

South Africa's education system vs the world

By Staff Writer May 14, 2015, Business Tech

South Africa's maths and science education has again been shown to be among the worst in the world – second last – according to the largest ever global school rankings.

A report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), put the country behind only Ghana, while Asian countries excelled, taking the top five places, while the US and the UK, were ranked 28th and 20th, respectively.

The OECD findings are based on the test scores of 15-year-olds from 76 countries.

The maths and science rankings were based on a combination of international assessments, the OECD's PISA test, the TIMMS tests, and TERCE tests conducted in Latin America.

"This is the first time we have a truly global scale of the quality of education," said the OECD.

Top 20 countries

#	Country
1	Singapore
2	Hong Kong
3	South Korea
4	Japan
4	Taiwan
6	Finland
7	Estonia

8	Switzerland
9	Netherlands
10	Canada
11	Poland
12	Vietnam
13	Germany
14	Australia
15	Ireland
16	Belgium
17	New Zealand
18	Slovenia
19	Austria
20	United Kingdom

Bottom 10 schools

#	Country
76	Ghana
75	South Africa

74	Honduras
73	Morocco
72	Oman
71	Peru
70	Botswana
69	Indonesia
68	Qatar
67	Columbia

In April, the [World Economic Forum \(WEF\)](#) released its [Global Information Technology Report 2015](#), which ranked South Africa last in the quality of mathematics and science education.

South Africa also finished close to last – 139 out of 143 countries – when looking at the overall quality of its education system.

Further warning

The report's authors sent out a stern warning to countries at the bottom of the ranking.

“There is no shortcut to improved learning outcomes in a post-2015 world economy where knowledge and skills have become the global currency, the key to better jobs and better lives. “We cannot inherit this currency, and we can only develop it through sustained effort and investment in people.”

Potential

The report noted that the quality of schooling in a country is a powerful indicator of the wealth that countries will produce in the long run.

“Put the other way around, the economic output that is lost because of poor education policies and practices, leaves many countries what amounts to a permanent state of economic recession – and one that can be larger and deeper than the one that resulted

from the financial crisis at the beginning of the millennium, out of which many countries are still struggling to climb,” the OECD report said.

South Africa does show potential, ranking highly in potential GDP increase if all 15-year-olds achieved a basic level of education.

According to the report, the country has the second-most potential globally, and the country’s GDP would increase by 2,624% if education levels were increased over the lifetime of those pupils.

Top 10 potential growth countries

#	Country	Potential Growth
1	Ghana	3,881%
2	South Africa	2,624%
3	Honduras	2,016%
4	Morocco	1,591%
5	Oman	1,427%
6	Botswana	1,303%
7	Macedonia	1,137%
8	Peru	1,076%
9	Qatar	1,029%
10	Saudi Arabia	975%