

# Contemporary Homeschooling in the Republic of South Africa: Some Lessons for other African Nations

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## **Abstract**

Apart from the United States and Britain where contemporary homeschooling is experiencing major breakthroughs, this form of education is also growing around the world in countries such as Australia, Canada, France, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, South Korea and Thailand among others. In Africa, a unique step was taken by the government of South Africa in 1996 when it gave legal backing to home Schooling. Till date (2014), South Africa therefore has seventeen years of official experience in contemporary home-schooling granted that this mode of education has been on for many years before receiving the mandate of the government. In this paper, attempt is made to examine contemporary homeschooling in South Africa and the lessons that other African countries can learn from her experience

## **Keywords**

Homeschooling, homeschoolers, parents, viability, public schools, research.

## **Introduction**

Contemporary homeschooling (also known as home education) is the education of children at home and in the community, as opposed to education in an institution such as a public or parochial school (Leiding 2008). According to Mayberry, Knowles, Ray & Marlow (1995:10-11), unlike traditional school instruction, home schooling is not a system designed by one group of people and implemented by another. They affirmed that, home schooling in its primary sense implies that parents are responsible for both the planning and implementation of the instruction. According to them, home schooling therefore forms an integral part of a family's daily activities as most of these parents regard their influence on their children's education as part of their primary task as educators . Hill (2010) reiterated that homeschooling is not a new phenomenon in the United States because in the colonial days, families including wealthy ones educated their children at home combining the efforts of parents, tutors, and older children. Distefano (2005) et al confirmed that

prior to the introduction of compulsory school attendance laws in the United States; most childhood education took place within the family or community. They explained further that for much of history and in many cultures, engaging the services of professional teachers (whether as tutors or in a formal academic setting) was an option available only to small elite. Thus, until relatively recently, most people were educated by family members (especially during early childhood), family friends or any one with useful knowledge.

Similarly, Louw (1992:357-8) indicated that home schooling in South Africa is not a novel phenomenon and dates back to the days of the early Trekboers and Voortrekkers. He stated that it can be regarded as the most traditional form of education. According to Louw, the main difference is that in those days, parents had no alternative but to home- school, whereas in the contemporary sense of the word, parents choose to home -school their children.

Magida (2008) argued that the component of non – formal education is such that goes beyond a focus on the adult only. According to him, early childhood or children's education is an integral component of Non- Formal education in many countries of the world and is even backed by law. This non- formal component addressing children's education, Magadi explained, is the homeschooling and is a similitude of the correspondence education experienced by adults except with differences manifesting in:

- the nomenclature: correspondence education on one hand and homeschooling on the other hand
- one focusing on the adults and the other on children or adolescents'.
- one is self learning and the other having the parent as teacher
- one involves certification and the other is not

Brynard (2007) also reiterated that homeschooling is one of the options regarded as open learning educational approach because it is a learning experience without conventional structures and limitations. Any approach to learning needs to utilize a variety of teaching strategies for greater options, so that individual learner's needs and personal circumstances can be accommodated (Phatudi, 1997:2, Saide, 1995:47). Strydom and Grimsley,( 1996:1) emphasized that since open learning refers to a learning process that eliminates certain obstacles in the teaching -learning process, home schooling can be regarded as such In open learning, learners are largely responsible for their own learning, as they themselves decide on what, how, where and when they want to learn (Strydom & Grimsley 1996:1). The degree of openness in home schooling however will depend on the way it is implemented (Brynard, 1998:177).

Home schooling is the collaborative term used for referring to different ways in which learners can be educated at home and it is an approach that is becoming increasingly popular among parents worldwide because it eliminates certain obstacles in the teaching-learning process (Strydom & Grimsley 1999:1). Ray (2010) observed that homeschooling which a decade ago appeared to be cutting-edge and "alternative" is now bordering on "mainstream" in the United States. Ray points out further that homeschooling may be the fastest- growing form of education in the United States and has equally been growing in countries such as Australia, Canada, France, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, Thailand and the United Kingdom.

While homeschooling is gaining ground in the nations around the world with the United States taking the lead, correspondence by the researcher in 2013 with Pestalozzi Trust (the Legal Defence Fund for Home and Civil education) in South Africa shows that the exception is the case in African countries. Apart from a relatively small number of families in the Republic of South Africa and even much smaller families in Botswana, Kenya and Uganda, contemporary home-schooling is still very uncommon in African countries. This observation is also confirmed in the correspondence of the researcher with Home School Legal Defence Association in the United States of America in 2013. In the same vein, Magida (2008) stated that home-schooling is little or not known in Nigeria. While the Republic of South Africa is still “trailing” far behind in homeschooling when compared with countries such as the United States of America, Australia, Canada, France, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, United Kingdom etc, she is nevertheless in the fore front in Africa. This paper therefore attempts an examination of the state of home-schooling in the Republic of South Africa and the lessons that other African countries can learn from South African experience.

Furthermore, the body of research on home-based education has expanded dramatically since the first studies and academic articles of the late 1970s that dealt with the modern home school movement. Numerous researches have also examined the academic achievement of home-educated children and youth, their social, emotional, and psychological development, and their success into adulthood, and various aspects of home school families in general (Ray 2010). Incidentally, good as these researches are, they did not have Africa included in their focus. Consequently, as at today, there is a dearth of research and data on home schooling in Africa. This paper therefore is also an attempt to stimulate research in the area of home schooling in Africa.

### **Contemporary Home-Schooling in the Republic of South Africa**

Pistorius(1970:262-326) emphasized that home schooling was fundamental to civilization in South Africa as the only form of education for many years. According to her, parents had a unique right to and responsibility for their children's education. However, when state schools were established in the late nineteenth century, they took over the parent's unique position, as school attendance was made compulsory thus making home-schooling, without exemption, was illegal. So firm was the government in her stand that in 1994, Andre and Bokkie Meintjies were prosecuted for homeschooling their children. At this turn of event, Graham & Allison Shortridge got Chris Klicka at the American Home School Legal Defence League with the support of the 40 000 members of his Defence League in America and Canada to intervene. This family was eventually released though given suspended sentence (Van Oostrum 1997b:1). According to Graham & Allison Shortridge (2013), as at 1994, there were only three families homeschooling that they knew of, themselves being one of them.

As the inadequacies and shortcomings of the state education systems continue to increase and to be more glaring, a good number of parents persisted with the reclaimance of their rights as primary educators of their children by homeschooling them, though underground for many years and at the same time pressing hard for legal recognition by the government. With the assistance of Louis Green (the then vice president of African Christian Democratic Party-ACDP), Graham & Allison Shortridge made a presentation on homeschooling to the South African Parliament. Up to this point in time, the concept of home schooling was virtually unheard of in South Africa so the education committee at parliament needed to be “educated” about homeschooling (Graham & Allison Shortridge 2013). The ACDP through Louis Green made this possible by placing a pile of literature on homeschooling at

the parliament library and also gave copies to members of the education committee. The said pile of literature were sent by sent by Chris Klicka at the American Home School Legal Defence League who had earlier on been contacted by Graham & Allison Shortridge for assistance. Durham (1996:77) estimated that in 1996 approximately 1,300 South African children were being taught at home. However she also drew attention to the possibility of a large "underground" component, owing to the fear of parents operating unregistered homeschools that they would be exposed to prosecution or interference by authorities.

The National Coalition of Home- Schoolers; one of South African home schooling Associations estimated that in 1997 there were approximately 2000 children being home schooled in South Africa and that this represented a vast increase in number compared with those of previous years (Van Oostrum & Van Oostrum 1997a:1)

Van Oostrum & Van Oostrum (1997a:1) however estimated the figure to be approximately 2,400 homeschoolers in 1997. Their figures were based on surveys of curriculum suppliers nationally and homeschoolers in the Pretoria area. It is worth noting however that not all homeschoolers make use of curriculum suppliers and that on occasion, more than one family may make use of one subscription. As part of the effort to secure government approval of homeschooling in South Africa, several associations sprung up. Some of these associations are: the Association for home-schooling formed in 1992 and the National Coalition of homeschoolers established in 1996(Van Oostrum & Van Oostrum 1997a:33). Other associations are: the Eastern Cape Home Schooling Association; the KwaZulu Natal Home Schooling Association, and the Western Cape Home Schooling Association. In addition, the Pestalozzi Trust was founded in 1998 as a legal defense fund for home education. The Trust offers to represent members' families—from consultation to correspondence and negotiation with local officials, and in court proceedings as a way through the appellate courts. The Trust takes responsibility for the payment of all litigation cost for home school cases it undertakes (<http://users.iafrica.com/e/ec/echsa/law/htm>). The American Home School Defense League, Canada Home School Defense League, the African Christian Democratic Party of South Africa, Homeschooling Associations in South Africa and several individuals played active roles for years in the bid to get homeschooling legalized in South Africa.

The South African School Act (No 84 of 1996) came into effect in January 1997(<http://www.pestalozzi.org>). On the 28<sup>th</sup> July 1998, the first draft of National Policy guidelines for home-schooling was published. The guidelines included information regarding the registration, conditions for registration and withdrawal of registration. The second draft was published on April 9, 1999. On the 23 November 1999, in accordance with the National Education Policy Act (NEPA, No 27 of 1996), the final policy for the Registration of Learners for Home Education was passed. The aforementioned document contains Policy for the Registration of Learners for home education and states that home education is:

- a) A programme of education that a parent of a learner may provide to his/her own child at their home. In addition, the parent may , if necessary, enlist the specific services of a tutor for specific areas of the curriculum or
- b) A legal, independent form of education, alternative to attendance at a public or an independent school(Policy for registration of learners for home education- 23 November 1999;<http://users.iafrica.com/e/ec/echsa/law.htm>

The NEPA (No 27 of 1996) furthermore stipulates that parents "may not instill unfair discrimination, racism or religious intolerance in learners"

In addition, several conditions for registration of a learner have to be complied with. The Head of Department must be content that:

- a) The home education "is in the best interest of the learner", is beneficial to the learner; complies with the fundamental right of the learner to education; and will be taught at least as persistently and to the same standard as in public school;
- b) The number of learning hours, available learning resources and highest education standard achieved by the learner is declared; the proposed learning programme is submitted; and the learning programme suits the age and ability of the learner, meets the minimum requirement of the Curriculum and is not of an inferior standard to that of the public school education.
- c) The language policy and specified outcomes of the eight learning areas are complied with;
- d) A learner receives a minimum of three hours contact teaching per day;
- e) The parent will protect the learner from any form of abuse or unfair discrimination and will not promote racism or religious intolerance with the learner; and
- f) The values of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa prevail in the education which is provided at home.

The policy for the Registration of learners for Home Education (November 1999) outlines duties of the parents for monitoring of home education. Such duties include:

- a) Keeping a record of attendance; building up a portfolio of a learners work, including up to date records of progression; providing evidence of intervention and educational support; and making all of the above available for inspection by an education official.
- b) Keeping evidence of continuous assessment for a period of three years
- c) Providing for mandatory assessment of a learner's progress, upon completion of each phase, by an independent and suitably qualified person who has been approved by the department.
- d) Guidelines for the withdrawal of registration are also included in the policy. In addition, there is a proforma application for the registration of a learner for home education.

In 2001, the Eastern Cape Home Schooling Association (ECHSA) estimated that there were in excess of 10,000 home learners in South Africa, a considerable increase over the number quoted for 1997. Van Oostrum estimated the number of home learners in South Africa at between 30,000 and 50,000 in 2003(Mufweba 2003:15) (<http://users.iafrica.com/e/ec/echsa/faq.htm>). In an interview conducted by correspondence in October 2013 with Leendert van Oostrum; President Pestalozzi Trust Legal Defence Fund for Home Education, he pointed out that there were just over 65 000 home learners in South Africa according to 2011 census. He however cautioned that the figure is not reliable as it is almost certainly a substantial over count in some respects and a substantial undercount in others. The figure he said fall very near the middle of the range of his own guess which he said is between 30 000 and 100 000. Though the exact figure is not known, it is obvious that the number of home learners in South Africa has ever been on the increase; an indication that it is an increasingly

acceptable education alternative. It can be expected that the number of homeschoolers in the Republic of South Africa will continue to grow. This is confirmed by Google Trends in which South Africa after USA is the country where most searches for the word "Homeschooling" is done(Bouwe Van der Eems 2013

Brynard (2007) argued that, homeschooling should never be regarded as a threat to any existing system of education in South Africa but rather as complimentary. Like any past, present or future system, Brynard maintained that homeschooling has shortcomings. However, in an interview that Brynard had with a chief Education Specialist (Special Needs in Education) of the Free State Department of Education, it was pointed out that homeschooling does offer possible educational solutions in certain circumstances, as well as relief from the pressure on an overburdened South African School System. Brynard (2007) also reported the view of the chief Education Specialist that the many advantages of homeschooling could be exploited to the benefit of South African educational system. Furthermore, it is the opinion of the Society for Home schooling in South Africa that a free, affordable system of private education (including home schooling) will offer the kind of competition that will make the quality of education in public schools to improve. According to the society, home schooling could be pivotal not only to the freedom of all learners, but also to affordable quality education (Morgenrood, 1997).

### **Why Some Parents prefer Homeschooling in South Africa.**

Brynard(2007) carried out an interview with a wide spectrum of South Africans which included: parents, education specialists, university lecturers, secondary school teachers and child psychologist concerning the reasons for homeschooling in South Africa. Brynard revealed that the reasons given by the interviewees for homeschooling corresponded with views held in the USA and other countries where homeschooling is being practiced. Some of the reasons that emanated from Brynard' interviews are:

- Parents are in a position to determine the kind and the depth of exploratory and play oriented childhood for their wards
- Education can be made flexible to allow each child to work at his or her own pace
- Subjects that parents deemed relevant and useful but which are not common in conventional schools can be taught. These includes: ethics, commitment to God, commitment to legally instituted authorities, some major world languages(-English, French, Chinese),music, money management
- Family values are integrated into the social, academic and emotional development of the child and early enough.
- Homeschooling prevents premature and dangerous parent-child separation
- Homeschooling enables parents to give adequate protection to their children from molestation and abuse which they may face in or around public schools
- Parents and adults of integrity serve as primary role models
- Homeschooled children are predominantly free from negative peer pressure
- Homeschooling children have the opportunity of enjoying relatively more resources as they have the community and the entire world as their resources.

The above reasons given for homeschooling in South Africa were also alluded to by Van Oostrum (1995), Gaum (1997:1), Joubert (2004:1), Leiding (2008) etc . Similarly, an interview with Graham & Alison Shortridge; Directors of Theocentric Christian Education in South Africa by correspondence in 2013 by the researcher revealed that the commonest reasons for homeschooling in South Africa is the dissatisfaction with the standard of education being offered in the state schools. Another significant reason according to them is the bullying that goes on at the state schools, where discipline is at low ebb. The views of Graham & Alison can be corroborated with a few cases. For example, Molosankwe (2012) reported an incident in which a grade 10 pupil; Nkululeko Ndlovu, 18 of Phineas Xulu Secondary School in South Africa was allegedly shot dead by a fellow student; a grade 11 pupil in the same school. Ndlovu had been shot in the classroom as he sat waiting to write an examination. Furthermore, Molosankwe observed that no one was prepared to shed a tear for Ndlovu. The general feeling was that he had got what he deserved. According to Molosankwe, one teacher was overheard saying “minus one problem” while some other teachers conceded privately that he had been troublesome and that he’d scarred them too. In addition, Mosolamkwe gathered that Ndlovu’s classmates at the school all knew he was a bully and preyed on the other children with his gang and that the other school children felt no grief, only freedom that his reign of terror had been brought to an end. Furthermore, Abraham et al (2006) pointed out that research carried out by the Medical Council of South Africa showed high level of sexual abuse of girls in South African Schools. Similarly, studies by African Child Policy Forum (2010) showed that 32% of reported child rape cases in South Africa were carried out by teachers. Modisaotsile (2012) asserted that despite the fact that South Africa spends 18.5 per cent of its annual budget on education, there are many signs that show that there is a crisis in her education. Modisaotile pointed out further that the dropout rate in South Africa is very high, and literacy and numeracy levels are low. According to him, other challenges of the public education system include; poor teacher training; unskilled teachers; lack of commitment to teaching by teachers; shortage of resources in education despite the large budgetary commitments by government. . Bloomberg News (2011) as reported by Modisaotile (2012) showed that over the past five years the Republic of South Africa has seen a doubling of the education budget to ZAR165, 1 billion, but still the system has failed to reverse unacceptably low examination result or to improve the standard of teaching. Modisaotile (2012), citing South African Department of Education, also revealed that the quality of education in the Republic of South Africa remains very poor and the output rate has not improved. In addition, classrooms are still overcrowded: the ratio of teachers to learners is 1: 32 in South African public schools. Annual National Assessments (ANANs) for Grade 3 and 6 learners have found low levels of literacy and numeracy for South African learners (Blach 2011 in Modisaotile 2012). The assessment found that only 35 per cent of learners can read, with results ranging from 12 per cent in Mpumalanga to a “high” of 43 per cent in the Western Cape (Blach 2011 in Modisaotile 2012). In a press statement before the Annual National Assessment for 2011, the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motsshekga indicated her concern over the standard of South African education by stating: *This is worrying precisely because the critical skills of literacy and numeracy are fundamental to further education and achievement in the worlds of both education and work. Many of our learners lack proper foundations in literacy and numeracy and so they struggle to progress in the system and into post-school education and training* (Department of Basic Education 2011). According to June 2011 diagnostic overview, the National planning Minister was reported to have observed that the quality of schooling is substandard, especially in the township schools. Drug abuse was highlighted as one of the major causes of class repetition at school in South Africa. Drugs are easily obtainable by students and their

use is prevalent even at primary school level ( McEntire 2011). The substance most abused by students is alcohol, followed by cigarettes and marijuana. According to a report from the Bureau of Justice (2011), 85 per cent of teenagers claim that they know where to obtain marijuana, while 29 per cent state that someone has offered or sold them illegal substance at school ( McEntire 2011). As a result of the aforementioned challenges (among others) facing South African Public Education system, some parents took to homeschooling as a reasonable alternative. This however is not to say that South African public Education system is totally a tale of woes. For instance, despite the challenges facing the system, the Republic of South Africa has attained almost universal access to primary education (Statistics South Africa 2011). Similarly, in her press release statement for the Annual National Assessment for 2011, the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angle Motshekga, stated at the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality(SACMEQ) that the result of 2007 had shown some improvement in reading since 2003(Department of Basic Education, 2011). While the Republic of South Africa is in the process of surmounting the aforementioned challenges in her public education system, and while some parents are making use of the strengths of homeschooling in the Republic, South Africa can still be said to be maintaining a comfortable lead in Africa in the area of education among others.

### **The Down Side of Homeschooling in South Africa**

There is the dearth of scholarships on homeschooling in South Africa and quantitative research in particular has been hampered by the non availability of accurate demographic data (Kunzman & Gaither 2013). Among other reasons, the challenge of accurate data on homeschooling in South Africa is traceable to the fact that many of the parents still see Section 51 of The School Act (Act 84 of 1996) that deals with the registration of home learners as a grey area. As a result of this many of the parents continue to operate underground.

Incidentally, data are the evidence on which policies are built and they help identify needs, set goals and monitor progress. Without good data, the development process is blind; policy makers cannot learn from their mistakes and they cannot be held accountable by the public sector (World Bank 2000). Similarly, Norton (2000) pointed out that "if you can't measure it, you can't manage it" If these submissions are correct, and one opines that there are, then the implications of the non availability of accurate data on homeschooling in South Africa are enormous. Among others it means that accurate planning, accurate policy decisions for homeschooling and about homeschooling can hardly be possible, so is maximum development of homeschooling in South Africa and maximum benefit from the system itself. The onus therefore is on all the stake holders in South Africa to go back to the drawing board without further delay as the foundation task of homeschooling is not yet complete notwithstanding the gains on hand now and the many years of existence both officially and underground. The need for a complete and solid foundation cannot be negotiated.

### **Some Lessons for other African Nations**

As earlier discussed in this study, the public school system in the Republic of South Africa is not totally devoid of challenges. However, the reality of challenges facing public education system is a common feature in countries around the world. For example, in her submission on the reasons why some parents are opting for home schooling in the United States, Leiding (2008) argued that American Education is facing challenges characterized by negative social pressure (such as bullying, crime, drugs, pervasiveness of various shades and other school related problems). Like America and

other non African countries, South Africa has been exploring homeschooling option as one of the ways of going around the challenges in her public education system. Ironically, in terms of progress in education (quality and quantity) the Republic of South Africa is very much ahead of most, if not all the other African countries where contemporary homeschooling is still largely unknown, widely unpracticed and or taken as a "taboo". It is noteworthy also, that the various factors that made some parents in South Africa to opt for homeschooling are also not only prevalent in these other African countries but prevalent in greater and wider dimensions. Attempt is made in the ensuing paragraphs at highlighting some examples:

When it comes to education, Africa is running a twin deficit in access to school and learning in school. Far too many children are out of school, and far too many of those in school are not learning. What is happening in education in Africa merit the description of a regional emergency and the emergency is fuelling poverty and inequality, compromising economic growth and setting Africa on course for a potentially destabilizing crisis of youth unemployment (Watkins2013). Furthermore, despite its vast oil wealth, Watkins pointed out further that Nigeria has 10 million children out of school. That shocking figure puts the country in the invidious position of topping the world rankings for out-of-school children. Many of Africa's children are denied an education because they are working as child laborers. According to the international Labor Organization, sub-Saharan Africa is now the only region in which the proportion of children defined as "economically active" is rising (2010). Alarmingly, around one in three children of primary school age in Africa is involved in hazardous employment, working in dangerous environments for pitifully low wages instead of nourishing their minds at school. When it comes to enrollment and years in school, Africa is a world apart. Only around one third of children make it to secondary school, compared to over half in South Asia. Just 6 per cent make it through to university, and 38 per cent of young adult ages 20 – 25 have less than four years of education (Van Fleet et al, 2012). If current trends continue, there will be 2million more children out of school in Africa in 2015 than there were in 2010. Why the slowdown? In large measure, government across the region have systematically failed to put in place the policies needed to reach the most marginalized children-the rural poor, young girls from disadvantaged homes, slum dwellers, pastoralists and others (UNESCO, 2010)

Learning outcomes are similarly bleak. Millions of children across the African region are suffering from what amounts to a "zero-value-added" education. They are spending several years in school and progressing across grades without acquiring even the most basic learning competencies.(Watkins 2013)

Research at the Brookings Institution's Center for Universal Education (CUE) has helped to provide a window to the learning deficit. Covering 28 countries that are home to over three-quarters of Africa's primary school -age population, CUE reviewed a range of regional learning assessments, national surveys and examination results. The aim was to develop a new policy tool- the African Learning Barometer- to identify the proportion of children falling below an absolute minimum level of competency for literacy and numeracy (Van Fleet et al, 2012). The bar was set at a very low level. Most of those falling below the threshold were unable to read a simple sentence or successfully complete basic addition. The Africa Learning Barometer points unequivocally to an education and learning crisis. Over one-third of the pupils covered in the survey-23 million in totals- fell below the minimum learning threshold. In the cases of Ethiopia, Nigeria and Zambia, the share was over 50 per cent.

If the aim of education systems is to enable children to realize their potential, escape poverty and gain the skills that they and their countries need to build shared prosperity, much of Africa scores an "F-minus". Today there are 127 million children of primary school age in sub-Saharan Africa. The cumulative effect of a large out-of-school population, high dropout rates and low levels of learning is that some 61 million of these children-almost half of the total-will reach their adolescent years without having gained basic literacy and numeracy skills, let alone 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills.

No education system is better than its teachers-and nowhere is this more evident than in Africa. Many countries are facing an epidemic of teacher absenteeism, depriving children of their most valuable learning resource. Part of the problem can be traced to low morale and legitimate grievances over pay and conditions. The bigger problem is that systems for teacher recruitment, training and support are hopelessly out of touch with national learning needs (Watkins 2013). Studies in countries such as Uganda, Nigeria and Mozambique have found that fewer than half of their teachers are able to score in the top band on a test designed for 12 year olds (Africa Progress Panel, 2012)

Training and classroom delivery is geared toward mind-numbing rote learning, rather than problem solving. To make matters worse, few countries in Africa have functioning national learning assessment systems, depriving policymakers of the flow of information needed to guide reform (Watkins 2013).

According to Dume et al, (2010), sexual abuse of students by teachers and others is not uncommon in Ghana.

Studies by the African Child Policy Forum(2010) also shows that alarmingly more than 84% of girls in Ethiopia, 94% in Uganda and 99% in Kenya reported to have experienced some form of physical abuse at school. A large proportion of girls- 42% in Uganda, 40% in Burkina Faso and Nigeria, 30% in Cameroon and Ethiopia, 27% in DRC, 26% in Kenya and 17% in Senegal- reported to have been victims of rape either in school , on the way to school or when coming from school. The studies further reveal that 72% of school children in Ethiopia report to have been slapped while at school, 67% of school girls in Botswana were sexually harassed by teachers. Badason & Rusakanikos (2010) confirm the prevalence of smoking among secondary school students in Harare, Zimbabwe. In the multivariate analysis, smoking was found to be statistically associated with having friend that smoke, getting involved in physical fight, alcohol use, marijuana use and having had sexual intercourse.

In agreement with Leiding (2008), who argued correctly, that teaching children at home is not for everyone, one is not advocating that every parent in Africa should go for homeschooling. Furthermore, the thesis of this study is not that education should be moved from school to the home "en masse", neither is one denying the reality of the fact that the home is not totally perfect and that the existing problem of poverty and illiterate parents across Africa. The argument however is that, in the light of the prevailing challenges confronting public school system across Africa coupled with the aforementioned examples, parents who are in a position to make use of homeschooling should follow the example of South African parents by embracing the option as a personal initiative in salvaging their school children from paying so dearly for the problems that they did not cause. In so doing however, there will be the need to work out a modality of avoiding the downside of the system as implemented and operated in South Africa while capitalizing on its strengths. With the

South African public school system being relieved of the burden of between 100 000 to 300 000 children that are being homeschooled, one is of the opinion that it is worth the effort for various governments in Africa to look into the possibility of working hand in hand with parents in their respective countries on how to make the best use of home education as a way of also relieving their overburdened public education systems.

## Conclusion

The fact that there are between 30 000 and 100 000 home learners in the Republic of South Africa must be a relief either overtly or covertly to the public education system which has been variously described as over-burdened. This measure of relief recommends homeschooling to other African countries where the public school system is not only over-burdened but over-burdened to the extreme. Homeschooling therefore is a possible panacea for "rescuing" at least some children in the African countries where the relevant authorities are still unobservant of the benefits of this form of education or undecided about it. This will go a long way to complement whatever the governments in these nations of Africa might have been doing but which have not yet brought any appreciable result.

Obviously there is a major problem of awareness of the whole idea of homeschooling and its prospects on the part of parents in African countries as shown by the fact that nothing very substantial is happening across the continent concerning homeschooling. It is therefore suggested that organizations such as Pestalozzi Trust and other homeschooling associations in South Africa that are actively pursuing the course of homeschooling should begin to see the whole of Africa as their terrain and not just the Republic of South Africa though they still have "unfinished war" at hand concerning homeschooling in South Africa. It is not just the children in the Republic of South Africa that need a future but the children in the whole of Africa. What Pestalozzi Trust and other homeschooling association have done and are doing to gain and ensure a foothold for homeschooling in South Africa should be extended to the whole of Africa starting with a dynamic awareness campaign.

Associations like "Elimu, Nyumbani"( meaning ' home school' in Kiswahili-the commonest language spoken in East Africa) in Kenya coordinating few families who are homeschoolers and the individuals that are struggling to make meaning out of homeschooling in Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania and Uganda should learn from the gains and challenges of homeschoolers and homeschooling associations in the Republic of South Africa and seek possible assistance.

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