considerably between the regions. Keetmanshoop, Windhoek and Katima Mulilo regions show the highest rates for Grade 4, where over 900 of every 1 000 learners enroled in Grade 1 should complete Grade 4. The highest rates for Grade 7 are in the Katima Mulilo and Windhoek regions where just under 800 of every cohort of 1 000 Grade 1s should complete the final year of primary school. The lowest rates are in the Ondangwa and Rundu regions where less than half of all learners complete Grade 4 and less than a third will complete Grade 7.

The assumption that a learner could repeat a grade three times may seem generous to some, but this is considered fair for many schools in Namibia. Restricting the number of repetitions allowed in the calculations to only two would lower the projected number of completers considerably. For example, only 510 learners would complete Grade 4 and only 310 would complete Grade 7 in Namibia. While this shows that projections are affected by various assumptions, the numbers given in Table 12 are probably fairly realistic given existing rates of promotion, repetition and drop-out.

Table 11. Projected numbers of learners completing Grade 4 & 7, based on a cohort of 1 000 learners starting Grade 1 in 1991

Region	Initial cohort in Grade 1	Number completing Grade 4	Number completing Grade 7
Katima Mulilo	1 000	928	794
Keetmanshoop	1 000	945	623
Khorixas	1 000	753	486
Ondangwa	1 000	444	250
Rundu	1 000	412	295
Windhoek	1 000	964	799
NAMIBIA	1 000	596	394

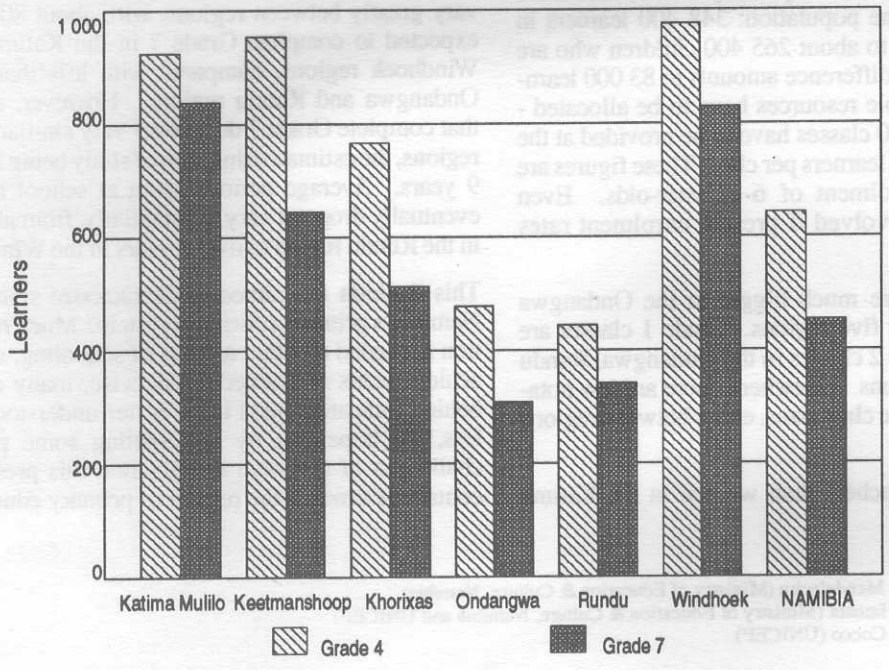

FIGURE 23
Of 1 000 learners starting Grade 1 in each of the six regions, estimated numbers that should complete Grades 4 and 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Primary education in Namibia involves hundreds of schools, thousands of teachers and hundreds of thousands of learners. Almost a quarter of the Namibian population spend their days at primary school. The amount of variation in primary education is a substantial component of this phase of schooling. Wide variation is to be found in the way in which primary education is provided, for example in the supply of schools and teachers, and in the way in which children pass through from grade to grade. In exploring this variation, the focus here has largely been on differences between regions and between males and females.

Admission, enrolment and population census data show that large proportions of children enter school at an early and appropriate age. This is especially true in the Ondangwa, Rundu and Katima Mulilo regions, while relatively small proportions of 6 year-olds are at school in the Khorixas, Windhoek and Keetmanshoop regions.

Amongst all grades and ages, enrolments are highest in the Katima Mulilo, Ondangwa and Keetmanshoop regions, and lowest in the Khorixas, Rundu and Windhoek regions. The national net enrolment ratio for 6-12 year olds is estimated to be 83%, indicating that about 17% of this age group is not at school. Although the majority of 6-12 year-olds are at primary school, very high proportions of them are not in grades that are appropriate for their ages. Thus, about 46% of all Grade 1s are 8 years or older. Of all learners in all primary grades about 36% are 13 or older and nearly 9% are 17 or older.

The high proportions of over-age learners are largely the result of high repetition rates which lead to substantial numbers of learners repeating over and over again without passing through the primary school system. Much greater numbers of children are thus at primary school than there are 6-12 year-olds in the population: 348 400 learners in Grades 1-7 as opposed to about 265 400 children who are 6-12 years of age. The difference amounts to 83 000 learners to which considerable resources have to be allocated - for example about 2 300 classes have to be provided at the national average of 36,2 learners per class. These figures are based upon 100% enrolment of 6-12 year-olds. Even greater numbers are involved if present enrolment rates were maintained.

Classes in all grades are much bigger in the Ondangwa region than in the other five regions. Grade 1 classes are much bigger than Grade 2 classes in the Ondangwa, Rundu and Katima Mulilo regions. Elsewhere, there are few notable differences in average class sizes, either between regions or between grades.

Many more men are teachers than women in the Katima Mulilo and Rundu regions, while many more women than men teach in other regions. About 64% of primary level teachers have professional teaching qualifications, the highest proportions being in the Windhoek and Katima Mulilo and the lowest in Khorixas, Ondangwa and Rundu regions. In terms of academic training, about 51% of all primary level teachers have not completed Grade 12. Much higher proportions of teachers in Windhoek region have Grade 12 or higher academic qualifications than elsewhere, while only about one quarter of teachers in Rundu have this level of academic training.

Failure, repetition and drop-out rates in the early grades are much higher in the Rundu and Ondangwa regions than elsewhere. Learners in these areas are older than others as a result of such high repetition rates, and substantial proportions of them are over-age.

Slightly more girls are enroled at an early age than boys, especially in the Rundu and Ondangwa regions. As a result of this and greater repetition by boys than girls, boys at primary school are older than girls. Many more boys than girls are over-age. Greater repetition rates are associated with higher failure rates among boys, especially in Grades 1-5. Drop-out rates are also higher among boys in these grades, but are much higher among girls in Grades 6 and 7.

On a national level, pass rates increase, repetition rates decrease, but drop-out rates increase through the primary grades. Over one quarter of primary school learners in Namibia are repeaters, and national drop-out rates range between 3 and 12%, depending on the grade.

As a result of these rates, about 60% of learners enroling in Grade 1 are expected to complete Grade 4, and about 40% their final year of primary schooling. These proportions vary greatly between regions, with about 80% of learners expected to complete Grade 7 in the Katima Mulilo and Windhoek regions, compared with less than 30% in the Ondangwa and Rundu regions. However, those learners that complete Grade 7 do so over very similar periods in all regions, the estimated duration of study being between 8 and 9 years. Average periods spent at school by those who eventually drop out vary substantially, from about 3,5 years in the Rundu region to over 6 years in the Windhoek region.

This Bulletin has aimed to characterize some features of Namibia's primary education system. Much more information is needed on other aspects of schooling, such as on the achievements of learners. Likewise, many of the factors behind indicators need to be better understood. Nevertheless, we hope that by highlighting some problems and challenges of a system in transition this presentation will contribute towards the reform of primary education.

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