

Getting the Talented Poor to Independent Schools



ISASA

Independent Schools Association of Southern Africa

Quality Values Diversity

Dr Jane Hofmeyr
Executive Director, ISASA

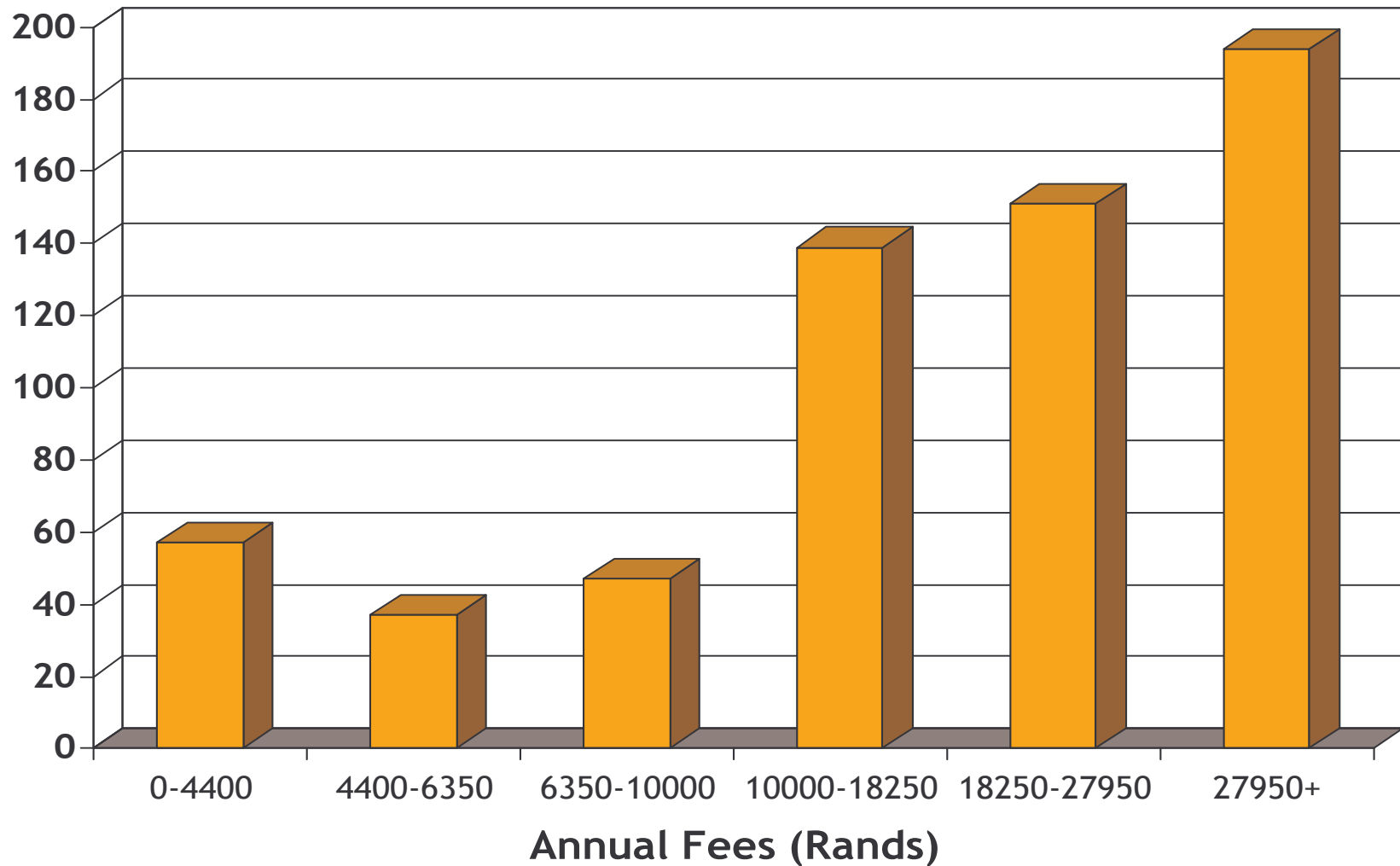
What is ISASA?

- ISASA is an association of 642 independent (private) schools in Southern Africa, serving some 145 000 pupils and employing more than 14 000 teachers
- As an inclusive, diverse association, ISASA welcomes independent schools of every persuasion which meet its quality criteria and conditions for membership

ISASA's Membership

- The ISASA brand is a public guarantee of high standards of educational and ethical practice and a commitment to “a democratic, non-discriminatory society and a diverse, equitable school community”
- Membership ranges from high-fee, to mid-fee, to low-fee schools serving disadvantaged black communities

ISASA Schools by Fee Category



The Challenge

CDE Report (2004):

Too few school-leavers today are equipped with the mathematical skills required to qualify as the artisans, technicians, engineers, computer scientists, accountants and actuaries that South Africa desperately needs.

The “Trickle” of Black African Maths Graduates

Full-time candidates writing Senior Certificate

2006: 528 525

2007: 564 775

Writing HG Maths

2006: 46 345

2007: 46 125

Passing HG Maths

2006: 25 217

2007: 25 415

African
8000?

3000?

C+ or better in
mathematics



Solutions

- In the **long term**, the problem will only be solved by improving the overall capacity of the public school system to develop mathematical skills
- In the **short term**, we need to
 - rapidly increase the number of black school-leavers with university entrance passes in mathematics and English
 - rapidly increase the number of quality teachers in these learning areas

ISASA's Propositions

- If learners with potential in Maths and English
 - *can be identified and provided with an opportunity they might otherwise not have had, and*
 - *placed in learning environments characterised by expertise, commitment and support,*
 - *they will achieve university entrances in Mathematics and English and succeed in higher education*

ISASA's Requirements

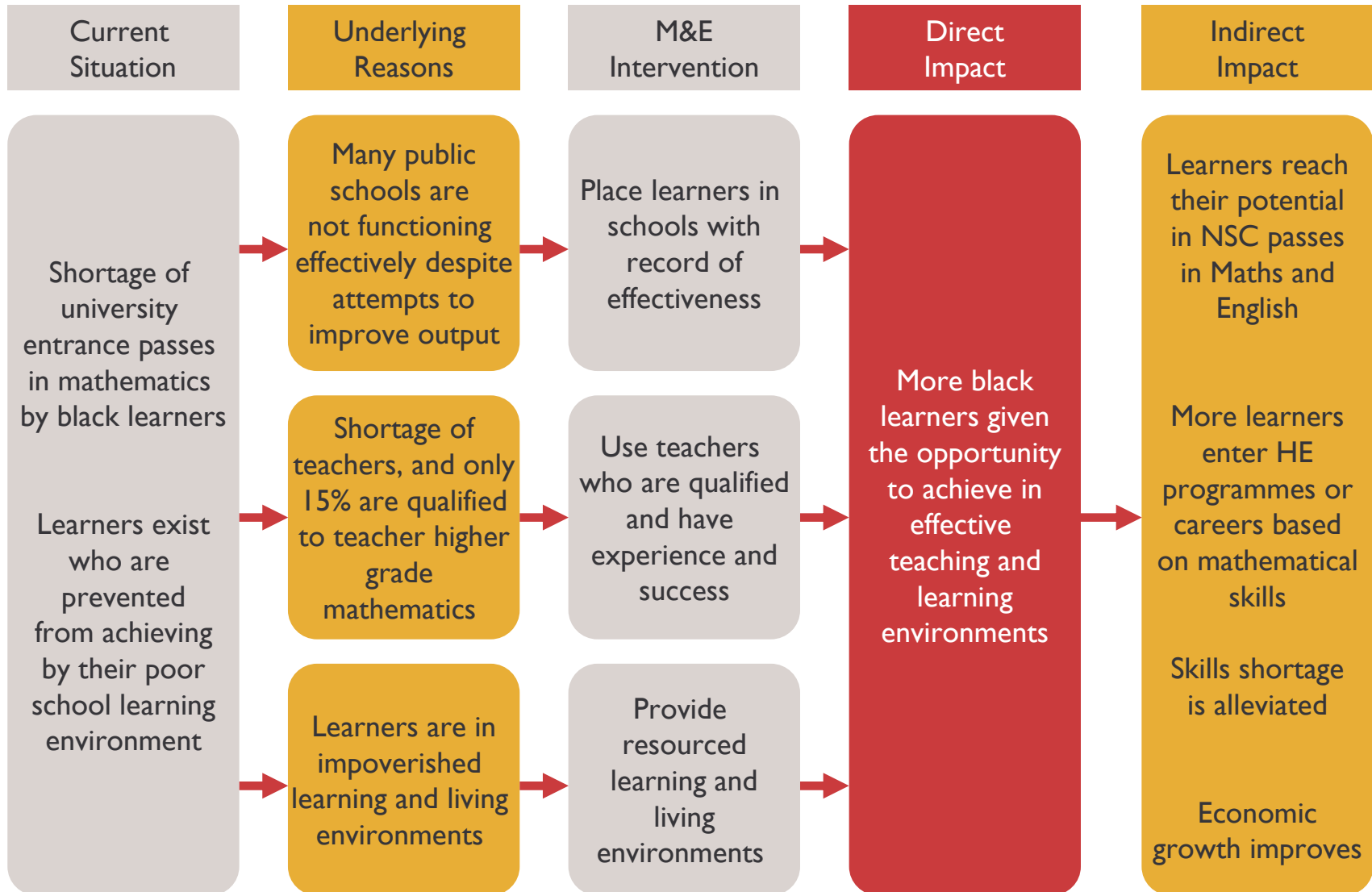
- Learners should be required to study mathematics, and English First Language higher grade in order to acquire CALP (Cognitive and Academic Language Proficiency) which is essential for understanding mathematical concepts
- Host schools must have the resources, commitment to diversity and willingness to offer substantial support

M & E Programme

Aims:

- To identify talented poor in Grade 9 with potential to succeed in M&E
- To obtain donor-funded bursaries
- To place selected learners in ISASA member schools in the FET Phase in order to help them to obtain university entrance passes in maths and English and the competencies to succeed in tertiary education

M&E Programme Model



Why Independent Schools?

- Independent schools have some of the best resources in maths, science and English in the country
- ISASA members are well-functioning, quality assured schools that provide quality teaching and learning
- ISASA schools want to help address the crisis and should be harnessed to the national cause

Programme Implementation

2 types of schools involved:

Hub Schools

- Specialised bridging schools with most expertise in ‘bridging’ disadvantaged learners
- As “hub schools” they are organising centres of expertise to assist host schools
- 3 hub schools: Sekolo sa Borokgo (Johannesburg), LEAP Science and Maths School (Cape Town) and Inanda Seminary (KwaZulu-Natal)

Programme Implementation

Host schools:

- **Low-fee** with disadvantaged black learner enrolment
- **Mid-fee** which are the most integrated
- **High-fee** with excellent resources
- Must apply to be host schools: key criteria are maths and English results, commitment, and space to enrol at least 5 more black learners for grades 10-12
- Currently 16 clustered around hub schools in 3 provinces (Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape)
- Most are mid- to low-fee

Funding of M&E

- Programme is donor-funded:
 - Zenex Foundation, First Rand Foundation, Epoch and Optima, BoE, BHP Billiton and the Lowenstein Trust
- Total budget for learner component of the programme for 2007-2010 is R 30m
- Donors asked to fund the scholarships at rates of R 19 000 to R 26 500 each, depending on school fees and need
- Schools contribution includes
 - mentoring and extra tuition
 - cost of high school fees, uniforms, meals, transport, and – where available – school boarding

Phase 1: Preparatory (6 months)

1. Applications from schools
2. Selection of host schools
3. Advertising for learners
4. Screening of applications (700 in 2007)
5. Testing of short-listed applicants (350 in regional centres in three provinces)
6. Interviews, matching and placement
 - 145 in 2007
 - 148 in 2008

Phase 2: School-based Learning (3 years)

1. Immersion in whole-school FET curriculum
2. Assignment of mentors for academic and pastoral support
3. National mentor workshops (2 per year)
4. Learner camps (2 per year) – academic, life skills, outdoor sporting and social activities
5. Additional tuition

Phase 3: Oversight (Continuous)

1. Academic co-ordination, monitoring and school liaison
2. Tracking of learners (quarterly)
3. Reporting to donors and ISASA (quarterly to annual)
4. Independent external evaluation (5 years)
 - Baseline
 - Formative
 - Summative

Evaluation Question

The big question is

Does this model of intervention of

- *selecting learners with potential in M&E*
- *placing them in independent schools with capacity, and*
- *providing an intensive enriched full-time learning programme*

successfully improve the quality of their performance in the NSC in Maths and English such that they can access and succeed in appropriate higher education, and how cost-effective is it?

Evaluation Process

- Closed tender process to evaluation agencies with proven capacity
- Proposal awarded to QPiE (Paul Hobden & Associates)
- **Components of evaluation:**
 - **Baseline** testing undertaken with project and control groups
 - Programme selection tests (2006)
 - Evaluator's tests (2007)

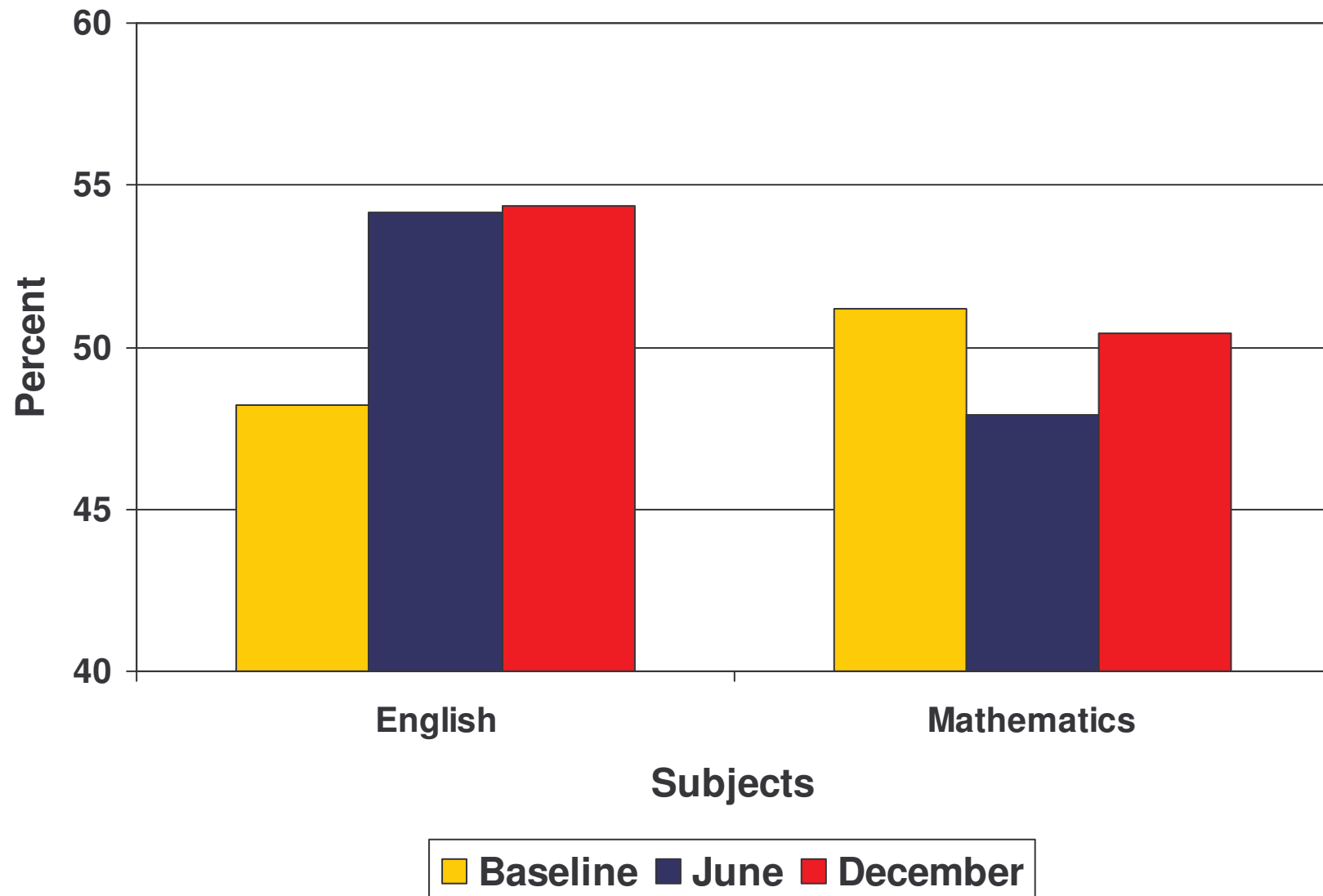
Evaluation Process (cont.)

- **Formative**
 - Close observation of and independent interaction with learners by evaluators in camps
 - Monitoring end-of-year results
- **Summative**
 - Matriculation results
 - Re-testing using baseline test
 - Follow-up in higher education/job

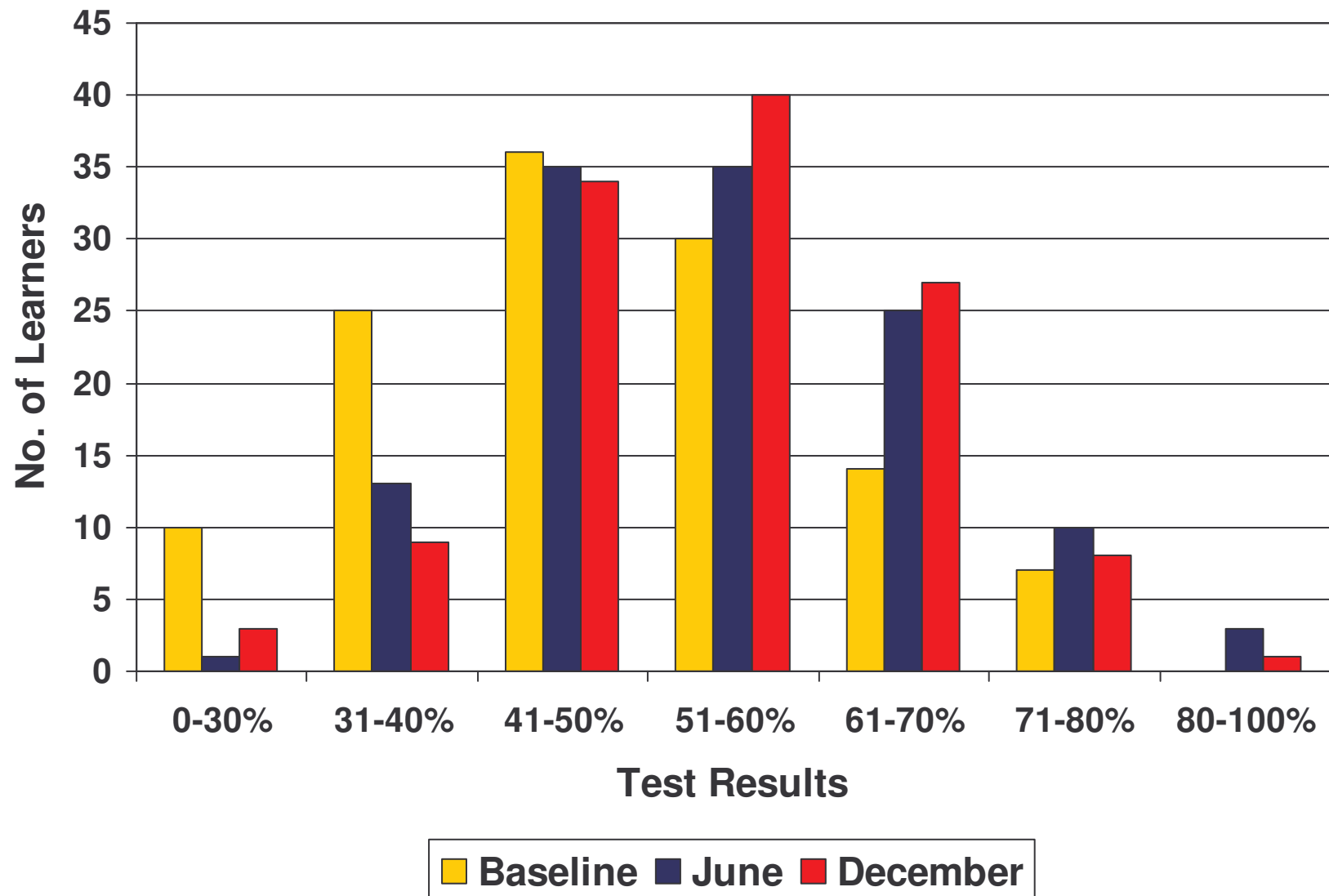
Evidence of Success to Date

- M&E Programme based on successful ISASA pilot project from 2001 to 2004
 - Bursaries for 3 years to 130 learners in 11 schools
 - 76 learners achieved HG passes in maths
- Meta-evaluation of Intervention Projects in Mathematics, Science and Language 1998 – 2006 by *ESA*
- Learner performance by terms and year
 - 2007 Grade 10 intake results

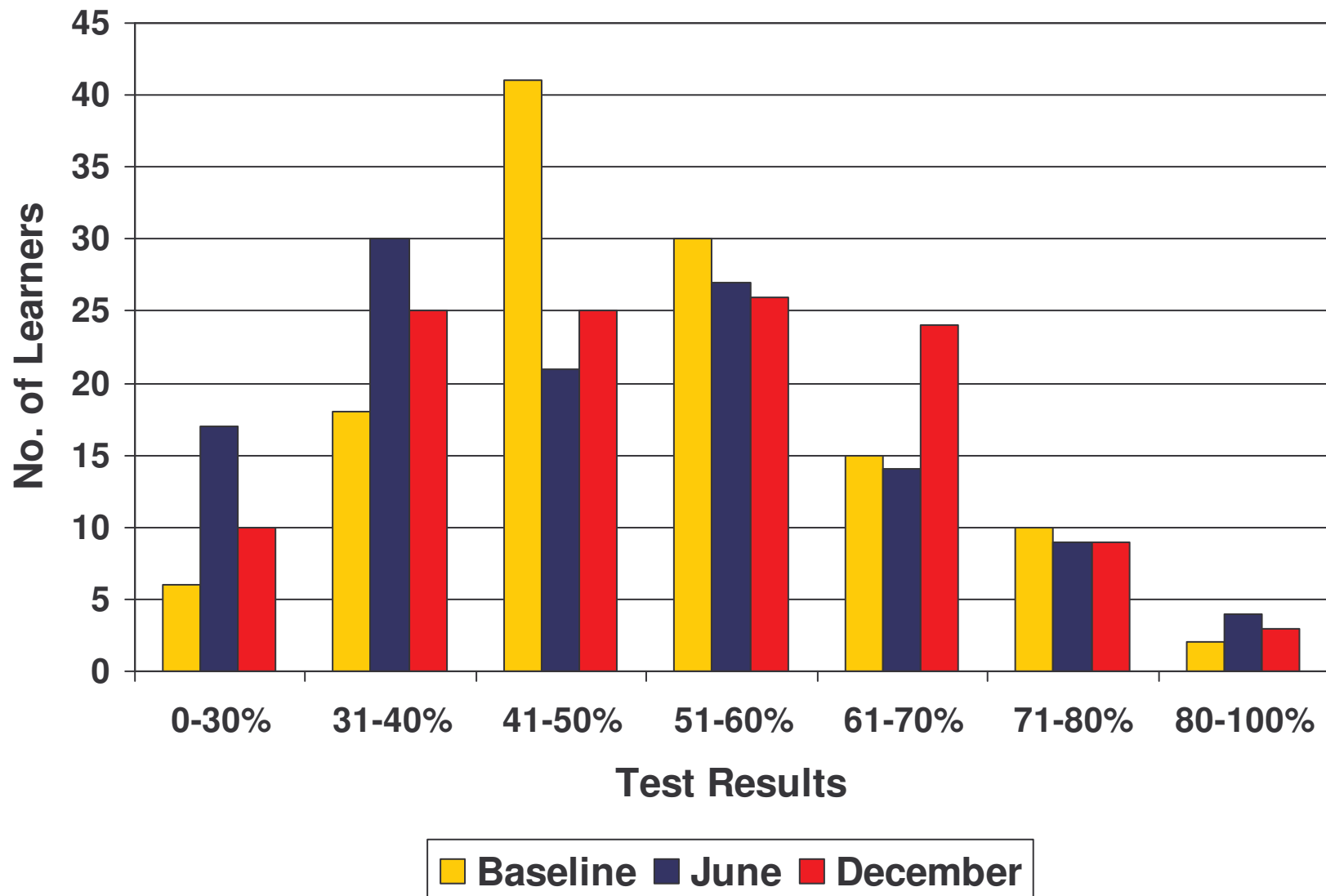
2007 Grade 10 Subject Averages



2007 Grade 10 Results: English



2007 Grade 10 Results: Mathematics

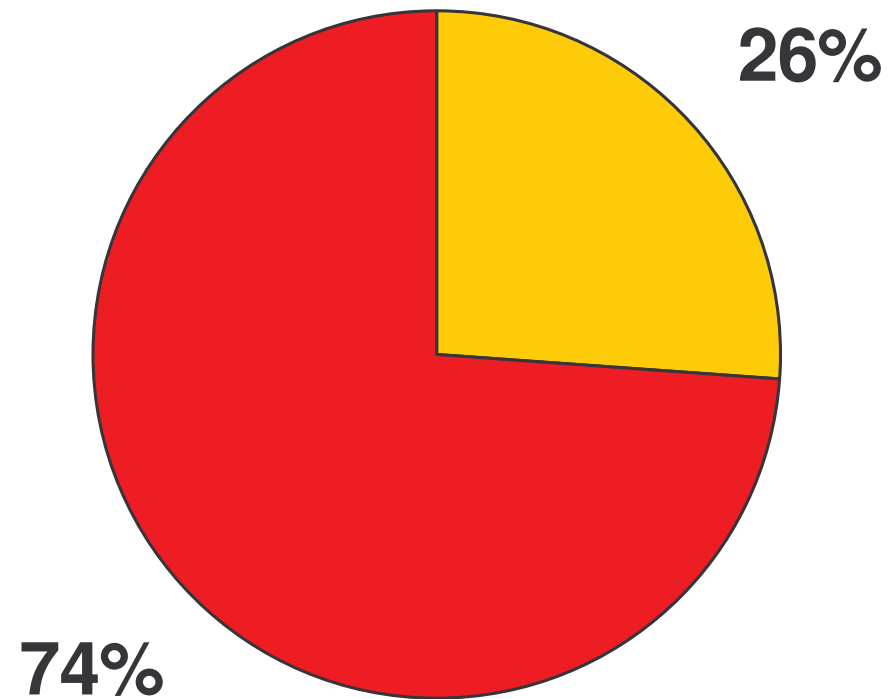


Lessons Learnt

Selection:

- Identification of potential learners by schools at regional level is valuable recruitment strategy
- Combination of diagnostic and achievement tests and interviews is most effective in yielding a group with a high level of ability and potential
- Sufficient lead time is essential
- Careful matching of learner to school is essential
- Females predominate among selected learners

Grade 10 Intake by Gender



■ Male ■ Female

Lessons Learnt (cont.)

Schools:

- Financial stability, infrastructure and resources of the hub schools around which Programme is centred must be secured
- Boarding schools provide a highly supportive environment for disadvantaged learners

Learners:

- The emphasis on English for CALP is essential
- Learner support programme adds great value (e.g. learner camps)
- Dealing with social and emotional challenges and the personal problems of pupils is vital

Lessons Learnt (cont.)

Management:

- Central co-ordination is essential
- Regular communication and interaction with schools on the ground is crucial
- Bringing mentors and learners together nationally and regionally has forged significant programme identity and buy-in
- Professional development of in-school mentors has been a spin-off
- Extra targeted funding for specific learner needs is necessary

Conclusion

Thank you for giving me steps to a brighter future, keys to success. Thank you for recognising me out of a crowd, encouraging me to reach my goals and showing me that through perseverance and hard work I can achieve great things ...

Aphiwe Zintle Mafunda