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**SOUTH AFRICA: ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL LESSONS FROM
THE CRUCIBLE****Abstract:**

Don Beck, in a slightly outdated book (1991- three years before the country became a democracy) used a metaphor of a crucible to describe South Africa. At the time that the book was printed, the country was still divided by a legacy of apartheid. Beck states that all the world's collective ills- racism, ideologies, unscrupulous exploitation and oppression- are compressed into this southern tip of Africa. In this crucible, under intense heat, elements are fused and transformed. If South Africa, which is a micro-cosmos of the problems facing the world, could find solutions to its problems, it could also serve as a blueprint for the world to solve global problems. For this reason a South African case study also has global relevance. Although the country is celebrating 23 years of democracy, it will be naïve to think that all the injustices of apartheid could be eradicated in such a short period of time. One of the major obstacles in the struggle to become a global player in the world economy, is its poor schooling system, which does not provide the scientists, engineers and economists that the country needs. In this paper the focus is on the struggling school system in South Africa, which negatively impacts on its economic growth. The paper focuses on issues impacting on education, and its impact on social and political transformation. The paper also makes recommendations on how to better provide in the critical skills to ensure economic growth.

Keywords:

School system in South Africa; economic growth; critical skills; social and political transformation

JEL Classification: I24, I25