

**FIRST INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL LITERACY COMPETITION OF THE ISLP –
THE SOUTHERN AFRICA EXPERIENCE**

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Statistics South Africa under the banner of the ISibalo Capacity Building Programme coordinated the first International Statistical Literacy Competition of the International Statistical Literacy Project (ISLP) for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. The competition is one of the activities of the International Statistical Literacy Project of the International Statistical Association for Education (IASE) focusing on the promotion and improvement of statistics education worldwide at school level and professional training. It thus formed one of the activities of the ISibalo Capacity Building Programme aimed at promoting scholarly participation in mathematics and statistics education by creating an environment conducive for mathematical education.

This paper gives an account of the Southern African schools that participated in the competition. The competition which was in a format of written exams on statistical literacy took place over a period of two years, from 2008 to 2009 and was divided into three phases. The competition attracted more than 9000 learners from seven countries in the Southern African Development Community region. The aim was to test the statistical understanding of learners at the same time promoting and raising awareness of the importance of statistics education at school level.

The competition revealed variances in the level of statistical education in the different countries. Specific reference can be made in the case of South Africa, in which most of the schools that took part in the competition were located in the townships in contrasts to the other six countries. The use of the English language and inadequate training of teachers in presenting statistics education at school level could be cited as some of the barriers to poor performance in many of the South African schools. Also noting that statistical education (that is, data handling and probability) at school level has just been introduced in the Mathematics syllabus in South Africa. One could conclude that more investment in the training of educators is strongly needed in the area of statistical education. The poster highlights a number of strategies that could be employed to promote and raise awareness of the importance of statistics education at school level.