



*By Jenny Reid, Managing Director of iFacts
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What will become of the uneducated class of 2014?

In a world where higher education is key to employability, what will become of the half-million South African learners who failed to get matric in 2014? Many people realise that tertiary education is vital if South Africa has any hope of remaining one of Africa's leading economies. However, almost 600,000 young individuals are also about to be dealt a heavy blow when they comprehend that tertiary education is a non-negotiable requirement in the global job market.

The falsification of qualifications is already a rampant epidemic in South Africa. Over the past couple of years we've seen far too many "high-profile" individuals, forced to resign from their positions after their quack degrees were uncovered.

The Department of Education proudly announced a seemingly miraculous 75.8% pass rate for 2014. What they didn't say was that according to their statistics department, there were actually 1,252,071 learners entered into the public school system in 2003. Of these only 688,660 actually wrote their matric exams in 2014. That leaves 45% of these learners unaccounted for. In real terms a more accurate matric pass rate sits in the region of about 41.7%. And that's to say nothing of the 5,000 cheats who may now face a three-year ban pending the outcome of the department's investigation. While the Department of Education quite rightly wants to make an example of these learners, one can only wonder what they plan to do while their lives are put on hold for the next few years.

A number of respected university chancellors have come out over the past couple of weeks to say that our education system is an illusion and a fraud. While the quality of our education itself is also questionable and probably an entire debate on its own, a recent statement by our very own President may provide even more reason for individuals to falsify their qualifications.

While addressing delegates at the ANC anniversary celebrations in Cape Town, President Zuma implied that soaring Higher Education and Training costs were a drain on government funding. Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande hit back at a media briefing later in the week to say that the government was in fact woefully underfunding educational institutions, and that our allocations were already far to low – even by African standards.

The odds are already so highly stacked against our learners. Those from impoverished communities and by far the vast majority in this country, for a plethora of reasons, are far less likely to complete their schooling, nevermind meet the criteria to achieve a higher education. So where does that leave us in future? An uneducated workforce and another string of qualification scandals?

According to Prince Mashele, CEO of the Forum for Public Dialogue, the rainbow nation envisioned by Former President Nelson Mandela, will collapse under the weight of a corrupt government. And here I would like to add the word **unqualified**.

Gone are the days when respected lawyers and other higher education graduates called the shots. While the likes of Pallo Jordan, Ellen Tshabalala and Hlaudi Motsoeneng are exposed, we've seen in recent years that the complete absence of any formal schooling is deemed adequate to run an entire country.

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About iFacts:

iFacts removes the people risk so that organisations can go about their business with employees they can trust. iFacts has a range of services that extend into every aspect of proactive and reactive security activity, which a company requires for optimum employee performance, loyalty and integrity. From people risk, ethics and integrity to safety and security and employee wellness, iFacts offers a full range of services to both individuals and employees that will ensure your organisation is achieving optimum performance.

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