

Education, Economy and Society is a compelling and comprehensive antidote to the misconstrued nature of the relationship between education and society. It provides a constructive critique of conventional discourses but also alternative approaches to understand the connections between education and the triple scourge of unemployment, inequality and poverty.

Against a tendency to reduce the skills discourse to narrow economic ends, the contributors passionately argue that education finds its value and purpose in a focus on social justice, transformation and democratic citizenship. The joy of education is to capture human imaginations and unleash their creativity towards a more humane and compassionate society.

Here is a rich resource for educators, policy developers, trade unionists, and trainers to explore possibilities for a new pedagogy in post-school education and training through empirical research on skills, technology and issues of employment on the shop floor, critical analysis of the youth wage subsidy and workers' education. The book will appeal to a wide audience including students and academics in the fields of industrial sociology, economics, adult education, further education and training, and those in youth development.

Education, Economy and Society "makes an impressive critique of conventional wisdom – that the promise of job creation, addressed through the greater supply of skills, can resolve the most intractable of social problems. The book argues persuasively that what is needed is a radical conceptualisation of the relationship between education, training and society in the interests of the marginalised, the poor and the working class." – Assoc Prof Linda Cooper.

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Post-School Education Journal

A review of education and training in South Africa

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- Contradictions and Contestations: The Role of NUMSA in SA skills development policies
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- Creating space for critical dialogue and advocacy in communities
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- Reflections on the Future of Adult Education and Training Centres
- Adult Education: Imagining what might have been
- The Geopolitics of TVET policy and the World Bank
- Community Education Manifesto
- Students for Social Change Convention

Editorial

This is the first issue of the Post-School Education and Training Review. It is published by the Education Policy Consortium (EPC) whose members are:

- The Centre for Education Policy Development [CEPD]
- The Centre for Education Rights and Transformation [CERT] at the University of Johannesburg
- The Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training [CIPSET] at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
- The Nelson Mandela Institute for Rural Education and Development [NMI] at the University of Fort Hare and
- Researching Education and Labour [REAL] at the University of the Witwatersrand

The EPC has received support from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to conduct research into the post-school education and training system. Its specific multi-year research project is titled :

Building a Progressive Network of Critical Research and Public Engagement: towards a Democratic Post Schooling Sector.

This first issue is focused on a number of such issues which *inter alia* reflect on the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training and its implications; on the debate about skills and knowledge unemployment; technical and vocational education and training; community education; adult education and other related topics. The Review also summarises some of the published writing, signals the events it will host and other announcements.

The purpose of this Review is to publicise some of the practical work of the EPC through the process of writing about and reflecting on some of the issues which are emerging from the research and its outputs.

Very importantly, this Review is intended to also provide an opportunity for some of the newer researchers working in the Consortium to publish their writing and reflections. This is an exceedingly important element of the work of the Consortium as it should be obvious to anybody in the field that such opportunities should be provided to young researchers to hone their academic and scholarly capabilities, to provide them with possibility to reflect and write about their work and develop their critical and creative intellectual talents.

The journal is also intended to disseminate the work of the EPC amongst the many and diverse constituencies with which it is engaged - beyond the university based academic community here and abroad. These constituencies include a wide range of organisations, policy makers, members of the media and activists working in locally based community projects. As you will see from this issue some of the writing is about the work of the EPC in working class and rural communities with whom these writings will be shared. We regard this as extremely important both in terms of the process and purposes of research production and its dissemination. It is our hope that in the future we will be able to translate this journal into languages that make it even more accessible to such communities.

We intend to publish this Review at least twice a year.

We invite comments and constructive ideas about this Review which can be sent to ysaint@uj.ac.za

Editors: Enver Motala and Salim Vally

Enver Motala is a researcher at the Nelson Mandela Institute for Rural Education and Development and Adjunct Professor at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Salim Vally is Director of the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation at the Faculty of Education and an Associate Professor at the University of Johannesburg

Layout and design—Mudney Halim CERT



Book Launch Dates

Johannesburg DATE: 22 July 2014 VENUE: Council Chambers University of Johannesburg Kingsway Campus TIME: 18h00 to 20h00 RSVP: (011) 559 1148 ysaint@uj.ac.za	Bloemfontein DATE: 25 July 2014 VENUE: The Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice, DF Malherbe House. University of the Free State (UFS) TIME: 14h00 to 15h30 RSVP: Lien Vanneste VannesteL@ufs.ac.za
Port Elizabeth DATE: 28 July 2014 VENUE: NMMU South Campus Auditorium TIME: 17h30 to 19h30 RSVP:	Cape Town DATE: 31 July 2014 VENUE: AIDC 129 Rochester Road Observatory TIME: 18h00 to 20h00 RSVP: Vuyiseka (021) 447 5770 Vuyiseka@climatejobs.org.za
Durban DATE: 15 August 2014 VENUE: Southern Sun Elangeni Hotel, Durban TIME: 11-00	The launch in Durban will be at the South African Education and Research Association Conference



Privatisation of Education: Selling Out the Right to Quality Public Education
Johannesburg Port Elizabeth

Privatisation: Sell-Out the Right to Quality Public Education.

Date: 24 July 2014
Time: 1.00pm to 3pm
Venue: B302 Kingsway Campus , UJ

Date: 30 July 2014
Time: 4.30pm for 5pm till 7pm
Venue: NMMU South Campus Auditorium

These panel discussions will examine the effects of privatisation on the right to education, education quality, the curriculum, equity and teaching. The panelists will argue that the corporate-driven 'education reform movement' is simply profiteering disguised as philanthropy: an evangelising and moralising endeavour assisted by the failure of many governments to fulfil their mandate to provide quality public education. The panelists will also show that privatisation is an assault on the very essence of public education and education as a human right, increases inequality and stratification in education, and substitutes good public policy with the vagaries of charity or the single-mindedness of profit-making. Many communities around the world have mounted important challenges against the privatisation and marketisation of education. The panelists will provide examples of these struggles as well as the root causes of educational failure and alternatives to privatisation.

Panelists:

Steven J. Klees

The Rhetoric and Reality of Business Distorts Education

Klees is a professor in International Education, College of Education, University of Maryland. His work focuses on the political economy of education and development. He is the author of many articles and co-editor of the recent book, World Bank and Education: Critiques and Alternatives. A number of his blogs can be found at: <http://educationincrisis.net/blog/contributors/itemlist/user/52-steveklees>.

Carol Anne Spreen:

Privatisation Nation - How the United States became the land of “edupreneurs”

Spreen is an associate professor at New York University. Her research addresses issues of education rights, school reform, and educational equity, specifically the impact of poverty and inequality on educational access and outcomes. Her current research centers on political and socio-cultural studies of educational change, particularly the influences of globalisation on teaching and learning.

Salim Vally:

Vally is the director of CERT and an associate professor at the Faculty of Education, UJ.

THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY AND EDUCATION

Selling Out Education

National Qualifications Frameworks and the Neglect of Knowledge

Stephanie Allais

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

Selling Out Education argues that basing education policy on qualifications and learning outcomes—dramatized by the phenomenal expansion of qualifications frameworks—is misguided. Qualifications frameworks are intended to make education more responsive to the needs of economies and societies by improving how qualifications and credentials are used in labour markets. But using learning outcomes as the starting point of education programmes neglects the core purpose of education: giving people access to bodies of knowledge they would not otherwise have. Furthermore, instead of creating demand for skilled workers through industrial and economic policy, qualifications frameworks are premised on the flawed idea that a supply of skilled workers leads to industrial and economic development. And skilled workers are to be supplied not by encouraging governments to focus attention on creating, improving, and supporting education institutions, but by suggesting that governments take a quality-assurance role. As a result, in poor countries where provision is weak to start with, qualifications have been created and institutions established to monitor providers without increasing or improving education provision. The weaknesses of many current policy approaches make clear, Allais argues, that education is inherently a collective good, and that the acquisition of bodies of knowledge provide the basis for its integrity and intelligibility.

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New Book

White Paper on Post School Education and Training:

Some new policy directions

Paul Kgobe & Ivor Baatjes

One of the normative expressions of the work of the new administration of 2009 was to separate the National Department of Education into two new departments the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The DHET came into existence in May 2009 by proclamation and as part of the restructuring of Government in the domain of education. It became operational a year later in April 2010. Its establishment follows an ongoing debate about, *inter alia*, closer integration of education and training in the post schooling sector and the desire to steer and reconfigure this sector towards a new architecture which reorients existing complex organisational arrangements and already-existing practices. As a result, skills development and training became part of the mandate of the DHET – a function which was previously located within the Department of Labour. As part of the architectural re-configuration, the sector education and training authorities (SETAs) were moved from the Department of Labour to DHET in order to foster a more co-operative approach to skills development. It therefore assumed overall responsibility for tertiary education (universities and higher education institutions), technical and vocational training, and adult basic education and training and oversees public and private FET colleges and Adult Learning Centres which provide for the learning and training needs of youth and adults.

This policy change attracted much debate, analyses, commentary and critique related to the underlying purposes of such restructuring, its necessity and how such restructuring would advance a broader transformation agenda. For instance, government officials often linked the restructuring process to a concern about fragmentation, incoherence and the need for greater integration and better coordination necessary for the more efficacious implementation of policy and utilisation of resources. This policy change should also be understood within the dominant global ideology of post school education which places emphasis on the “ceaseless work of training and retraining, skilling and reskilling, enhancement of credentials and preparation for a life of incessant job-seeking ... in which life is to become a continuous economic capitalization of the self” (Rose cited in Rizvi & Lingard 2010:184). Post school education policy, in particular, is increasingly negotiated in relation to market efficiency and ‘individual liberty’ which could ostensibly translate into the best economic outcomes for a nation.

Various subsectors of the post school system have been the subject of much critique, such as: the neoliberal ideology upon which the framework for education policy is based; the inability of the NSDS to reach skills development targets; the failure of skills development in addressing the stubborn and persistent high unemployment; the inability of the education system to provide for the increasing number of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET); the ongoing poverty in

provision and delivery of ABET and the persistence of illiteracy amongst adults; the difficulties within FET Colleges such as poor pass rates; and funding of higher education institutions. It was in light of such debates that significant work in the post school education and training (PSET) sector has been undertaken since 2009. Much of this work culminated in, amongst others, the release of the White Paper on Post School Education and Training in January 2014, which, for the first time, articulated a policy position for the “post school sector”. The White Paper was released following an extensive programme of Task Team deliberations arranged by the Ministry of Higher Education and DHET that focused on various elements of, and within, the subsectors that constitute the PSET sector. The White Paper, which incorporated many recommendations of Task Team investigations, was itself the focus of numerous consultations - perhaps of a nature not seen since the late 1980s.

The White Paper has as its main goal coordinated and integrated conceptualisation of the provision and delivery of PSET towards the improvement of the social, economic and cultural life of citizens. This policy document makes a number of important proposals on how to transform the PSET system and will form the basis of a development plan up to 2030. In this article, we draw attention to some of the key proposals of the White Paper.

First, increasing access to PSET is at the heart of the proposals of the White Paper. This will include a dramatic increase in enrolments in Further Education and Training Colleges (renamed Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges). The White Paper proposes increased enrolments in these colleges to 2.5 million students by 2030, a massive increase from the current enrolment figures of roughly 400,000 in 2012 (DHET 2013). An additional 12 TVET Colleges are planned for by 2030. This policy objective is closely tied to economic goals through the production of individuals with the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to enhance their own and national competitiveness within the global economy.

Second, the White Paper signals the intention to introduce a new type of institution in the post-schooling terrain – the Community Colleges. Current Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) will be converted into Community Colleges which will provide formal and non-formal education and training opportunities for youth and adults. These Community Colleges will also play a role in increasing access to PSET. It is envisaged that they will collectively absorb the millions of youths and adults who have never attended school or dropped out of formal schooling. By 2030, one million adults and youth will be enrolled in adult and community education

Students for Social Change Convention

PLAN OF ACTION

Based on these deliberations, the SSCC suggested a plan of action to be implemented. The immediate resolution was to establish a relationship with relevant institutions like the Department of Higher Education and Training, South African Union of Students and The South African Further Education and Training College Student Association. Submissions to be prepared should be tabled and discussed at every College and University in the province and must form the basis of building a youth agenda. The recommendations made by the SSCC are towards:

1. Working towards free education in South Africa.
2. Student's leadership to have representation on the NSFAS board.
3. NSFAS must improve its systems to better facilitate access to TVET and HEIs.
4. A programme focusing on building moral and ethical behavior amongst the youth.
5. Everyone should have access to internet for communication purposes in order to share ideas with other fellow student leaders in the province. This can be done by lobbying communication companies to help facilitate these virtual meeting.
6. The campaign for fighting drugs which must be intensified.
7. Study groups that must be formed to encourage critical thinking about youth and society.
8. Supporting youth to engage in defining the kind of society they want.
9. Educational dialogues that could be organised in the various institutions.
10. A youth agenda that must be linked to building and deepening democracy in the country.
11. Engaging institutions to support the participation of youth in the SSCC when the next event takes place later in 2014.

Conclusion

It is evident that many students in the Eastern Cape are unhappy and deeply concerned about the status quo, including the education that they receive currently. The SSCC thus:

- draws attention to this and raises awareness about other issues that affect students outside their academic life;
- argues for creating an intellectual environment necessary for developing and nurturing organic intellectuals;
- recognises the importance of PSET and the role that students and youth should play in shaping it in ways that serve their interests;
- wants to build an environment necessary for further exploration, engagement and actions; and
- recognizes the urgency to advance a progressive youth agenda which addresses the interests of youth in building a better society.
- The benefits of having a shared agenda in the Eastern Cape are many. These include:
- Getting the youth and students together to speak on critical issues – thus breaking down institutional barriers;
- Developing a collective voice that speaks to power – informing society about the issues that face the youth;
- Establishing a youth agenda that is implemented, monitored and reviewed;

The ultimate intention is to harness the energy of youth – employed or unemployed, studying or not – to actively, constructively participate in addressing societal problems. Building strong leadership for TVET Colleges and universities is one starting point towards building a progressive youth agenda. The students at TVET and HE institutions have a critical role to play in the life of such institutions. They further need to inform government policy so that their intellectual engagement helps create alternative futures that listen to the voices of youth in the community, regionally and provincially.

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Free Education

Student leaders argued that education is in crisis and that a campaign for free education be connected to this crisis. This crisis in education requires urgent attention because the failure of the education system would cripple the country because it would impede a generation that could take the country forward. It is imperative for the youth to define for itself what is meant by free education. Talks about free education should happen parallel to discussions about the transformation of the economy from its current form which undermines education as a right and portrays it as a privilege. The call for free education must go hand-in-hand with proposed ideas about how the institutions of higher learning can be sustainable. Furthermore, free education, including free PSET must not translate into poor quality education.

Improving teaching and learning at TVET Colleges

TVET lecturers require pedagogical support to enable them to understand their role in the vocational sector, and in the classroom. Students at TVET Colleges are troubled by the frequency of poor teaching practices amongst lecturers and the effects of this. TVET students would like to be confident about the knowledge they acquire in their chosen specialization. The TVET curriculum also requires review and must be distinct from the high school (National Senior Certificate) curriculum to avoid duplication and confusion. Equally important, the curriculum gap between TVET Colleges and the universities must be addressed and managed so that the youth could access university education.

The commercialisation of education

Most of the challenges faced by students in Post Education and Training (PSET) institutions are the direct result of the emergence of a neoliberal agenda in South Africa which undermines the social value of education. It commodifies and commercialises education -- concepts which have been used for the the marketisation of education. Free education goes beyond tuition fee and includes the unshackling of our education from a Eurocentric bondage in the attempt to Africanize our education.

Student Funding

The National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) must allow for a representative elected by Student Representative Councils at the decision making level in order to reconcile the needs of students with the decision that are taken. Failure to understand students and their current socio-economic realities could result in poor policy decisions about funding. More research must be conducted that provides a detailed understanding of the profiles of TVET students and to design appropriate funding mechanisms that meet their needs.

The convention further highlighted negative behavioural patterns amongst some TVET students, who, out of desperation become involved in fraudulent activities in order to access financial support. This behaviour could be discouraged by addressing the rigidity of the current NSFAS system which does not recognize nor understand the socio-economic circumstances of many students (i.e. single parent households, poor income and poverty, etc.).

The socio-economic circumstances of students are also linked to increasing enrolments but low throughputs. There is an increase in the numbers of students enrolling at TVET Colleges but the number of graduates remains low. As pointed out by student leaders themselves, this funding model, although it encourages the entrance of students, does little by way of student support to ensure success. TVET Colleges need to provide a variety of mechanisms that support students who progress into these institutions and to assist them to adjust to such institutions by identifying potential barriers to success.

Youth Unemployment

The increase in unemployment amongst graduates – both TVET and University – is disturbing, including the introduction of a one-year community service. The constant call by employers for more skills improvement coupled with years of experience is a barrier to employment for many. Unemployment, and youth unemployment specifically, is a significant challenge faced by young people. Most students are losing hope in securing employment even before they complete their studies. Many students now refer to being ‘warehoused’ at TVET colleges, through internships or the Extended Public Works Programmes (EPWP). Many of these programmes have become a mechanism “just to keep us from roaming the streets or causing problems.”



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Some new policy directions

An important aspect of the work of the Community Colleges is their direct connection with community needs and issues and with other government programmes such as the Expanded Public Works and the Community Works Programmes. This policy objective has the potential to provide greater people-oriented and socially useful programmes and work responsive to community needs and environmental standards, which in turn, could further promote greater social justice, opportunity and equality.

Third, improving access without corresponding improvements in quality is viewed as unacceptable. The quality of provision and delivery of programmes at both TVET Colleges and PALCs remains of great concern. For instance the throughput rates at these institutions have been very low, and learner success disappointing. To address these problems, a new structure to support quality improvements in colleges is proposed – the South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training (SAIVCERT). Its responsibilities will include providing support to TVET Colleges and Community Colleges, developing innovative and improved curricula for the College sector, upgrading the technical knowledge and pedagogical skills of staff in colleges in collaboration with universities, employers and experts, initiating ongoing research and scrutinising issues related to college management and student support. Whilst the establishment of SAIVCERT is a significant proposal, it remains absolutely crucial that it functions optimally in order to achieve the desired results. It is one thing to establish such bodies, but as experience shows, getting them fully functional is another matter. This policy objective responds to a vital area as it attempts to address the pedagogical practices of educators as well as complex institutional capabilities and curriculum architecture.

Fourth, other important measures to address quality improvements in the College sector include the introduction of regulations for minimum qualifications for both educator groups in technical and vocational education and adult and community education; improving student support services (including academic support) and finding workplace opportunities for students for which ring-fenced funding will be made available. The DHET recently declared policy for qualifications for educators in TVET. A draft policy for adult educators will be released for public comment shortly. Both policies recognise the need to support college lectures who can perform their functions at a high level, providing the necessary infrastructure and equipment to support their pedagogical practices, and collaborating with employers, curriculum developers and the expertise required for designing curricula. This policy objective is imperative in consolidating and strengthening the neglected adult education units in universities responsible for providing academic programmes. Further expansion of such units is required in order to address the vast learning needs of communities.

Fifth, all qualifications and programmes offered by the future College sector will be reviewed with a view to create a more coherent framework. This includes the revision of qualifications and programmes such as the NATED programmes and the NCVs currently offered at TVET Colleges. A similar process needs to be followed with the PALCs including support for community-based research that assists in the identification, development and design of both formal and non-formal programmes to be offered at Community Colleges. The focus on qualifications and programmes may include the introduction of new learning programmes that reflect differentiation between TVET Colleges so that these institutions are more responsive to the socio-economic contexts in which they are located. This policy objective provides for curriculum innovation linked to a localisation agenda concerned with the values of empowerment, self-sufficiency, self-reliance and democracy. It further offers the possibility for newly-established institutions to be more directly relevant to community needs through offering programmes that address such needs.

Sixth, the White Paper emphasises the importance of the university system as part of a coordinated and integrated post school system. The White Paper suggests a stronger interface with TVET and other colleges, SETAs, employers and other stakeholders. The three core functions of teaching, research and community engagement are highlighted, and so is the role of universities in providing high-level skills for the labour market, knowledge production, and provision of opportunities for social mobility to strengthen social justice and democracy. The latter points to the need for more socially-engaged forms of scholarship in higher education to addresses the wide range of socio-economic problems experienced by poor communities. Some of the proposed interventions to strengthen the university sector include developing a concrete plan that addresses the challenges of future staffing of South African universities, supporting the development of lecturers' pedagogical practices, providing financial support for educator development, recruiting retired academics to ease the over-large classes where possible, and improving student support services. Furthermore, a differentiated system that provides for a variety of learning modes, programmes and methods of teaching for diverse student bodies is proposed.

Seventh, articulation between programmes offered by post school system institutions has been identified as one major area of weakness across PSET. For instance, student progression and transfer between TVET Colleges and universities remain limited due to a range of epistemological, institutional, psychological and situational barriers. In order to respond to this problem, partnerships and collaboration between the College system and universities need to be established in order to enhance the transfer rate between these institutions through formulating articulation policy and agreements,

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and in the process, addressing barriers to the transition between the two tiers. The collaboration between the universities and other PSET institutions becomes necessary in opening up access to higher education, especially for marginalised youth and adults.

Eighth, work integrated learning (WIL) has also emerged as a focal point and is strongly supported by the White Paper. WIL is being emphasised as integral to qualification and programme design. The White Paper calls on various role players (SETAS, educational institutions, employers and DHET) to co-operate in tackling the challenges associated with WIL which have been a feature of the system.

In conclusion, a reading of the White Paper on PSET suggests that the South African government is concerned with issues of equality. This was emphasised in earlier drafts of the White Paper which grounded the policy debate within a broader discussion of the triple challenges facing the country – poverty, inequality and unemployment. The commitment to equality is necessary to ensure greater participation in education and to reduce social stratification and thus address this triple challenge. The White Paper's approach suggests that a better-educated population is necessarily good for the economic development of the nation, whilst, education is viewed as an important basic human right and essential for social cohesion and justice (Rizvi & Lingard 2010).

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Motala and Pampallis (2007) have however cautioned that the expectation that educational interventions through policy reform can (on their own) resolve the legacy of apartheid is both misleading and short-sighted. For instance, formal and increased access to PSET does not always translate into effective equity outcomes. This means that the commitment to social justice in education requires both broader reforms in social and economic policy including the redistribution of resources as well as a careful consideration of the historical conditions that produce inequalities. Therefore, while important proposals are made in the White Paper, the extent to which these will transform education and society will depend on a number of factors, including the broader historical and political context in which the White Paper is located, the conditions which continue to reproduce inequality and the external determinants that limit the ability of the nation-state to redress it.

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Students for Social Change Convention

Olwam Mngwazi

The convention was held at the NMMU Missionvale Campus on the 20 March 2014

Advocating for a progressive Youth Agenda in the Eastern Cape

The Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET) at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU) hosted the first Students for Social Change Convention (SSCC) for students at Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges, Universities and youth from community-based organisations. The purpose of this convention was to bring students from different educational institutions together to discuss critical issues that affect the lives of youth, communities and the province. The convention is viewed as one of many annual student conventions to follow and aims at engaging youth and students about the pressing issues facing society. We believe that a progressive youth agenda cannot be created during a few hours of discussion and dialogue but rather through a series of engagements that flag, expand and deepen debate about important issues that can ultimately develop a Youth Agenda for the Eastern Cape. This initial SSCC therefore introduced a number of critical themes which stimulated awareness of the political, social and economic issues that shape contemporary societies locally, provincially and nationally.

Ivor Baatjes, the director of the Centre of Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET), in addressing the SSCC pointed out that youth have agency, intellect and practical experience that can be used and garnered in order to find solutions in response to complex issues such as youth unemployment. The campus director, Dr. Phakama Ntshongwana, in welcoming the province's student leadership echoed Baatjes' belief: "It is so encouraging that the student leadership in the Eastern Cape is taking responsibility and ownership of what social citizenship entails and how it is meant to play out in our day to day lives and lived experiences." The students discussed the following topics which were carefully selected in order to stimulate conversation and bring awareness about socio-economic and political issues that they face outside the classroom and lecture halls.

A list of five broad topics was provided for discussion. Participants were expected to discuss issues related to their theme:

- **Economy, Education and Unemployment** – Youth unemployment, Alternative economic systems, should education be free?.
- **Socio-economic Challenges** – HIV/AIDS, Crime, Rape
- **Non-Racialism and Democracy** – Race, Affirmative Action, Discrimination, etc.
- **Political Science** – Police brutality, Palestinian-Israeli Conflict.
- **Student Governance and Development** – Social media as a tool to organize, youth voice towards building a youth agenda, NSFAS.

One of the key points raised at the convention was the need to organise students in the province, for social change. Social change, it was argued, must be encouraged through new forms of curricula that help students and young people to develop a deeper understanding of the world they live in. Education should not focus on producing workers only, but should also relate to democratic and participatory citizenship. Youth and students need to play an active role in giving shape, form and content to curricula that encourages 'reading the world'.

Below is a short summary of the themes discussed at the convention.

Student Governance and Leadership

On matters of student governance, the student leaders argued that politicians are failing youth and students and that students need to 'speak to power'. Students should therefore strengthen their collective agency, organise themselves and engage as well-informed minds. For instance, the appointment rather than election of student leadership should be considered in order to avoid compromising the democratic voices of students across the province. The convention will be used to build momentum and advance a students' agenda.

Community Education Manifesto

Iindlela zokufundisa nokufunda Ways of teaching and learning

Inkcazelo yethu eyengcingane yokufunda nokufundisa, imithetho-siseko esizakuyisebenzisa ngayo ekwakheni lenkqubo, indawo zokufunda okanye ikharithyulam, nendlela esizakufunda sifundise sonke.

Our pedagogy (theory and practice of learning and teaching), the principles we will use to structure programmes, learning areas or curriculums; how we will teach and learn together.

Uxanduva lokufunda kufuneka luvele kumaqela omabini- ootitshala bayakwazi ukufunda kubafundi, nabafundi bayakwazi ukufunda kootitshala (nabafundi bayakwazi ukufunda kwabanye abafundi).

Responsibility/possibility for learning must be on both parties – educators can learn from learners and learners can learn from educators [and learners can learn from learners]

- Inkqubo yemfundo kufuneka igqalisele kwamava abafundi umzekelo, indlela zokuphila imihla-ngemihla.
- The education programmes should be focused on learner experiences e.g. daily living
- Ootitshala nabafundi kufuneka baziphathe kwiindawo zabo zokufunda kwaye bakhethe izinto abafunda ukuzifunda.
- Educators and learners should have autonomy within their learning spaces to choose what to learn.
- Imfundo engajongenanga nobukhuni, ikharithyulam evakalelwa ngabaphathi ibanike amalungelo okuthatha-izigqibo zabanye abantu.
- Education that is not based on a rigid, top-down curriculum.
- Imfundo ejongene nokuthatha inxaxheba, ikharithyulam ebhetyebhetye.
- Education that is based on a participatory, flexible curriculum.
- Ukwakha ikharithyulam ngolwazi oluvela kwabasembo.
- Develop a curriculum from indigenous knowledge
- Kufuneka kubekho utshintsho lolwimi, ukuze abantu bakwazi ukukhetha ulwimi abafunda ufunda ngalo, kubekwe isigxininisiso kwiilwimi zoluntu.
- There should be a code-switching of languages, to enable people to choose the language they learn/contribute in with an emphasis on our mother tongues.
- Kufuneka sisebenzise ulwimi oluvakalayo noluncedayo; ngokuthetha nokubhala ukuze siqonde. Ukufunda uqonda izinto ezithethwa ngabantu nelizwe.
- We need to use language in a way that is understandable and useful; by speaking/writing for understanding. Learning to understand what other people and what the world is saying.
- Kufuneka kubekho indlela ngendlela esinokuphangulula ngazo amabali ethu, ingcinga kunye nemiphumela yethu ukuze sibone ezo sinothi sifunde ngazo.
- There must be a whole range of different ways to explore our stories, ideas and issues and to learn things which are useful to us.

Ukuziphatha: siziphatha njani thina? Self-governance: how will we organise ourselves?

Ezinye iingcinga zokuba sifuna ukuzilungiselela njani, ukusebenzisana kwethu nokusebenza ngendlela engafaniyo neyamashishini aqhelekileyo.

Some ideas about how we would like to organise ourselves, co-operate with one another and work in a way which is different from the usual hierarchical ways of working.

- Iminqweno nenjongo zeCEP kufuneka zivunye kwaye zicace kumntu wonke. Kufuneka ikakhulu zimiswe ngumntu wonke.
- The vision and mission of the Community Education Programme must be agreed by and clear to everyone, and must increasingly be determined by all members.
- Sifuna ukulungisa wonke umba siliqela- ngokwentando yesininzi (kungabikho zithunywa zangaphandle)
- We want to solve every issue that we might have as whole group – direct democracy (no delegations)
- Lonke uxanduva malohlulwe phakathi kwamalungumfundisi ntsapho-umfundi kunye nomfundisongumfundisi ntsapho.
- All responsibility must be shared between the members - educator-learners and learner-educators.
- iOfisi yeCEP mayihlale kwiimvumelelwano ukuze sihphephe ukumisa ixesha lenkqubo.
- CEP Office should stick to agreements to prevent postponements and delays to the programme.
- Sidibana kanye enyangu ngentlangano yabaphathi bolawulo.
- We will meet once per month for a self-governance (management) meeting.
- Mazibeselubala zonke izinto.
- There should be transparency in everything.
- Wonke umntu uyavuma ngokuzimisela abeyinxalenye yeCEP, abekho kwintlangano alibambe nexesha.
- Everyone agrees to being committed in their involvement with CEP, attending and being punctual.
- Sizakusebenza ngamandla ukuze sinciphe ukulungelanelanisa kwemfundo nezenzo.
- We will all work hard to help the co-ordination of the learning and action.
- Siyayazi ukuba uqhagamshelwano, kwiilwimi zonke kubalulekile, kunjalo nje sizimisele ukusebenzisana ukuze siqhagamshelane ngokulungileyo.
- We know that communication, including across language, is important and we commit to working hard to communicate well.

On the White Paper

Enver Motala

Post-school education and socially useful employment

The role of the post-school education and training system is the subject of considerable public interest especially now that a White Paper on Post-School Education and Training has been published. In this article we examine the important issue of how to understand the Minister's injunction regarding the imperative to develop the post-school system to support especially the few million of our young citizens who are not in employment, education or training.

Writing in the Mail and Guardian of the 4th October 2013, [Knee-jerk liberal opposition tries to limit the powers of the state] Minister Nzimande argues that one of 'the main imperatives of the post-school system, including the universities' is 'to focus our energies and resources on expanding the post-school system to cater for the 3.4 million 15-to 24 year-olds who are not in employment, education or training'.

This is a disarmingly laudable objective and one that, if it is achievable, will signal great social progress - especially if the proposed educational access widens the scope of participation in education for the youth of this country. I do not deal with the implications of the Ministers 'imperatives' for planning, budgeting and quality assurance. I assume that the Minister takes these issues for granted and of course takes it as given that education institutions including universities will play their part in reaching these goals. We can assume therefore that the Minister is referring to qualitative access and not just nominal access where the quality of the outcomes of learning are unedifying at best and alarming at worst.

The main issue for us should be about how we understand and interpret the injunction to focus of 'our energies and resources on expanding the post-school system to cater for the 3.4 million 15-to 24 year-olds who are not in employment, education or training'. We need to understand fully the import of the Minister's injunction. One interpretation (a 'kneejerk' one) is to invariably link the outcomes of education - proclaimed or pursued, to the question of employment. This interpretation constitutes, in my view, the great undeclared problem which arises both from the assumptions that are derived from a particular reading of education and its relationship to the labour market for employment and economic development purposes on the one hand, and the failure, on the other, to examine realistically whether these objectives are realistic or meaningful in a society in which particular relations of power are both dominant and hegemonic - i.e. under a global system of social relations in which the regime of corporate globalisation is virtually [though not absolutely] complete, unless challenged.

It requires that we engage with issues of education and training simultaneously with a vision of a new society and new social relations unbounded by the relations of capitalist labour markets alone, since these labour markets, as we know are notoriously unhelpful for so many who are unemployed for so many years. This is the nub of the issue since the conventional approaches to higher participation rates remain bound within a conception of such participation as functional to employment, education and training and as we have argued elsewhere this is bound by unsupported assumptions such as that:

1. employment demand is never likely to be the *raison d'être* for higher rates of labour market participation no matter how often and how loftily it is proclaimed. The phenomenon of demand in global corporate capitalist regimes simply is pointing in another direction - away from higher levels of labour demand and the structural changes in the economy towards the service sector and high technology dependence is an additional (not mitigating) factor in this regard. Even in periods of economic growth as South Africa (and the Indian economy in the periods of its highest growth levels) has shown, economic growth is not a guarantor of higher levels of demand for jobs. Jobless growth is now an abiding characteristic of 'development' because of the many underlying factors which combine to reduce labour demand in the present structural trajectory of capitalist production and distributing systems.
2. The only basis for making claims on the demand for higher participation in education lie elsewhere - outside the reach of the potential of conventional economic activity under capitalism. In other words the possibility of increased demand lies not in the aspiration to meet reducing demand for labour - as wage labour - or as the much touted 'self-employed' entrepreneur, but in the growing social justice based demand for a new scholarship, new learning, new science and new teaching *for a new society* - one in which the demand for work is not based largely and somewhat capriciously on the goodwill and power of global corporations but on the criteria of *just and socially useful work in a just society*.

The elements of that new society and its forms of work - socially defined useful work- provide an alternative and the only real promise for a new approach to stimulating educational systems realistically - that is, on the basis of a reconstitution of the forms of work removed from the tyranny of conventional labour markets and their structural limits on demand. Such an approach to work signals the requirements of work for a new society, a different citizenry, a different concept of citizenship, based on an understanding of accountability and public engagement which is far removed from the present levels of consciousness about work and learning in the leading places of learning today.

There is a vast and growing catalogue of occupations, forms of work, livelihood and social engagements which speak to these alternatives, some having long histories and others being constructed on the ashes of the failed systems of the present. Many of these are about new forms of collective work and old and new forms of cooperating through work and social life. Often these are premised on the work of women as the doubly oppressed and exploited and most marginal constituents of society. Many represent responses to desperation - out of capitalist neglect and greed and many are based on returning 'to the soil'.

Many are self-generated autonomous initiatives and local level interventions having very little support from outside. And some indeed have been able to find ways to utilise the resources - especially of the local state, productively, without the unresponsiveness of state bureaucracies but with and dependent on its sustained support but all of these initiatives have required a different level of imagination- based on the single conviction that the present modes of producing livelihoods and work that meets social demands and the demands of families and small communities, are patently not sustainable. In reality any conception of work or livelihoods has, in the first place, to be based on a different conception of the present relations of social, political and economic power and must simultaneously be based on a new view of cultural formation in society, recognising much more fundamentally than is contemplated even in the present Constitution, the value of local social reorganisation and a critical view of the limits of capitalism as a social system. It requires an alternative framework of thought and action about work that is socially useful and meaningful and which moreover meets directly with the demands of life especially for those who will remain permanently marginalised by the choices made by powerful and unrepresentative global and local interests.

Note: This article is taken largely from an article that was published in the Mail and Guardian Newspaper on the 11 October 2013

Intlonipho nendlela esisebenzana ngayo. Respect and our ways of working together.

Kancinci nje ngendlela esisebenzisana ngayo siliqela nange mithetho-siseko esiyifakayo kwiindawo esifundela kuzo.

A bit about our way of working as a group and the principles within our learning spaces.

- Lungiselela ukusebenza phez'kwemeko zokungavisani.
- Be prepared to work beyond/through misunderstandings.
- Sifuna ukuxhasana omnye nomnye xa umsebenzi unzima, ukhathazekile nasemphefumleni.
- We want to support one another when the work is hard, emotional or difficult.
- Kufuneka sibebuthathaka, kuluvo nemida yabanye.
- Need to be sensitive to others feelings and personal boundaries.
- Akukhomntu kufuneka enyanzelwe ekwenzeni into - abantu mabathathe inxaxheba ngokukhululekileyo.
- No one must be forced to do anything. People will participate freely.
- Sizaku zihlonipha thina, nabanye abantu kunye nexesha labanye abantu
- We will respect ourselves, one another and other people's time.
- Sizakunyaniseka kwabanye siziphathe ngendlela efanelekileyo.
- We will be honest with one another and behave in way which is appropriate.
- Sizakuba nobuntu komnye nomnye
- We will be kind to one another.
- Sizakuzihlonipha iimfihlelo zomntu wonke.
- We will not invade other people's privacy.

Kwindawo esifundela kuzo:

In the learning spaces:

- Xa sifunda kunye, sizama ukubonisa intlonipho elinganayo kumntu wonke.
- When we learn together it will be in a way which shows equal respect to one another.
- Ukuqwenela uzifundisa makungabiyiyo intlekisa. Wonke umtu unegunya lokufunda izinto ezintsha enze nempazamo'.
- Wanting to educate yourself should not be ridiculed - all people should be able to try new things and make 'mistakes'.
- Sizakuhlonipha abanye xa bephakamisa uluvo lwabo ngokungathethi bethetha. (okanye sisebenzise umnxeba).
- We will respect people when they are raising a point by not talking over them or having a cell-phone conversation.
- Sizakuhlonipha amalungelo abantu ngokuba neenkolo kwaye nemibono eyahlukileyo; sisebenzele ukuqonda imibono namava wabanye abantu.
- We will respect people's right to hold views/beliefs different from our own; and work to understand other perspective and experiences.
- Sifuna ubakho (siqiniseke), simamele ngemizimba nengqondo kwiintlangano zethu.
- We will aim to be 'present' (focused), listening physically and mentally during sessions.
- Kufuneka sidale ubuhlobo obulungileyo nobukhathalayo phakathi kwethu.
- We must create a healthy and caring relationship between all participants.
- Kufuneka umda owahlula ulamano lukatishala nomfundi.
- There should be appropriate boundaries between educator and learner's relationship.

Community Education Manifesto

Imfundo yabadala ekuhlaleni: Imfundo yantoni?

Adult Education in the Community: Education for What?

Ezinye zezizathu sisebenzisana nabantu abadala kwimfundo yasekuhlaleni kunye nezinto esinqwenela ukuzenza.

Some reasons why we are working with adult and community education and what we hope it will do.

Intsingiselo nenkolo ezichaphazela imfundo mazicace zibenomvuzo kubantu bonke- mazibe nobuntu.

The values and beliefs which underpin education must be made clear and must be for the benefit of people – it must be humanising.

Imfundo mayakhe iphuhlise ukuzazi komntu ukuze izenzo nenkolo zabantu zaziwe kwaye, ziphakamise imibuzo.

Education must be able to build/promote self-awareness so that the social basis for our actions and beliefs can be known and questioned.

Imfundo yasekuhlaleni kufuneka ikufundise ngoxanduva lwakho ekuhlaleni kwaye incedise ngokuba yinxalenye kakho ekuhlaleni.

Community education must teach you to be responsible in your community and help to involve you in community.

Imfundo mayiphuhlise intsebenziswano- isebenzela umvuzo womntu wonke.

Education must promote working together – working for mutual benefit

Imfundo mayibe ngeyasekuhlaleni, yenziwe ngabantu basekuhlaleni, kwaye sisebenze kunye namanye amaqela asebenza ngoluhlobo ukuze ihlale injalo.

Education should be for the community, by the community. We will work with other groups working in this way.

Imfundo mayenze utshintsho lokulingana nobulungisa. Education should enable social change for equality and justice.

Ukusebenza/ubuchule - Work/skills

Imfundo ejongene nendidi-ngendidi zobuchule ezinokusetyenziswa ngabafundi nasekuhlaleni, ezibangela abantu bakwazi ukufunda ilizwe labo.

Education that is based on a broad range of skills that are useful to learners and society, that help people to 'read the world'.

Kufuneka kubekho isikhokhelo kwezemfundo nenkqubela phambili yobomi kubafundi abadala nolutsha.

There must be career guidance available for adult learners and youth.

Imfundo yoluntu lonke!

Education for All!

lingcinga zethu zokuba ngubani ofuneka afikelele nokuba yintoni na esifuna ukuyizuzisa.

Our ideas on who should have access and what we are trying to achieve.

- Imfundo kufuneka ifikeleleke kumntu wonke, ifikeleleke kwizenzo nakwiinkqubo, ingabi namda.
- Everyone should have access to education- in practice not just in policy – there should be no barriers.
- Abantu funeka bakwazi ukufikelela kulwazi olugqibeleleyo olushicilelweyo nakolungashicilelwanga lwezemfundo.
- People should have full access to information about both formal and non-formal learning opportunities.
- Imfundo yabadala engashicilelwanga kunye neshicilelweyo kufuneka ihlawulelwe ngokugqibeleleyo
- Adult basic and non-formal education as well as formal education must be fully financed.
- Imfundo yabadala engaphaya kwesiseko semfundo (ibanga lesine likaABET) mayifikeleleke kwaye ibe mahala.
- Adult education beyond basic education (ABET level 4) should be available and free.

Luluvo lukabani olubalulekileyo ?

Whose knowledge counts?

Uluvo lwethu ngokuba ngubani onolwazi kwaye ulwazi lunonceda kwintoni na.

Our ideas about who has knowledge and what knowledge is useful for.

- Ulwazi lwasembo: ulwazi oluvela ekuhlaleni, oluvela edolophini nasemaphandleni lubalulekile kwaye luhloniphekile.
- Indigenous knowledge: The knowledge from the community, from urban and rural areas is important and respected.
- Sisebenza ngomoya wemvisiswano nentlonipho kwindawo ezahlukeneyo ezinje ngamasiko nendlela ulwazi olungalo.
- We work to create mutual understanding and respect across and between different cultures/ knowledge systems.
- Kufuneka imibono emanyanayo kulwazi. Ukusebenzisa nokuhlonipha ulwazi oluvela kwabadala, abantwana, abafundi, abafundisi-ntsapho, izithwala-ndwe, abazali nemibutho yasekuhlaleni.
- There should be an integrated approach to knowledge. Using and respecting knowledge from adults, children, learners, educators, academics, parents and community organisations.
- Ulwazi oluphezulu kufuneka lufikeleleke/lubekhona kumntu wonke ukuze lisetyenziswe kakuhle ekuhlaleni kwethu sonke- siyayixhasa imfundo ehlanganisa abantu.
- Academic knowledge should be available/ accessible for everyone to use and it should be used for social good – we support socially engaged scholarship!
- Abaphandi: sonke singabaphandi-siyakwazi ukuphanda size nolwazi ngezinto ezibalulekileyo kuthi.
- Researchers: we are all researchers – we can all investigate and create knowledge about things that are important to us.

VUT panel discussion on Post-schooling

Bernadette Johnson

Critical Reflections

Panelists at the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) discussion held on the 8th April 2014 included:

John Pampallis – special advisor to the Minister of Higher Education,

Professor Irene Moutlana – Vice Chancellor of the Vaal University of Technology (VUT),

Stephanie Allais - Wits Centre for Researching Education and Labour.

Ivor Baatjes - Director of the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU).

The question guiding the discussion was:

“In light of the White Paper on Post school Education and Training, who should drive change in education institutions?”

The various perspectives from which the question was addressed revealed different emphasises on the kinds of challenges experienced within the education system and different conceptions of the role and responsibility education has in society, especially impoverished societies such as ours.

The challenge of quality, readiness levels, progression, access and success of students from primary school throughout the post schooling environment continues to persist and tends to perpetuate and reproduce structural relations of inequality between learners and within the system. Should the progress of students within the context of insufficient support and poor quality at school level not require more attention at higher education institutions? However these institutions do not have sufficient resources and available time to address the backlogs accumulated by individual learners as they are allowed to progress in the system. Despite this, articulation and progression is required and responsibility for this is pegged at each stage in the education system whether within the TVET sector or within universities. But even so how will our efforts to respond to a broken system while we simultaneously mend the system develop into an improved education system?

The Big Question is: What is the role of education? Or what is the purpose of education? These kinds of questions tend to be focused on the kind of society the post schooling education system is aiming to support. It raises the questions of socio-economic development of the country and the development of the developmental state

more specifically “class interests”. Should education be in the interest of working class communities or for the benefit of capital? Such a class perspective requires a deeper consideration of the notion of the “developmental state” and in whose interest such a state would develop South African society. In considering the role of education, the way in which education engages with poverty and unemployment has to be considered within the context of social and economic inequality in South Africa.

Can post schooling in fact solve the problem of poverty and unemployment? The temptation in our context is always to look to education to solve all societal ills especially in the context in which inadequate and inappropriate skills are considered to be the main reason for slow economic growth and development. We know for some time now that credential inflation has been taking place globally as we are required to achieve higher and higher qualifications but we also know that this does not necessarily result in employment or stable employment. Education has been valued for its human resource development capacity to assist in lifting many out of poverty especially during periods of economic growth. From a class perspective, if a reserve army of labour is required to support the capitalist economy, it may be argued that poverty and unemployment in a class based system can never be resolved or is this thesis false? Should we despite this not strive towards trying to address poverty and unemployment even if the possibility exists that it may not be resolved in full under the current societal conditions?

Uncritically we speak about developing “Entrepreneurs” through the education system so that individuals can create new jobs and stop looking for jobs. Do we know enough about what this entails? In the context of the disappointing experience of social and economic development post-apartheid for many South Africans, individuals have found ways of surviving through providing services within the communities such as aftercare and homework support to school going learners. Communities have relied on themselves and have pooled their internal resources to support their survival in the context of poor state support for their development. This raises the importance of education research further delving into and understanding the nature, form and capacity of such alternative forms of community support and development as alternative forms of economic stimulus and activity. Through understanding this might we not better understand how communities may inform the kind of post schooling experience, environment and knowledge they require to support their efforts for self-employment.

Should there be a tight relationship between the economy and education? We know that many graduates in fact do not even work in the areas in which they have gained their qualifications. It raises the unpredictable nature of the economy and the labour market.

The economy we refer to is of course a capitalist economy which in the context of continued post-1970s economic crisis essentially means the subsidisation of private capital by public funds. The rise of academic capitalism in which public institutions are drawn on to develop a closer skills match for private benefit which includes commercialisation of knowledge and narrow skills development of graduates. Is the notion of the economy and the labour market not too fickle to allow for such a close association? Will it not destabilise the education system or enslave the education system to the needs of the market? On the other hand however, we are reminded that without such an association graduates will not have relevant skills and so in turn the economy will not grow. Should we therefore find a balance, a balance between the needs of the market and the needs of the community given the current reality? Or should we insist that government and the state support a system that strengthens community development that directly supports alternative forms of economic development in these spaces. Do we need to create more

opportunities to build community structures and community facilitators that can transcend the current rigid boundaries within the education system especially at post school level?

Should universities not put themselves at the service of society, embrace and be embraced by their communities and in so doing strengthen education as a public good and service? What responsibility, if at all, should we have towards capital in the context of a declining economy?

Returning to the main questions: Who should drive post schooling?, prompts diverse responses: Is it the community, is it government, is it business, and is it higher education institutions? There are many role players. They may each have a share in such a responsibility but in a fractured society what and who brings these efforts together? Even though government has put in place policy initiatives such as the White Paper on Post schooling which all agree is a step forward in the development of the system more is required. Will a coordinated effort ensure that all South Africans experience this system? or Might it be through communities, dialogues, self-clarification, self-organisation and confident expressions through community organs of power that in fact the real driving force lies within those who continue to experience inequality?

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Vaal University of Technology

Community Education Manifesto

CIPSET Collective

The development of this manifesto

This document was written up following several workshops within our Community Education Programme on our experiences of adult education and non-formal learning spaces and on our desires to change these into democratic spaces that build our shared humanity and lead to social change. Additions in the made in finalising the document are captured in square brackets.

The manifesto forms the first draft of our ideas about the sort of adult education we are building and the ways in which we are committing to work with one another. We will use this document as a foundational reference point in our collective reflection on our work and revisit it on annually to make changes based on our experience. It is and should be a living document. It is a daily reminder of our audacity and strength when we work and learn together to create a different world.

What is Community Education?

Community Education emerges out of people's experiences and social interests generated within communities. Community Education enables democratic agendas to emerge at local levels to challenge and eradicate oppression linked to exploitation, marginalisation, cultural dominance, powerlessness and violence. Community Education exists neither to help people enter into the workplace, nor to place profit as the main objective. Instead it focuses on education that benefits the whole of society, bringing about social transformation.

Strategic Purpose of the Community Education Programme

1. To establish a model for a progressive Community Education College
2. To develop educational programmes which play a role in youth and adults organising themselves to work and learn collectively, to provide mutual support and build unity, to claim their rights, and to develop their community and transform society

To do this we will

- offer non-formal and formal community education as a progressive alternative to education informed by the needs of the labour market
- develop a theory and practice of education that is participatory and humanising
- work in a way that is flexible and tolerant of a different views, but at the same time is open and clear about our own beliefs about the relationship between education, society and work
- develop and support new and existing forms of community organisation that bring hope

Objectives of the Community Education Programme

- To mobilise adult educators, learners and community members to advocate for progressive adult and community education and alternative livelihoods
- To offer non-formal community education programmes
- To develop infrastructure and an administrative and governance system that supports learning
- To develop progressive adult and community educators
- To develop participatory curricula and educational materials
- To establish progressive community projects and co-operatives
- To develop mutually supportive relationships around shared objectives with community organisations and social movements
- To conduct research

The Geopolitics of TVET policy and the World Bank

Veerle Dieltiens and Siphelo Ngcwangu

From a long-standing opposition to TVET, the World Bank's most recent education policy *Learning for All, World Bank Education Strategy 2020 (WBES)* has seen a shift to its promotion and then a seeming retraction – all within the space of two years. This paper attempts to understand the logic underpinning this pendulum change in the approach of the World Bank. The specific research question that we have examined is: What informs/lies behind the World Bank's re-interest in TVET? Sub-questions include, when and why did the Bank change its position on TVET, and what is the nature of TVET policies which it is advancing? The Bank is steadfast in its commitment to principles of equal opportunity and market efficiency in determining the efficacy of any educational policy option. Both these principles are adjusted according to market fluctuations. As Soudien argues 'The Bank's signature discourse—a narrow definition of skills and knowledge—remains prominent. The questions, "What are the strengths of our system? Where are the weaknesses? Are children and youth acquiring the knowledge and skills that they need?," posed regularly throughout the document (WBES), are invariably answered in an economic way.' (Soudien, 2012:96).

We maintain that there have been three definable positions in the World Bank's policies on education within the rubric of 'education for all'. The *first position* emerged in the 1960s. For about three decades after that the World Bank's focus was on primary education. Primary education for the World Bank was the condition for equality of opportunity until the first decade of the 21st century. The *second position* emerged through the World Bank's Education Strategy 2020 published in 2011 wherein it changed its focus by placing emphasis on skills as being necessary for growth, such growth to be achieved through vocational education. In other words vocational education was seen as the solution to the unemployment challenge, with TVET promoting both employability and entrepreneurship. But just a year later, the Bank took a position against vocational education, arguing that it is jobs that should take policy priority (and skills will naturally follow). The *third position* is that TVET has a mixed record due to institutional failures. The distance from the private sector, slow response to rapidly changing skills needs and capture by providers has affected the provision of TVET. The World Bank argues that some skills – such as social skills – are best taught in the workplace and the solution (according to the Bank) is learning through jobs.

One of the fundamental internal contradictions in the World Bank's approach to education is that it maintains that 'skills mismatches' can be explained by market failure yet it implies that the 'skills mismatches' will be solved by the market. So while the World Bank claims to be siding with the poor what in fact transpires through its policies is that it will only do this by adopting the market logic of structural adjustment having profound effects as we have seen on the systems of education and training especially in this continent and other developing societies. According to Hoogvelt (1997) 'Structural adjustment has tied the physical resources of Africa more firmly into servicing the 'old' segment of the global economy. At the same time it has oiled the financial machinery by which wealth is being transported out of the region, thereby removing the very resources which are needed by *dynamic* adjustment to the 'new' global economy (Hoogvelt, 1997:184). This movement of financial resources has occurred through the extension of Structural Adjustment Loans (SAL) by both the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

The SALs were provided in exchange for neoliberal reforms in trade, macro-economic and fiscal policies. 'The main features of what would characterize adjustment lending for the next two decades for the IMF and World Bank: fiscal adjustment, getting the prices right, trade liberalization, and, in general, a movement towards free markets and away from state intervention' (Easterly, 2005:3). The result of this has been neoliberal policies which undermine human development, reduce social spending and increase the pressure on African economies to focus on deficit reduction rather than social investments. Within this context vocational education is reduced to skills training and is fragmented, a consequence of the neo-liberal agenda of restructuring and fragmenting the labour market and work reorganisation to promote 'multi-skilling', 'lean' production and other similar objectives. These approaches are shaped largely by the logic of Human Capital Theory which has had a strong influence on policy making in developing countries particularly over the last few decades.

This article is a preview of what we intend to research in greater detail, the main objective of the research we will undertake will be to capture the key trends in the literature exposing the contradictions in World Bank education, TVET and skills policies. For instance, we will show how the World Bank's Education Strategy 2020 advances an agenda of individual responsibility for skills training in which one's skills acquisition (and hence productivity) is based on individual choices. As a result failure in acquiring employment opportunities is blamed on the individual rather than as an outcome of the policy choices often foisted on nation states by the Bank's grant making conditions. In this regard critics such as De Siqueira (2012) have argued that

Regarding individuals the Bank presents a reductionist perspective of education and learning, as an individual must become skilled to increase "his or her" individual productivity, as though production were not a collective process, and aims solely at the adaptation of new technologies rather than at their creation' (De Siqueira, 2012:70).

In a similar vein others such as Vally and Spreen (2012) maintain that

World Bank Education Strategy 2020 conveniently transfers the responsibility for unemployment to individual deficiencies, implying that lack of employment is a reflection of a person's skills level and abilities instead of an intrinsic weakness of the economic structure and how employment is distributed. In this sense it remains an ideological hoax that ends up blaming the victims' (Vally and Spreen, 2012: 177).

Taken as a whole these policies of the World Bank have signalled a shift to a focus on technical vocational education and skills' training for employment, suggesting that the Bank sees these areas as critical to ameliorating the development challenges in poorer countries. However, as we will show, the Bank policy prescriptions and 'advice' has been the subject of considerable contestation especially in regard to the implicit ideological assumptions of an approach which relies on the idea that improving skills training alone could provide solutions to the structural problems of unemployment and development.

References available

Veerle Dieltiens is a researcher at CEPD

NMI and CIPSET's approach to education the economy and society

Enver Motala and Ivor Baatjes

The Nelson Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development (NMI) at the University of Fort Hare and the Centre for Integrated Post School Education and Training (CIPSET) at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University are research institutes and members of a larger consortium of research organizations called the Education Policy Consortium (EPC). The EPC has received a research grant from the Skills Development Fund administered by the Department of Higher Education and Training.

Following the publication of the *Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (2011) the NMI and CIPSET have been developing their orientation to the post-school system. This is based on a framework which regards education, the economy and society as integral one to the other. Put another way, the relationship between education and economic development is intrinsic to the question, 'What kind of society do we seek to develop?'

This point of departure relates particularly to the exclusion of young adults from education and the economy – because access to meaningful education and training continues to be difficult for such young adults and because unemployment engenders social and economic exclusion. This approach is expected to yield insight into the triadic challenges of inequality, unemployment and poverty and generate ideas about how to deal with them.

Entry into formal labour markets through the attainment of a job in the private or public sectors of the economy has become increasingly unrealisable for millions of South Africans. There is simply not enough demand for jobs regardless of the quality of supply. By implication education and training must relate not only to the diminished possibilities for formal employment but also to socially useful jobs outside the formal labour market.

Many hundreds of thousands of South Africans, disproportionately women in the most disadvantaged communities of our society, are employed in such activities: in care-giving, rural agriculture, the education of children and collective projects such as cooperatives and other community based initiatives. They undertake such extremely important jobs with little or no external support but give meaning to their lives by courageously 'volunteering' themselves and their services for society, while engaging in their economic livelihoods and means of survival.

There is a long way to go to provide a systemic answer to the critical role that education could play in such communities, especially considering how many unemployed post-school members they contain. NMI and CIPSET are working on educational programmes and projects which support such communities. Some of the complexities and possibilities have already been clarified as a result of the participatory research methods employed and the community based discussions, engagements and workshops which together have aroused the communities' interest in this work.

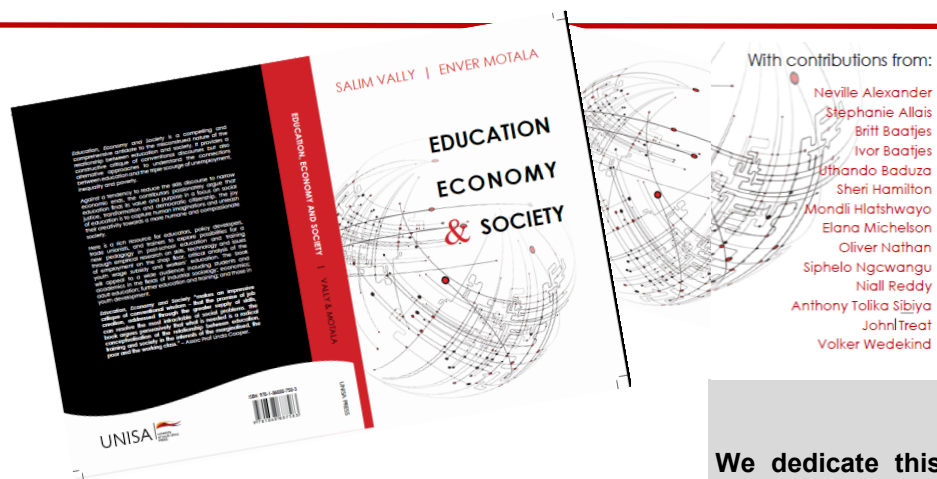
FORTHCOMING:

Confronting the false assumptions that pervade discussions about education: Enver Motala and Ivor Baatjes. CIPSET/NMI Occasional Paper

Education, the economy and society: [Editors: Vally S and Motala E] With several contributions from CIPSET/NMI Faculty, Forthcoming UNISA Press

Enver Motala is a researcher at the Nelson Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development at the University of Fort Hare.

Ivor Baatjes is Director of the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.



New Book

Launch dates
on inside back cover

We dedicate this book to Neville Alexander who we had the honour of collaborating with for many decades and who through praxis showed that the boundaries constructed by the requirements of conventional scholarship are artificial since engagement is inseparable from serious scholarly activity. Professor Sayed from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology appreciatively mentions that the book is inspired by the political activism and intellectual insights of Alexander who believed in the power of hope and collective action and we would like to add, sought concrete possibilities and demonstrable alternatives in the present.

The relationship between education, the economy and society is the subject of considerable media discussion, policy deliberations, academic writing and public angst. In South Africa and elsewhere there exists a resurgent and unquestioning acceptance of simplistic claims related to the link between education and economic growth and that more and better education and training will automatically lead to employment. The contributors to this book systematically challenge these assumptions and set out the basis for an alternative vision in which knowledge and skills are not perceived in purely instrumental terms but as intrinsic and indispensable to the creation of an inclusive and transformed society. We argue that the value and purpose of education is much broader - linked to a rich tradition of praxis based on social justice and democratic citizenship.

The chapters of this book written by a mix of established and exciting new researchers are carefully selected, and while covering a diverse terrain, they cohere well by including more discursive, theoretical pieces and detailed empirical research. The contributors question the dominant discourse around education which assumes that socio-economic development is contingent on the banal 'productive' or entrepreneurial role of education. They also address the entire nexus of issues in which education is one strand in the tapestry of economic, political, class, racial, gendered and ecological policies and practices in the context of social forces that constitute everyday lives.

Advance Reviews

Reflecting critically on the links between education, skills and the economy, the chapters of this book draw attention to structural attributes of South African society that link to unemployment, poverty and inequality. Questioning the 'conventional wisdom' of human capital theory that frames the purposes of education in relation to the needs of the economy, the authors point to the poor track record of free markets in reducing unemployment, and the limitations of neoliberal orthodoxies in addressing poverty and inequality. Instead, the book challenges readers to reflect more creatively on education, skills and the economy, and to reframe the value of education more broadly to include its social, cultural and political purposes. This book is a welcome return to, and extension of, a critical tradition that is so necessary in South African education. - **Prof Pam Christie, Director, School of Education, University of Cape Town.**

This book is a fresh contribution to the increasingly sterile political and academic discourses on education and society. Using incisive and empirically grounded transformative perspectives as lenses of analysis, the authors succeed in liberating the reader from the dominant and simplistic economic determinism that has, for a long time, concealed the culpability of structural attributes of corporate capitalism in creating the triad of poverty, unemployment and inequality. Within this context the grand narratives about the role of education in development cannot be seen as ideologically neutral. While the book is valuable reading for all citizens, especially policy makers, I recommend that it should form the basis of a compulsory core curriculum course for all first year students at universities, regardless of their disciplinary specialisation - **Prof George Moyo, Dean of Education, University of Fort Hare.**

Adult Education: Imagining what might have been

Sheri Hamilton

After the proclamation of the White Paper on Post School Education and Training in January 2014 and a few weeks before the May 2014 elections, a high level meeting on adult education was convened by the Minister of Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande. At this meeting members of his senior staff and advisors were present together with representatives of the remaining outposts of adult education in the universities and in the adult education NGO sector.

Dr Nzimande acknowledged the chronic under-funding and lack of support for adult education since the historic 1994 elections and the consequent decimation of this once vibrant sector. At this meeting one university representative reported on the recent demise of *Learn with Echo*, the last remaining newspaper for newly literate adults that has been discontinued as a supplement carried for almost twenty years by The Natal Witness. *Learn with Echo*, will join the graveyard of newspaper and magazines dedicated to newly literate adults such as *Learn and Teach*, *Speak* and many others.

Among the first to experience disappointment with the post-apartheid government for the failure to launch a mass literacy campaign, was a layer activists working in adult education. Mass literacy campaigns had been the practice of most of the newly liberated countries after centuries of colonial oppression and exploitation. For example, among the first acts of post-colonial governments in Africa, from Angola to Zimbabwe; in Latin America, from Cuba to Nicaragua; to the former Soviet Union; was the launch of a mass literacy campaign. Through this, for example, the former Soviet Union was able, in just one generation, to outpace America in its output of scientists, doctors and engineers and even in its space programme. Although subsequent campaigns had mixed results, there is no doubt that mass literacy programmes or campaigns were a key factor in galvanising support for state development efforts among the poorest members of the population in these countries.

It is not difficult to imagine, for instance, what might have been achieved through the training colleges system if it was not shut down and geared towards training literacy or ABET teachers on a large enough scale, drawing on returned exiles, unbanned persons, released political prisoners, and many unemployed to set about the task of eradicating illiteracy and building the new nation. Such an act would have provided the opportunity 'to implement by the next morning what was learned the previous evening' as Nyerere once said, reflecting on the difference between adult education and schooling. The values and principles of the new Constitution could have been taught as part of a core curriculum along with other key development objectives. That moment in time, in the aftermath of the snaking queues that marked the birth of democracy has been lost perhaps for generations to come. South Africa missed this historic opportunity and forfeited the goodwill that liberation from racial oppression evoked that could have so easily been harnessed to support a mass literacy campaign.

But hope springs eternal and when literacy was declared a Presidential Lead Project in the Reconstruction and Development Programme, it was seen as another chance to rescue the moment. However, these hopes were soon dashed when no budget was allocated to the campaign. Literacy and adult education entered a slippery slope downhill from grand mass based plans to programmes and initiatives that produced negligible results given the consistently poor budgets allocated to such efforts. Except for a committed and determined few, ultimately, these failures did not more than exhaust the goodwill and enthusiasm that existed for this work. Like the would be beneficiaries of the land reform programme who would not

outline the missed opportunities to redress legacies of the past, many illiterate and poorly educated adults have been denied the 'light' and 'dignity' which so many newly literate adults have avowed about the benefits that literacy has brought to their lives.

Now that the Minister acknowledges that adult education has been neglected by the present government for the 20 years of its rule, and that the new Community Education and Training Centres or Community Colleges mooted in the PSET White Paper provide an opportunity to correct the past mistake, we renew our hopes in this promise to rescue an ailing adult education sector. We continue to ask however whether this hope is and to ask the question: 'What has fundamentally changed to makes this latest promise plausible'? As I see it a great deal has changed and hopefully the Government's latest promise is a belated response to a changed context.

Firstly, the neo-liberal triumphalism which influences every single aspect of life has been exposed as a lie in South Africa and internationally. There are very few illusions about it about the impact of the approaches to education that have led to its commodification and contributed to the demise of literacy and ABET. Secondly, there is a healthy scepticism towards any new panacea that is proposed by government, given a reality and experience of far greater inequality now, higher levels of unemployment and other seemingly intractable social problems such as crime, violence - especially against women and children - and substance abuse. Thirdly, there is a search for alternatives that are based on the principles of collective, sustainable and participatory solutions that place the needs of people before those of profit. Finally, there is also the recognition that there is a need to rebuild organisations, reinvent methods and approaches that support such them and reignite the activism that brought about the liberation from apartheid and colonialism.

Community Colleges that can hopefully incorporate the current Public Adult Learning Centres might offer a new system of youth and adult education not characterised, as it is presently, by mainly second-chance schooling but by institutions that serve as bridgehead between schooling and the post school education and training system and is linked directly to the development needs of communities. For example, the various development and job creation initiatives such as the Expanded Public Works Programmes can be tied directly to education offerings in community colleges that prepare youth and adults as part of initial in-service training. Such programmes should be linked to further and continuing education and training opportunities in other PSET sectors, in firms, factories, farms and communities as part of 'professionalising' this work in communities. This is the only way to address the "skills shortage" by tying jobs creation to education and training. It is also the only way to move away from "job opportunities" to decent jobs.

Tying job creation that responds to needs in communities to education and training through Community Colleges linked to other post-school education institutions will be the basis upon which we can rebuild an adult education movement. Such a movement can have an impact in the first instance on the lives of adults and youth who can immediately contribute to change in their communities. Therefore, our hopefulness should not be based on the government's latest promise but be based on the lessons we have learnt from past experience, from understanding the present context and for strengthening the activism that has endured throughout the last 20 years of democracy. Such activism continues to be the only way to effect real change.

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Reflections on the Stakeholder Meeting on the Future of Adult Education and Training Centres

16 April 2014, Southern Sun OR Tambo

Astrid von Kotze

General opening comments

The meeting was well attended; however, the majority of people present were unknown to me and unfortunately, there was no opportunity for introductions. Those stakeholders involved in adult education were in the minority but we all knew each other and it felt like we continued a dialogue that began many years ago, and still continues to-date.

Inputs

Mr Pampallis welcomed all present and asserted that today would be the beginning of all moving forward, together, in the interests of adults and youth wanting to learn, through formal and non-formal provision at community education and training centres and colleges (CETCs).

The Minister of Higher Education, Dr Nzimande explained that while the initial reason for calling the meeting had been a concern expressed by a variety of people involved in adult and youth education, particularly in the light of adult education centres closing down, this was now an opportunity for a concerted effort to address poverty, inequality and unemployment through education and training. He referred to the White paper for Post-School Education and Training that aims to address systemic issues with regards to access, enhanced quality and success, improved articulation and relevance. The Minister pointed out that CETCs should build on existing strengths and, in the future, be run by communities as a way of building an active participatory citizenry. He also emphasized the need to preserve and rebuild adult education at universities, and that this would necessitate major collaboration with NGOs as stakeholders.

Mr Baatjes congratulated the Ministry for putting out the White Paper. He described a sad state of affairs with regards to hitherto strong and vibrant adult education centres at universities who have suffered greatly under the neo-liberalization of universities. This is regrettable as universities could play an important role in community work. He pointed out the strong link between universities and NGOs/CBOs, citing examples from adult basic education publications such as 'Learn with Echo' (UKZN), worker education and popular education.

Mr Rangiah further expanded on the long proud history of non-formal adult/community education provided outside formal institutions. He described how the formerly strong NGOs sector providing most of such education has been strangled, and that those who survived have marketised their work.

This was followed by various inputs from the floor, including :

- * there are no work-sites for completing skills training
- * any facilities for education / CETCs must be close to local communities and census figures may help to pinpoint sites for colleges
- * the state should resource materials for learning and teaching
- * there is a total dirge of reading materials for adult-new-literates in the official languages
- * new Institutes of TVET should define skills training more broadly, inclusive of skills needed for livelihoods security

Challenges for the future

- * The meeting was, I hope, the beginning of a vibrant ongoing dialogue involving the full range of adult/ community education stakeholders who can bring valuable experience to the establishment of various forms of post-school education provision.
- * It is hoped that community education and training centres will use existing facilities and places of current quality provision. This should then be followed by colleges strategically placed so they can play a supporting role for centres.
- * Existing organizations that are under threat of closure / retrenchments due to a lack of resources, must be given the support that allows them to survive and regain the strength necessary to collaborate with centres or, indeed, become centres.
- * The call for adult and community educators to establish a 'collective voice' through the creation of a professional association was well taken. In the past, numerous attempts in that direction have been made but due to the volatile / unsupportive environment these attempts have been unsuccessful.
- * One particular task for such an association is to formulate clear and convincing arguments for supporting adult education / the importance of post-school education, both formal and non-formal. Again, there have been many such attempts in the past and it is hoped the Ministry will listen this time!
- * The Minister asked: how do we build on the experience of various forms of popular education, so strong in the past, under different conditions? There are already agencies who have taken up this challenge – it is important to make their work more prominent: visible and heard! One such opportunity is the new website www.populareducation.co.za.
- * The assertion that NGOs and CBOs have a vital role to play in the establishment and running of CETCs is encouraging. For the last 30-40 years, adult / community education has been provided, in the main, by organisations within civil society and this valuable experience must not be lost. While universities may take over the role of training the staff that will eventually run the centres and colleges, they should do so in consultation with relevant educational NGOs.

The meeting ended with a very encouraging commitment by the Minister that "community colleges must be everything to everyone".

Astrid von Kotze

Popular Education Programme, Cape Town

Advance Reviews

Vally and Motala are two of South Africa's most outspoken critics of the 'there is no alternative' view to the hegemonic neo-liberal approach to economic development and the place of education within it. In this text they and a number of eminent colleagues provide one of the few elaborations in the country of what is wrong with human capital theory, with supply-side approaches framing economic policy and with current education strategies which privilege individual advancement. In many of the chapters the challenge of building alternative paths is taken up. The book is a deeply important contribution to a discussion that now must happen about where the country should go. - **Prof Crain Soudien, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Cape Town.**

A breath of fresh air, this myth-busting book brings a bracing balance to the contemporary debate on the relationship between education, training and the economy. A timely and sobering book on a much-neglected area in South African education, it foregrounds the structural context of South Africa's vocational education and training landscape while humanising understanding of its deep systemic challenges. I recommend it to anyone interested in understanding and acting on the challenges South Africa faces in this field.— **Prof Linda Chisholm, Visiting Professor, Centre for Education Rights and Transformation, Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg**

A refreshingly different set of voices critical of the drone-like assertions of 'human capital' theories on the alignment of state policy, education and skills training regimes to market demands in tackling the much vaunted triple challenges of job creation, poverty reduction and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa. This exciting collection of essays questions the very logic on which is this alignment is based, sets out to debunk a range of widely held 'common sense' myths about South Africa's 'skills crisis', and makes a convincing case for why narrow, economic notions of skills development and supply-side policy interventions are unlikely to reconcile democratic social interests with that of acquisitive monopoly neo-liberal capitalism. Its thesis, that unless there are profound and deep-seated democratic transformations in the core social and power relations of this economy, the 'crises of capitalism' will continuously be passed on as a 'skills crisis' and failure of public policy, presenting each generation with an ever-receding, but ultimately unreachable horizon on which to moor democratic public interests. - **Prof Derrick Swartz, Vice-Chancellor, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.**

This book debunks both the core ideas and applications of human capital theory in a South African context of mass unemployment. The authors also provide a long overdue critique of the economy's barren prospects for job-seekers, and thus of banal conventional appeals to the workforce for higher productivity and more sophisticated skill levels. Something is structurally wrong in our society; Vally, Motala and their authors help identify root causes and genuine solutions. - **Patrick Bond, Senior Professor of Development Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal.**

Timely, accessible and a compelling read which gives us grounds to imagine that a better world is possible. The analytic insights and the assessment of the issues at hand are thought provoking and refreshing. This book tackles some of the most difficult issues that confront complex societies and should be mandatory reading for anyone with a stake in the global South. It brings together a group of distinguished scholars and practitioners who make a provocative advance with their richly textured chapters. - **Ruksana Osman is Professor of Education and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand.**

This compelling, comprehensive, and thoughtful book will be widely read and used by academics, students, and policy makers alike. Bringing together an outstanding group of scholars on issues of economy, education and training, and skills development, Vally and Motala provide the first really persuasive engagement with the deep structural and institutional obstacles that hinder economic, education and training reform in 21st century South Africa. In that regard, they bring rich alternative perspectives to the current conceptual crisis within economic and training debates. Theoretically sophisticated and unsettlingly lucid, the various arguments across the book's chapters provide important discursive opportunities to think differently about the economy, workers, the role of education and training in South Africa, and the depth of skills development pathways - **Dr Azeem Badroodien, Education Policy Studies, Stellenbosch University.**

This erudite yet accessible book is an important intervention into the debate on education, economy and society in South Africa and internationally. It debunks the myth at the heart of dominant global discourses that education and skills alone can somehow lead to improved economic growth and prosperity provided we can get the 'supply side' right. As the various contributions to the volume make clear, the causes of economic crisis and unemployment are rooted in the wider structural inequalities and social relations of a rampant global capitalism. The book however, also sets out the basis for an alternative vision in which knowledge and skills are not perceived in purely instrumental terms but as intrinsic and indispensable to the creation of all-round, inclusive and socially just human development. This book will appeal to anyone who is interested in the debate about education, knowledge and society whether they are scholars, policy makers, trade unionists, community activists or members of the public. - **Prof Leon Tikly, Professor in Education, University of Bristol.**

In both the South African and the global environment, we have grown accustomed to claims about the indispensability of education to the needs of economic growth and to assumptions that more and better education and training will automatically put one on the path to employment. This is a seductive (albeit misleading) proposition in a country like South Africa where economic growth is poor, participation rates in post-secondary education low and unemployment levels grievously high. This book confronts and interrogates these received wisdoms about the nexus between education, employment and social development. Its different chapters seek to go beyond normative opposition to neo-liberal framings of education and employment. The book highlights the structural constraints to employment posed by global corporate regimes (and the consequent limits to what education and training systems can enable under such constraints), engages in hard-nosed analyses of current strategies like the youth wage subsidy, and begins to point to alternative non-reductive ways of thinking about education and development. The book is a stimulating and timely intervention in policy and research debates that have resonance not only for South Africa but also globally in a context where knowledge economy discourses are faltering in the face of economic austerity and growing unemployment – **Prof Mala Singh, Professor of International Higher Education Research in the Centre for Public Leadership and Social Enterprise at the Open University, UK.**

Advance Reviews

This book begins with an epigraph from Neville Alexander in which he observes that 'Once the commodity value of people displaces their intrinsic human worth or dignity, we are well on the way to a state of barbarism'. The book, lucid, sophisticated and elegant, is, written against what it calls a 'narrow, reductive and economic determinist perspective' of the value of education and in support of 'a wider, more responsive and encompassing lens'. It certainly takes full measure of the limits of the post-apartheid state but it also takes commendable care to avoid the reduction of all blame for our current educational malaise to the limits of the state. Here capital and its ideologies about education – ideologies that have often become normalised as if they were common sense in the media and the academy – are subject to penetrating critique. This is a book of real weight and consequence that deserves to be widely read and discussed. - **Dr Richard Pithouse, Senior Lecturer, Department of Politics and International Studies, Rhodes University.**

Twenty years into South Africa's democracy the discussion about education, training and development has come full circle. This book brings the reader to the beginning of the debate by showing the failings of current arguments. Underpinning all the chapters is the conviction that poor intellectual frameworks make not only for poor analyses but, more dangerously, for paralysed politics. Combining theoretical exploration and critique with empirical research into the post-secondary schooling sector and the world of work, the authors explore the limitations of the application of human capital theory, supply analysis, state failure notions and decontextualised approaches to the understanding of the relationships between education, employment and the labour market. It is particularly refreshing that the authors build their analyses on the structural limits that capitalist accumulation poses to the notion of employment, and that, true to the critical tradition from which they come, they announce some of their propositions as untested and open to discussion. The chapters are written by a group of experienced researchers, educationists and activists, who incarnate in different ways the old, and still valid, notion that philosophy should not simply interpret the world but help to change it. This book will provoke welcome and necessary debate.- **Dr Lis Lange, Directorate for Institutional Research and Academic Planning, University of the Free State.**

As economists, it is exciting to see such an insightful engagement with the concept, and practical consequences of the use, of human capital theory. While this theory is little more than an unconvincing attempt to treat human beings as a factor of production whose accumulation (through fuzzily defined 'skills') can lead to economic growth, it has become a pervasive proxy for making the poor responsible for their unemployment. In this view unemployment, poverty and inequality is largely the fault of the poor because they are uneducated, unskilled, unproductive and lack entrepreneurial flair. This view ignores the political economy of South Africa. It ignores the unstable, crisis prone integrated global economy. And most importantly it never discusses the damaging profligacy of finance and speculators, market-rigging, rent seeking business interests and an entrenched, unproductive, overpaid managerial class that came into being under the protection of apartheid cultural and economic isolation. Vally and Motala have rendered a great service with their edited volume, which should be read not only by academics and policymakers but South Africans from all walks of life. This volume demolishes the myths of neo-liberal economics. It shows us not only how intellectually flawed these ideas are but also how damaging they are for our society. The authors of this volume provide an opportunity to shift our discourse and policy discussion back towards a progressive vision for education and the types of policies we need. As economists usually have little to say about this, they will have much to gain from reading this book. – **Seeraj Mohamed, Director and Nicolas Pons-Vignon, Senior researcher, Corporate Strategy and Industrial Development (CSID) research programme, School of Economic and Business Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand.**

This volume is a sample of cutting edge critical scholarship about the relationship between education and society in post-apartheid South Africa. A special focus is the comparatively under-theorised and under-researched 'post-schooling sector' such as vocational education, workplace education and worker education. The studies combine close study of education policy and practice with a sensitive analysis of the political economy of education in order to develop alternative concepts, approaches to policy making and to pedagogical practice that point to or go beyond dictatorship of the market. Especially impressive is the range of research methodologies drawn upon to develop and illustrate a range of possible options. - **Brian Ramadiro is a researcher and Deputy Director of the Nelson Mandela Institute for Education and Rural Development, University of Fort Hare.**

The book's authors collectively marshal evidence and use critical analysis to expose the role of capital as a historical shaper of the character of the South African state and critique the government's negative education policies. The current dominant discourse that subordinates education and training to economic growth is systematically problematised and challenged. This discourse blames the victim, absolves capital's culpability in the education crisis, fails to identify and grapple with underlying causalities, and as such, dooms society, in particular the working class, to a bleak future of ever rising rates of unemployment, inequality and poverty. The book's critical analysis lays a firm foundation for developing viable solutions to the social crisis engendered by a capitalist system that has ran out of ideas to extricate itself from its own contradictions. Every educationist, scholar-activist and committed social reformer should read this book -**Trevor Ngwane, PhD candidate, University of Johannesburg.**

Inspired by and dedicated to the political activism and intellectual insights of Neville Alexander, Vally and Motala have compiled a most timely volume that critically engages with current orthodoxies in public policy, development thinking and education reform. The book provides a trenchant critique of crude renditions of human capital theories of growth and skills development that shape current education discourses. The impressive range of voices and research assembled in the volume speak to the power of hope and collective action in the face of an unrelenting global discursive assault that uncritically champions narrow conceptions of economic growth as the main driver of public policy. The book is a timely reminder that growing disparities between the rich and the poor are not simply failures of public policy and of education systems that are unresponsive to the market. Instead, it is symptomatic of structurally determined social relations that are not amenable to simplistic and reductive policy prescriptions. This book is a must read for policy-makers, practitioners, activists, educators, students and academics in the Global North and South committed to social justice as the antidote to global neo-liberalism. - **Prof Yusuf Sayed, South African Research Chair in Teacher Education, Cape Peninsula University of Technology.**

Grounded in knowledge produced in South Africa's vibrant education social movements of the recent past, and engaging with education scholarship from around the world, this book is of international significance. Few books critically address the range of higher education, vocational education and trade union education contexts which this volume tackles, with contributions that are analytical, while grounded in actual practice. Indeed, it offers valuable insights for scholars and educators everywhere concerning the hard yet urgent struggles ahead for social and economic justice, and to (re) build education to serve genuine liberation and democracy. - **Aziz Choudry, Assistant Professor, International Education, Integrated Studies in Education, McGill University, Montreal.**

On the basis of the three issues highlighted above, a number of key concerns have been raised by members of the community and the kinds of socio-economic issues to which community education could respond to:

- Substance abuse has been highlighted. High levels of alcohol abuse amongst parents is a worrying trend. Educators recognise its impact on students, their learning – both at school and at home, as well as its detrimental effects on early childhood development. Community members described how alcohol is often perceived as a means of “escaping” their poor living conditions as it, temporarily at least, provided a disconnect from the demotivation they felt. They acknowledged however the detrimental effect this had on their health.
- The drop-out rate is also a worrying trend. Working within a structure in which numbers are valued more than the individual students who pass through - educators are often compelled to complete the curricula within a given period of time and students with learning disabilities (or those who learn “slower than others”) are often marginalized - this inevitably results in their dropping out of the system - condemned to a life of poverty.
- Teenage pregnancy was also raised as an issue of concern as this unavoidably meant that female learners did not complete their schooling. Very few, if any, return to school due to the stigma attached to their pregnancy. This means that they too are “trapped” in the cycle of poverty-- unable to find employment without an education within a context where unemployment is already very high.
- The importance of learning through mother tongue has also been highlighted. Blueilies Bushes Primary School is the only school in the area which offers classes in isiXhosa - this is a multi-grade class as the school only employs one isiXhosa-speaking teacher. IsiXhosa-speaking members of the community expressed their concerns at being taught in Afrikaans and its impact on learning and progress. Many isiXhosa-speaking students experienced great difficulty in “catching up” and often dropped out of school as they felt alienated and embarrassed. In addition to this, community members recognise that even when some of the learners succeed in “catching up” they were yet again thrust into the same situation upon gaining entry into further education where the medium of instruction becomes English. The language policy of the school, therefore, creates a tension between language groups and reinforces inequality, marginalisation and exclusion.

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It becomes strikingly clear what the value of community education in Blueilies Bushes - and communities such as these - could be, as community education is often regarded as a vehicle that can address a number of general and specific issues affecting communities (Baatjes & Baatjes, 2013; Baatjes & Chaka, 2011). Education which speaks to the immediate issues affecting communities such as this would help build and develop self-sustaining communities able to respond to the social issues with which they are faced.

Whilst actions that grant the many youth of Blueilies Bushes access to a secondary school are required, post-school educational options are also necessary. For instance, Blueilies Bushes might be a good example of a semi-rural community where a community college could provide a meaningful contribution. Given the socio-economic realities of Blueilies Bushes, a curriculum should be developed which is more responsive to the needs of that community so that youth and adults develop their capabilities and apply these to the benefit of their community and address some of its problems. The acquisition of technical skills such as in ICT could also be deployed in the service of the community.

Community education within Blueilies Bushes could speak to issues around the dangers of unprotected sex; pregnancy; HIV/AIDS; alcoholism; drug use/abuse; as well as reflecting on the resources available to the community by members who are skilled in agriculture and farming for example. Blueilies Bushes is an agriculturally-rich community and food sovereignty could provide for socially useful and productive work. It is important to remember that community education is not just about the personal, social and economic needs of a community, but also about political issues which help develop more critical and active citizens.

Blueilies Bushes is not the only community which struggles with access to basic resources. There are many more examples like this where community education could play a vital role in starting to address the needs of the community; where the post-schooling sector could start pointing to alternative forms of education, the content of which is more acutely aware of its context and responsive to the needs of the communities it is meant to serve.

Emerging Voices 2 is a research project currently being conducted by the Education Policy Consortium (EPC) which draws attention to the importance of deepening our understanding of how communities experience the post-schooling sector. In addition, it foregrounds how imperative it is that we begin to engage communities on the issues that they need the post-schooling sector to speak to and most importantly, to understand what post school education and training is useful to build communities which are self-reliant and critically important in their environment.

Reflections on the importance of community education:

Bluelilies Bushes

Bluelilies Bushes is a semi-rural community in the Cacadu district of the Eastern Cape -- the largest of the six district municipalities of the province (Integrated Development Plan 2012-2017: Cacadu District Municipality, 2012). It is located on the breathtaking Tsitsikamma route where economic activity focuses predominantly on timber, hospitality and tourism. According to local educators there are nine primary schools in the area -- none of which extend beyond Grade Nine. There are no high schools or Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in the area. The closest TVET Colleges and high schools would be in Plettenberg Bay or Uitenhage, approximately 40km and 120km away respectively. Bluelilies Bushes is one example of a semi-rural community with limited access to both formal and non-formal forms of post-school education and training (PSET) programmes. This paper reflects on initial dialogues with members of Bluelilies Bushes and highlights the significance of community education programmes for both youth and adults.

Initial engagements with community members in Bluelilies Bushes pointed to a number of issues that concerned them-- the greatest of which seemed to be the lack of opportunities and access to further education within their immediate surrounds. In an attempt to bridge the gap between responsive institutions of learning and the community(s) in which they are established, we held a series of dialogues with members of the Bluelilies Bushes community. These dialogues were initiated as part of our curiosity and desire to gain a better and much deeper understanding of how semi-rural communities experience the post school system. These dialogues also form part of our socially-engaged work as a public institution and reflect our hope to develop meaningful, lasting, transparent and honest relationships with communities. We therefore built on prior engagement with community members and educators from Bluelilies Bushes and followed a process of introducing ourselves and our work. We proceeded by initiating discussions which would help us grow our understanding of the area and its people. We hoped to begin to develop a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the difficulties that these community members are faced with. These preliminary issues will be elaborated upon below.

Firstly, students expressed their despondency about the post-schooling sector due to a lack of information regarding what is available to them in terms of further education, learning and training. For instance, youth do not have any information about where to apply, how to apply, what courses are available and how to access financial support. Educators at the local school were equally unfamiliar with education and training opportunities available to their students and the unemployed

youth and adults in that community. As part of our conversations we realized that educators were unaware of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS); that their students were eligible to apply; that applications to both TVET Colleges and NSFAS were obtainable from Colleges in Plettenberg Bay and Eastcape Midlands College in Uitenhage. In addition to this, educators were often unable to provide students with useful information related to furthering their education. Access to information is constrained in the absence of resources such as computers and the internet, a poorly resourced library, limited information from the government departments - such as the Department of Basic Education, the absence of a community newsletter and no contact with TVET Colleges or other PSET organisations. Educators from the local school often use their own personal resources, such as cell phones, to access the internet, often with poor connectivity

Secondly, students expressed their frustrations at the lack of educational institutions and organisations established within their community and explained how the distances between their community and neighbouring communities in which these organisations are established, for instance, are a significant barrier. The closest formal institutions are located in George, Uitenhage and Port Elizabeth. Safety concerns and a lack of income further exacerbate their inability to access further education and training. Other community-based forms of education and training for youth are largely non-existent. There is a Public Adult Learning Centre (PALC) at Bluelilies Bushes Primary School which provides education up to an ABET level 4. The ABET educators expressed their frustration at not knowing what to tell their graduates to do once they had completed the level 4 programme. As a result, graduates have started questioning the value of ABET because even completing the programme doesn't seem to provide them with access to resources - for example access to jobs. This is coupled with their frustration at the lack of formal and non-formal forms of furthering their education within their immediate surrounds.

Thirdly, educators, students and community members alike spoke emphatically about the high levels of unemployment in the area. Educators estimate that as much as ninety percent of the community are recipients of social grants -- a statistic we were unable to verify officially, but one which is not wholly inconceivable when walking through the community -- as witnessed by the large number of adults who have given up looking for employment. Community members expressed their fears and concerns for the youth of the area who wander the streets with nothing to do and nowhere to go and explain how some youth end up participating in criminal activity as a result

Sonya Leurquain-Steyn

Skills? What Skills? Jobs? What Jobs?

The South African skills shortage?

Stephanie Allais

A skills shortage is widely regarded as a major contributor to South Africa's high unemployment levels. In some quarters an allegedly inflexible labour market is also blamed. This discourse is not unique to South Africa. In many countries around the world the idea of a 'skills gap' is invoked to explain rising youth unemployment. The notion of a 'skills gap' suggests that education systems are not producing people with the skills required by the world of work, hence leading to the concurrence of both high levels of unemployment and unfilled vacancies in workplaces. Conversely, attaining ever-higher levels of education is widely believed to be essential for economic growth, and the idea of a 'knowledge economy' which supposedly requires ever-higher levels of skills from workers is frequently invoked by policy makers.

This impacts on education through criticism of curricula, as well as of education institutions and educators in general. These critiques mainly build on or sometimes repackage old critiques: policy makers question the suitability of school subjects and 'traditional' disciplinary bases for curricula in schools and universities, and even more so in colleges, where new courses and programmes often are developed in the absence of a traditional disciplinary base. These critiques usually assume that different curricula and differently organized educational institutions would improve individuals' chances of getting jobs or being able to support themselves. Thus, instead of economic and social policies which create demand for skilled workers, we see a proliferation of policy mechanisms which attempt to ascertain 'what employers want', described as 'demand-driven' education policy. This is the origin of policies such as qualifications frameworks and competence-based training, as well as the continued creation of institutions and structures which attempt to bring different roleplayers together, in the hope that this will improve how curricula prepare individuals for work, as well as encouraging employers to give learners work experience opportunities.

Are such policy interventions sustained by what we understand about the relationships between education and work? In South Africa and internationally longitudinal or panel survey research designs are one of the ways researchers have tried to understand the school-to-work pathways of a youth cohorts. Such research shows that more young people are staying in education longer, and demonstrates that young people's transitions are becoming more protracted, more diverse, less linear, and more complex. One key emphasis in the South African literature has been the role of social networks in assisting young people to get jobs (Cosser et al., 2003; Gewer, 2010).

This body of literature provides important empirical knowledge about the movements of young people from education to work. However, it offers limited contributions to our ability to theorize the relationships between education and work, because over the past 100 years the relationships between levels of education attained and prospective positions in socially stratified societies have changed dramatically; consequently, arguments that specific educational paths prepare individuals for specific positions in stratification systems may appear to be empirically valid for moments in time, but the relationship shifts over time (Moore, 2004).

How then are these changing relationships theorized? Human capital theory, which lies unstated and unacknowledged behind much policy discourse, is based on the assumption that education enhances individuals' productivity, which is why employers are willing to pay higher wages to better educated workers. An alternative view suggests that employers are uncertain about the marginal productivity of potential employees, and unable to clearly ascertain what knowledge and skills they bring, let alone how these enhance or otherwise affect productivity. What they do, therefore, is look for crude signals that differentiate applicants from each other (Spence, 1973). You can imagine two queues: one of vacancies for jobs, and one of applicants. The first queue is ordered by the complexity of the jobs available--itself a very contested issue. The second is ordered by educational attainment of applicants. Selection in the labour market brings these two queues together, starting from the high paying, believed to be difficult or complex jobs, and highly educated applicants. The key issue is one's position in the queue relative to others. Education is used to sort individuals, often for characteristics that individuals had before entering education, as well as those that they obtained in or through education. But many other factors can explain one's relative position in the job queue. A key one in current labour markets around the world is work experience, thus relegating young people to low positions in queues, even when they do have relatively good educational levels, and creating the perception of a 'youth' unemployment crisis (instead of just an unemployment crisis).

Credential inflation is one main result, as potential workers feel obliged to strive for higher and higher levels of qualifications to improve their place in the job queue. The rhetoric about an ostensible lack of skills causing unemployment is located in a global context in which workers in all countries have unprecedented levels of formal knowledge and qualifications (Livingstone & Guile, 2012),

Many so-called 'knowledge workers' operate in a global labour market for work that is high-skilled but low-waged (Lauder & Brown, 2009), and much work requires very little skill (Kennedy, 2012). Credential inflation has many negative consequences: people are obliged to stay in education longer than they want to, often incurring debt; people at lower levels are increasingly disaffected from education; class sizes increase as ever higher levels of education are massified; the qualifications that people obtain have ever weaker relationships with the actual work they will be doing if they do get jobs; and education institutions are ever-more criticized.

Such criticisms ignore the relationships between systems of social insurance, systems of skill formation, and spending on public education, and how the nature and structure of the labour market affects the structure and quality of education and training for work (Iverson & Stephens, 2008). Improved pathways from education to the labour market require reducing the fragmentation of the workforce, as well as the fragmentation of systems of workforce development. Labour market regulation, active labour market policies, and broader social policy are major determinants of the success of vocational education systems; countries with weak unions have weak vocational education and workplace training. Transitions between education and the labour market work best in regulated jobs and occupations, in which people gain long term respected employment with benefits and reasonable remuneration. In such systems, there is a clear relationship between the regulated occupations in the labour market, and the programmes offered through the vocational education system. In some countries it is only professional workers who have regulations and therefore reduced competition for their labour, and in others, this also applies to intermediate qualifications and work; it is these countries which generally are said to have good 'transition' systems. It is specialized occupations (clearly defined and protected occupational roles) which enable training. Where work is fragmented into discrete work processes, employers are interested in skills for the immediate job at hand, and the result is weak relationships between education and training and the labour market.

These are just some ways of theorizing the relationships between education and work, how the regulation and organization of labour markets affects education; how social policy affects education; and how economic systems affect education and the demand for education, and also, how they distort the content for and demand for education in society. Without better analysis of these relationships, it is easy to draw patterns (and policy prescriptions) from contingent situations which in fact are not going to repeat themselves; and prescribe policy reforms which in fact weaken education systems.

Even very preliminary analysis of South Africa shows that inequality, fragmented work and a casualized labour market, and a historic and the prevailing built-in dependence on cheap labour as well as on the exploitation of primary resources, and a bias towards importing technology solutions, all work against the possibility of good vocational education, and are unfavourable for the development of skills in the general population. There is a strong and vocal lobby to increase job insecurity, particularly for the youth, despite the fact that our economy is characterized by extremely high unemployment and extreme job insecurity for many workers. All these factors are diametrically opposed to the factors which have, in some developed countries, led to high levels of both general and vocational education, with considerable economic and social benefits. It is almost impossible to build 'successful' vocational education in a context of extreme job insecurity and casualization.

For us to meaningfully engage in educational reform today, we need more and better theories of how these relationships work, and what education can and cannot do. This includes analysis of what kinds of knowledge (as opposed to qualifications) are useful for what purposes, and what the best ways are of helping people to gain access to them.

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Stephanie Allais is a researcher at the Centre for Researching Education and Labour

What do Emerging Voices have to say?

Though we are in the early stages of implementing EV2, some initial issues and themes which have "emerged" from our engagement in Sedibeng include the following.

A post-school qualification doesn't guarantee a formal sector job. Among representatives from local post-school learning institutions and educated and unemployed youth, there is near unanimous agreement that a qualification alone is not sufficient for gaining access to a formal sector job. In Sedibeng, large numbers of HEI and FETC graduates do not gain employment in the formal sector. While this is not a surprising research finding, creating dialogue around this issue has generated interest in the need to collaboratively re-vision post-school education.

Research on and debating the purpose of post-school education and collecting livelihood stories raises critical consciousness. Participants have started to question the dominant discourse and its instrumentalisation of education. Over the past five months our youth research team has engaged in lively debates over the purpose of education

They argue that many youth see education, not as an end in and of itself, but as the path toward a white collar job, and the security and material prosperity which comes with such employment. In this case, post-school education can be seen as reinforcing, instead of critiquing, the dominant discourse and social structures – even as large numbers youth fail to access these all but phantom white collar jobs. A member of our site-based team has argued that the education system encourages in learners the desire to "work for somebody" rather than create a livelihood. Another participant argues that all too often post-school learners focus on getting the qualification instead of learning and exploration.

The importance of the practice of dialogue has emerged in the debates and meetings around the project work. Participants may begin a dialogue by tacitly accepting the "qualifications for jobs" idea, but over the course of a dialogue evidence is often brought to bear which points to the complexity of the relationship between education and jobs. This realization encourages participants to think in new directions, both about the purpose of post-school education and about community development and livelihoods. Perhaps we have some distance to go: often participants point to learner proclivities as the main problem instead of pointing to the biases embedded in the structures and conceptualization of post-schooling.

Informal learning and informal learning spaces point to new possibilities for post-school education and speak to the potential of re-contextualizing the relationship between formal post-school institutions and the community. In our initial set of "livelihoods" interviews we have found that there are many jobs in the informal sector and in fields (i.e. media) where there are few formal qualifications. Interviews with employed and unemployed youth have identified several adults who have followed non-traditional paths to creating a livelihood. In addition, visits to a local youth development organizations have identified promising examples of positive youth spaces which attract youth with learning opportunities that support human and community development in ways not always evident in formal institutions.

In our initial contact with formal post-school institutions, participants acknowledge that the academic and occupational offerings of post-school institutions are decontextualized from the developmental interests and needs of the surrounding community. There is a sense that these institutions are *in*, but not

of, the community. Institutions are looking for ways to bridge this divide. In our next round of dialogues we are engaging with a community radio station to broaden the dialogue on formal and informal skills and on the extent to which post-school institutions provide learning opportunities which meet the broader learning interests and livelihood needs of the community. At two post-school institutions, CERT is hosting a debate organized around the question, "Will increased access to and reform of FET colleges solve South Africa's youth development and unemployment crisis OR is a new vision of FET college education needed?" Far from avoiding such sensitive, and some might say, existential, issues, institutions have welcomed these debates.

Community issues and implementation frustrations cannot be ignored. Post-school institutions cannot separate themselves from the economic and social issues which bedevil poor and working class communities. Bursaries alone will not address the issues facing youth from poor families. One FET college lecturer sees his first role as that of a psychologist and counselor offering life guidance as youth navigate their uncertain and fraught transition to adulthood. Institutions too struggle to ensure they have adequate resources to support their programs and have spoken openly of the difficulties they have in partnering with government and in ensuring that local employers provide work opportunities for youth.

Youth are agents, but also need guidance. Like all of us: youth exist in the social space between structure and agency. At present it seems that post-schooling programs have had difficulty in upsetting the "qualifications for formal jobs" mindset which blinds youth to alternative understandings of human and community development. Many youth are looking for positive ways to engage in the community, others are beginning to explore ways in which education can improve self-knowledge, expose youth to new ideas and offer alternative ways of conceptualizing livelihoods. A re-imagined post-school sector can support these educative goals.

As we continue to implement EV2, we plan to further explore these questions. Our youth team has articulated an ambitious agenda. Some of the questions for community dialogue touch on critical issues facing development in South Africa, including, (i) how do we define success? Is it material or is it something else? (ii) Is formal education better than informal or popular education? (iii) what is more important, qualifications or skills? What skills? and (iv) can post-school education help in the practice of democracy and citizenship? These questions are not grounded in the developmental assumptions of human capital theory, but rather allow communities to refine, on their own terms, their views on the two questions we posed earlier: What do we value? And, what vision of post-school education embodies the values we hold dear? Undoubtedly some responses will speak to issues of employment, community development and youth development. We'll learn more as the debates continue in Sedibeng over the next year.

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... A role for emerging voices in re-imagining post-school education

Another critique of human capital and productivist thinking is that a focus on “jobs” and “economic growth” is silent about the complex social and environmental issues faced by South Africa and by other countries globally. What is the difference between exploitative work and dignified work? What are the consequences, to our environment, our health and our families and communities, of chasing economic growth and material wealth at any cost? These questions are two of many possible value-oriented questions foreign to the logic of human capital formation and markets. A third, but by no means final critique of the dominant perspective is that an “education for employment” lens offers an unnecessarily narrow conceptualization of the role of education in human development. What does post-school education have to offer us other than training for formal sector jobs which don’t exist?

This brief critique does not reject the notion that the modern economy requires knowledge and skills which people may learn in post-school institutions. Rather, we are arguing that education will not solve the jobs crisis and, perhaps more importantly, limiting the purpose of education to this alone impoverishes possibilities for human and community development in South Africa. Given this critique, where do we go from here?

EV2 research: A process for unraveling half-truths, seeking alternatives and creating counter-narratives at the community level.

The Emerging Voices 2 project is designed to build a network of progressive researchers and community advocates who are tasked with developing a new vision for post-school education which better meets the priorities and interests of all South Africans. In this research, we are asking the following questions: (i) what is the current reality of post-school education? (ii) Is post-school education meeting the needs and interests of individuals and communities – particularly the interests of poor and working class communities? (iii) What is a new vision of post-school education that will better serve human and community development in South Africa?, and (v) what do we need to do to bring that vision to life?

EV2 is funded by the National Skills Fund and is implemented by the Education Policy Consortium as part of a larger research project. Research is taking place at four sites: two in Eastern Cape and one each in Limpopo and Gauteng. Research is being implemented by three university-based research centres (the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation at the University of Johannesburg, the Nelson Mandela Institute at the University of Fort Hare and the Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and training at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University) and the Centre for Education and Policy Development.

The Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT) at the University of Johannesburg is implementing EV2 research in the Sedibeng area. To implement EV2, CERT works with community and adult education centres, FET colleges, higher education institutions and other places of learning in the Sedibeng area through two-representative structures: a site-based team and a youth research and advocacy team.

The “qualifications for jobs” discourse appears to perpetuate unrealistic expectations and false hopes. Educators recognize the highly unfavorable economic environment and express concern that they are judged on whether post-school graduates get jobs. Unemployed youth have expressed their disillusionment with an education system which doesn’t seem to work as advertised. Even so, many poor and working class youth continue to look to post-school education with the hope that it will be a step in the right direction – either toward further education (e.g. transition from an FET College to University) or to a job.

The site-based team and youth team includes stakeholders from community education, adult education and literacy, FET colleges and higher education institutions, including managers, teachers and learners from educational institutions, leaders at local NGOs and unemployed youth.

CERT works with community research teams to implement individual interviews; community dialogues, workshops, and seminars and advocacy activities where community members discuss the current reality of post-schooling and discuss issues of youth development, community development and skills development and unemployment as they relate to post-school education.

The vision of EV2 is that more research is not enough. Rather, for post-school education to better meet South Africa’s diverse community and human development needs, especially among marginalized populations, we must engage in sustained and inclusive collaboration and dialogue to develop and advocate for a new vision for post-school education from the grassroots up.

The process of working with community researchers requires that CERT engage in a critical dialogue with site-based and youth research teams around the EV2 research questions and train community researchers on modes of critical inquiry and data gathering. By itself, this process has raised the level of discourse among community researchers while at the same time providing them with analytical tools for investigating and critiquing post-school issues of importance to them.

Misrepresenting the Causes of Unemployment

Pervasive distortion of what “causes” unemployment undermines the possibility of responding effectively.

John Treat and Enver Motala

South Africa’s persistently high levels of unemployment continue to be the subject of animated public debate, especially in discussions regarding the country’s education system and social unrest. At the same time, intensifying strikes over wages and working conditions in the year and a half since the Marikana massacre continue to be met with threats of job cuts from employers. A recent headline ominously warns, “Job losses loom amid platinum strike”. In the piece, Implats executive Johan Theron is quoted as saying, “If the strike continues in the months ahead, we will unfortunately be forced to apply for a section 189 process.”

Such a statement begs at least one question: Forced by whom? It makes no sense to suggest that striking workers “force” their employers to lay them off; if that were the case, presumably they could also force the employer to relent to their demands, or to seek relief from the state to save their jobs. If, alternatively, it is “market forces” or “government” that force the hands of the employers, then why should workers take the blame?

These questions bring into relief an underlying question about what “causes” unemployment – a question that warrants closer and more serious attention. Although the fact is rarely acknowledged, mainstream discussion of these issues is largely dominated by voices and perspectives allied to the corporate sector, often to the exclusion of other perspectives. For this reason, such discussions are significantly shaped by assumptions – often unstated – about the nature and causes of unemployment. The resulting bias has profound implications for the question of what might be appropriate policy interventions to help achieve a social order that is more socially just, more politically tenable, and more ecologically sustainable.

In order to pierce through the fog, it is useful to step back and consider the broader range of contributing factors that together determine unemployment levels at a given moment, and to look for similarities and differences among them, and among the various ways in which they are portrayed in the dominant discourse. By doing so, we can hopefully begin to recognise distinct patterns that emerge, and begin to formulate explanations for these patterns.

Specifically, among the full range of factors contributing to unemployment, we might recognise three categories in particular:

- real contributing factors to unemployment that are portrayed more or less accurately in mainstream reporting;*
- real contributing factors to unemployment that are portrayed in a biased fashion;*
- alleged contributing factors that are fundamentally ideological assertions.*

Any such categorisation introduces a degree of simplification, and we should not be surprised to discover exceptions. Our concern is not to achieve some definitive categorisation, but to highlight what seem to be important patterns in the dominant discourse regarding various contributing factors to unemployment, and to offer an interpretation of these trends that makes sense of them under present conditions and in light of existing social forces. We argue that this framing should be judged on whether it illuminates more than it obscures. We believe it does.

First, then, we propose to consider contributing factors to unemployment that are effectively ‘external’ to the productive relation. In this category belong, for instance: (a) technological developments that displace workers in the name of automation; (b) the availability of cheap imports; (c) fluctuations in demand for, or in the price of, primary commodities; (d) declining mineral reserves. Such factors are ‘external’ in the sense that they are essentially immune to intervention by the firm or the state, at least in the short term.

For instance, in a story about falling commodity prices or declining mineral reserves, one will frequently encounter passing comment on the potential negative impacts on jobs in affected industries. So when AngloGold announces plans to cut 400 jobs due to a declining price for gold bullion, one can at least understand the link that was being suggested between cause and effect: fluctuations in commodity prices do impose real constraints on financial performance at the level of the firm. To be clear, recognising such a link does not in itself *justify* any particular ‘solution’ – to stay with our example from AngloGold, the ‘solution’ of laying off 400 workers. Rather, it is simply to acknowledge that there is a genuinely external, material factor, essentially beyond the control of the affected parties in the immediate term, that impels some change to the existing state of affairs. Such factors certainly *exacerbate* the contradictions inherent in the relations amongst parties internal to the enterprise, but they are essentially external to those relations.

The distortion arises precisely when such a factor is invoked as a *justification* for particular management decisions, without even passing notice paid to alternative options to prevent or alleviate job losses. In another context – during a previous phase of capitalism, for instance – alternative solutions to a fall in gold bullion prices would not necessarily have been dismissed out of hand – for instance, protective measures or subsidies undertaken by the state. Only in the past few decades have such suggestions been marginalised to the point that they are virtually beyond consideration, due to the aggressive prioritisation under neoliberalism for so-called ‘market-based’ solutions.

It is also worth noting that these sorts of contributing factors to unemployment are often portrayed *relatively* objectively in the dominant discourse – possibly owing precisely to their relative externality vis-à-vis the production process. Although even in these cases an employer may attempt to use such an external causal factor to advance their agenda at the expense of workers or the public at large, there is nonetheless a genuine causal connection in play that effectively arises out of the external environment.

A second category of contributing causal factors to unemployment might best be understood as *real* contributing factors that are often either ignored or portrayed in a manner that carries a marked and identifiable bias. Here, we have in mind things such as: (a) the non-investment of surplus capital; (b) off-shoring of profits; (c) salary differentials. We should note here that even the names by which these factors might be called are themselves a source of disagreement, as they reflect different interpretations that advantage different parties.

Non-investment of surplus capital: When it is noted at all in mainstream reporting, decisions by holders of capital not to invest in production is usually described in terms of ‘investor caution’, ‘weak investor sentiment’, etc. What is striking here is that it is simply taken for granted that those who currently hold capital have absolute discretion regarding the disposition of that capital. Such a framing elides the social origins of capital: the fact that such capital has invariably been accumulated through processes of historical dispossession and / or expropriation of the value of contributed labour. That is, such a framing obscures the origins of existing differentials of wealth and opportunity in past injustice and exploitation – differentials that thus carry social obligations.

An alternative framing might take more seriously the view that holding capital carries social obligations, irrespective of the wishes of the holder. From this perspective, the decision to withhold capital begins to look more like an ‘investment strike’.

Off-shoring of profits: The removal of profits from the country in which they have been created is often described in mainstream reporting as ‘repatriation’. A moment’s reflection highlights the oddity of this description: the suggestion seems to be that the claim of ownership of the originally invested capital is tantamount to parenthood, and the nationality of the ‘parent’ capital extends to the child (profits). On this logic, the ‘repatriation’ to, say, the United Kingdom, of profits generated in South Africa, is like ‘bringing home’ a child of the realm who happens to have suffered the misfortune and indignity of a colonial birth.

Critics might refer to such a process as ‘capital flight’. Extending the metaphor of parent and child, one might even suggest a kidnapping. So again in this case, a major contributing factor to unemployment is routinely characterised in the mainstream press in ways that carry a systematic bias.

Salary differentials: Another factor that might be noted under this second category is income inequality, or salary differentials. It is widely recognised that South Africa has one of the highest ratios of income inequality in the world. While income inequality is regularly noted as a challenge needing urgently to be addressed – through financial incentives to employers, expanding the available skills base, etc. – the contribution of such income inequality itself to joblessness is ignored.

Salary differentials are a mechanism through which the distribution of profits takes place – another mechanism through which the power afforded by holding or managing capital is exercised to the advantage of those holding or managing it. The treatment of this as a merely statistical ratio to be managed obscures the fact that it is the consequence of decisions taken about the distribution of profits, by parties with a vested interest in that distribution, the net effect of which is to remove capital from the circuits of potentially productive investment.

Finally, we might note a third category of factors that are routinely blamed in the mainstream discourse for unemployment, but where the argument seems difficult to maintain. Here we have in mind a set of interrelated factors that are often invoked in combination: ‘unrealistic wage demands’, ‘low productivity’,

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Emerging Voices 2

EV 2 Collective

Creating space for critical dialogue and advocacy in communities

A role for emerging voices in re-imagining post-school education

Education is about what we value

It is generally agreed that education is a social construction. That is to say that the institutions of education, understandings of knowledge, and constructs such as “NQF” and “matric,” among other things, are understood to be socially-negotiated human creations. A school, unlike a waterfall, is not a natural formation; a course in the “History of South Africa” will reflect particular perspectives and understandings of the past (many of which are contested); and identifying someone as a “FET College student” may reflect certain explicit characteristics (i.e. enrolment in an FET College course) as well as implicit assumptions about a particular human being.

As with other social constructions, education both influences and is influenced by conditions and phenomena in society. In modern South Africa, these include high and unequal levels of poverty, inequality and unemployment; the persistence of spatial, “racial” and wealth disparities created under Apartheid; understandings of knowledge, work, and success defined in terms which privilege capitalist paradigms and echo a history of unequal power relations; and a diversity of other social formations and movements (e.g. unions, religious organizations, popular education movements, cooperatives and collectives) which posit alternative conceptualizations of the relationship between education, work and society.

While the problems facing education and society are complex, what is stated above suggests a straightforward point: *education is constructed around what we value*. The Emerging Voices 2 project, the topic of this article, has an ambitious goal: to support the process of collaboratively re-visioning post-school education from the grassroots up. In this process of re-visioning, we find that we are required to grapple with two fundamental questions: (i) what do *we* value? And, (ii) how, and to what extent, is what we value made manifest in post-school education and learning in South Africa?

This article is about the Emerging Voices 2 project (EV2). EV2 is a multi-year research project funded with a goal of engaging communities to create a new, community-oriented, vision for post-school education. This article is divided into three sections. The first section identifies the need for the EV2 project. The next section provides an overview of EV2 activities in Sedibeng, one of the implementation sites. The final section presents some preliminary evidence which has emerged from EV2 meetings, dialogues and events.

The need for Emerging Voices 2

Today, more South Africans than ever before, over 1.3 million, are enrolled in post-school education. This expansion in equity and access has been characterized as an important step toward the goal of social justice. However, despite record enrollment, there is a great sense of frustration with post-school education. With high unemployment, especially among youth, many people with a matric, a post-school qualification or a learnership experience are wondering if the struggle for post-school education and qualification was worth it.

In parallel with the surge in enrolments, there has also been a dramatic increase in the number of youth (over three million) who are not in education, employment or training. Among youth in poor and historically marginalized communities, unemployment borders on 50%. South Africa is twenty years into the new dispensation and mass poverty and inequality persist.

The dominant perspective guiding investment in post-school education is that expanding access to post-school education and implementing reforms which enhance the relevance of post-schooling qualifications for the labour market will promote economic and employment growth. Echoing this perspective, the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* states that the main purpose of FET Colleges is “to train young school leavers, providing them with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for employment in the labour market (DHET, 2013, p. 11). Implicit in this statement is that the labor market stands ready to absorb hundreds of thousands of post-school leavers annually – if only leavers have the right qualifications or skills. What do we do then when the labor market appears unwilling to fulfill our policy wishes?

The EV2 point of departure is a critique of the dominant discourse which by and large is grounded in the logic of human capital theory and productivism. This is not the time or the place to offer a book-length refutation of this argument such as is offered in Vally and Motala (2014), however we must refute the dominant construction of education if we are to argue that a new vision is necessary.

There are several problems with human capital and productivist perspectives. If jobs are a policy goal, education is not a silver bullet. Supply-side skills development does not in and of itself create jobs. In fact the development of more productive workers may lead to fewer jobs and a hollowing out of the middle class (Collins, 2013). The development of workers with advanced knowledge and skills may be a desired goal – but such investment may exacerbate, rather than reduce mass unemployment and economic inequality.

We were momentarily carried away to some romantic place for two days, and then rudely re-awakened as we drove away from the villages through towns and cities - re-awakened by the pollution, hooting of cars, people scurrying, and litter lining the streets. This jolt back to reality was a good thing as it reminded us to always be very aware that 'airbrushing the countryside serves us badly' (Patel 2007:21).

To become and remain an idyll, the rural is forgotten, sanitized and shorn of meaning to fit the view from the city (ibid).

This 'little piece of heaven' in the rural Eastern Cape is a site of struggle and hardship for those who live in it – carrying water up and down a mountain is no easy task and we witnessed a few people doing this, including a child of about 9 or 10 with her head wrapped to cushion it from the heavy bucket. While the villages, farmers and the work being done there shows us that something else is indeed possible, we should not romanticise it – a few examples of hope will not change this world but they do show us that another world is possible – it is already emerging. This is an example of agency within struggle.

This example and others like it need to be amplified in order to bring a new world order into being. This requires new thinking, heightened conscientisation, mobilisation, resistance to co-option, and embracing the ethic of social justice. It will be a hard, long struggle against those who care very little (if at all) for real justice, peace and dignity for all.

What is our role in this?

What is our role in this struggle? What can we do, as middle class researchers, who research the so-called 'poor'? Some of the farmers asked us if we can assist with water or with imple-ments. We said that we cannot, even though we wished we could. We did promise to get 'word out there' – to try to do something with the little power we have – our ability to write – to write on behalf of others. We do this remembering the words of Freire (1998: 73):

'No one can be in the world, with the world, and with others and maintain a posture of neutrality. I cannot be in the world decontextualized, simply observing life'.

We can listen and we can learn, we can be angry and we can stand in solidarity.

One of the farmers gently scolded us (the 'University') for forgetting about rural communities like his - as he said to us: 'ukuba nithi niyiyunivesithi nyayabuya niza ezilalini, icacile uku-ba iyunivesithi isilibele singabantu basezilalini' ('the University is coming back to the rural communities')

We end with a reflection and poem. The reflection is written by Sonya and the poem by Olwam – both pieces looking at 'poverty':

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A culture of avarice deepens this widening gap between those who have, and those who don't; it desensitizes our recognition of gross inequality and is irrevocably destroying our planet - and yet this insatiable appetite for more grows, seemingly apathetic to the destruction it causes. I sit back and wonder what world we could have if everyone was happy with enough - because there most definitely is enough for everyone: enough food for everyone to be fed, enough land for everyone to have homes. I think of this capitalist system which subliminally feeds our wanton desire for more; a system which thrives on this need for excess and can only ever reproduce this growing gap of inequality; a system which is so ingrained within the fabric of our society that we barely notice its effects on our everyday choices until we're forced to step back and assess the disastrous state of our world. I imagine a world untainted by the greed of capitalism where people are seen as human beings and not as human capital. A world where enough truly is as good as a feast (Mary Poppins' words oft quoted by Neville Alexander) - a feast that everyone can enjoy.

Five Days of Hunger

You know it's bad when there are no hunger-pains anymore. Your mouth taste like something between metallic and alkali – one is too hungry to tell. Your face, belly and thighs start to lose fat from the past few days of no food. Your arms feel sore just where your skin meets the bones. Your voice grows faint and it becomes harder to shout as energy is depleting.

Today you learn new lessons that help you to last longer in tomorrow's battle: Lie flat on your bed and move slowly to preserve the little energy left in your blood; Be careful not to jump too quickly off the bed because dizziness and weakness will send you to the floor; The stomach growls digesting the saliva that's been collecting in your mouth; You drink water to stay alive and it will also make your skin look fresh and hydrated. The human body can take much more beating than three days of starvation.

With two more days to go before any sign of a good meal, My hope is stirred up knowing I have endured this long. I realize it's not hunger but poverty that is my enemy. Two more days of hunger that I need to withstand.

At this moment I put my pen down to save the little energy left in me. I lie prostrate, drained on my bed dreaming of a better day. Thinking of all the good things in my life, I am comforted. Seeing my future screening on my shut eyes, I am consoled. Hunger is but for a while then harvest comes.

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Sonya Leurquain-Steyn (CIPSET,NMMU)

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Contradictions and Contestations

The Role of NUMSA in the formulation of South African skills development policies since the 1990s

This is a shortened version of a forthcoming paper exploring the contradictions and contestations within the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) regarding the trade unions' contribution to the formulation of South Africa's skills development policies. Theoretically the paper engages with sociological theories of labour power and also discusses perspectives on educational restructuring.

The irony of the discourse on neo-liberal skills policies is that the prevailing policies of the state, criticised as being neoliberal, were actually conceptualised and won within a radical socialist trade union - Numsa.

NUMSA has been the leading union amongst Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) affiliates which has championed the struggle for empowering workers with mid-level skills through artisanal training and Sector Education and Training Authority(SETA) aligned technical training. The labour movement was part of deliberations to envision a post-apartheid skills development dispensation since the mid- 1980s and embarked on various projects and programmes such as the Industrial Strategy Project (ISP); Economic Trends Research Group (ET) of COSATU , Participatory Research Programmes (PRP) and Research and Development Groups (RDGs) which sought to articulate a vision for industrial, economic as well as skills training policies in a democratic South Africa. According to Von Holdt (2005) the aim of NUMSA's multi-year bargaining strategy linking grading, training and wages was that 'Workers would have a clearer career path up the grading ladder based on acquiring new skills through training. Wage gaps would be narrowed and wage levels would be narrowed and wage levels would be determined by the workers' skills. Restructuring would be based on more skilled work and higher value added as the workforce became more skilled. The shift away from narrow job demarcation would open the way for flexibility and team-work based on multi-skilling'. This approach gave rise to many challenges including the fact that so called multi-skilling actually became a strategy which capital used to implement retrenchments by claiming to 'multi skill' workers when in fact the strategy was to reduce the number of employed workers.

In interviewing some current and former NUMSA leaders who were involved in training Ifound that there was also a concern that skills based grading undermines worker solidarity. Kgobe (1997) also raises an important question when he states that:

South Africa's workplaces are not constructed on the basis of a skills and knowledge hierarchy. They are made up of a large, relatively homogenous group of workers with roughly equivalent skills and a small group of more skilled jobs. What sense does a skills-based career path have in this context?' (Kgobe,1997:74).

It is these contours of contestation that occurred within Numsa and the broader trade union movement which I discuss in more detail in the paper. Numsa expanded the work of the RDG on education and training to include a component of international consultation. By the early 1990s Numsa had already drawn international experts from Australia, such as Chris Lloyd and Alistair Machin, into the policy making process to assist in spreading ideas about skills, knowledge and career paths within Numsa and the broader trade union movement in South Africa. Policies such as Outcomes Based Education (OBE) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which have underpinned the skills training policy of the present government were largely influenced by these processes of policy development.

Radical alternatives such as those that argued for comprehensive literacy and numeracy programmes linked to RPL were defeated and in their stead skills-based career pathing was prioritized to accentuate the ostensible relationship between skills acquisition and productivity. Kgobe (1997) argued that:

The skills-based grading system creates a complex training regime at the top while leaving the base largely underdeveloped and confused. This is one of the criticisms that has been levelled at the Australian training system. You end up with complex, paper castles in the sky and very little actually happening on the ground' (Kgobe, 1997:75).

I argue that by following these policies into the state the former trade union intellectuals moved from being *policy thinkers* to *policy actors* within the state thereby playing a crucial role in the implementation of policies which were generally viewed to being neoliberal in orientation. An internal vacuum of knowledge about skills and other policies within Numsa was created when most of the leaders went into government during the mid-1990s. Once these intellectuals entered the state they combined with technical experts within the state system and consultants to consolidate the implementation of skills policies which were neoliberal in orientation.

Skills and technology are integral to the neo-liberal offensive which results in workplace restructuring and ultimately retrenchments. Hlatshwayo (2013) shows that NUMSA has been weak in developing proactive responses to technological changes at the workplace and that the focus has been more on bargaining and wages rather than comprehensively responding to technological changes. This paper draws from a number of interviews with current and former leaders of NUMSA who have been directly involved in skills development and broader economic policy formulation since the late 1980s. NUMSA has been focussed more on its representational role within bureaucratic structures such as SETAs rather than reviewing the theoretical and ideological basis on which its input into the skills development debate is premised. The more substantive paper referred to above will therefore also contribute a critical understanding to the complexities of the role of trade unions in skills development policy formulation.

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Two villages, four researchers, one inspiring experience

Four of us who work on a research project – Emerging Voices II - part of 'Building a progressive network of critical research and public engagement: Towards a democratic post schooling sector' (Education Policy Consortium) - set off on a Sunday on a nine hour drive from Port Elizabeth to Port St Johns. Our task: to visit the first of 10 South African 'Profiles of Possibility' – groups/organisations/communities doing something that can be defined as a 'transition', a 'prefigurative expression', an 'intermediary', 'pocket of hope' in an increasingly hostile world in which millions struggle to survive largely because traditional forms of employment are becoming a thing of the past. Zizek (2011: 211) extends Vilfredo Pareto's 80/20 rule when he states:

The global economy is tending towards a state in which only 20 percent of the workforce will do all the necessary work, so that 80 percent of the population will become basically irrelevant and of no use, potentially unemployed.

More on 'Profiles of Possibility'

Throughout the world there are numerous movements, spaces, groupings, organisations, ideas, learnings, activities, and ways of doing things differently – against the dominant, oppressive system of global corporate capitalism which favours a few at the expense of the majority. These 'possibilities' argue for something new, better, equitable and just. They often do this against all odds – they struggle to survive and constantly bump up against power and domination. And yet, against all of this, they are there – they exist, even if they are marginalised and invisible to many or even to most. Our research explores these 'profiles of possibility', with a specific focus on the *learning* that happens there – learning which may not be confined to a classroom; or to a day, week or month; or may not happen in a traditional way of 'teacher – expert' and 'student – empty vessel'; or may not be prescribed; or may not have formal assessment. Our search is for learning within a group/organisation/community that is connected to the everyday struggles of people within that group. This kind of learning can hopefully point to something new, better and more meaningful in what has come to be termed the 'post-schooling' sector (the education/training/development that happens 'around' schooling). Learning that is of interest to us is aptly captured in the following words:

For me the most interesting and significant learning occurs informally and incidentally, in people's everyday lives. And some of the most powerful learning occurs as people struggle against oppression, as they struggle to make sense of what is happening to them and to work out ways of doing something about it (Foley, 1999: 1-2).

Our first 'profile', Is'baya, together with the ARC-Institute for Tropical and Subtropical Crops, has worked in the Port St Johns area of the Eastern Cape for 15 years. They currently work on the Uvuselelo (Integrated Village Renewal Programme) with 55 villages. Uvuselelo is a long-term (5 to 7 years) holistic model that has to do with self-reliance and is being implemented interactively with organised village communities.

Noqhekwana, the first of two villages we visited, is 10km away from town. This is a misleading measure if gauged by the urban experience. The village is roughly 40 minutes from town (on a non-rainy day) owing to the gravel road, pot holes and the mountainous landscape – the latter being a feature telling of the spatial (and other) divide between the rural and its town counterpart. The guesthouse owner (where we stayed) knew very little about the villages or what is being farmed there. She told us that there is 'cattle farming, but the youngsters are not interested and are more interested in having cellphones, etc'. We experienced something quite different to her description.

Britt Baatjes

Sonya Leurquain-Steyn

Olwam Mngwazi

Khanyisile Ngalo

Grappling with the concepts of 'poverty' and 'poor'

We are aware of numerous studies showing that as people's income and consumption rises, their levels of happiness don't necessarily rise too (see, amongst other, Schumacher's 'Small is beautiful', 1973), and we acknowledge that assets within a livelihoods framework focus on what people have (their strengths) – and build on that capital – rather than seeing people as passive victims - and concerns about the inadequacies of traditional measurements of poverty based on income or consumption (see reference to the work of Chambers, 1989; Carney, 1998; Rakodi, 2002 and others in Staples, 2007).

Despite knowing this, we were all still struck by the 'wealth and richness' of the farmers – a pride and dignity within themselves, a collegial and cooperative relationship with their neighbours and, indeed, a stunning richness in the blossoming of their trees and plants. None of us felt that we were in the presence of 'poverty' – except for the fact that the farmers are lacking in certain basic rights and necessities, like not having easy access to water and not having enough farming implements. Besides these vital missing components (and we do not wish to minimise their importance at all) - there was no sense of starvation or desperation or helplessness or hopelessness – none of the middle class assumptions or labels of what 'poverty' is. The four of us (all middle class) experienced a tremendous sense of peacefulness, serenity and calmness over the two days. Perhaps for the two researchers who grew up in a similar environment, it felt a bit like home, or for the two of us who did not, it felt a bit like we wished it was. How could we feel envy for people who seemingly have so little when we have so much (or perhaps that is the problem – it is how we define 'much')?

There is no alienation of work here as many urbanised workers feel being part of a factory line. Instead there is a deep connection to the land and a sense of harmony and balance within and among it. The children, chickens, chicks and dogs sitting and playing side-by-side are testament to this. We visited the villages at the same time as seasonal farmworkers got retrenched in De Doorns, Western Cape. Lumka Oliphant (Social Development) said:

'There's a problem with seasonal workers, where they only get money for a certain period and where they only get food for a certain period. And then they go back to poverty'.

The farmers in Noqhekwana and Qhaka and the other villages grow fruit and vegetables the whole year round and they are working their own land. In this way, they are not part of a capitalist system that can hire and fire at a whim, leaving you 'working and eating seasonally'.