Post-School Education

REVIEW

REVIEW HIGHLIGHT

#FeesCanFall
Funding FREE Education

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EDITORIAL

Enver Motala and Salim Vally

The tumult in our universities continues in 2016 despite the announcement by Higher Education Minister Nzimande that the 8% increase in fees demanded by universities will be largely subsidised by the state. Finance Minister Gordhan's Mid-Term budget announcement at the end of October of an increase in budgetary allocations to tertiary education has not quelled the flames because it does not deal with the fundamental demand for free education – not even fee free education for the poor. A significant amount of the increase will be provided to the National Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Gillian Hart – distinguished professor at Wits University – reminds us that:

> The failure of state funding to keep pace with growing student numbers has generated the cruel arithmetic of steadily increasing fees. Far from providing a solution, NSFAS is a part of a vicious circle through which inadequate government funding drives up fees, necessitating more support for low-income students. Furthermore, this support is by definition inadequate to the extent that increasing the NSFAS comes at the expense of direct funding to universities, and thus pushes up fees even further. It is little wonder, then, that many black university students feel as though they have been handed a poisoned chalice (Mail and Guardian, 21/10/2016).

For the year 2015-2016, South Africa's state budget for universities including funding for NSFAS continued its decline to 0.72% of GDP considerably below the international average and even less than the continental average despite the growth of student numbers. This chronic underfunding of tertiary education and the on-going protests and police/private security reaction raised the ire of hundreds of academics who staged a national day of action on October the 7th. They demanded an increase of at least 1.5% of the GDP toward directly funding tertiary education pointing out that the government has created a funding crisis at universities. Underfunding they argued, has also led to a reduction in student and academic support programmes, high lecturer:student ratios, large class sizes and has negatively affected the quality of education. Over 50% of students are pushed out of institutions without completing their degrees and are saddled with debt.

Academics also decried the violence at different universities and in a statement issued felt that, "Student protests are a symptom of this crisis. They are not its cause. The employment of private security or 'bouncers' and police on campuses has created a dangerous situation on our campuses including an atmosphere of distrust, increased insecurity and the wastage of much needed resources". A lecturer at UCT's Health Sciences Faculty, Dr Lydia Cairncross argued:

> A university cannot function as a space for the generation and dissemination of knowledge in a climate of securitisation. It is not possible to teach properly when we have armed guards at the door to "protect" us from our students. We cannot expect students to learn or to engage in meaningful debate when armed guards polarize them into groups 'for' or 'against' a particular struggle. If our institutions of higher learning, the very home and space of ideas and intellectual discussion, cannot find a better solution to our problems than guards, costly interdicts, suspensions, intimidation, harassment and bullying, pepper spray, rubber bullets and stun grenades then we have failed as an institution of higher learning for we are teaching that force, not thought, is the only way to resolve our differences" (http://www.groundup.news/article/uct-academics-ask-vice-chancellor-not-use-private-security/).

Securitisation is not the solution and strengthens the hand of those who are frustrated and desperate. We unequivocally condemn arson, including the torching of buildings and libraries, and reject equating legitimate protests with arson. Moreover demonising those who support free education does not bring us closer to a sustainable solution. Hundreds of students have been imprisoned and many suspended without due process simply on suspicion of involvement in these acts. This merely aggravates frustration and contributes to a vicious cycle of violence.

Inevitably this issue focusses on these contemporary developments. It begins with a summary of the Neville

Alexander Commemorative Conference held at the end of 2015 which brought together participants, largely students from 22 universities and provides a useful background to the events of 2016. The remainder of the articles in the first section of the Review explore in various ways how free education can become a reality.

The first a submission to the Fees Commission provides concrete proposals for a more democratic and sustainable model of public funding which does not rely on the vagaries of charity and individual philanthropy. It calls for decisively addressing the chronic underfunding of universities through taxing the super-rich. The submission draws attention to higher education as a public good and the problems of a user fees model. Importantly, the submission outlines how the beneficiaries of free education will contribute to society and the public good by using their acquired skills, training and knowledge for responsible 'public service and citizen work.' If applied creatively, this model could engender forms of social solidarity, social cohesion and consciousness in order to challenge the divisions plaguing our country. The writers of the submission also respond to Vice-Chancellors Habib and Bawa who referred to the submission in the public media and who the writers feel have misunderstood the submission.

This rebuttal is followed by an informative popular pamphlet compiled by students and academics from Wits University and UJ. The pamphlet provides an overview of the arguments of the proponents of universal free, public and decommodified education for all and those who argue for free education for those they define as 'poor' and the continuation of user fees. We include the executive summary of the model for free education - including an increase in corporate tax rates - assembled by Wits FeesMustFall. The preamble to the model challenges those who believe that free education for all will benefit the rich: "There is no doubt that the rich can afford to fund their education, however, this then means that their contribution to the education system will be limited to the 3 or 4-year timeframe in which their children are in the university system." Molefe writing in the Daily Vox (reproduced in this Review) also takes umbrage at the perspective that free education will increase inequality arguing instead that, "The bottom line is that in South Africa, education forms parts of a rights floor that everyone is entitled to and no one should be arbitrarily denied. Education is part of an inheritance at birth every South African is granted, no matter their

colour or socioeconomic position." Equal Education's full submission draws attention to the vital link between basic education and higher education. They compellingly show that the quality of basic education for the majority of South African children is inadequate. This quality, moreover, is differentially distributed, based on social class and colour and Equal Education contends that transformation is not only crucial at the higher education level alone, but needs to be deliberate and focused on the whole system.

We include the address by Enver Motala on student leadership. Motala calls for a culture of critical thinking instead of formulaic dogma, more debate and deeper clarification on key issues such as critical literacy and appropriate forms of democratic representation and clarity for organizational and strategic purposes.

Articles in the remainder of the review deal with the political economy of health and its implication for nursing work and training (Miriam Di Paola – REAL), multilingualism and education (Nadeema Musthan – Centre for Community Schools, NMMU and Fatima Gabru – CERT), national youth service (Veerle Dieltiens - EPC) and experiential learning (Neil Murtough -CIPSET). The review ends with a review of an important book on global inequality and wealth concentration.

As the year draws to an end we conclude on the sober note from our op-ed in the Conversation (https://the-conversation.com/free-education-is-possible-if-south-africa-moves-beyond-smoke-and-mirrors-65805):

> Neither smoke from police stun grenades, burning buildings nor officialdom's smoke and mirrors will solve the problem…It is clear to us that very little will be resolved without reference to this critical demand [of free education]. All the minister has done is to kick the can further down the road, deepening students' disquiet and provoking conflict on campuses.

Times of social upheaval and change call for creative and imaginative leadership. Thus far we have seen a spectacular failure of imagination and a forlorn and unfortunate resort to the apartheid- era practice of kragdadigheid. It failed then and it will fail now. We need to talk about how and when universal free and quality public education from early childhood education to higher education can be achieved not if or whether it can be achieved.

REFLECTING ON TRANSFORMATION, DECOLONISATION AND THE FEES MUST FALL CAMPAIGN:

Salim Vally (CERT)

CERT hosted the third annual conference to honour the legacy of former Robben Island political prisoner and celebrated scholar-activist, Neville Alexander. Alexander died in 2012. He was arguably South Africa's foremost and pre-eminent public intellectual and a reference point for understanding some of the most important educational debates and practices in our country over the past half-century. The conference on the 1st of December, 2015 was held amidst a wave of important national developments, significant not only for students, workers and academics but also for South African society more generally.

Close to two hundred student, academic and worker participants from 22 universities attended and engaged in vibrant discussions dedicated to reflecting on the tumultuous events at South African tertiary institutions last year centred around the #FeesMustFall campaign. It was the first such gathering with delegates from almost all universities since the RhodesMustFall initiative at UCT in early 2015.

Developments since the Rhodes Must Fall and other student movements have opened up absolutely critical debates at a number of institutions - not just universities - about the purpose of education in relation to the idea of transformation and decolonisation in a situation of the global marketisation and corporatisation of education. These debates are not just about colonial and apartheid era statues since they relate to a raft of other issues all of which go to the root not only of education but also of society (symbolic representation, structural racism and interpersonal prejudice, demographic issues, hetero-nor-mativity, patriarchy, 'whiteness', culture of institutions, language, culture and knowledge, power and history).

The national FeesMustFall student movement promoted solidarity between students and workers in and between universities and challenged the corporatisation of the academy. They called for an education system that speaks to the needs of citizens and not to the business of profit. For this cause students were prepared to close their institutions, occupy their campus buildings, challenge authority and power and courageously put their bodies on the line. In their mass marches to Luthuli House on 22 October 2015 and the Union Buildings and Parliament on 23 October 2015, students and workers en masse, expressed their support for the movement and through it their vital desire for an education that promotes a dignified and fulfilled life for all.

The concrete gains and victories in a short space of time at universities should also not be under estimated. Some of these include the removal of symbols of colonialism, the re-naming of buildings, stopping fee increments and registration fees, insourcing at a few universities and serious attempts at changing the curricula. These gains bode well for maintaining the momentum toward the achievement of free quality public education from pre-primary to higher education.

We also witnessed collective forms of organisation in many places and a healthy suspicion of backroom deals, a realisation that change will only come through mass struggle on the ground, an unleashing of popular energies nationally, a realisation of the importance of student-worker alliances and the setting aside of sectarian differences.

Recent developments are not an aberration in the sense that the present protests have been building up for a long time. There have been protests at the beginning of every year for more than a decade against the high costs of higher education and financial exclusions. The present events also come in a post-Marikana massacre period where we continue to have daily community protests for democratic accountability and what is called 'service delivery' protests. There is certainly an effervescent air of audacity and new found mass militancy.

Significant numbers of academics realize that they can no longer be agnostic and adopt a 'business-as-usual' and 'ivory tower' approach to their work. Progressive academics engage actively with their contexts. They are responsive to social need and acknowledge the reality, voice and experience of the marginalised, embracing social justice as a central aspect of academic work. We should reject systems that reproduce, entrench and naturalise inequality and the social suffering that it entails. Through rigorous inquiry, progressive scholars are able to identify the insufficiencies of present models of education (such as those promoted by free-market fundamentalism, human capital theory and neoliberalism), challenge these models not only in epistemological terms but in ethical and practical terms, developing with students and others concrete alternatives to the status quo through imaginative policy-making, planning and practice.

This kind of scholarship contributes to making every aspect of the university public, socially useful, accessible to the citizenry and helps us to return to the notion of education as a common good, This in turn energises teaching and learning, making it more relevant and meaningful. As progressive academics we must do whatever we can to remove the obstacles that stand in the way of every citizen achieving the highest ideals of their community and humanity and thus support the student movement.

The first session of the conference was run by students themselves and involved students from the various universities - for the first time since the momentous events of 2015 - sitting face-to face with each other and sharing views about the essential issues confronting students. In their deliberations they discussed many issues which refer not only to institutional life within higher education

but also the many unavoidable related issues that affect the lives of students and the communities from which they come. They concern the impact of racist practices beyond apartheid, social inequality especially as it affects the lives of students and workers, the alienation felt by them, and very importantly the extraordinary burden of costs that affects all students as public universities increasingly adopt commercial approaches and management practices in the running of universities. Leigh-Ann Naidoo a student who facilitated the first session summarises the issues that were discussed:

> ending financial exclusion and student debt; the dehumanising labour practices of outsourcing; institutional racism and other systems of oppression; the language question; the criminalisation of protest and protestors and the securitisation of our universities; and the need for serious change in our curriculum and pedagogies – are the students contribution to the ongoing debates around the role of a university and the imagining of what a decolonised public African university might be. All of these questions speak to the varied experiences of violence by mainly poor black students, and of course other oppressed student groups like women, queer and physically challenged students.

A panel of academics, workers and trade unionists discussed the need for unity between students and staff, the negative impact of outsourcing and the meaning of 'decolonising' the academy. The discussion was opened by UJ academic, Rubina Setlhare-Kajee, who spoke about the UJ Progressive Staff and Academics' Forum and its attempt to "create a space at UJ for open discussion, where workers and academics - understood as all staff (academic and nonacademic), as well as students - come together in a process of learning." CERT staff member Prof Linda Chisholm describes the input of a panelist:

> The significance of the contemporary movement to end outsourcing was underlined by Noor Nieftagodien, Professor of History at Wits and member of the Workers Solidarity Committee. He provided an insightful analysis of when and how outsourcing was introduced at Wits and what it has meant. Outsourcing, he explained, was introduced in the context of the adoption of a neoliberal framework for the management of universities in the mid-1990s. This involved the corporatisation of institutions which transformed students into clients and workers as not being part of the core business of universities. The implications were extremely negative as workers were pushed into precarious casual work and excluded from the university community. The struggle for insourcing, he said, is therefore not only about better working conditions, but also about making workers equal members in the university community.

Sikhumbuzo Mngadi another UJ academic posed the challenge of what it might mean today to talk of decolonising the university and re-envisioning a new university. He urged the audience "to reflect on the historical moment and ask ourselves why we are still asking the same questions that Neville asked those students many years ago." The final speaker was Dinga Sikwebu from the metal workers' union NUMSA who also paid tribute to Neville Alexander and to the students who had achieved in a few months what the unions had not been able to achieve for many years.

Enver Motala from the University of Fort Hare presented a joint paper on funding which showed that "free public higher education for all is possible, realistic and necessary". He argued that the state should examine the structure of personal taxation which could be levied for the top 10% of income earners in the country and that government needs to increase funding to universities:

> In 2011, South Africa's state budget for universities as a percentage of GDP was 0.75%, , which was less than the Africa-wide average (0.78%) and compared to OECD countries (1.21%) and the rest of the world (0.84%). From 2012 data, the proportion of GDP for Brazil is 0.95%, Senegal and Ghana 1.4%, Norway and Finland over 2% and Cuba 4.5%. In South Africa, the 2015/2016 budget for higher education is R30 billion. If the government were to spend 1% of GDP on higher education, this would amount to R41 billion – an additional R11 billion and almost four times the reported shortfall due to the 0% increase.

A collective of students and academics from different universities subsequently and as a result of this conference compiled these ideas into a submission to the Fees Commission.

The conference also involved animated discussions in four vibrant break away groups under the following themes:

- Decolonisation of curricula/racism/patriarchy
- Governance/universities as democratic spaces/ state-university relations/autonomy
- Rankings/the neoliberal university/corporatisation/ inequalities between universities/austerity
- Repression/censorship

Many of the participants were at the epicentre of the recent struggles for education and other rights, and together brought the considerably valuable experience they had accumulated in the course of the debates, discussions and actions over the last period from many parts of the country. Events in the recent past among youth and students are certainly suggestive of a new generation in the now very popular epigram of Fanon, attempting to fulfil its mission. It does signal a new consciousness among important layers of youth, students and workers, but also exasperation with the sophistry of the ruling party, frustration at thwarted hopes, the everyday injuries of mere survival under racial capitalism, the failure of an economic system which increases inequality and unemployment, the venality of politicians and the brazen excesses of cronyism. The conference provided them the opportunity not only to share their experiences but to contest the issues that arose in the course of the campaigns including the political, ideological and social orientations they brought to them, the issues these raised and the complexities they had to deal with. Most of all it provided them with the opportunity to forge and renew relations. These will be assessed at the next Neville Alexander conference to be held later this year.

FREE PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ALL IS POSSIBLE, ACHIEVABLE AND NECESSARY:

EXTRACTS FROM A SUBMISSION TO THE FEES COMMISSION

26 May 2016

By Mondli Hlatshwayo (CERT), Rasigan Maharajh (Tshwane University of Technology),
Zolisa Marawu (CIPSET), Enver Motala (NMI),
Leigh-Ann Naidoo (University of the Witwatersrand) and Salim Vally (CERT).

OUR ARGUMENT

Following from the legislation and reports above and a variety of other literature (including academic and other articles in the public media), our main arguments are that:

1. It is generally agreed that the higher education system in South Africa is chronically underfunded. Even the Minister of Higher Education has accepted the need to access additional resources for higher education.

2. Student funding is precarious because it is dependent on a variety of sources which are based on the contributions of parents, bank loans, the goodwill of business and charitable institutions, the contributions of universities who are themselves underfunded and other bursaries and scholarships from the public (outside education) and private sector. These sources of funding are precarious and unsustainable because they carry no legal obligation to fund students in the first place - not even in the case of parents, the majority of whom are most likely to be dependent on bank loans for such funding.

3. The production of knowledge is inseparable from and indispensable to the sustainability and development of all societies in a complex and challenging world. Such knowledge has been essential to the development of human beings, social systems and their relationship with the global environment since the dawn of human civilization. Without it human society as we know it today would not exist. The preservation, continuity and development of knowledge are inseparable from the survival of the species especially as part of the natural environment in which it exists.

4. Universities are now the key public institutions of knowledge development through their role in research, teaching and post graduate supervision. The production and dissemination of knowledge is inextricably linked to their mandate as institutions of social, economic, cultural and intellectual development for democratic societies and the global environment. The costs of education are not easily reconcilable with narrow economic goals alone or to the rates of return to individuals since the remit of education is simultaneously individual, social and global and has qualitative attributes which are not measurable in conventional ways. Higher education therefore is a public good. Knowledge systems in South Africa must examine and conceptualise their roles as part of the larger global systems of knowledge production for a humane social order globally. The provision of free education for all its citizens has inestimable value and limitless possibilities.

5. Universities are crucial to development in democratic societies where they are mandated to advance the system of knowledge that can be useful for the multiplicity of related roles for achieving the values and goals of a democratic society. Especially in societies that are in transition from a traumatic past – as in the case of South Africa - this role has to be discharged through a dedicated response. This mandate requires universities to respond to the many and pronounced challenges faced by the state and society in its transformation, including those emanating from a raft of social, economic political, environmental and other challenges amongst which are the intractable issues of inequality, poverty and unemployment. In other words, the challenges faced by universities are fundamental to the reconstruction of post-apartheid society. For that reason, universities should be funded as comprehensively as possible to discharge their important socio-economic, political and cultural mandates to the best of their capabilities.

6. Also critical to their mandate is the ability of students to enter into universities, to be able to study in an atmosphere of calmness, to apply themselves properly to the difficulty of the environments present and to succeed in the process of achieving their goals. Universities must simultaneously provide the enabling environment for students to do so through the necessary financial, infrastructural and intellectual resources necessary to discharge its mandates of teaching, research and community engagement. Few students who don't come from private or well-resourced urban schools make the grade for admission into university courses and even fewer for some highly prized courses. It is ultimately a proportionately small percentage of 'poor' students who gain entry to study at universities. Given the high correlation between push-out rates and costs, meaningful funding has to be provided to enable students to continue their studies. Such funding

should cover not only tuition fees but the full cost of study necessary for success at university, including: registration and tuition fees; meals and accommodation; books and travel.

7. Some of the factors limiting poor student success should be addressed by increasing the quantity and quality of contact time between lecturers and students. Lecturer-student ratios need to be adjusted so as to make it possible for lecturers to provide the necessary support especially to underprepared students and specifically in first-year classes. This in turn requires increased numbers of sufficiently qualified and appropriately remunerated staff (both academic and administrative). Renewed efforts must be made to provide, and properly fund academic and language support[1]. Official university output targets and indicators need to be cautiously managed, to ensure that too narrow a focus on outcomes does not negatively affect teaching quality. Wasteful expenditure including the perverse pursuit of rankings, unnecessary and glitzy public relations, exorbitant salaries paid to top managers and dispro-portionate security measures should be curtailed. Non-academic staff should be 'insourced' and paid a living wage.

8. The funding of education is not an end in itself but is essential for the achievement of the socio-politi-cal, cultural and transformative goals against the background of society characterised by the cleavages of racist oppression and exploitative social relations. Policies that are designed to provide for the full cost of study are essential to an overarching social objective in which the goals are to develop a democratic and socially just society.

9. Although individuals will not be equal when education is made free, the spirit of such a policy must also have as its priority the goal of ending the culture of individualism, corporatisation and unnecessary managerialism that is pervasive in the University system. This is important because of the role that higher education can play in a society with high levels of unemployment and chronic inequality where education has been about elite transition within the framework of an ethic defined by the present market-driven capitalist system. This has engendered both uncritical thinking and an isolation from the key issues facing the vast majority of society – in particular the black working classes and marginalised communities, ideas re-enforced by the very structure and form of learning, the alienating curriculum and pedagogies that characterise so much of university life. A properly funded university system is therefore necessary to engender and encourage cooperation, collegiality, collaboration and a new social compact based on a set of values in which knowledge is not commodified and is socially relevant.

WE THEREFORE SUBMIT THAT

1. Free public higher education for all is possible, realistic and necessary.

2. The government needs to increase the funding by at least an aggregate amount equal to the ratio achieved in OECD countries to address the issue of the chronic underfunding of the higher education system. In 2011, South Africa's state budget for universities as a percentage of GDP was 0.75%, which is more or less in line with Africa as a whole (0.78%). When compared to OECD countries (1.21%) and the rest of the world (0.84%), South Africa lags behind in this regard[2].

3. No student who meets the requirements for admission to a university course should be excluded for financial reasons. Students should be funded for the 'full cost of study' including registration and other fees, accommodation, costs of meals, accommodation, travel and books. In addition, universities should receive a subsidy per student from public funds which is sufficient for its recurrent operations – i.e. to ensure what has been called both 'financial and epistemic access to university education'.

4. A determined state should examine the structure of personal taxation which could be levied for the upper 10% of income earners in the country. This income bracket together with those High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI) who have thus far evaded taxation could generate a substantial increase in available public revenue to fund higher education[3]. This approach which concentrates on the structural aspects of inequality and uses tax revenues for the purpose is preferable to the idea of a differentiated approach to the 'rich' and 'poor' and supports the idea that those identified with the top 'net-worth' pay for their children's education through taxation, and the distribution of public funds, rather than through an individually-based 'wealthy user pays' model[4]. This is a more democratic model of public interest and public funding than individual philanthropy or subsidy which is not sustainable.

5. In order to place the right to free education 'for all' in its proper social context serious consideration might be given to the idea of responsible 'public service and citizen work' by the recipients of its benefits. This could, if applied consistently and especially across the present social divides, engender greater social consciousness about the important relationship between knowledge and society - especially its role in resolving, through engaged practices, the relationship between education and the intractable social and environmental issues facing all societies. Such a 'fellowship' would not only engender forms of social solidarity in those participating in such activities but develop a new consciousness beyond the narrow and largely self-interested limits imposed by the requirements of the formal job market.

6. The further implication of this approach is that all students are regarded as beneficiaries of public funding, and participants in a system prioritising the public good. As such, students should be expected to contribute to society when leaving university through community service and by working in

public institutions after graduation. In effect equal participation in the benefits of public funding by virtue of citizenship would support the creation of socially cohesive attitudes amongst students. It can be argued that such an alternative approach to that seeking to differentiate between 'rich' and 'poor' students is necessary for more far reaching structural and systemic change.

7. Much more attention needs to be paid to the question of what amount of the national fiscus should be allocated to higher education from the government's overall budget. In other words, the government needs to seriously consider reprioritizing educational expenditure relative to other expenditure because of its critical role in underpinning social and economic development more generally and because of its role in advancing the democratic transformation of society.

8. Consideration must be given to the difference between a 'progressive realisation' of the goal of free education 'for all', relative to 'gradualist' approaches. In the first case, as we have seen from the number of legal cases on this issue, too much reliance is placed on the untrammeled judgements of political decision-makers alone. As opposed to this (in what might be called a more deliberate, even if gradualist) approach a determination is made about the exact time frame for the achievement of fee-free education for all together with the relevant milestones to be achieved for that purpose. In other words, such an approach will ensure a set of binding covenants about the achievement of fee-free education 'for all', the effective mechanisms by which this would be achieved and the process for its monitoring. Here the approach adopted in Article 13 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights[5] is instructive. Article 13.2 recognises not only the availability of free education in the primary education and that:

Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education; (c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to *all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education*[6].

Although the relevant section too refers to 'progressive introduction' it speaks of a free education that is 'accessible to all'. In any event, as we have pointed out the idea of 'progressive' should be interpreted more meaningfully as we have suggested and not left to the caprice of individual policy decision-makers without reference to a wider social engagement.

9. Dedicated research must be undertaken about costs of quality public education and especially about opening up the fiscal debate to show what democratic choices could be made informing fiscal and other policy decisions about the provision of education and other public goods and the potential sources of such funding. In addition, a more detailed examination of the sources of income across the system and the major costs drivers of expenditure in the different types of institutions is also necessary as this together with some of the expenditure patterns also need to be part of the debate about the choices that need to be made. Very importantly, how institutional choices are made can also be the subject of research regarding such expenditure.

10. Given the context in which these issues have arisen and remembering that many students themselves had and continue to express the demand for 'fee-free education for all', they should be widely consulted before any final decision is made on this issue. Such consultation should be meaningful, open and frank and should be premised on seeking a long term and stable solution to this issue and to engender a long term commitment to stability in the higher education system. We believe that this is only possible through such a process of respectful and collegial consultation about the policy choices related to higher education as a public good. Especially important would be the avoidance of choices left to 'experts,' 'advisors' 'consultants' and the agents of institutions that represent a narrow fiscal driven approach to the provision of public goods like higher education.

REFERENCES

[1]See for example the extensive writings of the late Neville Alexander on the importance of language development and mother-tongue instruction in education institutions. Alexander, 2013, 'Language in the new South African university', Thoughts on the New South Africa, Sunnyside: Jacana.

[2]Report of the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Funding of Universities, October 2013, pages 7-8.

[3]We do not here set out the more detailed and compelling arguments around approaches to taxation but would refer in this regard to the ideas set out by Dick Forslund and Jeff Rudin in the following articles: (M&G, Nov 27th, 2015, 'No Fees: Breathe fire into Ubuntu') and http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2015-11-04-the-political-budget-crisis-and-alternatives-to-austerity-part-one/#.V0LhkjV96M8 and http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2015-11-05-the-political-budget-crisis-and-alternatives-to-aus-terity-part-two/#.V0LkWzV96M in which they state:
"To further increase revenue the Treasury could reintroduce the 45% tax bracket for incomes above R1 million. It would yield R5-6 billion (based on the 2014 Tax Statistics). An important point must however be made about our millionaires. In 2013, there were about 4,200 individuals registered for an income of R5 million or more. Their average income (3,337 tax forms assessed) was R9.5 million, and the tax they paid was R3.7 million per person. Cap Gemeni's "New World Wealth" 2014 report estimates that there are about 48, 800 High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI) in South Africa. A HNWI has an income of more than R7 million, or R70 million in accumulated wealth. If only 10, 000 of these HNWIs paid income tax like the 3,337 income millionaires did in 2013, instead of hiding outside the tax system, this would yield additional R37 billion in tax revenue."

[4]Contrary to the dominant view, user-pays mechanisms are consistent with market-led approaches to the commodification of education. They do not equalise the costs of education between rich and poor and are in fact punitive for the poor. The view that the rich can afford to pay fees obfuscates the larger issue of transforming social relations.

[5]Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966 entry into force 3 January 1976, in accordance with article 27. http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx

[6]Section 13.2.5 our italics

A RESPONSE TO ADAM HABIB AND AHMED BAWA CLARIFYING OUR PERSPECTIVE:

FREE PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION FOR ALL[1]

We made a submission to the Fees Commission the full text of which is at https://www.uj.ac.za/faculties/faculty-ofeducation/cert. Commentators on it (see for instance the article by Adam Habib and Ahmed Bawa Sunday Times 17th July 2016) have seriously misunderstood it and we feel it necessary to clarify what the submission is about.

The burden of our submission (which draws on elements of the White Paper on Higher Education and refers to prior government enquiries on this issue) is that the student and associated struggles, which intensified last year after sporadic outbursts over several years, was not merely about the question of 'fee free education for all'. These struggles symbolized a much more fundamental and encompassing issue about the very nature of a democratic society aspired to by the great majority of South African citizens. We argue that in the search for such a society universities have both a role and an obligation to facilitate, engender and provide the intellectual platforms for this aspiration.

The issue of 'fee free education for all', is but one aspect of this issue concerning the efficacy of the quantum of financial resources available to the state for higher education in the context of the chronic underfunding of the higher education system as a whole.

We also point to the precariousness of the present sources of funding available to students, the indispensability of the process of knowledge production and dissemination to societies, the importance of the qualitative attributes of what is taught and learnt and the importance of dealing with the developing culture of individualism, corporatisation and unnecessary managerialism that has become pervasive in the higher education system globally.

In our view educational systems should not be held to ransom and compromised by the priorities set by ideologues who seek to limit social expenditure for the public good and who are uncaring about its effects on the education system as a whole and the limits this imposes on its important role in social change.

Taxing the superrich – a mechanism widely suggested even by mainstream thinkers like Thomas Piketty, (and more recently by Bernie Sanders) is but one aspect of the strategy to bring public education back into the realm of the public good - and to retrieve it from the jaws of its present trajectory as a site for private accumulation.

In fact taxation is but 1 of the 10 proposals we raise in our submission to the Fees Commission, pointing to the transitional nature of some of these proposals because of our acceptance that not all of these are immediately achievable.

We also take this opportunity to respond to some of me of the other arguments made by Habib and Bawa as follows:

1. They argue that a 'serious trust deficit in the state means that the rich will engage in tax avoidance'. We have always contended that it is precisely for this reason that citizen-based action is essential to hold both the state and private interest to account. As for the argument about the lack of *political will* our view is that analyses which rely on this as an explanation are disingenuous since it is hardly the lack of will that drives particular policies which entrench social privilege, the privatization of public goods, the allocation of tenders based on cronyism and the daily infractions that seek to minimise the rights of marginalized communities. These are matters of *political choice* – a deliberate set of actions such as in the choice of arms purchases, expensive infrastructure of limited public value, and other egregious acts that follow political choices for which there is no lack of political will.

2. The same would go for their argument about investment loss, a mantra fervently chanted at the slightest whisper of any suggestion that the power of global multinational corporations to financialize the economic system to their direct advantage needs to be checked. In fact, our focus should be on financial outflows. For instance, drawing on data from the South African Reserve Bank's latest Quarterly Bulletin, the net outflow paid to owners of foreign capital reached R174-billion in the first quarter of 2016, while R330-billion flowed offshore annually as "illicit financial flows" through tax-dodging techniques from 2004-13, according to the international NGO, Global Financial Integrity.

3. Their argument about the fate of higher education 'in Africa' is prey to the collective amnesia of those ahistorical accounts which have no recollection of the wilful destruction of the higher education system in several countries on the continent. We urge Habib and Bawa to re-read texts which they are doubtless familiar with, such as the 2003 UNESCO publication on the subject, by Samoff and Carrol, which explain

the reasons for the parlous state of higher education in some countries in this continent.

4. As for the 'alternative plan' set out by them we think it is more of the same - increasing the burden of debt on students who are already debt-laden, except this time as debtors to the self-same globally entrenched elites (the 1%) now seeking to profit from the miseries of poor communities by collaborating with states to privatize public goods – explanations of which are now widely available in the scholarly literature about the growth of financialization in the global economy. The proposals for increasing the debt burden on students will serve no other purpose than entrenching the interests of financiers and bankers while immersing the state in debt-guarantee arrangements which are ultimately paid by the public.

5. We make no comment here on their references to what they call 'thoughtful activism', 'Pol Pot brigades', laced with gratuitous comments about 'imploding higher education' and especially their reading of the forms of social mobilisation and the possibilities for serious engagement. We regard these as unhelpful caricatures and subjective representa-tions which reproduce the false dichotomies about the interconnected and complex nature of social mobilisation. Moreover, we fear that any continuing intransigence and the inability to find a sustainable approach to this crisis is likely only to exacerbate the situation and strengthen the hand of those favourably disposed to nihilistic actions.

6. Finally, we think that higher education leaders like Habib and Bawa should use their powerful institutional locations to convene wider assemblies for public and open discussion of these important issues and engage with the voices and perspectives of students, academics, parents, workers and the general public - instead of representing the perspectives of a select coterie of high level managers and bureaucrats in public institutions, alone.

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REFERENCES
[1]A truncated version of this article was published in the letters column of the Sunday Times of 7 August 2016

UNIVERSITIES IN CRISIS[1]
WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW

WHAT GOVERNMENT AND UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT SAY	WHAT WE KNOW	WHAT GOVERNMENT AND UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT SAY	WHAT WE KNOW
Government has agreed to subsidise poor students and the 'missing middle' by not increasing fees for them. Why are students protesting if they got what they wanted? ▶	The Government offer is only to pay the fee increases for 2017 students from households with incomes under R600,000. It leaves the existing fees for all students at exactly the same level they were in 2015. To pay those fees, poor students will have to take loans that will leave them in debt for years to come. Those who can't clear their existing debt will be barred from registering and will be prevented from studying.	**South Africa can't afford free education. If we pay for free education we will be taking money away from other urgent needs in our society, like basic education or housing.** ▶	South Africa has a lot of money that is misspent or leaves the country illegally. We also do not have a wealth tax, even though we live in the most unequal society in the world. Money does not have to be taken from social spending for the poor, but has to be found from other sources. Basic, secondary and higher education is a public good that deserves investments because it strengthens our democracy.
An expansion of NSFAS (loans to poor and 'missing middle' students) is the answer. ▶	NSFAS is a loan scheme that puts poor students who can't afford education into debt. This means that they will have to keep paying off their education when they earn a salary, even though their families will need the money from their salaries. Rich students whose families can afford education will not have to get into debt. NSFAS is part of the privatisation of education, not the answer to it, because it still requires poor students to pay for increasingly expensive education.	**Universities need to be protected by police and private security from violent students.** ▶	We have seen that when university managements bring police and conflict and violence gets much worse. In fact, many of the acts of violence by students on campus have been in response to police and private security brutality.
		We need to wait for the president's Fees Commission to provide solutions, and students are too impatient. ▶	After the TRC and the Marikana Commissions many to not trust commissions to provide real solutions. Government has had over a year to make decisions on fees but hasn't provided any useful leadership to solve the university crisis. The Commission will only report in May next year, and its terms of reference are about fee models not free education.
The students are protesting for free education for the rich. ▶	The proposal for free education is that the rich will pay for free education through higher taxes so that their children and poor children will all be able to go to university for free. This is a redistribution of wealth in the interets of all students.		

FREE EDUCATION FOR ALL

The Free Education for All model moves away from the idea of education as a privatised commodity. It conceptualises education as a public good for the benefit of all that must be funded via the state that collects our taxes - in this way all of us pay.

The funding for HE therefore shifts from a model *of fees + state funding + private donors* to one that is primarily state funding. State funding of HE as a percentage of GDP would therefore increase to a level more in line with global standards. No one should pay up-front fees or registration costs. This means the poor students don't have to go through dehumanizing means testing. It also means that poor students do not leave HE with an extra debt to carry. All students will pay back through contributing to society.

This model has been critiqued by some as being Free Education for the Rich since the rich also won't have to pay fees. However, the rich will pay through taxation. 1) The rich can pay more taxes to this end: only 10% of High Net Worth Individuals (who earn over R7million a year) are registered tax payers. If this is increased to just 50%, an extra R92 Billion is made available. 2) Illicit cash flows to the value of hundreds of billions of Rands have left SAA since 1994, which could otherwise have been taxed. 3) A wealth tax of the richest 10% of the population is the most efficient and democratic way to get the rich to pay for education and these funds are sufficient to also pay for other social goods such as healthcare. 4) The Auditor-General also found (2014 and 2015) wastage amounted to over R60 billion. So the R40-R50 billion needed for 'free' education exists.

In this model, if rich students study overseas or in private institutions, or are not studying at all will still be contributing to higher education through their (parent's) tax unlike the state's proposal. 'Third Stream Funding' by private donors should be put into a common pot and redistributed to supplement the 'HBI'.

FREE EDUCATION FOR THE POOR

The slogan 'Free Education for the Poor' is the most talked about but the model has hardly been developed. Most people using this slogan actually propose a model similar to the government's position which is a debt-funded model (see next panel).

This model is premised on *means testing* in which students have to prove their parent's income. This requires a standard of who counts as 'poor' – a superficial classification that currently even excludes the working poor such as mineworkers. This is why the 'missing middle' has become an important group in the debates – those that are too poor to afford fees but too rich for NSFAS and have to go to the banks for loans.

In this model the universities would still run on a fees model but the government pays the university on behalf of poor students as a form of bursary (not a loan as it currently is). Students defined by means testing as 'poor' would leave the university system without any debt. State funding of HE would have to either go directly to the

institution or through an intermediary and would have to increase.

Rich students are envisioned to voluntarily contribute to HE by paying increased fees, despite that most universities have only a small population of rich students. This encourages universities to focus on attracting more rich students and encourages rich students to leave the public education sector thus leaving the sector underfunded.

In this model 'Third Stream Funding' by private donors is left unregulated which increases the inequality between universities. Currently the third stream funding inequalities mean that Wits receives 45% of its funding from private sources while the average is 30% and the University of Limpopo only receives 10%. This also leaves universities susceptible to volatile economic pressures.

CURRENT GOVERNMENT POSITION

In September 2016 Minister Blade Nzimande announced the government's position on how to address the funding crisis at universities in 2017:

*   0% increase in fees for poor and 'missing middle' students (everyone whose household income is less than R600 000).
*   An increase of up to 8% for students earning more than R600 000 determined by each university.

This position is thus not a model for free education. It's a no fee increase position for 2017 that maintains the payment model in which the fees of poor students are paid to the universities through NSFAS. It also maintains a debt model in which poor and missing middle students (who are mostly also poor in terms of generational wealth) have to repay those loans at a later date. This contributes to the debt cycle of poverty and ignores the huge debts that poor families already deal with including Black Tax, house repayments etc., while rich students will walk out of university without any debts to pay off.

This model also perpetuates the idea that education is a commodity to be bought and sold, and valued for its capacity to improve individuals rather than as a public good aimed at benefitting South African society broadly.

This model's reliance on NSFAS entrenches the debt cycle, is not sustainable (low repayment rates), allows for increased corruption, and directs state resources via a financial intermediary rather than directly thus increasing costs.

The government's model also leaves 'Third Stream Funding' intact thus perpetuating inequalities (see middle panel). In the logic of this model, more and more people will end up being excluded from HE due to financial reasons.

OTHER ISSUES

Autonomy – Some have argued that if the state pays for HE, then universities should become state institutions. As called for in the ANC's slogan "AutonomyMustFall". Universities should work in the collective public interest

not the state. Universities cannot do without autonomy from state power but neither can they do this without state funding. Hence we want autonomous institutions that are state funded and accountable to communities.

Private universities – It has been suggested that the crises in higher education will lead to a proliferation of private higher education universities. The government has recently put in place measures to allow this to occur. This is absolutely not to the benefit of the collective public interest. The rich should not be allowed to opt out of public institutions. Privatisation will increase inequality.

Graduate Tax - A graduate tax will increase the burden on new graduates, many of whom are first time graduates in their families and thus have extensive other demands on their incomes alongside their NSFAS and/or bank loan repayments. In addition there are a significant amount of rich people without degrees or major income who would be left off the hook. Therefore the tax models on the super-rich (by income and wealth) are more redistributive.

It is vital that we also struggle for free and quality Early Childhood Development and Schooling which we don't have at present.

Not only tuition fees but the **full cost of study is necessary for success at university**, including: registration; meals and accommodation; books, equipment and travel.

Beneficiaries of HE, all students, should be expected to contribute to society when leaving university **through community service** and by working in public institutions after graduation. Equal participation in the benefits of public funding by virtue of citizenship would support the creation of socially cohesive attitudes amongst students rather than differentiating between 'rich' and 'poor' students.

QUESTIONS TO DEBATE
- What effect does debt have on your life and on the lives of those in your community?
- What are your experiences of means-testing?
- Should the rich contribute to HE voluntarily or should they be required to contribute to the collective interest?
- What is access? Getting your foot into the door and/ or what happens afterwards when you are inside of the institution?
- Should HE be imagined as a public or individual good?
- What is your ideal university system? What would a public, decolonized African University look like?
- What could replace commissions as the way forward?
- How does a free decolonized HE sector benefit all aspects of society?

RESOURCES
- **Pathways to Free Education**

https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6dVO9Lj0oLkTk VtT3lxVHYwRlE/view
- **The Conversation**
https://theconversation.com/free-education-is-possible-if-south-africa-moves-beyond-smoke-and-mirrors-65805
- **Submission to the commission for Free Education**
https://www.uj.ac.za/faculties/facultyofeducation/cert/Documents/CERT%20FEES%2 COMMISSION% 20SUBMISSION%20Hlatshwayo_Maharajh Marawu_Motala_Naidoo_Vally.pdf
- **Why Neoclassical Arguments against Free Education are Bullshit**
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B8t2tgFHF8teOFFX QVFHblI0MGM/view
- Forslund, Dick and Rudin, Jeff. 2015. **'Paying for University Education'.** Amandla Issue 43/44 December p14-15

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING MODELS
The new student movement in South Africa has had a few major thrusts: **decolonization** including of the curriculum, ending **racism, patriarchy, anti-privatisation** which has criticized the exponential increase in student fees and the corporatisation of our universities. This pamphlet is concerned with funding, although it is understood that financial access to education cannot be separated from the critique of the corporatized and colonial nature of the university.

The funding crisis at universities comes from two developments in higher education:

1. The number of students at universities has doubled since the end of apartheid (the proportion of black students has increased from 52% to 81% since the end of Apartheid). This is a very positive development for our democracy, but at the same time 200,000 qualifying matriculants are still excluded from Higher Education (HE) for financial reasons.

2. Government has not funded this increase in student numbers properly, so the amount of money given by government per student has dropped every year. This has created a funding crisis at universities, and universities have had to recover their costs by increasing student fees, which have increased every year beyond inflation. It has also led to a reduction in student support programs and mass lectures thus increasing the push-out rate such that over 50% of students don't get their first degree but are saddled with debt. The funding crisis is turning our universities from quasi-public institutions to private institutions, which exacerbates the financial exclusion of the poor and the quality of education. We are not calling for a general tax increase and certainly not VAT but a tax on the super-rich and an end to corruption.

REFERENCES
[1]Pamphlet by a group of students and academics from the Universities of the Witwatersrand and Johannesburg.

WITS#FMF MODEL FOR FREE HIGHER EDUCATION

SOLVING THE HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING CRISIS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE FREE EDUCATION MODEL

#FeesMustFall/#FreeOurFutures

The South African higher education system is in a crisis. Our 26 public universities are in various challenges at this time. At the heart of the current crisis is the legitimate call by the student movement to ensure that every academically deserving student has full access to university and to ensure that universities are adequately funded. The #FeesMustFall movement was founded by students with an explicit and clear mandate of pursuing free education through ending the commodification of education and decolonisation of the higher education system. The student movement has also remained resolute that education is a basic necessity and a right.

In 2015, this movement managed to create universal awareness about the structural inequalities within our universities. Our universities have presented a façade that they are public institutions, but in reality they are business enterprises pursuing returns at the expense of the social project. In the past 15 years the government has severely underfunded our university system. The consequence of this underfunding is that the burden of costs has been passed on from the state and corporate South Africa to poor and working-class families.

Our parents – the teachers, nurses, police, domestic workers and miners – have been called upon to try and buy their way into higher education so that their children can escape the poverty trap and the dehumanisation of the current system. We know that it is through education that the child of a domestic worker can become a doctor; the son of a plumber can become and engineer; and the daughter of gardener can become a pilot. It is unacceptable to deny our people access to these opportunities on the basis that they are born black and poor in a country that exploits and abuses them.

In 2000, the government contributed 50% of the costs of running our university system. In 2000, our university system had a greater concentration of white students than black students. In 2015, our system has increased its concentration of black students; and the government has decreased its contribution from 50% to 39%. The shifting of the burden from the state to the poor and the working-class should be the cause of a national outrage.

In 2015, the state selectively heard our calls and agreed to suspend the fee increases for our students but this was entirely insufficient as a response and one would have hoped for an adequete and long-lasting solution to be presented. Having reminded the government of its obligations to its youth; we believed that our government would finally take responsibility for the chronic underfunding of our universities and provide us with a roadmap towards the realisation of free education. Unfortunately, we were wrong and a year later we sit in the same position.

In September 2016 the Minister of Higher Education announced that fees for 2017 could be increased by up to 8%. For students that are part of the National Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), the government committed to insulating them from the fee increases for 2017. In addition, the government also committed to insulating students in the missing middle by absorbing the 8% increase on their behalf. Unfortunately, these were nothing more than cosmetic solutions that did not deal with the fundamental problem we highlighted in 2015 – we simply cannot afford fees. The Minister's decision simply means that fees are frozen at the levels we paid in 2015. This is not what we called for when we marched to the Union Buildings on 23 October 2015.

The government has created a Commission of Enquiry into the feasibility of rolling out free higher education. The Commission is due to provide a report to the government in the middle of 2017. We reject the Fees Commission for 2 reasons. Firstly, the terms of reference for the Commission are incorrect. It should not be asking whether free education should exist but when it will be implemented. We also reject the Commission as its decision to only report back in 2017 means that the government has failed to appreciate the urgency of the funding crisis.

As a result of this collective sense of failure by the government to respond to the legitimate calls for universal free education; our universities are burning. From Turfloop to Mangosuthu; from Venda to Zululand; from Fort Hare to Soshanguve – there is a national crisis. The increased militancy at the universities is a result of the collective frustration of students who will yet again be faced with the prospect of being excluded from the system in 2017.

The President of the Republic has recently called upon all stakeholders to provide solutions aimed at resolving the crisis. As the custodians of the #FeesMustFall movement, the students should be at the heart of formulating a solution. In light of this, students have committed to a process of designing a model for the rollout of Free Education that will serve as a basis for our engagements with the government. In the design of our model, the following variables were considered –
- Free education should be for all students
- Students should not be subjected to a graduate tax which imposes a debt burden on them after they graduate

We then commissioned a team of students from different faculties and disciplines. We also called upon experts from various fields to assist in the process of advising the student task team and provide input into the design of the model. We are therefore pleased to present the model for Free Education that has been designed with the mandate of the people most intimately affected by the crisis – the black students of the poor and the working-class.

One narrative that has been pushed is that it is unjustifiable and perhaps immoral to advocate for a system of free education for all, including the rich. Core to the argument is the idea that the rich can afford to pay and that government funding should be directed to other resources. After careful consideration of the merits of this argument we are of the opinion that a model that pays for everyone is more appropriate in the South African context. There is no doubt that the rich can afford to fund their education, however, this then means that their contribution to the education system will limited to the 3 or 4-year timeframe in which their children are in the university system.

Additionally, the consequence of apartheid planning being what it is – the vast majority of the wealth live within close proximity of the economic hubs where universities tend to be based. This simply means that a child of a billionaire in Sandton will be living at home rather than on campus during their studies. This means that their contribution to the education endeavour is actually limited to just tuition fees and nothing more. The rich in South Africa make up less than 4% of the population and are – at least anecdotally – predominantly nuclear families which means that the contribution made by them in terms of direct payment into the system is actually quite low. For the sake of sustainability we would prefer an additional tax on the wealthy for education purposes as it essentially ensures that they will contribute to the higher education system for much longer than the duration of their children's degree or diploma.

Our model is based on the understanding that the full cost of study of each student needs to be covered. This includes the costs of tuition, accommodation, meals, books and basic necessities. It is not acceptable or sufficient to have a model that fails to cover all these items. Research has indicated that students perform best when all costs associated with their studies are covered.

Our model is also based on the understanding that we all share a collective responsibility to maintain the autonomy of our institution; the quality in the production of knowledge (research) and excellence in the dissemination of knowledge (teaching). We do not share the view that the call for free education will result in a decline in quality as our model insulates the academic enterprise from any adverse impacts.

Our model is based on the understanding that higher education is a public good that generates significant benefits for society and the individual. Education is not a commodity to be bought by the individual for his or her private advancement in society. No one should have to pay to learn. Rather, the public function that higher education serves – that of producing graduates to perform various duties and services, and to produce new knowledge for the development of society – must be acknowledged and protected. Consequently, there is a need to fund it using available resources in a sustainable manner. The rollout of the model is explained as follows – Universities generate their funding from 3 sources – government funding; corporate/private funding and student fees.

In an ideal mix; the 3 sources of funding would be as follows – 50% government; 30% corporate/private and 20% student fees. In South Africa in 2000, the mix was 49%

government; 27% corporate/private and 24% student fees. In 2014, the mix was 38% government; 29% corporate/private and 33% student fees. This means that in a 15-year period the government contribution has decreased by 10% and the burden on the students has increased by 9%. For the purposes of illustrating how our model works; we will assume that a typical university costs R100 million per annum to run.

If a university needs R100 million to run the funding mix indicates that the government would contribute R38 million; corporates would contribute R29 million and the students would be expected to contribute R33 million. If the university has 1 000 students, then the cost allocated to each student would be R33 000.

If the government made its contribution to 50% of the total cost, then the burden would be reduced. In that scenario the government would cover R50 million, the corporates would cover R29 million and the students would be allocated the burden of R21 million. This would translate to a cost of R21 000 per student. By simply asking the government to restore its contribution to 50% of the cost – we will see fees falling for students across the board.

Our first call therefore is to the government to immediately increase its subsidy allocation to the university system to the 50% levels that were achieved up to 2000.

The second recommendation relates to the infrastructure costs that form part of the university cost base. A university is responsible for identifying its infrastructure requirements and needs on an ongoing basis. Universities then depend on the state to provide grants to fund infrastructure development, replacement and maintenance. Our universities currently have an infrastructure backlog that would take more than 12 years to clear if we keep waiting for the government to make funds available for infrastructure development. In our estimate, 10% of the university cost base relates to the infrastructure costs rather than the ongoing costs related to salaries and utility costs. At the same time, companies on the JSE are sitting with large cash reserves that are not being invested in the university system. This is because we have never called upon all sectors of society to invest in our education system as part of the social compact.

In our model, we are calling on corporate South Africa to open an infrastructure fund in which they can invest money which will be used to build infrastructure across our universities. We further call upon national treasury to facilitate this process by creating a higher education infrastructure fund to allow investment into our future now. For example a company will pay R100 million into the fund and over 10 years receive R10 million back annually as per their tax at that point in time. This encourages corporate investment into higher education infrastructure. This has the dual benefit of clearing the backlog and also providing capital injection in the system without affecting other government programs.

Never again should students from DUT suffer the indignity of squatting in rooms illegally due to a lack of accommodation. Never again should students at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University struggle to do their practical work due to a lack of laboratories in their campus. Never again should students at Wits have to sleep in libraries and lecture halls.

In our model, we call upon corporate South Africa to champion the creation of the Infrastructure Fund which will reduce the cost of running our universities by 10%.

In this approach, the R100 million is now allocated as follows – Government – R50 million (50%) Corporate/private – R29 million (29%) Infrastructure Fund – R10 million (10% of the original R100 million) Student burden – R11 million (11%) At this stage – fees have fallen from R33 000 per student to R11 000 per student.

We believe this can be achieved without adding an undue burden to the various stakeholders in the system.

Once the fees have been reduced to R11 million for the students, we have identified various sources of funding that can be used to inject additional funding into the system. In our model, we call for the abolition of the NSFAS model as its loan approach only contributes to the 'black tax' phenomenon. Instead of NSFAS, we recommend the creation of a 'Higher Education Endowment Fund' to be dedicated to funding students across various institutions.

The funding would be on a grant rather than a loan basis.

The Higher Education Endowment Fund would be created as a standalone entity and funds would be utilised only for the purposes of funding students at our universities. The Endowment Fund would then recover its funds through a levy system once students have graduated. This is superior to the current loan collection system as it uses existing infrastructure and does not require any additional investments in order to facilitate collection.

HOW DO WE FUND THE ENDOWMENT FUND

In order to provide funding for the Endowment Fund, we have identified 5 possible avenues that can be used to source the funding. The 5 sources are as follows –
1. The Skills Development Levy
2. An increase in the company tax rates
3. An increase in tax rates for the rich
4. An apartheid windfall tax on all companies that benefited from the evil regime
5. An increase in the wealth taxes (donations tax; dividends tax and estate duty)

THE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT LEVY

In 2000, the state introduced a Skills Development Levy which is an amount paid by a company that employs people. The levy is then used to fund various training programmes in the workplace and beyond. The levy is calculated at 1% of the salary bill. In 2015 alone, this generated more than R12 billion.

We therefore recommend that the levy be increased to 3% for the next 3 years. This will inject an amount of at least R24 billion each year which can be ring-fenced into the Higher Education Endowment Fund.

In order to facilitate this, all we need is for the Minister of Labour – in conjunction with the Minister of Finance – to amend section 3 of the Skills Development Levies Act and change the rate from 1% to 3%. This can be done through the issue of a notice in the Government Gazette.

INCREASE IN COMPANY TAX RATES

Companies in South Africa currently pay taxes at 28%. In 2015/16, company taxes contributed R189 billion into the National Revenue Fund. An increase in the rate from 28% to 30% would generate an additional R13,5 billion. In order to facilitate this, we need the Minister of Finance to make an amendment to section 5 of the Income Tax Act.

INCREASE IN INDIVIDUAL TAX RATES

Individuals in South Africa currently pay taxes at a rate that ranges from 18% to 41% for the rich. We have estimated that an increase in the tax on the rich from 41% to 42,5% would generate an additional R6 billion per annum.

APARTHEID WINDFALL TAX

It is a universally acknowledged scandal that South Africa has a large number of companies that either stole money from the Reserve Bank or unduly benefitted from apartheid looting in the past. We estimate that at least R26 billion could be recovered if the state undertook legal steps to recover the stolen funds.

WEALTH TAXES

South Africa has various forms of wealth taxes – donations tax, capital gains tax, dividends tax and estate. They range from 15% to 20% in value. We believe that increasing the rate of tax on these wealth instruments to 20% would generate an additional R10 billion per annum into the fiscus.

Based on this analysis, it is clear that South Africa is more than capable of raising the funding required to cover the rollout of free education without having to remove funds from much- needed basic services.

The Minister of Finance, Labour and the President can invoke their powers to support the funding avenues we have exploited. The Ministry of Labour has the discretion to amend the Skills Levy rate from 1%. The Treasury has the power to enact provisions in the Act that support our call for corporates to invest in the Higher Education Infrastructure Fund. The President has the power to enact bills bypassing the long parliamentary process if it is in the Public Interest. The analytics we have gathered indicate how each of the avenues we have identified can generate sufficient funding.

We also believe that the creation of a dedicated infrastructure and endowment fund to be overseen and managed by an independent board of governors will ensure that the funds are used for the specific purpose of funding higher education.

Contrary to the narrative used as an excuse from government, we do not need to have the poor fighting for the crumbs at the table of the privileged.

What we do need is political will and public pressure. We would like to invite students and academics from across the country and the various organs of state to interact with us and map a way forward where we can all partner together towards the journey of realising free education now. We have shown that not only is ours a noble and much needed goal, it is also entirely possible.

If you would like access to the full model or to interact with the research group please email: freeourfuturesa@gmail.com

EXTRACTS FROM EQUAL EDUCATION'S SUBMISSION TO THE FEES COMMISSION

June 2016

EQUAL EDUCATION'S ARGUMENT

1. Equal Education believes that there is much more to be done in addressing past inequalities that are still prevalent in today's society. It is imperative that the government looks at means to fully address access and the high level of student debt. The 'progressive realisation' mandate on free universities should be instituted around a timeframe and not remain as open-ended as it is now. This should be a priority for all stakeholders involved, where more university going students have equal access to the sector without acquiring more debt.

2. There needs to be a focus in transforming the higher education sector, making it more inclusive and equal. We have highlighted above that the previously Black universities are still marred with apartheid 'branding' and are not competing in the system as best as they can. The fact that poor Black students are the majority that access these institutions is also a point of concern. The R410 million per annum recently assigned to Historically Disadvantaged Institutions will see a slight injection into these universities, but it is not enough. From the above table it is clear that schools like UCT and Wits are in a different league to universities such as Fort Hare and WSU. There must be a rethinking of how to better fund these universities and how to start building the gap between these two distinct 'groups' of higher education institutions.

3. It is generally agreed that the higher education system in South Africa is chronically underfunded. The Minister of Higher Education himself has accepted the need to access additional resources for higher education. Therefore, there should be focused interventions on this. There seems to be a general acceptance of the fact South Africa simply cannot afford fee-free universities; this is simply unacceptable as a response. The DHET and other experts have said this over and over, but have not provided the required evident as to why this is the case. There needs to be factual analysis that indicates why the South African government believes that the country cannot afford to offer fee-free university study to its youth.

4. There is also a general need to look into the holistic education system; as highlighted earlier, for as long as the ECD sector is not prioritised, the secondary education sector and subsequently the higher education sector will need more financing in order for students to play 'catch up'. Poor, under-re-sourced schools produce weak learners who become struggling university students. As long as there are children in the basic education sector who are not taught well, who learn in unsafe schools without electricity, water, furniture, toilets, libraries and sports fields, and who walk long distances to school, often going hungry in the process, we will be left with millions of potential students not accessing the higher education sector, or accessing it briefly and abortively: struggling to cope academically and financially, and ultimately being forced to drop out. Higher education is not isolated; success there requires success from pre-Grade R level. South Africa needs to invest in all stages of education.

5. The number of bailouts ESKOM, SAA and other state owned enterprises have received in past years has averaged billions, funds that could have been used in other sectors to better equip the public and enhance our health and education sectors. PRASA alone continued with a tender process for new trains at a cost of over R3.5 billion, trains that do not adhere to the height regulations in South Africa. There needs to be a serious look at the level of corruption, overspending and wasteful expenditure in the public sector. In past audits (2013/14 and 2014/15) the Audit General indicated that South Africa has lost over R60 billion to government departments irregular expenditure. There must be greater accountability introduced to the public sector to ensure that every cent is used, is accounted for and all corrupt officials are held to account. There also needs to be greater accountability in the private sector; such as avoiding illegal outflows and profit shifting. Doing this would grow the tax base and allow the government to spend more.

6. Universities must simultaneously provide an enabling environment for students to benefit from and fully participate in the sector through the necessary financial, infrastructural and intellectual resources necessary to discharge their mandates of teaching, research and community engagement. Few students who don't come from private or well-resourced urban schools make the grade for admission into university

courses and even fewer for particularly highly prized courses. It is ultimately a proportionately small percentage of 'poor' students who gain entry to study at universities. Given the high correlation between push-out rates and costs, meaningful funding has to be provided to enable students to continue their studies. Such funding should cover not only tuition fees but the full cost of study necessary for success at university, including: registration and tuition fees; meals and accommodation; books and travel.

7. The challenges faced by universities are fundamental to the reconstruction of post-apartheid society. For that reason, universities should be funded as comprehensively as possible to discharge their important socio-economic, political and cultural mandates to the best of their capabilities.

EQUAL EDUCATION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The funding of education is not just an end in itself but is essential for the achievement of the socio-political, cultural and transformative goals against the background of a society characterised by the cleavages of racist oppression and exploitative social relations. Policies that are designed to provide for the full cost of study are essential to an overarching social objective in which the goals are to develop a democratic and socially just society.

1. The government needs to increase the funding by at least an aggregate amount equal to the ratio achieved in OECD countries to address the issue of the chronic underfunding of the higher education system. In 2011, South Africa's state budget for universities as a percentage of GDP was 0.75%, which is more or less in line with Africa as a whole (0.78%). When compared to OECD countries (1.21%) and the rest of the world (0.84%), South Africa lags behind in this regard.

2. No student who meets the requirements for admission to a university course should be excluded for financial reasons. Students should be funded for the 'full cost of study' including registration and other fees, accommodation, costs of meals, accommodation, travel and books. In addition, universities should receive a subsidy per student from public funds which is sufficient for its recurrent operations – i.e.

to ensure what has been called both 'financial and epistemic access to university education'.

3. Poor students need to be prioritsed in the realization of free higher education in South Africa.

4. A determined State should examine the structure of personal taxation which could be levied for the top 10% of income earners in the country. This income bracket together with those High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI) who have thus far evaded taxation could generate a substantial increase in available public revenue to fund higher education.

This approach which concentrates on the structural aspects of inequality and uses tax revenues for the purpose is preferable to the idea of a differentiated approach to the 'rich' and 'poor' and supports the idea that those identified with the top 'net-worth' pay for their children's education through taxation, and the distribution of public funds, rather than through an individually-based 'wealthy user pays' model44. This is a more democratic model of public interest and public funding than individual philanthropy or subsidy which is not sustainable.

5. Dedicated research must be undertaken about costs of quality public education and especially about opening up the fiscal debate to show what democratic choices could be made informing fiscal and other policy decisions about the provision of education and other public goods and the potential sources of such funding. In addition, a more detailed examination of the sources of income across the system and the major costs drivers of expenditure in the different types of institutions is also necessary as this together with some of the expenditure patterns also need to be part of the debate about the choices that need to be made. Very importantly, how institutional choices are made can also be the subject of research regarding such expenditure.

There needs to be more discussion around these topics of equity, equality, access and transformation. Whatever is decided based on the submissions received must be subject to clear implementation plans, timelines and a transparent process.

WHY FREE EDUCATION FOR ALL IS NOT AS OBVIOUSLY ELITIST AS THEY SAY[1]

TO MOLEFE argues that education forms parts of a rights floor that everyone is entitled to and no one should be arbitrarily denied.

October 5, 2016

There is a facile argument doing the rounds that the call for free education for all is inarguably inequitable and elitist as those who can afford to pay will get away with not paying. The otherwise seemingly thoughtful people who advance this lazy argument, like Business Day columnist Steven Friedman and the national executive committee of the ANC, have chosen to ignore that policy does not operate in isolation nor do policy headlines tell the full story.

They have also chosen to ignore what students campaigning for universal free education are actually saying, along with the fact that education in our society is not like any other good or service.

Let me start first with the first two points about policy.

Take VAT, for example, a flat 14% sales tax everyone pays. If that headline is all you read of the policy, then you might come to the incorrect conclusion that the tax grows inequality because everyone pays the same percentage no matter their income.

But reading beyond the headline reveals that certain basic food items like brown bread and fruits and vegetables are zero rated (i.e. taxed at 0%), and other items such as education and transport are exempt from the tax. These items have been excluded from the normal treatment because they "are bought more frequently or predominantly by poorer households", according to National Treasury (pdf). The intent, therefore, is to make this otherwise inequitable policy have a zero net effect on inequality or contribute to its decrease. VAT also operates within a fiscal framework whose rich-to-poor redistributive effect should also be looked at overall to get a complete picture.

We can debate how effective zero rating has been as a pro-poor policy, and how redistributive South Africa's fiscal framework actually is. But the point remains: judging a policy proposal by its headline, or without considering where and how it fits into the overall policy framework is comically asinine. And it is tragic when analyses based on such a superficial reading are taken seriously by people who think themselves serious thinkers.

Friedman cites as a cautionary tale the example of **Brazil**, whose free education policy he says has allowed the kids of the wealthy (who score better in admission tests because they're better educated) to dominate the limited number of places available in the country's best public universities.

But we do not have to make the same admissions policy choice. In fact, South Africa has so far tried to do the exact opposite. The admissions policies at our public universities attempt to "compensate", to varying degrees, qualifying applicants from poorer schools and communities for the injustice they've been dealt. Arguably this has not gone far enough, but that it exists is enough to render the Brazil example interesting and appalling, but neither comparable nor relevant to the South African reality.

Friedman also says free education for all foregoes, as funding source for higher education institutions, fees from those from families who can pay.

Well, yes. Perhaps it does. But this has more to do with the role of education in our society than Friedman's imagined and unwarranted notion that "campaigners (for universal free education) are less inclined to look at whether demands benefit the better off at the expense of the poor".

In our society, education is a fundamental right. It is one of a basket of other fundamental rights that have been declared so because, when realised, they allow the individual to exercise their full agency and citizenship — should they be willing and so wish — among a society of others doing the same. Should these fundamental rights not be made real for all citizens, our society will not be a full democracy.

At least that's the theory behind the liberal democratic framework that is the basis of our society. I find the framework deeply problematic for its basis in individualism — but that's a topic for another day.

The bottom line is that in South Africa, education forms parts of a rights floor that everyone is entitled to and no one should be arbitrarily denied. Education is part of an

inheritance at birth every South African is granted, no matter their colour or socioeconomic position.

Expecting that people pay for this birthright should be the exception, not the norm that it currently is. The only reason we expect that people pay is because resources are supposedly scarce — another point I disagree with but also have to shelve for another day. So, because resources are supposedly scarce and because we have entrusted the state with the powers and obligations to mobilise resources to realise these fundamental rights for all, there are trade offs to be made.

The state can reasonably expect, within this paradigm, that those with resources enough either realise these fundamental rights for themselves or contribute a portion of "their" resources so that it may make the rights real in the lives of others. But direct payment for public services is only one of the ways to mobilise resources to cover the cost of providing the service.

A more equitable and non-exclusionary way to mobilise resources for public services that flow from fundamental rights is to have recipients of the service pay when they begin deriving value from it, based on the value they derive from it. In other words, a tax on income that increases with income — a progressive income tax.

Our personal income tax (PIT) system is progressive, but Wits students calling for universal free education argue that is not progressive enough. As one of their proposals to fund free education for all, they **say that PIT** rates for the wealthiest should be increased — as should taxes on wealth.

Under the current model of pay now, derive value later, students and their families are burdened unfairly with carrying the costs between when education is paid for and delivered, and the break-even point when a graduate's earnings recoup the costs of education. Black graduates and their families have this worse. Even though graduate unemployment is relatively low, **black university graduates are more likely to be unemployed**, further underlining the structurally racist nature of fees for education.

Graduates are also not the not only ones to derive value from their education, so Wits students are rightly demanding that other beneficiaries pay, too. To fund universal free education, they say corporate tax rates should be increased to 30%, and corporates should contribute to a fund for university infrastructure.

So it is clear that students calling for universal free education are actively engaged in thinking deeply about what education signifies in our society, and how it can be made accessible to all and funded most equitably. Too bad the older commentariat, perhaps from ego or a pending sense of irrelevance, aren't as thoughtfully engaged.

REFERENCES

[1]This article originally appeared in the Daily Vox (http:www.dailyvox.co.za/to-molefe-free-education-not-obviously-elitist-say/)

ON STUDENT LEADERSHIP

ADDRESS TO NEVILLE ALEXANDER 2012 CONFERENCE BOOK LAUNCH NMMU- PORT ELIZABETH

Enver Motala (NMI)

I am happy to say that this launch continues to celebrate the work of Neville Alexander. Since the Conference on which this publication is based there have been two further conferences - in 2014 and 2015, and there will be a further conference later this year. The 2014 conference focussed on some historical episodes of alternative education, contemporary educational struggles, Neville's educational praxis and some wonderful examples of popular education practice.

At the second conference in December 2015 there were about a hundred participants who were specifically invited to speak about the student struggles of 2015. They came from 20 universities. The first session was devoted to reporting on developments at their universities. The rest of the conference was devoted to a deeper discussion – mainly by students themselves – of the issues that emerged from their preliminary discussions about what was happening at the campuses. This was done with the express purpose of providing a platform for exchanging ideas, debating difficult question, thinking through actions and generally building collective understanding and solidarity. Most revealing was the fact that no resolution or grand statements were either solicited or proposed and the reason for this in part, was attributable to a lack of faith in high sounding proclamations which were rarely followed through. That for me was instructive and revealing.

A wide range of issues, which we now know from the media and from discussions more generally, was discussed but amongst the most troublesome was the question of violence - the violence attributed to students by an uninformed and selective media whose political and social predilections failed to separate student struggles and its general purposes from the moments of nihilism that took place in the course of the conflicts of the time - and which had the potential to disrupt the genuine struggles of students nationally. Even more alarming was the crassly myopic views of some commentators including academics whose understanding of the issues betrayed not only a shocking ignorance but a political predisposition disguised as comment.

As Nadeema Musthan has said in criticising one such perspective

> It was clear that notions of 'violence' were highly contextual, unequal and subjective ….. beyond a simplistic understanding of what constitutes violence, …. The violence Snodgrass claims has been initiated

by the students is what Zizek calls 'subjective' violence. It is the burning, the beating, the teargas, the rubber bullets and stun grenades (that was directed at students and workers). It is the visible violence. But it is not the only kind there is. There is also 'objective' violence that Zizek writes, is constituted by symbolic violence (through language and its forms), and systemic (or structural) violence (that arises from economic and political systems). This objective violence is invisible. Furthermore, you cannot 'look' at subjective and objective violence from the same place. ….Objective violence is that which is inherent in the 'normal'. It cannot be 'seen' and must be historicised. Without an understanding of the two, one cannot make sense of what appears to be sudden, irrational, irresponsible, subjective violence. When Snodgrass labels the students and workers all 'violent' she is criminalising them, and in doing so, removing all need to listen to them, to engage with them, to change anything. The same was done on campuses all across the country.

Neville Alexander would inevitably have been involved, given his life as critical social analyst, thinker and practitioner -a revolutionary - in the events around #FeesMustFall. And he would in all probability have spoken and written about the issue of political and social consciousness as critical to the student's actions.

I think this issue is critical for a number of reasons and it has implications for how university students, the communities they come from, workers, academics and other interested participants in the future of universities and especially around the issue of university de-colonisation and transformation are conceptualized. In particular the attributes of social and political consciousness need much closer attention and exploration. Students have themselves expressed the view that there was a great need for the development of their 'intellectual and practical leadership' and that the activities which were generated by their struggles raised important issues which required clearer definition. For instance, what indeed is the content of the idea of a 'decolonised university', what is understood by a democratizing university, what and how are ideas about decolonisation inserted into the curriculum of the university, what about the weaknesses of teaching and supervision and its relation to socio-linguistic issues; what exactly is the import of the symbols of university life and of their place as cultural, linguistic and educational institutions in South Africa and globally. How should one understand the issue of 'free university education' beyond the simple idea of 'fee-free' higher

education. What is contemplated by this in relation to the real cost of education. In other words, how should one conceptualize the role of the state in relation to funding not just students, but of the university system as a whole. What indeed is the role of funding in relation to the workers who are employed in universities - not just academics and high level administrators, and indeed what processes are there for opening the doors of education to the very workers who are employed there. These represent a wide range of intellectual and material challenges to the existing system of educational provision and what students regard as a right that should be afforded the citizens of a democratic society. These issues are referred to in the public media on a more-or-less continuous basis and require little further 'evidence'.

They require a much closer understanding of what is implied in the concept of student leadership and its political, social and educational consciousness. What are some of the attributes of such consciousness?

1. The first of these, as I understand it is the need to develop, in the community of students and others associated with them, a much wider culture of critical thinking about the issues in question – without resorting to simple formulaic and reductive thinking or the simplistic ideas associated with commitment to some forms of political organisation. The issues raised by students have profound implications for the nature of society, for the role of the state, for conceptions of citizenship, for collaborative life, against acquisitive individualism, against all forms of racism and gendered ideas and calls for trans-sectional thinking. Some of these issues - for instance questions about which Alexander himself was deeply interested, such as the 'national question,' have a long history of debate and remain largely unresolved nationally - not just amongst students and academics.

    Such questions are central to the reconstitution of the post-colonial, post-apartheid society and needs fuller examination, more debate and much greater clarification. And so too with issues of gender, 'development', the land question, environmental issues and even what is regarded as trite – the question of democracy. And of course how all of these are understood are intrinsically also about political and social strategy. Stressing one or other of these questions - such as the land question - without reference to its relatedness to the other issues is simply not good enough because of the integral nature of these issues in society. A much more trans-sectional (as academics might say - transdisciplinary) understanding of these issue is required.

2. Such a deeper understanding also implies the ability to engage with all kinds of texts critically – written, visual, overt and subliminal, perverse and illuminating, social, human and scientific, academic and public, historical and contemporary, in all their complexity. The first of these attributes relates to the development of the critical literacy of the leadership

itself, since without that its capacity for leadership is less than able. Critical literacy implies the ability to apply reasoned thinking, the ability to read and analyse textual material critically, to become increasingly familiar with the nature of public and academic discourse and most importantly social issues germane to the nation, to provide effective leadership in their representations of the students as members of society. It requires a literacy that is able to translate academic learning into social purposes, to debate and discuss complex issues, to share and disseminate knowledge and to engage with the broader public of the university in ways that lead to the co-evolution of socially useful knowledges; it requires a level of literacy that enhances the ability to communicate and engage with such public knowledge and to examine it critically. Most importantly it requires a commitment to the idea of collective knowledge, its forms and purposes. In fact, critical literacy should be fundamental to all learning.

Universities, as we know, are failing abysmally in taking on this task largely because of a combination of the difficulties of teaching under-resourced large classes – the lecturer/student ratios in our universities – and the cynicism of some academics about students who in their view 'should not be at university' because of the poor preparatory education received in schools. This is compounded by the universities and academics failing to understand the role of socio-linguistic issues in the acquisition and constructing of knowledge. Some students have doubtless become more aware of the question of critical literacy but it is a not enough because unless a substantial body of students - supported by academics – takes on this question more fully, critical literacy will remain the preserve of a privileged few and have adverse consequences for education's role in countering the hegemony of anti-democratic social practices.

3. An adjunct to the issue of critical literacy is the question which has also been debated by students – though somewhat partially. It is about the appropriate form of democratic representation which speaks in the interests of the student constituency especially beyond the limits of SRCs as they are presently constituted. In fact, this issue raises the related question of how the university itself is constituted for its governance purposes and whose perspectives are regarded as being the most important in that regard. But the student debate has been essentially about the forms of representation extant historically and now. In particular this debate has seen contestations between party political forms of representation, liberal democratic, vanguardist, anarchist, autonomist, horizontal and 'Africanist' perspectives. Regrettably there is no real clarity about these issues despite their considerable importance for both organisational and strategic purposes. In effect until this issue is clarified more fully those formations that are dominant and that have represented students in

less than satisfactory ways will prevail. Especially the more recent ideas about non-hierarchical forms of organisation – sensitive to gender and racialized identities and other forms of exclusion – forms that are based on trans-sectional approaches - need to be explored much more fully. For as long as these are not developed the prevalent forms will remain dominant – representation of the majority of students will remain marginal and unrepresented.

4. An issue that is very much related to this question is the question of organisational practice and democratic accountability, the right of recall and the importance of mandates. Much too much of the political and organisational discourse in far too many sites – in even the ostensibly most 'radical' organisations is truly conservative in relation to these issues. It is far too dependent on the leadership of a few individuals, patriarchal, very little open and democratic discussion, no recourse to mandates or accountability processes and very little internal democratic organisation.

Organisations, we all know of, slide so easily into a mode of undemocratic practice and lack of accountability. If anything the present forms of representation of students is very much a case in point - in fact it is the reality of so much global decision making where powerful political, market based and state organisations simply repeat the mantra of democratic form while denuding it of all meaningful content. It is a charade played out in public and private life seeking justification for some of the most egregious acts of oligarchic and oppressive regimes.

Take for instance the enormous global concentration of power in the hands of the most powerful multinational corporations that bestride the world representing the profit-directed interests of a tiny global minority of bankers, financiers, and sympathetic government leaders that controls the world resources and unleashes terror and warfare on defenceless nations and citizens, sometimes with the active collaboration of the governments of those nations. The reality is that in some cases they have direct control over the lives of over a million workers, make decisions that have devastating environmental effects and continue to do so in the boards rooms of global corporate interest unaffected by questions of representation. Students and all of us need to pay careful attention to this particular issue since it would be hypocritical to ask of governments and other organisations to be democratic if our own practices have no regard for it.

5. Students need also to understand more fully – as some seem to be doing – who the audience is for the conversations, debates and strategies that they must be engaged in. Who is the 'community' of the students and their organisations. Is it the students who vote in student elections, students at their own universities,

students in the university system as a whole, students in other higher education institutions like TVET colleges and other training institution, students in private colleges, students in training organisations, in public schools, in private institutions or even more widely in the communities from which they come, academics, other political, social, trade union or gender based organisation. These question need also to be debated since it is not obvious to me that students can by themselves – unsupported by the broader communities in which they are – achieve the goal of democratizing and decolonising the university – let alone the more encompassing goal of changing power relations, knowledge and society.

6. Students are aware - as they showed in their actions apropos the rights of outsourced workers – about the wider implications of their questions about education in the universities. Since these questions are not just about universities – they are about whose knowledge, what knowledge, how knowledge is disseminated, the power relations that are implicated in any idea of knowledge, the purposes of knowledge and indeed between all of these questions and their relationship to the larger question about what kind of society is envisaged by students in particular and all of us more generally. In effect the questions about the university are not educational or sociological, scientific, human science or historical or philosophical questions. They are all of that and more. They are questions about society – what kind of society, what state, how is citizenship constituted and mostly whose interests should be paramount. Unless we clarify our orientation to these questions and the alternatives being paraded we remain in the dark thrashing around amongst the many false 'developmental solutions' on offer.

CONCLUSION

The issues identified as central to the concerns of students are not simply – as it would seem - about the material and intellectual resources which are the subject of their claims. They are in fact about the deeper underlying issues which provide for us an insight into the present more fully. These deeper underlying issues are essentially about the question of democratic participation in decision making, public accountability, the selective choices that inform public expenditure, the growth and development of privatisation and their implications for the rights of citizens. The development of student leadership is both urgent and necessary and even if ideas about how this is to be done remain less than clear, there can be no useful reason for equivocation about what needs to happen. Let me conclude by saying that the real challenge is also for academics to rethink their role in all of this. There is an opportunity like no other to think through what the idea of a university represents and in doing so to make a genuine contribution to our collective search for a new society.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF HEALTH IN SOUTH AFRICA

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING WORK AND TRAINING

Miriam Di Paola (REAL)

Twenty-two years into democracy South Africa is still battling with unequal access to health and, overall, with health outcomes that are worse than those found in lower-income countries. South Africa is affected by a quadruple burden of disease (HIV-AIDS and associated tuberculosis; high maternal and child mortality; high level of violence and injuries; rise of non-communicable diseases) and by a low ratio of doctors and nurses per population; and the public health sector is severely affected by a crisis of production, recruitment, and retention of health workers, particularly nurses (Rispel and Barron 2012; Rispel et al. 2014). Addressing the so-called nursing crisis is central to address the gross inadequacy of access to health in the country (Rispel et al. 2014; Segatti et el 2014).

Much research has been conducted in the attempt to identify the causes and specificities of the nursing crisis (Breier et al. 2009). My study builds on this body of research and it aims at investigating the link between nursing education, which has undergone a process of transformation towards outcomes-based education; and the changes that have occurred in the world of work, including casualization, changes in control-patterns through the use of nursing agencies, and the lowering status of the nursing profession.

In order to explore the link between education and work it is critical to look at the specificities of the sector where nurses operate; more specifically on the political economy of public health. In this paper I will argue that although there is increasing emphasis on improving the nursing curriculum, with the hope that this will solve problems of poor performance at work, the macro-economic conditions which have structured both the ways in which education is provided and the ways in which nurses work, counteract this assumption.

Nursing is characterized by high levels of attrition both during and after training, especially in public health, where those employed in it seek employment in other sectors of the economy or emigrate abroad (Rispel 2015; Horwitz and Pundit 2008). Moreover, and linked to the various dimensions of the nursing crisis (production, recruitment, and retention), the profession is marked by a lowering of their status. The high turnover of nurses poses a threat to quality health care provision. In some instances operating theatres and wards have been closed as a consequence of shortages occasioned by high turnover.

As an attempt to recruit and retain nurses in the public sector, Government has put forward several specific policy interventions (DOH 2006) of which the most significant has been the implementation of an occupation specific dispensation to improve remuneration and recognise work experience. The policy focuses on one important dimension of job dissatisfaction, viz. salaries, but does not tackle structural factors. Moreovoer, it was poorly implemented due, mostly, to managerial difficulties. Hospital managers were given carte blanche to implement the policy without consultation with the employees. This resulted in an uneven and at times arbitrary interpretations of the policy, divisiveness amongst different nursing categories, perceived unfairness and staff dissatisfaction, undermining the quality of care. Despite the relatively positive impact of the dispensation in retaining nurses, the shortcomings in implementation have partially overturned the achievements (Motsotsi and Rispel 2012)

Other attempts have been made towards the professionalization of the nursing curriculum to address the supply side of the problem and prepare efficient and well-skilled practitioners so that this would obviate the question of the lowering of the status of the profession, thus reversing the nursing crisis and ultimately impacting positively on health care provision.

These attempts seem to stem from a conception of education as somehow responsible for economic shortcomings that in fact derive from macroeconomic factors, class relations and poor investment. The nursing crisis has to be located in the political economy of health provision in South Africa, whose main features are a bifurcated system characterized by dramatic differences in the outcomes in private and public health; the power of financialised private health institutions; macroeconomic constraints which have impacted on the transformation of the apartheid healthcare system and, linked to the latter, a shortage of health professionals, a breakdown of managerial structures and the casualization of the workforce.

In terms of overall expenditure South Africa ranks above many upper middle income countries, with about 8% of the GDP spent on the health care. However, as mentioned above, health status outcomes, such as infant mortality, are much worse than that in other middle income countries and similar, if not worse than that of lower income countries. Therefore, the challenge is not the overall resources allocated but the extremely unequal

distribution of existing resources between private and public health.

The bifurcation has resulted, amongst other things, on an exodus of health professionals from public to private care. In the early 2000s there was a six fold difference in the number of people served per nurse, and a factor of 23 in the number of people served per specialist doctor, employed in the public and private sectors.

In private health there has been a process of concentration of hospitals under three major groups that control the prices of hospitalisation and medication. Related to that, since the late 1980s a process of financialisation has become prevalent in medical schemes and private hospitals and this, amongst other things, has entailed an increased utilisation of services (supply-driven demand) and a rise in spending on medical schemes. Private hospitals acquired a privileged position also as employers and trainers of health care workers, setting standards for the whole sector, e.g. introducing the use of nursing agencies.

Despite the transformative agenda of the Constitution, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and the ANC, COSATU and the SACP alliance's National Health Plan, the effect of the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macroeconomic strategy adopted in 1996 was to mark definite shift to orthodox development economics. GEAR had a stronger impact on health and health care than any of the directly health related policies of the post-apartheid government. "Its neoliberal basis, tight fiscal policy, and minimal-state ideology became the overwhelming priority of the ANC government, which made achievement of the redistribution and equity goals of the RDP and the National Health Plan almost impossible" (Baker 2010 p 81).

Many studies on inequality and health have shown a strong relationship between the unequal income distribution and poor health outcomes. Some authors, like Corbun, bring to the centre of the analysis of inequality and health the relations between different classes and how such a relationship has changed historically. Notwithstanding the importance of income distribution it should be understood as a product of prevalent class relations and in relation to other factors such as poverty, labour market policies, the level of organisation of labour and the level of welfare.

Bringing class relations to the centre of the analysis of the relation between income distribution and health would allow us to look at issues of increasing inequality, budget cuts, corporate capital's power and the phenomena of casualization and lowering the status of certain professions, such as nursing as part of a continuum of changing class relations in the specific context of neoliberalism.

The fact that the unequal access to health, based on class and marked by a strong racial dimension has not substantially changed in the past two decades has to be related to the adoption of restrictive macroeconomic policies. Financial orthodoxy starts with stagnant expenditure at the national level and trickles down to the level of the single hospital where cost- containment has become the priority for hospital managers. The way these policies have impacted nurses' work tells a story of worsening conditions of employment, deteriorating work environment, loss of authority and increased workloads.

In terms of conditions of employment, nursing agencies have mushroomed, particularly in the past fifteen years, beginning with the private sector eventually permeating public health. Because of nursing agencies moonlighting between two or more jobs has spread amongst nurses and it is mostly motivated by financial reasons (Rispel at al 2014).

The explosion of the HIV-AIDS pandemic has exacerbated inequality and resulted in increased demand for services in public hospitals. Trade unions rights are today guaranteed and wage gaps have narrowed in relative terms, the racial dimension of the despotic management inherited from apartheid has been eroded, but it still remains substantially authoritarian and characterized by a lack of consultation. Indirectly related to macroeconomic orthodoxy and fiscal discipline, budget cuts for hospitals are a consequence of shifting resources from tertiary to primary health care in order to redress the legacy of apartheid without an increase in total expenditures. As a result, shortages of nurses and managers and of other categories are rampant, leading to the serious deterioration of the work environment for those who remain.

Overall public health workers are subjected to workloads that are far greater than those experienced by workers who work under market pressures in manufacturing and other private industries (Von Holdt and Maseremule 2005). The unsustainable workloads they are subjected to impacts negatively to their job satisfaction, health and the service they provide to their patients, who come mostly from working class communities, thus reinforcing the dynamics of inequality of health provision.

In the context of the worsening conditions of employment, increasing workloads and deteriorating work environment, the government response ostensibly directed at professionalising nursing has focussed on raising nurses' educational career paths. The assumption underlying such a supply-side intervention must be that the work-related challenges identified above somehow derive from inadequate education.

The entry level on the profession is now a four-year

degree offered by universities or colleges which meet university standards. Nursing education was historically funded by Provincial Health budgets and offered by colleges that worked in a close relationship with hospitals. Clinical training, was offered by hospitals. In the course of the 1990s there has been a change in the landscape of education institutions for nurses which included the closure or merger of colleges. These changes implied that nursing education and training would now fall under the Department of Higher Education and Training offered in cooperation with the Department of Health. There are uncertainties about how the cooperation should work and the process, which started in the early 2000s, is still ongoing. Most importantly, in the context of significant budget cuts, especially at the provincial level, the restructuring of the system has effectively reduced the numbers of enrolments and graduates. Related to budget cuts is also the disinvestment on clinical training offered by hospitals. It should be understood that hospitals relied on trainee students as as a source of labour that would eventually be integrated into the workforce. According to one of my interviewees, budget for clinical training has now been cut by the Province while universities would supposedly provide such training with the cooperation of hospitals. This has entailed a stronger emphasis on practice for education institutions at the expense of theory and has implied a new relationship between hospitals and trainees. Due to the major changes in the labour market towards casualization and the proliferation of nursing agencies, clinical training is not seen as an investment on future employees by hospitals. Hospitals do not have either the budget or the incentive to train nursing students. This results in major challenges for both hospitals and students where hospitals have structurally a leaner labour force and students suffer during their training from an environment that is adversarial, where they are perceived as a burden to an already over extended labour force.

Macroeconomic constraints have resulted in cutting funding for clinical training in the workplace while the renewed power of private health groups has meant the flourishing of low and middle level private education (professional nursing, the highest level of training before specialization, is offered only by universities).

Against the relative decline in public sector production of nurses, private training has blossomed. The major hospital groups increased their training of nurses for their own purposes while there was rapid growth in independent, for-profit nursing schools. Private training courses are substantially shorter than university degree but highly expensive; they are based mostly on loans offered by the financialised hospital groups; and in certain cases bound students to work for meagre wages to repay the costs of training (Breier 2009).

To conclude, the political economy of health care provision provides a picture of a further bifurcated system where public health workers, and subsequently working class patients, pay the price for cost-cutting policies which start at the level of the national Department of Health and trickle down to hospitals. The government response to deteriorating health services has focussed on the professionalization of the nursing curriculum which has included a renewed emphasis on outcomes to the expense of theory, in the hope that supply-side interventions may solve macroeconomic challenges.

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THE LANGUAGE ISSUE

Nadeema Jogee
Centre for Community Schools

Most of us agree that our education system is in a state of crisis.

More and more solutions and alternatives, based on different analyses, are being proffered from different angles depending on the vested interests of the analysts and would-be reformers, be they parents, academics, students, business people or organisations.

Many of these solutions are well researched and grounded in evidence. Many are useful, necessary and few are fanciful or groundless, as they often have their beginnings in real experience of the inadequacies of the system.

What this means is that we have to take it for granted, we have to assume, that there is no single, all-encompassing blueprint that can or does contain the perfect solution. In no way do I maintain that by fixing the language issue we will fix the educational issue. But we are in trouble and our language in education is a big part of what's wrong.

If one of our primary goals, as enshrined in the constitution, is to build a united, non-racial, democratic and multicultural South Africa, we need to invite all those interested in education to speak the truth, engage in meaningful discussions about what is wrong and how we can make it right under the circumstances we are forced to operate in.

Currently, with few exceptions, we have a two-tier education system that has urban, 'white' middle-class children in privileged circumstances continuing to have schooling in their mother tongue, be it English or Afrikaans, while children from townships, rural areas and informal settlements received schooling in a 2nd, 3rd, 4th or foreign language (English or Afrikaans) under impoverished conditions with inadequate resources and poorly trained teachers. Of course, underlying this are all the social inequalities that have bearing on home and community environments.

Neville Alexander maintained we have to follow a 2-track strategy in most domains: we must provide compensatory measures in the short to medium term and have longer term strategic initiatives geared towards turning the system in the direction that will bring us closer to the vision enshrined in the constitution, and indeed, beyond this. This process will require inspired leadership at all levels.

Language remains a blind spot in the education system. Yet there is no learning without language. Neville used the analogy of a window to explain this: we look through the window, but very seldom do we look at the window. Unless we begin looking at the window of language and see how we are mediating knowledge, the way we transfer knowledge via language, and then begin to understand that the medium can be defective, we are not going to be able to make significant progress.

Twenty-two years into the new dispensation and the fundamental decision with regard to language policy in education has not yet been made. Do we base the system (and all that feeds into it) on the mother tongues of the children, as is done in virtually every country outside of Africa, or do we base it on a foreign language, which is what English amounts to for most South Africans? The issue is not either the mother tongue or English. The fundamental issue in a multilingual country like South Africa is both the mother tongue and English. The question we have to answer is how do we do this? And do we want to do this?

THIS LAST QUESTION IS A CLASS ISSUE.
The only way in which the majority of the people in this country can empower themselves is by means of the languages they know best. Middle class intellectuals and others are sometimes misled by their proficiency in English. Such proficiency is the result of middle class privilege, but this is not the position for most of our people.

For something like 70-80% of the population of South Africa, it is simply not possible to acquire the kind of proficiency in English that would empower them sufficiently to be able to compete on an equitable basis in the market for highly skilled and renumerated jobs. And democracy, we should remember, means power to the people.

Language is one of the most important means of empowerment of both individuals and societies, and for that reason the language question is at the heart of a sound democratic system of education.

This is not an indictment against English. We want all our children to get as proficient as possible in English. But there are proven linguistic, psycholinguistic and pedagogical research that indicate very clearly that the way to gain maximum proficiency in any additional language is via the mother tongue. So what we have to oppose is the hegemony of English, not the dominance of English. We need to oppose the idea that African languages are worthless and that we cannot empower ourselves through them.

We have to have counter-hegemonic strategies so that African languages can compete with other world languages in the sense that they can and will be used where appropriate.

If we are to avoid the continued oppression and marginalisation of the majority of poor and working class children in our schools, for whom mother tongue-based bilingual education holds one of the few keys that can open the doors of learning, we need to recognise the role language plays in all our educational alternatives and solutions.

RECLAIMING BI/MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION AS A PUBLIC GOOD:

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY READING CLUBS

Nadeema Jogee
Centre for Community Schools.

> 'The self-esteem, self confidence, potential creativity and spontaneity that come with being able to use
> the language (s) that have shaped one from early childhood (one's mother tongue) is the foundation of all democratic
> policies and institutions. To be denied the use of this language is the very meaning of oppression.'
>
> *-Neville Alexander-*

The language-in-education issue in South Africa remains highly contested. Language policies that were rooted in the ideology of *apartheid* (separateness) had to be replaced or re-aligned with the post-apartheid dispensation to foster social inclusion, social cohesion, democracy and equity of opportunity. This resulted in an expansion of official South African languages from the colonial and apartheid languages of power, English and Afrikaans, to eleven official languages. This elevated the status of African languages that were deliberately underdeveloped intellectually before 1994.

The Language in Education Policy (LiEP) of 1997, based on the non-discriminatory use of languages as well as additive bilingualism, was introduced to begin creating the linguistic environment in our schools that would allow children to best develop their mother tongue(s) as well as acquire one of the high status languages, mainly English. However, as many have noted (Heugh, 2000; Alexander, 2003; Ramadiro, 2012, Spaull, 2013), the failure of government to put into place a detailed implementation plan has meant that schools continue to favour English and Afrikaans, to the detriment of African languages. More recently, a new policy attempting to counter this hegemony is in the initial stages of being piloted across the country. The Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) (2013), while having some redeeming aspects, is conceptually and practically flawed. Fundamentally, the IIAL does not support mother tongue speakers of African languages, but rather supports those already linguistically privileged by existing discriminatory practices that promote and support English and Afrikaans speakers.

On various international tests of educational achievement and outcomes, our children consistently score below average grade levels for reading, writing and mathematics. It is widely accepted that our education system is in a state of crisis. "Of 100 pupils that start school, only 50 will make it to Grade 12, 40 will pass, and only 12 will qualify for university" (Spaull, 2013, p. 3). It is also clear that

as children progress through the schooling system, the learning deficits that disadvantaged children encounter between what they should know and what they do know increases to a point where remediation becomes almost impossible at high school level (Spaull, 2013). The time to intervene is early on in a child's life.

The systematic underdevelopment and oppression at all levels (societal to psychological) of the majority of people in South Africa has ensured stark discrepancies in living conditions, school environments, access to facilities and opportunities etc, that is yet to be redressed. For education, this has resulted in a two-tiered system that generally has urban, 'white' middle class children in privileged circumstances continuing to have literacy experiences in their mother tongue, be it English or Afrikaans, while children from townships, rural areas and informal settlements are subjected to schooling in poorly resourced schools in what amounts to a second, or in some cases, a foreign language.

To make matters worse, South Africa has adopted an early exit model of bilingual education (ie. the abrogation of mother tongue instruction in favour of English) after three years of schooling,. This, coupled with inadequate teaching of English, as well as other socio-economic factors, have had disastrous effects on literacy acquisition, reflected in both local & international tests referred toearlier. Compounding the problem is the lack of resources (ie. Books, television programmes etc.) in African languages. Some of what is available is expensive, poorly translated, not enjoyable as narratives/stories in themselves, and/or restricted in terms of genre. As Dr Neville Alexander has put it: those who were privileged before the fall of apartheid continue to be privileged after the fall of apartheid (Westcott, unknown).

COMMUNITY READING CLUBS
If democracy is our goal, that is, full participation in every aspect that governs our lives, then literacy becomes a necessary tool. The power to name our experiences

means to wrestle against dominant understandings of what it means to read, write and engage in our worlds with and through language. The restoration and building of communities around the language issue with the expressed goal of elevating the status of African languages is an important part of the work that needs to be done to reclaim education as a public good. We cannot talk about dignity, and freedom, creativity and spontaneity, innovation and indeed, democracy, without engaging with the language issue. By creating spaces within communities, third spaces outside of homes and schools, we can begin this 'interrogation' with language and literacies in ways that make sense, are fun, and build embodied knowledge that can begin to challenge the discriminatory practices within school and society at large. Within these spaces we can make our own rules about how language can and should work, and use this to connect children and ourselves to broader cannons of knowledge and ways of being. This is what Neville Alexander called 'language planning from below'.

The principles of equal status of languages in a bi/multilingual context, the planned and systematic use of all the languages present, and reading for enjoyment and meaning have to be the cornerstones and non-negotiable aspects of community and school-based reading clubs in South Africa if we hope to begin shifting attitudes and practices of language use and literacy behaviour. In the absence of these principles, the power of the high status languages will continue to dominate and our children will continue to feel alienated from the very education that holds the potential to change their lives for the better.

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THE POWER OF THE MULTILINGUAL READER

Fatima Gabru (CERT)

INTRODUCTION

Imagine if, in the quest to increase the literacy level of our young learners from multilingual homes, they were able to easily access story books in their mother tongue, another indigenous language and English, all within the same book?

The second Neville Alexander Conference, hosted by the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation (CERT) at UJ between 31 October and 1 November in 2014, reflected on post-apartheid education. Participants envisaged, among other things, a future where learning that will '…provide mother-tongue and multilingual learning, teaching and learning materials in all schools; Promote and support community reading clubs with appropriate multilingual material, nutrition and training in all communities' (Neville Alexander Commemorative Conference, Poster, 2014).

As a CERT researcher working with the Community Literacy and Numeracy Groups (CLINGs), I was struck by the poor book language selection that these community libraries had been able to afford to do their work up to now.

CLINGs were established through CERT and the respective communities of Freedom Park, Evaton West and Evaton North. This was in recognition of the shortfalls (overcrowding, poorly trained teachers, etc.) of the formal schooling system that impacts negatively on the literacy levels of multilingual communities. Most of the CLINGs now operate as homework centres, as well as literacy clubs, with a small child-to-educator ratio, which in turn has a positive impact on the learning experience of these children.

CLING volunteers must be commended for undertaking door-to-door book drives, among other initiatives, to get books onto the shelves of these groups. Unfortunately, second-hand book drives limit book choices. On my first visit to the CLINGs, I noticed that most of the books on the shelves are either really old and/or often only in English. Also, these books have Eurocentric representation/bias that deny the reality of the communities within which the CLINGS are based. There are many challenges that CLINGs face and the one I will focus on in this article is the limitations of book choices in terms of language, cultural and race representations. This reflects a broader problem facing the post-apartheid education system.

TOWARDS ENABLING MULTILINGUAL LEARNING IN CLINGS

The 'Nal'ibali' supplements that appear in popular papers are the main multilingual resources that CLING volunteers use in their work. But, these are newsprints that get pasted into notebooks, and while they are kept as best as they can, they end up looking tatty from overuse, as well as having a limited lifespan.

Also, the socio-economic conditions of the volunteers and the surrounding communities who run these groups prescribe the resources of the groups. Interventions from the state and other well-resourced institutions are direly needed to populate these shelves with readers/books/resources that are culturally and linguistically relevant within the communities within which they are based. But, as my experience will show, this is also not the answer to CLING participants interacting with books that empower and affirm.

Working with a dedicated CLING support staff member at CERT, I initiated a proposal to a Johannesburg community charity group (The Caring Women's Forum/CWF), who, together with STANLIB, donated an amount of R75 000 for children's books. These are intended for the CLINGs and other community reading groups that CERT works with and supports from time to time.

In drawing up the book list to fulfil this donation we added in all the Nal'ibali books from the Jacana catalogue (our chosen publisher to work with for this order), as well as all other children books that they had listed. Each of the reading groups has slightly different language needs and these had to be catered for, as well. It was not an easy task to fulfil and in the end we had to add in a few more reference books in English, rather than the multilingual mix we had aimed for.

The question that this exercise raised in my mind was 'where are the multilingual readers?' A search through Jacana's catalogues and enquiries confirmed that they do not have any multilingual readers for children or any other age group. I was then directed to *Puo Publishing* and located 4 bilingual children's readers available from them. Subsequent investigations has elicited a limited number of publishers that produce multilingual readers for children. Even Nal'ibali, while it has the best range of single title books in multiple languages in separate books, does not have a multilingual reader within one publication.

OBSTACLES TO PUBLISHING A MULTILINGUAL READER

Reading Clubs and libraries throughout the world are set up to help literacy levels through growing the love for reading. In a country where English is more often a

second or third spoken language, it has unfortunately has become a language 'more equal' than the others, and is the most preferred language of instruction and communication, even at the crucial early learning stages. Thus, how does an overabundance of English-only reading material, which often reflects a foreign culture, help in growing a love for literacy, grow confidence, and empower self-identity in multilingual, African communities? Would exposure to multilingual, or even bilingual, listening and reading positively enhance the crucial reading, comprehension, self-expression abilities, and self-identity of these learners?

Edwards and Ngwaru (2011; iv) point out that South African "publishers are reluctant to invest without a market-spend large enough to make African language publishing viable. The absence of teaching materials, in turn, affects the willingness of teachers to use African languages as the medium of instruction". Furthermore, Edwards and Ngwaru (ibid) point out that:

> One of the major obstacles to the expansion of African language publishing for the schools market is the failure to implement the language-in-education policy. At the international level, the arguments for mother-tongue based bilingual education are well rehearsed: students who have a sound foundation in the mother tongue participate more actively, feel more confident about their learning and outperform peers who operate only through the medium of a second language. While language-in-education policy in South Africa is supportive of this policy, the rate of implementation is extremely slow and, in the absence of bilingual provision, parents veer to education in English, the language of highest status. A further consequence is that publishers are reluctant to invest without a market-spend large enough to make African language publishing viable. The absence of teaching materials in turn affects the willingness of teachers to use African languages as the medium of instruction.

They highlight the crucial issue of publishers' profitability, as well as the position of the State as the largest client of African language books (for school texts). Would the State investing in authors, translators, and the publishing of multilingual readers not have a positive effect on the national literacy level that embodies empowerment and positive self-identity here in South Africa?

Apart from this top-down efforts towards building and empowering multilingual communities, there is another bottom-upwards effort that is being engaged by teachers in multilingual environments. This effort uses the abilities of these teachers to translate already available books to help transcend the language barriers to early learning and conceptual development of learners.

These bottom-upward efforts need more support in terms of the following questions, among others. How can reading club volunteers be empowered to use the written form of indigenous languages, since a number of them come from schooling systems that did not accommodate this? How do these volunteers currently accommodate multilingualism within the reading club environments? There are a number of other questions that both this perspective and the top-down efforts raise in terms of how to build up and empower multilingual communities here in South Africa.

Constant engagement with both these efforts are required if we want to build up communities that not only learn to read, but that are empowered while they do so.

CONCLUSION

The look on a child's face when they understand and relate to what is being read to them or what they are reading is worthy of further research and investment into bringing multilingual learning and reading into the mainstream. I see the ability or power of the mainstreaming of multilingual learning environments to empower and grow our neglected, side-lined and marginalised communities.

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MARCHING INTO A NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Veerle - EPC2 Community Service Working Paper

Since the end of apartheid there has been some loose talk amongst politicians promoting the idea of a National Youth Service. Such an initiative would draw in young people who have finished their schooling to spend a defined period of time providing a service that benefits communities. At the same time, youth service is often also intended to prepare young people for further education and training or even to transition them into employment. While under apartheid, young white men were compelled into military 'service', there has been no attempt since 1994 to coerce youth into giving time to work for the public good. (One exception is community service for medical professionals, who must complete a year's service after they have graduated in order to a registered with the South African Health Professionals Council). There have, nevertheless, been smaller-scale experiments and initiatives with youth service. This paper provides a brief overview of those attempts and unpacks three small but nevertheless perceptible shifts in the calls for a NYS since 1994 – each with a new emphasis in the rationale and a slightly different model. While these changes are slight (and often the policy rhetoric remains much the same), they do point to shifting concerns over youth.

In the first phase, youth were central subjects for policy attention. Concern that a generation of young people had lost out on education and had been brought up in a near-war situation, prompted concerted efforts to open up opportunities for youth development. Youth Service, an idea borrowed from post-colonial Africa and even the USA, promised a structured way of integrating youth, giving them an avenue to contribute to rebuilding post-apartheid society, including them into an emerging national identity and simply keeping them busy and productive at a time when the political environment was volatile and when young men (in particular) might have made easy recruits into political street battles or crime. In this phase, therefore, youth service was wide-ranging but principally based on the idea of nation-building.

In the second phase – probably dated from after 2000 – youth development (and nation-building) had slid as a political priority. Unemployment was an emerging anxiety and hitting youth especially hard and youth service came to be seen as a solution. It would provide both hard and soft skills to young people and give them a taste of the workplace.

Finally, a decade later and with youth unemployment still escalating coupled with increasing paranoia over unoccupied youth, crime and service delivery protests,

national youth service takes a new twist. This time it seems to promise youth discipline. It gets a new name – 'brigade' – and with this military connotation, is sometimes added three months of basic training in the army.

These three phases overlap – each phase contains elements of the others. But it is in the degrees of difference that we see shifting political anxieties about youth.

PHASE 1

The role played by youth in the downfall of apartheid combined with the devastating impact of apartheid on young people, meant that youth as a category was recognised as needing policy attention.

In the run-up to the first democratic elections, an early idea as a vehicle for meeting the needs of young people was a national youth service. The Joint Enrichment Project, an NGO which had organised a National Youth Summit in 1993, presented the idea in a document titled "Towards a national development service and a national youth corps for South Africa". A youth service was seen as a way of striking several blows with a single stone. It would provide skills for accessing jobs and economic opportunities, act as a platform for inculcating the values of equality, democracy and reconciliation of the new nation and provide young people with access to social, cultural and sporting opportunities (YDN, Youth Development Research Report, n/d, p11).

JEP was influenced by rural youth programmes in African countries such as Nigeria and Kenya, and an interest in the US models, such as the Youth Build and City Year programmes (Foley interview).

JEP piloted what was called the Youth Work Scheme. It was a six month programme in which small teams of 15-20 people were organised and involved in community service projects with a school or hospital ... It was targeted at out-of-school youth – a group at risk of neither getting into post-school education or into work and estimated to make up to 40% of young people.

Despite the fact that it was called a "work scheme", Chisholm et al (1997) point out that JEP was cautious of youth employment schemes. Rather the idea was for a project with socialisation as its focus. The intention was for it to have an education component, add some skills for the workplace as well as contribute to personal development. Foley explains that: "It was meant to get people busy, working, doing something – get them educated and move them out of the group with no future" (Foley interview, 8.4.2014).

At around the same time, 1994-95, the National Youth Development Forum, which was set up at the National Youth Development Conference in 1993 as an independent youth body with broad-based representation, started with a National Youth Service Initiative (NYSI). Projects such as the Bertrams Housing Project and the Hekpoort Permaculture and Child-Care Project, were planned in consultation with government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (YDN, Youth Development Research Report, n/d, p11).

The National Youth Service Initiative (NYSI) was an ambitious programme. Chisholm et al explain that: "It sought to steer clear of narrow visions of youth development" (1997, p220). But its target of reaching 10,000 young people was overstated. By 1995, there were just four projects accommodating 350 people (Chisholm et al, 1997, p221). An evaluation of the NYSI in the mid-1990s, observed that the main reason for the failure of the programme was that it had "tried to do too much with too little," and that the "aim to provide a comprehensive programme had been difficult to implement" (Kgobe, 1996:23).

By the end of 1995, the NYDF was closed down but the momentum for a NYS was carried through to policy as human capacity and resources in the NGO youth sector shifted into government.

Youth service was already a feature of government policy. The RDP had advocated for a National Youth Service programme that: "must better educate, develop, train and empower youth, and enable them to participate in the reconstruction of society through involvement in service projects in the community such as literacy, welfare, and improving infrastructure. All development and job creation programmes such as a national public works programme must address the problem of youth alienation and unemployment" (ANC, 1994).

Those wide-ranging aims were carried through to the Green Paper on a National Youth Service which was published in 1998 and spearheaded by the National Youth Commission. It was no less ambitious than the NYSI, undertaking that "National Youth Service will play its role in youth development, regeneration of communities, nation building and economic revival by harnessing youth energy and innovation."

The Green Paper intended youth service to target four groups: FET students; higher education students; out-of-school youth and youth in conflict with the law. There would be a different emphasis in terms of education, personal development and service for each target group. But overall the underpinning motive seems to have been the need for nation-building and a common, inclusive notion of citizenship. The Green Paper, argues Foley, seemed to drive the idea that service had a moral value over and above its practical values. She explains: "They start to talk about the fact that you do something that

other people value. It changes your sense of self-esteem and it starts to take from being seen as a problem into a position of respect" (Foley interview, 8.4.2014).

But national service never quite got off the ground. It was trapped in definitional issues: what kind of service would qualify? Would it run as one national programme (like Ghana)? Would it be voluntary? Would recruits wear a uniform? Moreover, there were logistical issues: how would it be funded and in which department would it be located?

By the late 1990s then, the NYS had grand policy ideals but not the bureaucratic capacity to contain and direct operations. Its objectives were too broad in scope to fall neatly into a focused programme. What was needed was a more clearly articulated aim, a more clearly defined target group and a centralised administration to co-ordinate it. It found that cohesion in youth unemployment.

PHASE 2
The second shift in the discourse over youth service was for it to look more and more like an employment scheme. Already the Green Paper on NYS had highlighted in its 'problem statement' the "alarming increase of youth unemployment" but in the Green Paper, youth service was always meant as a comprehensive programme to address a wide range of issues confronting young people.

When the Umsobomvu Youth Fund took over the reins of NYS in 2001, it focused the programme at unemployed youth (YDN, Youth Development Research Report, p19). The 2003 National Youth Service Development Policy Framework (2002) and the National Youth Service Implementation Plan (2003) promised youth service as a route for training and gaining work experience, whilst contributing to the country's development.

To be sure, service, learning and youth development were still objectives of NYS but employability appears as a more prominent rationale. The NYS Implementation Plan of 2003, notes that the value of youth service is that it provides soft skills, and that these are critical to young people succeeding in their search for work.

Many of the projects funded by the UYF and that fell under the NYS justified their existence to integrating youth into economic activity though training, entrepreneurship or internships. Indeed, youth service was either a lead into a job opportunity or a substitute for work itself. A project such as Siyancenda Youth Service, for example aimed to: "provide skills training in laundry, cleaning, gardening, care for the aged, and child and infant care to intellectually disabled youth so that they can serve, train in and earn wages at community based organisations". EDUCO National Youth Service Programme was a 18 month programme that reached 72 youth with the promise "To equip youth with technical and life skills to access employment opportunities". The aim of the 17 Shaft National Youth Service Programme was to "provide technical skills to unemployed youth in construction or

horticulture to serve the community and gain skills for employment opportunities."

But the NYS could not solve systemic problems related to unemployment. The 1998 Green Paper on NYS had already pointed out that there is not a simple correlation between unemployment and lack of skills. The number of available jobs is a complex summation of economic performance, global trade conditions, the price of oil, market fluctuations and even social factors. As the Green Paper points out, women struggle to find work because they have to counter negative stereotypes even if they have the skills required. The solution to an unemployment problem is more employment. It is not clear how a youth service allows for greater connect with employers, makes a fit with job vacancies or helps grow employment opportunities.

While employability remains a dominant narrative in youth programmes, the establishment of the youth wage subsidy (which came into effect in early 2014) had channelled much of the momentum. At the same time, rising levels of youth involvement in violence in both service delivery protests and xenophobic attacks seemingly reignited political rhetoric about needing to integrate youth into communities.

PHASE 3
And so finally, there's been a discernible third shift in the call for a National Youth Service in which the objective seems to be on building character and patriotism. Moreover, there is a stronger sense in which a NYS will bring about discipline – particularly as the term "brigade" becomes more prominent as a way to describe NYS.

The Youth Employment Accord (2013), for example, notes that the strategy to increase youth employment in the public sector includes: "Youth brigades to give youth a chance to serve their communities, provide some work experience and training, integrate youth into a social movement, build social cohesion and earn a stipend" (p18). The Youth Accord lists the following as 'brigades' which "should all set clear youth intake targets":

- The Expanded Public Works Programme and the Community Works Programme,
- The National Rural Youth Service Corps (NARYSEC)
- Green brigade, focused on the Working for Water, Working for Energy, Working on Fire and other environmental programmes
- Health brigades, to expand home-based care as well as health and wellness education to communities as part of the NHI, auxiliary services in health care facilities
- Literacy brigades to utilise young people to expand literacy training of adults
- Other suitable areas of focus as identified from time to time, such as a Maintenance Brigade to undertake small, regular maintenance of assets and premises that are not currently done adequately or at all. (Youth Accord, p20)

The notion of a 'brigade' is not new. The Jobs Summit in 2000, for example, included a proposal for the establishment of youth brigades for unemployed young people and young people out of school. However, the recent revival of the term 'brigade' is interesting and hints that its hidden purpose is military-style discipline. Indeed, one of the early ideas for a youth 'brigade' emerges from the SANDF under Lindiwe Sisulu. When she moves as minister to the Department of Human Settlements, the brigade is launched there in December 2014. Although the long-term aim is to create a crop of builders and construction workers, there is also a promise to build 'character'. In a press release issued by the Department of Human Settlements at the launch of the Department of Human Settlements' Youth Brigades, it states that the four months training in "character-building" focuses on "principles of the nation building, voluntarism and patriotism, among others" (Press Release Date: Sunday, August 16, 2015). The same press release quotes the Deputy Minister for Human Settlements, Zou Kota-Fred-ericks as saying: "My children, this may be your first and last opportunity in life. It is in your capable hands to make the very best of it. You must always remember that discipline and responsibility are the fundamental founding blocks of success" (Press Release Date: Sunday, August 16, 2015).

The need to discipline youth is also evident in NARYSEC, a programme which aims to help rebuild rural communities, assist with rural basic infrastructure such as fencing programmes and road maintenance as well as addressing food security. Rural Development and Land Reform Department Minister Gugile Nkwinti described the programme's aims as equipping youth with the necessary skills to enter the job market and also as "a programme for the youth development and character development" (Govt pumps billions into youth entrepre-neurship, Wednesday 5 June 2013 05:51, SABC).

In a radio interview on SAFM, Dr Anton van Staden, programmes manager for NARYSEC notes that working with young people "is not always easy. Youth can be very difficult at times." NARYSEC Recruits spend three months in army barracks doing basic training before entering a TVET college. It includes topics such as: management of personal finance, occupational health and wellness, hygiene, fire-fighting, drill and transfor-mational management (NARYSEC booklet, April 2014). The stint in the SANDF is meant to instil self-control:

There is nothing military about the training – but it is done within a military facility with a discipline that is typical of a military facility – done by military instructors. These instructors take the youth through different skills programmes. They wake up very early. They must clean their own area where they stay, make their bed, stand for inspection. There is a noisy corporal who will discipline them when necessary – they do a lot of exercise. And then they do programmes in leadership – social regeneration. In basically developing that emphasis on – if we work

together, we can actually make a difference. In those 3 ½ months, we see the youth change from youth complaining about the food that is bad, the beds that are hard – and wanting to go back home – to youth that is really motivated

(Dr Anton van Staden, programmes manager for NARYSEC; 15 May 2014; SAFM Radio interview, Broadcasting from the Thaba Nchu College of Education; graduation of 6000 participants; radio host: Rowena Bird).

Interviews with some NARYSEC officials were adamant that Youth Leadership Development Programme facilitated by the SANDF was effective both as character development and as an inoculation that the young do not drop-out of the later programme. As one explains: "If you look at them after 12 weeks, they are young, naughty, and vibrant and they have a lot of questions, but afterwards they are changed. It has got an impact in terms of making you a member of South Africa. You start realising that you know, what can I do for my country?"

But military style basic training has not been universally accepted even amongst NARYSEC staff. Some NARYSEC officials admitted (to me in interviews) that the SANDF was secretive about the exact programme NARYSEC recruits were put through. Some recruits had refused to go to barracks.

Whether or not military-style basic training is the most effective way to bring about the psychological shift to responsible adulthood, the idea that 'discipline' is a necessary preparatory step for skills training is at least significant. A director in the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform argues that the skills element has completely over-run the purpose of NARYSEC – and that the youth development component as well as patriotism no longer feature as prominently (interview, GN).

Another problem with the NARYSEC model is its scale and expense. In 2014, there were 14,000 NARYSEC participants with a 5000 annual recruitment target. They received uniforms, monthly stipends, were enrolled into FET colleges and accommodation costs were covered. Those costs are not necessarily recouped by recruits getting long-term employment.

But perhaps the drift towards a youth service 'brigade' is that it feeds into the perception that youth are ill-disciplined and that a military regime is the kind of restraint that would instruct and exercise youth into becoming productive citizens. The emphasis on patriotism, on obedience and self-control is at odds with the more open, democratic environment in which young people can safely challenge government and the status quo. Military discipline is incompatible with democratic discipline. It denies equality and suppresses oppositional views. A democratic National Youth Service (and one that serves a democracy) must be one that includes the views of young people, addresses the issues they put on the table and builds their capacities.

CONCLUSION

Over the past 21 years, national youth service has adapted and responded to changing perceptions of youth and the problems they face. Initially, youth service was seen as a way of including young, disaffected youth into the mainstream of national building. That was followed by a period in which service was primarily a route into employment – if not a substitute for employment. Finally, national youth service has added a disciplining element.

Most recently it seems the policy wheel has come full circle and is back to address current anxieties over nation-building and race. The National Youth Development Agency in its National Youth Policy 2015-2020 States that:

> The NYDA should ensure that the National Youth Service is implemented across race and class.
> The National Youth Service aims to reconstruct South African society by developing the abilities of young people through service and learning. The National Youth Service builds character and enables young people to give back to society. In addition, it addresses past racial segregation by enabling young people to share common space such that they recognise in each other common humanity.

This shift in youth service discourse is of course more fluid than three distinct periods. Policy also tends to repeat the same rhetoric even as practice emphasizes one principle over another. Nevertheless, what is clear is that youth service always has an instrumental purpose that shows up government's worry with youth not in employment, education or training (the so-called NEETs). The preoccupation is to use youth service to keep youth productively occupied rather than using it as a means of encouraging autonomous youth movements. Guy Redig (in personal correspondence) points out that youth work is often characterised by a tension between programmes that treat young people with optimism and those with a more pessimistic view of the youth. The former approach is more likely to provide young people with opportunities, to give them responsibilities and reward them, without much adult interference. The latter, what he calls "defensive approach", is generally distrustful of youth, limits their space to act and uses accountability measures to restrain them.

The national youth service in South Africa seems to have evolved into more and more of a defensive approach. Turning it around into a service that is youth-centred (rather than service-centred) will require government to relinquish its fears of young people as sources of destruction and even violence. But that in turn will also require an upswing in socio-economic conditions that fuel those fears. The acute socio-economic needs of youth need to be met as a pre-condition for a national youth service that is less instrumentally focussed on how to integrate youth into the mainstream and rather more focussed on giving youth the decision-making powers.

LEARNING FROM BERTRAMS STREET

Neil Murtough (CIPSET)

I am a mentor of Andiswa and Sindiswa who are community educators at a non-formal, post-school project. The project's learning activities are defined by the needs of the community. Andiswa and Sindiswa facilitate skills classes with community members, recycling wooden pallets into furniture. Since they are new to this work I mentor them with carpentry and facilitation skills.

This is a story with four narratives: mine as their mentor; Andiswa and Sindiswa's personal accounts of growing their skills as community educators; and the voices from their environment in Zwide Township, Port Elizabeth.

Bertrams Street in Zwide is much like any other arterial road in this township, a lot of traffic and speed bumps. Pedestrians are busy on their way, children to and from school, neighbours chatting and young men in corner groups watching. I drive this street often and am aware of certain landmarks, a tavern here, salons here and there, a blue spaza shop, a yellow carwash container.

There are small, quiet side turns where many people live and many children play, houses from the seventies much transformed, their erfs crowded now with extra rooms. Front doors embossed with elephants or birds, garden block walls replacing palette palisades. Down one of these side streets lives Andiswa, at her extended-family home with her daughter, her mother and several others.

Today Andiswa asked me for a lift home to pick up a broken cupboard, saying she wanted to repair it at the project. As we pass down Bertrams Street Andiswa tells me about her area and I find myself looking around with a new focus. I see everywhere evidence of skills learned and on offer. There are signs on buildings and walls: TV/microwave repair; accounting; painting; electrics; plumbing; building; block making; baakie hire; cooking pot hire; tent hire; herbalist; hair salons; car repairs; hair retail; eggs wholesale.

It occurs to me that many of the skills on offer in Bertrams Street would not have been acquired in formal education. So in what non-formal ways were they learnt? I find myself thinking about how people's learning and their social world are connected. That question is what this story is about.

We are now at Andiswa's home, it seems like the whole family is in the front yard to witness our collection of the cupboard pieces. There is a lot of laughter. Mama is teasing and scolding Andiswa for wasting my time. It seems an implicit challenge but Andiswa braves it out. I wonder why Andiswa thinks she can fix a broken

cupboard for that matter? Does she already know how to? Or does she have a different plan?

The following week we returned the repaired cupboard standing proud in my trailer. Many eyes followed its journey, down the Bertrams Street. There was a quiet confidence in Andiswa's eyes. What sort of learning brought Andiswa to this point? When I put this question to her she said that her co-worker, Sindiswa had a lot to do with it.
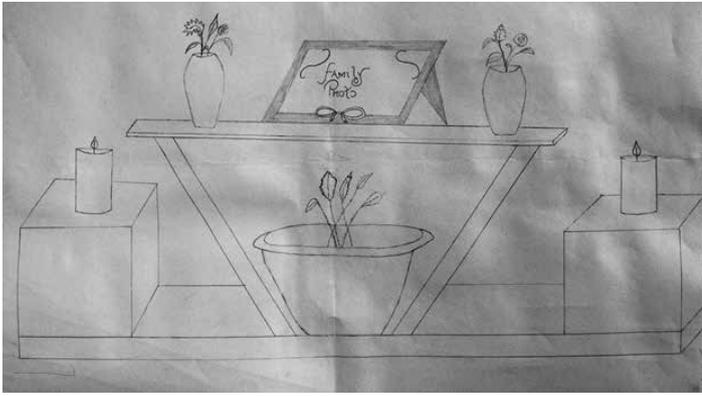
I recall my early role in helping Andiswa and Sindiswa to learn furniture making skills. I showed them how to break up pallets into useful planks, how to use a hammer, nails, saw and ruler and pencil. From the start Andiswa appeared the less confident and determined. On the other hand, Sindiswa couldn't wait to get started and enthusias-tically produced a kitchen

chair in 2 hours! The chair was wobbly and was way too heavy but Sindiswa's pride in the result more than made up for it!

As time went on, when I visited the community education centre in my mentoring role, Sindiswa often made me feel self-conscious about being the 'controlling male'. Sindiswa was always enthusiastic about making furniture but her body language suggested resistance to advice, so I would wait for her to ask. She displayed a tough independence and desire for self-learning, for example she often asked for new types of tools but insisted on finding out herself how they worked.

Then a few weeks ago Sindiswa surprised me by asking me to look at the new bench she had made. It was much better quality than her first chair, the proportions and angles were right somehow. I was delighted and told her so. I guessed she was happy about her bench but she wasn't singing. She still seemed to be holding back.

The following week I held a class with all the community educators to draw new furniture designs in 3D, in proportion. I expected many to have difficulty working in 3D because their formal education had exposed them to little art or technical drawing. But Andiswa made an impressive 3D drawing of a shelf unit.

Why had Andiswa come so far so quickly? It seemed miraculous! My answer came the following week at the community education centre. When I arrived she had a supressed look of excitement and called me to look at the new shelf unit she had been making. There it was, a piece of furniture she was building, using only a photograph downloaded from the internet. She had used this photograph to build the shelf unit, which in turn had given her the insights to make her 3D drawing.

As I started taking photograph of Andiswa's shelf unit she became excited. Soon Sindiswa was posing on her own bench, the old shyness gone!

There was something in Sindiswa and Andiswa's shared excitement. They told their own stories.

Andiswa's story: when we started (working as community educators), I was scared because I didn't know how to hold a drill and was worried that I won't be able to make furniture. The only thing I know is how to draw. But seeing Sindie that she could make things, I talked to her about my problem. She said "no you can do it, just do it!" then I made a small chair for a child then the shelf. Sindie was my motivation.

Now as I think about it, we make a good combination, I had to draw and come up with ideas and she can make furniture. That's how we work together. And our aim is to see other youth make something for themselves. And there's no right and wrong, its only that you need confidence, unity, learn from each other, bring new ideas and love what you do.

The only thing I know is how to draw and I never learnt that from school, it comes from my family background. Everyone at home can draw e.g. my mother can weave but before does anything she draws on paper without seeing them in a magazine.

Sindiswa's story: Why wasn't I singing about making my bench? I was bothered by not being able to make a bench and disappointing the person teaching me how to make it. This meant that I am wasting the pallets.

What motivated me was working with Andiswa when she was fixing her own cupboard. I never did drawing at school. I learnt it from Andiswa and also Mzimkhulu, the one who usually draws in class at CIPSET. I would sit next to him.
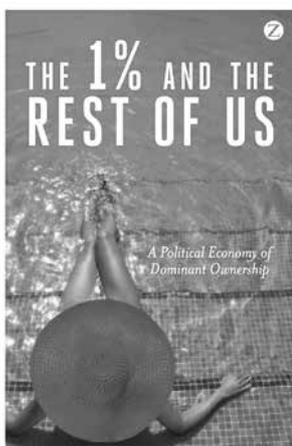
I learnt woodwork from my father and grandfather because there were no boys at home, we were all girls. Because my dad was very strict we mostly did boys work at home, such as my dad's mechanics work. He would make us work his car engine.

Sindiswa and Andiswa's stories have an emerging character. Their learning at the project, invisibly influenced: by each other; their families; and environments of learning and doing, in which they live, like Bertrams Street.

Their stories speak to me as a mentor trying to work in non-formal ways because they challenge the socially disconnected cognitive learning approaches that I was socialised into. Lave (Lave, 1993) takes up this point: "as opposed to cognitive theories of learning that drive formal learning, theories of situated learning see that persons learning and their social world cannot be separated".

So then if a "persons learning and their social world cannot be separated", what is the nature of its engagement? Lave (ibid) observes: "It is not the case that the world consists of newcomers who drop unaccompanied into unpeopled problem spaces. People in activity are skilful at, and are more often than not engaged in, helping each other to participate in changing ways in a changing world. Such participation "can be thought of as a process of changing understanding in practice that is, as learning."

As an educator I need to be aware that my non-formal learning partners in the project may take their learning in directions that they and I can neither define, limit nor neatly sequence. That seeing learning as a social process of changing understanding in practice changes the point of departure. That before picking up hammer and saw, pencil and paper, we could well commence with the learner's stories and read the messages on the walls of their 'Bertrams Street'.

BOOK REVIEW

Tim Di Muzio (2015)

THE 1% AND THE REST OF US:

A POLITICAL DOMINANT OWNERSHIP, HSRC PRESS

Enver Motala (NMI)

INTRODUCTION

Rampant inequality is one of the most disturbing attributes of capitalist wealth concentration and warrants attention because of its social and other effects and because it appears to be unstoppable in the context of the prevailing approaches to 'development'. Recent studies about the global economy and society have highlighted the extraordinary growth of inequality in the world, brought to public attention by the writings of authors like Piketty, Atkinson, Stiglitz and others and their many reviewers. Unchecked, the prevailing 'historically unprecedented' disparity in incomes and wealth is likely to grow even further.

An insightful text on this subject is the book by Tim Di Muzio titled The 1% And The Rest of US: A Political Economy of Dominant Ownership[1]. It is a study which arises from recent developments (such as the Occupy Movement) about the 'global political economy of dominant ownership' and the fantastic levels of wealth accumulated by a 'tiny minority' of the inhabitants of the world, and the effects of this on the distribution of power in society, participation in public life and the rights of citizens. While the concentration of wealth has grown exponentially for this tiny minority, the majority of the global population survive on the margins experiencing 'varying degrees of austerity, precarity, indignity and exploitation in their daily lives'[2]. These conditions and their psycho-social and other effects are experienced by millions throughout the world.

Di Muzio refers to the estimate made by the Credit Suisse's Research Institute showing that the top 1% of the global population owns as much as 46% of global wealth while 'the bottom 3.2 billion people own just 3% of all wealth between them.'[3] Consequently the aim of his study is to

> Provide critical and historically informed account of the rise and social reproduction of the global 1% and what its existence might mean for the rest of us and the future of the global political economy.[4]

His study provides detailed analysis of the data (quantitative and qualitative) about 'dominant owners and how they hold their wealth'; situates the global elite in a historical context; provides a 'theory of capital as

power' and theorises capitalism as a relation of power and as more than a mode of production.

He refers in particular to the power wielded by this tiny global elite and their control over the processes of decision making especially in the inter-related military, corporate and state institutions, giving them extraordinary leverage on these institutions and state resources. For him explanations which rely on personality traits and 'meritorious ability' are not very useful for explaining the extraordinary wealth accumulated by individuals. Instead he uses the analysis developed by C Wright Mills in his The Power Elite (2000) to explain the phenomenon of elite formation and the growth of extraordinary wealth and power in its hands. Such analysis continues to have relevance in explaining the concentration of oligarchic wealth and power and the threat this has posed to democracy globally. Mills' view is supported by research in the 21st century which showed how the policy preferences of the United States (for instance) has reflected the perspectives of this oligarchy (referred to by him as the 'dominant owners') who have marginalised the poor and middle classes globally.[5]

He argues further that the problem of global inequality is not about individual wealth – although it often manifests itself in that form – but is about structural and political questions. It is not simply about 'morally reprehensible' behaviour but about the 'prevailing social relations of power' having roots in the particular form of capitalist accumulation over the last three centuries, in the 'violent creation of exclusive private property and its legal sanctification and in European colonialism, the transatlantic slave trade, the discovery and use of fossil fuel energy and the never ending class war over the generation and distribution of surplus wealth'.[6] It is also a study of the pathology of those who pursue the goal of 'differential wealth and power' which has the potential to destroy the planet and which makes the lives of the vast majority insecure and precarious while an oligarchy accumulates vast fortunes.

The inability to deal with the problem of what he calls 'differential accumulation' and its political, environmental social and other consequences for the majority of the world's population will lead to a 'politics of desperation

and apathy' though it could also lead to violent forms of resistance, as in the case of the French Revolution where

> Confronted with protest, the aristocrats responded with inflexibility and prevarication, and dedicated themselves to preserving their own advantages at the expense of everyone else.[7]

CAPITAL AND POWER

In chapter 2 Di Muzio explains the *relationship between capital and power* arising from the extraordinary global disparities in wealth. This disparity is unresolvable in the present global system because its very logic is based on deepening inequality. In other words, such 'differential accumulation is pathological' because it expresses the ultimate purpose of capitalism. He refers to the work of Nitzan and Bichler, in particular, as useful to understand and explain the critical political economy of the relationship between capital and power in which capital 'is differential power' commodified through the financial system. In this 'capital' is the key. Understanding 'capital' is relevant also to how it is fundamental to the act of 'capitalisation' which is essentially what capitalists do and what makes differential accumulation (inequality) possible. It enables us to understand the power of capital as 'dominant' and as facilitating 'dominant ownership' and provides an understanding of how Net Worth Individuals(NWI) hold their wealth.

Di Muzio also provides a brief outline of the development of political economy from its emergence as classical political economy in the 17th century explaining 'the nature, causes and distribution of wealth'.[8] Classical political economy was deeply political and was therefore also contested. Unlike classical political economy however, mainstream neo-classical economists believe that their work is socially neutral, is scientifically 'objective' and is largely removed political and power issues. As Nitzan and Bichler have argued it is 'largely an ideology in the service of the powerful'. Classical political economy - which did not separate politics from economics - was concerned with 4 main issues; the wealth of nations; the problem of wealth distribution; how inequality could be justified in regard to wealth and property; explanations of poverty. The first of these concerned economic growth, the second related to the distribution of wealth divided between classes, kingdoms and principalities, the third was a justification of inequality and why some were richer than others and the last about how poverty arose.

Classical political economists did not deal with 'capital' critically and regarded the term as unproblematic. It was a term that emerged in the 12th century meaning, (according to Braudel) 'funds, stock of merchandise, sum of money, or money carrying interest'. Later it also came to mean money to invest. Under Adam Smith it assumed the meaning of either funds to invest (money) and 'circulating or fixed capital (material goods)'. The latter view of capital (as material goods) became prevalent in the next century. This led to defining capital as a factor of production such as plant, equipment and machinery used in its processes. But for Di Muzio this is hardly instructive for the present, since capitalists are not interested in accumulating a lot plant, machinery and equipment or for that matter 'calculators and computers'. These items of value are not what capitalists are interested in since the 'restless never-ending process of profit making alone is' what is aimed at. According to Di Muzio, Marx understood the importance of money for investment in profit generating enterprises and for realizing its symbolic nature, but his approach to accumulation relied *entirely* on the exploitation of surplus labour power for the production of commodities in capitalism. For him the production process was based solely on his labour theory of value – not the accumulation of stock but the capacity of workers producing more value than they are paid for. This for Nitzan and Bichler was ultimately a 'misleading' conception of capital because it does not explain how Marx's 'basic unit of socially necessary abstract labour time can be transformed into market prices'.[9] For Di MUzio therefore neither the approach by Smith (about capital being a factor of production) nor that of Marx (where value is created solely by surplus labour) is an adequate explanation of 'capital' as it emerged at the turn of the 20th century. The development of America provides for him a useful way of understanding 'capital'.

CORPORATE AMERICA AND 'CAPITALISATION'

At the beginning of the 20th century large corporations having an interest in transportation systems, oil, banking and steel came into being in the USA in particular - at the end of the American Civil war 1861-1865. An explosion of investment – capitalisation – followed and the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE formed earlier in 1817) became an important arena for capitalisation – even for ordinary Americans interested in stocks. In this regard Veblen's theory of theory of modern business as representing a development on the industrial system is useful. Veblen's ideas are extended by Nitzan and Bichler to explain the political economy of global capitalism. The industrial system itself was run mainly for business profit-making through its search for differential gain and to increase the ownership of income generating assets. The process of accounting became solely about a 'line of capitalisation in money values…ownership runs in terms of money'. (Veblen quoted on p 58). Capital in this sense is nether the machines nor unpaid labour 'but the capitalisation of expected future profits'.[10] It is now based on money values that assure through capitalisation a *future flow of money values by the modern corporation* and even its earning capacity is judged by the ability to generate more earning of investible money. Market capitalisation becomes the measure of a company's value – its 'market value' – the value of its share multiplied by the total number of shares at any given time. So for example the value of Coca Cola or BP is not based on the value of its assets but by the value of its future profit expectations. In effect, in the business world the value

of a business is more than the things it owns but rather the value of its potential earning from its capitalisation - the capital invested by it in the process of doing business. Capital is therefore more than the actual ownership of assets but a capacity for generating profits. It is therefore important to understand how capitalists themselves view capital – i.e. as a fund of money values 'used to capitalise expected future earnings', focusing less on the actual content of particular businesses and 'more on their form as vehicles for capitalising future earnings'. This means understanding capital less as a mode of production and more as a mode of power – the power to produce future earnings.

It requires understanding what is being capitalised and for what purpose? Generating sales for instance must be seen as a mode of power - as a social process designed to generate power over the process of doing business – the power to shape social production in competition with other firms. That is the power to shape how any society 'produces, consumes and reproduces its life and lifestyles, how it understands or conceptualises this mode of existence, and how it defends, both materially and discursively, its pattern of existence'.[11] And since power itself is differential 'dominant capital' is predominant in this regard – especially the largest corporations that command state support. This could be the top 1% or 10% that are in such a dominant position. At the time of writing there were some 80000 public companies in the world's stock exchanges - 1% of them would be 800. How profit is distributed within these dominant companies is a matter of power based on ownership and the resistance to this power. This is a contested terrain even amongst business enterprises. Higher levels of capitalisation mean that investors – large capitalists in particular have more confidence in the ability of particular capitalisations to shape and reshape 'the terrain of social reproduction inorder to generate greater earnings'.[12]

Based on Credit Suisse's data the richest 10% owned 86% 'of all wealth or just over US$12trillion' as at 2012. In effect a small fraction of the world's population owns and controls the vast majority of the worlds income generating assets. The dominant owners are made up of those individuals who own the majority of capitalised assets whether these are assets capitalised in stock markets, governments bonds, real estate or some other asset class. Those who work for an income – have a paid job – or buy their goods and services, work for the dominant capital in one way or the other.

THE CAPITALIST MODE OF POWER: BONDS AND CENTRAL BANKS

Capital should therefore be understood as 'commodified differential power'. This is daily reproduced through the commodification of

- Parts of nature (mining, manufacturing, deforestation, etc.) and knowledge production and attaching process to them

- Constituting legal forms for ownership of business
- Capitalising the proceeds of such business through such ownership and commodification to the exclusion of others.

In effect Di Muzio's argument sets out a 'power theory of value' - an advance on the labour theory of value or theories dependent on the supply and demand of goods and services which do not determine price in a competitive market since 'power does'. This power can be illustrated by examining the operations of companies like JP Morgan Chase and Co, Facebook and Lockheed Martin, by examining their political campaigns and their power to shape the terrain of business for 'war, peace and security' around the world.

Although this implies that capital is largely 'finance' it does not diminish the value of production which however is not an end in itself, since, it is conducted to commodify the differential forms of income for sale beyond industrial production itself. Understanding capital as finance moreover requires a closer look at the financial market itself.

> The financial market consists of bond market, stock market, real estate, commodity market, derivatives market, foreign exchange market, money market, spot market, private equity, and the over-the-counter market. Combined with the price mechanism, credit rating and accounting agencies, institutional investors and central banks, regulatory agencies and off-shore secrecy jurisdictions (commonly called tax havens) these markets make up the architecture of capital as power. They are the main avenues through which dominant owners accumulate their fortunes and organise and reorganise ownership patterns and the field of social reproduction.[13]

Di Muzio provides an explanation of these forms of the market. Most interesting in this regard is the bond market which is the 'heart of the financial market' and consists of a primary and secondary sector. In the primary sector debt instruments are issued and capitalised by investors and traded in the secondary sector – for instance, as government bonds, financial bonds (loans), equity (shares), securitised and non securitised loans, etc. These bonds have increased from US$12 trillion in 1980 to $2225 trillion in 2012- 1775% in 33 years. Government debt (borrowings by governments – the US and Japanese governments in particular) make up about half of these debts made in effect by the 'public'. These borrowings by government set the framework for interest rates and provide a 'no-risk return' on the capital advanced. A massive part of wealth in the hands of the 1% is made up of government debt. Very importantly this means that when government borrows it is privatising a portion of its revenues and a small group of dominant capital have a claim on government revenues secured through public tax. Government bonds are therefore a systemic way to

capitalise power itself - power backed by the force of government – i.e. 'a share in the organised violence of society"[14] which universalises power. But such organised power is not limited to tax revenue alone since (as when Goldman Sachs organised debt repayments which were dependent on the future revenues of the income derived from airports and the lottery system in Greece) these debts are also secured by the privatisation not of government assets but of its future expected revenue. This approach to public debt has for instance been argued for by the influential *Economist* which is itself partly owned by the Rothschild family whose wealth has been derived from 'warring governments and trading and manipulating government securities'.[15] Di Muzio argues that on the advice of the IMF, many governments of the global South have been forced to sell public assets to pay off these private debts. These activities have been hugely accelerated even in OECD countries undermining social programmes through weaker 'public institution and empowering private corporations' by adding trillions of dollars of public debt through the financial crisis of 2008 to be repaid by public tax revenues from citizens of the developed countries of the OECD.

Even more telling is the discussion of *stock markets*. The market for government debt was the first 'symbol' of the capitalisation of power used by kings and governments to conduct war resulting in greater taxes to be paid by the public and debt incurred to support the organized violence of states to be paid for by its citizens. Joint stock corporations emerged through this and they were given the right to operate as monopolies by governments for specified purposes like the building of canals or sending ships to do trade outside the country. For this latter purpose these corporations were given the sole monopoly to trade in the region, together with the right to make war, build forts and 'the right to administer the indigenous population for profit' as in the case of the DEIC, which colonised countries in the Far East and South Africa, crushing all opposition, destroying local markets and engendering the murder of local forces, forced labour and relocation and the destruction of local crop production. In effect those who invested in the DEIC were investing in its war making and other activities. While the general public thinks that stock markets are useful for raising money, in fact this is a minor aspect of its role in productive activity. Their real role is that of 'state protected markets' by which dominant owners organise and redistribute ownership claims to money and power. These institutions evolved into central institutions in the second half of the 19th century.

It may surprise us to learn that some central banks like the US Federal Reserve Bank are owned entirely by private banking corporations and 'by the dominant household that own those banks'. They therefore own the profits that emanate from the power of these commercial banks who are able to increase the money supply by making loans bearing interest. They also own the International Central Bank (BIS) established in 1930. It is owned by a group of central banks and indeed here too by several private owners who hold as much as 14% of its shares. In some senses this is a secret organisation as there are no public minutes of meetings - which are held in secrecy. It is not subject to any jurisdiction except by international law, pays no tax and is unregulated by any other institution or government despite the 'fact that it manages currency reserves of about US$304 trillion'. And 120 tons of gold.

The extraordinary power given to those who own the central banks can be seen from how governments approach public projects like football stadia for which money is borrowed from private banks to be repaid with interest from the tax and other revenue raised from the citizenry. There is no reason in principle why governments cannot create the money necessary for its purposes but elected governments do not use their power to do so because the 'very power to create money has been capitalised and monopolised by the dominant owners who own significant shares in commercial banks around the world'.[16] The argument that printing money will inevitably lead to inflation is obfuscatory because the real problem is not about the limits of productive capacity but of the demand for goods which can be reasonably controlled by limiting the supply of money. The assumption that all public expenditure is likely to be reckless is simply not 'a universal truth. Di Muzio argues that if democratic governments are able to make decisions about money supply, bankers and financiers should be even more constrained in their power to create debt. The basic resource required by families, individuals and communities is money which is not available to the great majority who are obliged to incur a mountain of increasing debt – a problem that is exacerbated by the actions of governments that remain subservient to the interests of the few since 'the banking families of the 1% control and profit from the creation of our money as debt and it is the mounting interest on this debt that pushes up the prices of goods and services.'[17]

Di Muzio's book is available on line and is worth serious reflection and debate by everyone concerned with social inequality and its impact on humanity.

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