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TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

OCCASIONAL PAPER

EDUCATION AND THE FREEDOM CHARTER A Critical Appraisal

What the Freedom Charter says

The Doors of Learning and Culture Shall be Opened!

The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life;

All the cultural treasures of mankind shall be open to all, by free exchange of books, ideas and contact with other lands;

The aim of education shall be to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace;

Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children; Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit;

Adult illiteracy shall be ended by a mass state education plan;

Teachers shall have all the rights of other citizens;

The colour bar in cultural life, in sport and in education shall be abolished.

This paper first appeared as chapter 7 in the publication '60 YEARS OF THE FREEDOM CHARTER No cause to celebrate for the working class'

Published by Workers' World Media Productions

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Acknowledgements

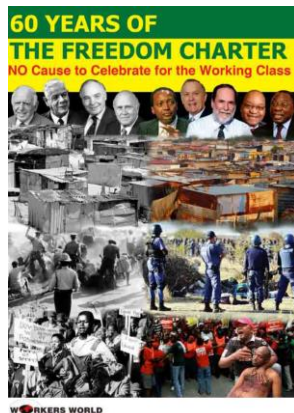
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EPC OCCASIONAL PAPER 5 July 2015

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Apartheid and education

At the time that the Freedom Charter was adopted in the 1950s, almost all skilled jobs were reserved for White workers. The needs of the capitalist system for a more skilled black workforce was still quite limited and school education for black people was not a high priority.

The Bantu Education Act of 1953 broadly determined education policy for 'Africans' for the next two decades. According to official policy, "Native education should be based on the principles of trusteeship, non-equality and segregation" (quoted in Badat, 1999). The mission schools were taken over by the Apartheid education administration and there was huge differentiation in the levels of spending on schooling on the basis of racial classification.

'Separate development' for education in the 'homelands' became increasingly important. Ultimately, apartheid segregation and the homelands policy ensured that under the racist regime there were 19 different educational departments.

Education policy encouraged a sense of inferiority, subordination and respect for authority in black students. This approach was reflected in the budget allocation for education that guaranteed high quality education for Whites and inferior education for black people, especially 'Africans'. There were vast disparities in terms of the number and quality of schools built, student-teacher ratios and education facilities and amenities.

The overall impact was severe. Apartheid education created a massive gap between the "quality of provision and the outcomes of schooling". To give one example of the result, in 1978 70% of the white cohort matriculated as opposed to 5% for the black cohort. There were extremely high drop-out rates in black schools due to large class sizes, poor teacher training, lack of basic resources and then later in the 1980s, violent social and political conflict (Prew, 2014).

Apartheid education was fundamental to the warped socialisation of the black majority to be subservient wage slaves as well as underpinning their oppression. It prevented any meaningful social and economic advancement and constructed (white supremacist) authority as the repository of knowledge and power. Further, it associated tools of social engineering such as a race-based moulding and suppression of sporting and cultural expression that only served to entrench social inequality.



What the education and culture clause meant at the time

Other than the clause referring to “Education shall be free” much of the language and sentiment of this clause no longer resonates today as it might have in the 1950s. The clause appears to more particularly reflect the frustrations of the middle class intelligentsia who were very influential within the Congress movement at the time. In part this was most probably a specific reaction to the narrow, functional racist approach to education of the apartheid authorities.

The Charter goes on to say that access to tertiary education will be “open to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit”. Here, there is a fundamental contradiction that surfaces the inherent elitism. If something is “open to all” there can be no selective qualification of access such as availability of scholarships based on “merit”. Indeed, given apartheid’s systematic undermining of black education, merit becomes a discriminatory qualification. The inevitable result can only be that a privileged few are allowed access, to become the next (black) elite.

Further, the Charter’s stated aim of education, i.e. “to teach the youth to love their people and their culture, to honour human brotherhood, liberty and peace” is both conceptually narrow and practically limited. It appears to reflect a somewhat sentimental commitment to a specific kind of nationalism and internationalism typical of the immediate aftermath of

the Second World War. A more liberatory and universalist understanding of the aim of education, involving the idea of the fullest development of the individual and the importance of developing critical thinking as part of a democratic collective, is wholly absent.



The student movement during the 1970s and 80s

After the relative political quiet of the 1960s and early 1970s and besides the 1973 workers strike, it was student/youth struggles related to apartheid education that provided a renewed spark to broader internal resistance as well as the larger liberation struggle. And, these did not come from within the Congress/Charterist movement.

In early 1976, the apartheid state decreed that the Afrikaans language was to be the medium of instruction in black high schools. In response, a small group of students affiliated with the new Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) in Soweto and organised under the banner of the South African Student Movement (SASM) responded with active resistance and demonstrations.

When the state responded with violent force, more students and some residents in and around Soweto went on the offensive, culminating in the massive 16th June demonstrations. Within a week and after further actions by many more students around the country, a total of 136 people were officially listed as having been killed by the apartheid authorities. In the ensuing weeks hundreds more students were killed. SASM was subsequently banned (Marx, 1992).

Neville Alexander wrote: "In the seamless web of South African history, the 16th of June 1976 represents both an end and a beginning" (Alexander 1992: 25). Written in lyrical style, Alexander argued that: "... the rifles and ammunition that laid low Hector Peterson and his comrades and that sent the Tsietsi Mashininis into exile and the Dan Motsisis into prison put an end to illusions that the struggle for educational equality could be separated from the struggle for democracy and eventually from class emancipation" (Ibid: 26).

The Soweto uprising of 1976 represented the willingness of students and youth to more actively engage in resistance to the oppressions of apartheid education as well as to the apartheid system itself. However, it was not until the early 1980s that the broader impact of the uprising would come to the fore.

"The Doors of Learning and Culture shall be opened!" This was the popular slogan of the student movement of the 1980s. Across the length and breadth of the country, almost every leaflet issued or poster mounted boldly carried this slogan.

The 1980s were characterised by wave after wave of student boycotts and mass protests, marches and demonstrations against apartheid education. This, in turn, led to repeated clashes with the apartheid security forces and the mass arrest and detention of student activists. Every act of repression was met with resistance and drew larger numbers of students into open struggle against the apartheid regime. This spiral of political unrest reached its highest point in the mid- to late-1980s.

From 1983, the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) which was the successor to SASM, alongside the tertiary-based Azanian Students Organisation (Azaso) which emerged out of the BCM and AZAPO-aligned, later renamed the South African National Students Congress (SANSCO) after it reoriented politically to the ANC, became highly active participants in the newly formed Charterist-aligned, United Democratic Front (UDF). Education demands were linked to a range of other demands in the all-sided struggle against apartheid.

In their hundreds of thousands, students joined workers and other township residents in all the key episodes of the mass uprising during the early-mid 1980s. These included: the mass protests against the Republic Day celebrations of the apartheid regime in 1981; the massive Transvaal stay-away in 1984; the million-signature campaign of the UDF in 1984; the nationally-organised protests when COSAS was banned in 1985; and, in the campaign against the dummy tri-cameral elections, over one million students participated in the boycott of schools and other education institutions.



Both COSAS and SANSCO adopted the Freedom Charter. Although the Charter was regarded as “generally anti-capitalist in orientation”, there was wide acceptance of the two stage theory of national liberation first, then socialism. However, both organisations as well as other student formations developed a more sophisticated critique of apartheid-capitalist education than contained in the Freedom Charter.

The education system was regarded as an integral part of the oppressive machinery of the apartheid-capitalist system. In the words of the ‘Committee of 81’, black schooling was, “the outcome of the whole system of racist oppression and capitalist exploitation” (quoted in Badat, 1999).

In the mass education struggles of the 1980s, the main student grievances related to: the segregated and inferior education they received; the lack of schools; the poor quality of facilities; the shortages of textbooks; corporal punishment; the demand for independent Student Representative

Councils (SRCs); low Matric pass rates; and the lack of jobs available for school leavers.

COSAS and SANSCO, alongside NUSAS (the white student body) and the national teacher organisation, the National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA), were at the centre of a mass campaign to develop an Education Charter. The Education Charter Campaign set out to “explore the education demands set out in the Freedom Charter... to give them greater content” (Badat, 1999). The aim was to develop a set of common goals and demands for the realisation of “non-racial, free and compulsory education”.

In 1986, all the mass organisations (national, regional, local) involved in the education sector came together and formed the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC). The NECC raised the slogan, “people’s education for people’s power”, which, according to Badat included the “preparation of people for participation in the realisation of people’s power.” The NECC also called for the formation of parent-teacher-student associations (PTSAs) “as the organs of democratic school governance”.

All of the student and youth constituencies of the 1980s were central to the intensification of the anti-apartheid struggle. Even though they did not complete the task of drafting an Education Charter due to increased repression, their boundless courage, energy and revolutionary commitment made the notion of ‘people’s power’ from below something palpable and shook the foundations of apartheid-capitalist rule.

However, there were also some negative tendencies within some of the

Congress-aligned student and youth organisations and struggles. These included a marked intolerance towards non-Charterist organisations and politics and an often uncritical acceptance of the ideological and strategic 'line' from the ANC and SACP. Also, the adoption of the slogan "liberation before education". Neville Alexander, in an article under the subheading 'AK 47s, petrol bombs, driver's licences and matric certificates', strongly cautioned against this slogan which he felt was dangerously misguided, arguing instead that education institutions should be sites of struggle and co for developing a future democratic education encapsulated in the counter slogan 'Education for Liberation'. (Alexander, 1992).



Equal Education protest against the lack of school libraries

The Freedom Charter and the struggle for free, quality public education today

While the students and youth of the 1970s and 1980s made amazing sacrifices in the struggle against apartheid education and for equal quality education, many of their key demands have not been met in the post-1994 era. Despite progressive

legislation and wide-scale, formal changes within the education system (and in society more generally) systemic problems and inequalities remain.

The Freedom Charter demands that, "Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children". Today's equivalent is the widely championed slogan of "Free quality public education for all." How far have both of the slogans been realised?

In answering this question we must always remember that the onstitution [in Section 29(1)(a)] states that "Everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education". Importantly, in post-apartheid South Africa, the constitutional right to such a "basic education" is not qualified by "available resources" or "progressive realisation". In other words, it is an immediate right; government is responsible for providing/realising such basic education now, not in the future and not partially.

While there has been sizeable progress since 1994 in expanding the numbers of black children in primary and secondary schools and more moderate progress in the provision of both early childhood and adult basic education unfortunately, the government has not been able or willing to meet the basic education rights standard as set down in the Constitution. The Minister of Basic Education continues to cite "budgetary constraints" and "the limitation of available resources" as a reason why every child in South Africa is still not receiving a quality basic education (John, 2012).

This is directly linked to the role played by the neoliberal GEAR macro-economic framework. As educationist

Salim Vally has pointed out, GEAR's approach to education, despite lip service to empowering poor communities, is embedded in the neo-liberal obsession with technocratically-driven and fiscally conservative governance. This has not only impacted on the quantifiable aspects of education but also on its content and quality.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in relation to the content of education curricula. The increasing privatisation/corporatisation of the educational system has allowed corporate education and skills development 'experts' to increasingly "have a large part to play in the development of the curriculum, in shaping the orientation and outcomes of education, and determining the 'suitability' of teachers and administrators". Necessarily, this has meant that capitalist 'values' such as an individualist, profit-seeking approach and the benefits of associated 'entrepreneurship' have become more and more dominant (Vally and Motala, 2013).

Indeed, by allowing education to be framed by the demands of a neoliberal 'development' approach, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on being "internationally competitive (with particular emphasis on maths, science and technology to develop requisite 'productive' skills for the 'jobs market') and the imperatives of fiscal restraint (expressed as cost-containment measures and the increasing marketisation of education)" (Vally, 2004).

The overall effect has been to greatly undermine an approach to education that is grounded in social justice and equality.

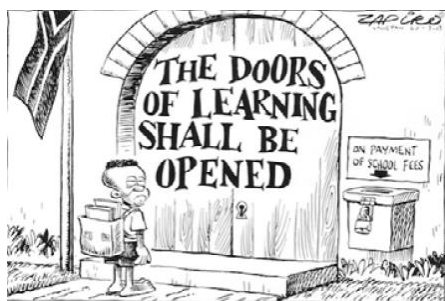
Adult education and literacy

The Freedom Charter calls for an end to adult illiteracy and in the first few years after 1994 there was decent progress made in fulfilling that call. According to official statistics, from 1996-2001, the adult literacy climbed from 83% to 89%.

However, since then the literacy rate has remained static. According to the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report in 2012, South Africa's adult literacy rate stood at 89%, the same level as in 2001. While the country's public education spending as a

proportion of total government spending amounted to around 18%, the same level as that of countries such as Chile and Indonesia's, the adult literacy rates in those countries stood at 98.6% and 92% respectively (Mail & Guardian, 25 January 2012).

In addressing the education needs of adults, the Constitution goes much further than the Charter by guaranteeing adults the right to adult basic education and training (ABET) as an immediate right. However, after more than 20 years of democracy, ABET continues to remain underfunded and is largely a paper right. A sizeable majority of the population over 20 years of age have still not completed secondary schooling.



Early childhood education

Both the Freedom Charter and the Constitution claim early childhood education (ECE) as part of the overall demand/right to basic education

because that is precisely what “all children” and “everyone” means.

This is extremely crucial since the public provision of ECE not only lays a solid educational foundation that improves readiness for school and later academic performance, but is a central part of ensuring the psychological and physical health of very young learners which makes it much less likely that children will drop out or fail as they progress through their schooling. Simply put, ECE is neither a luxury nor a privilege; it is a key right and therefore a responsibility of government

However, in the first ten years after 1994 there was very little progress made due to a severe lack of funding for the educational (and thus also developmental) needs of children from the ages of 0-6. By 2004, “only 13% of children” had “access to this crucial level of education” (Vally, 2004).

While there has been some improvement in the last 10 years, with the Department of Social Development now providing a subsidy for poor children in registered ‘early childhood development’ facilities and after care centres, the application and implementation of the subsidy scheme remains highly problematic. In addition to very burdensome registration and documentation requirements the provincial budgets covering the subsidy scheme come nowhere close to covering all those who are eligible. Not surprisingly, those who suffer the most are poor children living in rural areas.

Further, because the subsidies are not nearly enough to cover costs, “most centres depend on fees to supplement the inadequate subsidy”. Since “the poorest families cannot afford these fees, this leaves many areas of the country, and many children” without adequate early childhood education. At present only 1 in 5 of the poorest children attend an ‘early childhood development’ facility/centre. Even worse, “children with disabilities make up less than 1% of the enrolment” at such facilities even though they are amongst those most in need of ECE (Centre for Education Rights & Transformation, 2013).

Free Basic Education?

In the new democratic South Africa, education is still not free

Consistent with the neoliberal ‘principles’ of GEAR, a system of school fees was introduced by the South Africa Schools Act of 1996. What this effectively did was to institutionalise the idea and practice of ‘public-private partnerships’ to encourage the flow of private monies into the public

educational system in the form of (supposedly non-compulsory) school fees. This is consistent with the neoliberal policy of 'financial decentralisation' where the fiscal responsibility for educational provision is gradually shifted away from the public sector to local communities and parents of learners.

Not surprisingly, the Hunter Committee that proposed the system argued that universal provision of public education was not viable because, given budgetary constraints rich white students would suffer a decrease in the quality of education they were used to.

The imposition of school fees was met with widespread opposition by the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) as well COSAS, the Pan-African Students Organisation (PASO) and other student/youth organisations. The words of the President of SADTU at the time sum up how the fees system was in direct opposition to the demands of the Freedom Charter:

"The user fee system has spawned a privileged semi-private system within the public system, which attracts more than its fair share of resources, but is supported by public funds. We are entrenching a highly unequal public education system, albeit now based on class rather than race. If we are serious about equity and redress, we need to seriously review the working of the user fee system."

Even though the ANC government finally introduced a partial no-fees school policy in the early 2000s, students and parents alike have been widely subjected to various types of punishment for non-payment of school

and other 'service' fees, even though these actions are unlawful.

While over 65% of all public schools are now classified as 'no-fee schools', the government has made it clear that they still want poverty-stricken parents of students to make monetary contributions. Recently the Minister of Basic Education stated that, "there are things that schools would require that government is not necessarily able to provide at that given time ... I think it even disempowers communities if they are not encouraged to take (financial) responsibility" (Phakathi, 2013).

The practical result is that working class parents, students and community members have been forced to take on much greater responsibilities for school governance, funding the school's upkeep and infrastructural development.

Tertiary Education and Opening the Doors of Learning

At a tertiary level, the doors of learning have indeed been opened, in that the number of black students at historically white universities and technikons has grown dramatically since 1994. It would seem that the plan to develop a black middle class is proceeding fairly well.

The Freedom Charter says, "Higher education and technical training shall be opened to all by means of state allowances and scholarships awarded on the basis of merit". The students of the 1980s and 1990s went much further and demanded free education, up to and including tertiary education.

However, the notion of free tertiary education, a reality for a long time in many European welfare states, has been almost universally replaced with a system of fees and loans. The education budget has consistently fallen far short of meeting the needs of black working class youth who would like to study further.

At the same time, the cost of tertiary education has sky-rocketed rendering many students severely indebted long after they leave tertiary institutions. These international trends have become the norm in South Africa today. The demand of the Freedom Charter has been given a twist, in that tertiary education is indeed open to all, provided one pays at the door.

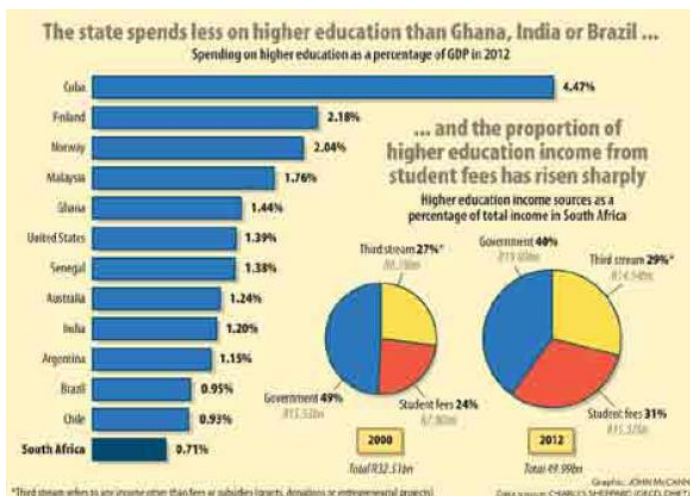
Salim Vally has neatly captured the contradiction: 'There is a disjuncture between active and formal democracy ... [we are in] an era ... where managerial imperatives emphasising the discourse of outcomes, the measurement of outputs, budgetary parameters, normative guidelines and user fees holds sway over a rights-

based approach, substantive equality and free quality education".

Democratisation and Privatisation of Schooling

The South Africa Schools Act of 1996 also set out a contradictory framework for the operation and role of school governing bodies (SGB's).

On the one hand, the functioning of SGB's should conform to the government's dominant neoliberal economic policies. Many have referred to this as the privatisation of education through the back door. In this framework, the main emphasis is for the SGB's to take over the financing of the school and govern its financial security. In this way the government hopes to turn the SGB's into fund-raising committees and thereby shift greater economic responsibility for education onto taxpayers themselves, ensuring an informal additional taxation and further financial burden on hard-pressed parents, more especially the poor.



On the other hand, the ANC government has also felt the need to demonstrate its commitment to democracy, which bears some resemblance to past struggles. So, what we now find is the government's neo-liberal policy of self-financing converging in legislation with the democratic traditions of PTSA's of the past (e.g., grassroots, decentralised control over education content and activity). In the legislation, the SGB's have been given the responsibility of democratic control over the schools' affairs, developing policies and directing the schools activities. The main emphasis is on parents playing the dominant role in school governance.

The major shortcomings here are clear: given that the ability of the school communities and parents in poor/working class areas, to govern education in their own interests is limited by numerous factors like educational levels, experience, financial resources and time etc., it is again the state that actually ends up retaining control of the content and direction of education to school communities.

As such, the envisaged role of democratic participation and control is very rarely possible while at the same time, the main role of SGB's becomes one of fund-raising and financial management. Implicitly, democratising of education in form is converging with neo-liberal cost recovery measures in content.

The result is that power and privilege within education are being re-enforced. As one international education analyst has pointed out; "schools are expected to own the problems but not the solutions (and this) reinforces the

tendency to privatise the costs of education delivery" (McLennan, 2003).

Predictably, all of this has served only to exacerbate already existing spatial and class-based socio-economic inequalities of educational access and opportunity. Previously existent public/state educational mandates have been devolved onto private individuals and collectives. Those least able to fill the fiscal gap - poor communities - are further burdened while wealthier urban communities have gladly embraced this creeping privatisation, effectively transforming ostensibly 'public' schools into privately managed and run institutions. Where this has been resisted, expensive-elitist independent private schools

(whether at the primary, secondary or tertiary level) have been set-up, most often with the direct involvement of corporate capital, further exacerbating the division between the haves and the have-nots.

Compulsory and Quality Education

The Constitution grants everyone the (immediate) right to "basic education". By this is meant education until the age of 15 years or the completion of Grade 9. The Schools Act of 1996 makes school education compulsory but only up to grade 9 or until a learner turns 16. However, the Freedom Charter does not set such a limit.

By making education compulsory the MECs of provincial education departments have a duty to provide a place in a school for all learners up to the specified grade or age. Any parent or other person who deliberately keeps

a learner out of school is in breach of the law and can be charged with a criminal offence.

While the number of students enrolled at schools has increased significantly, there are still many learners of school going age who are not within the school system. Indeed, over the last decade in particular there has been an increase in the number of working class students who dropout or play truant. The latest figures show that in 2001 there were 1.2 million children enrolled in Grade 1 but that only 44% of them stayed in the system to take their National Senior Certificate (NSC) in 2012 (Holburn, 2013). Besides the many personal challenges and social problems that come with poverty, many are demotivated and do not see the point of attending school when future job prospects, in the light of mass structural unemployment, are so slim.

Learners from poor working class communities are affected by a range of factors such as: poverty, unemployment, hunger, malnourishment, poor housing conditions, ill-health, inadequate health care, inadequate community facilities, high levels of violence in the household and community, high incidence of drug and alcohol abuse. These all impact negatively on school performance and the quality of education they access.

It is not only a lack of material resources and other contextual problems but also growing crises around poor performance, absenteeism, predatory sexual behaviour and corruption involving growing numbers of public school administrators and teachers themselves. Further, a lack of government regulation and oversight

of fly-by-night private schools in the urban areas has only exacerbated the situation.

It should thus come as little surprise that there is a growing gap in performance between (poor) public and (wealthy) public/private school students linked to racial and class location/ experience. It does not help matters when the politicians and economic elites who often preach the loudest about the need for good public education are the very ones who send their own children to expensive private schools.

The corporatisation of higher and further education

When it comes to higher education, the government has embraced “the (global and neoliberal) universality of the institution of managerialism” and corporatisation. The cumulative result has not only been “the rapid growth in the for-profit higher education sector” but a distinct lack of both racial and class ‘transformation’, the use of unfair and discriminatory selection and admission processes, “the financial and academic exclusion of students, unacceptably high dropout rates and the alienation of university research from a (progressive) developmental agenda” (Bawa, 2014).

More specifically, the content and quality of university (as well as other higher/further education institutions) curricula is being negatively impacted on by the increasing attempts to link their organisation and funding directly with the needs and interests of private corporate capital. In turn, this is directly linked to a growing culture of consultancy wherein academics ‘hire’ themselves out to both government

and corporate capital to produce research that has little to nothing to do with the needs of a public education institution or its students. One of the consequences of this is that the kind of critical (radical) scholarship that was so important to the political and socio-economic struggles of the broad working class in the 1970s and 80s has been greatly diminished.

What we are witnessing at most all South Africa's universities is the gradual but systematic insertion of the (educational) demands and needs of the capitalist market. It is a 'smart' privatisation which fits neatly into the neoliberal educational regime of cost-benefit analysis, where the 'service' provided becomes commodified as it enters into a market relationship with its 'users'.

The primary result is a 'business university' that is increasingly divorced from providing a holistic public education which can equip students with both intellectual knowledge and practical skills that are defined by the pursuit of social justice and equality and centred on human development and need.

Beyond the formal university setting, the way in which the government has 'transformed' institutions of 'further education' such as Technikons and Training Colleges, has seen associated 'skills and training' also becoming increasingly defined by a neoliberal paradigm.

As opposed to developing a curricula that speaks directly to the kinds of skills and training which would best meet socially and economically useful (public and collective) needs of society, the present approach emphasises that 'skills and training' should be designed

to fill the gap in 'skills' (mainly) in the private sector and thus also to reduce the high unemployment rate.

As a result, the very 'developmental' features of neoliberal capitalism - i.e. exploitation of labour through constant retrenchments, increased casualisation and permanent low-wage jobs - have become the main basis for the 'transformation' of further education in post-apartheid South Africa. As Vally and Motala (2014) point out, "unemployment is a structural problem and education should not be seen as supplying the labour requirements of business". Skills development is not 'ideologically neutral' and occurs within a wider rubric of capitalist strategies of accumulation and maximisation of profits (Ngcwangu, 2014).

It is the height of irony that the government which professes to be pursuing the Freedom Charter is now rushing headlong to reduce "the value of education to the narrow interests" of the same social and economic forces which provided the exploitative foundation for apartheid-capitalism.

Indeed, the fact is that 20 years after 1994 the apartheid system's division of labour continues to largely define the workplace, especially in the private sector. As Kgobe (1997) pointed out in the early years of the transition, "South Africa's workplaces are not constructed on the basis of a skills knowledge hierarchy. They are made up of a large, relatively homogenous group of workers with roughly equivalent skills and a small group of more skilled jobs". In this contemporary context, "what sense does a skills-based career path have?"

Equality in Education

Although the Freedom Charter does not explicitly call for quality education it does demand equality in education. To meet the aim of equality, the implication from 1994 onwards was surely that the standards of education provided to black students under apartheid needed to be raised to the level of quality previously afforded only to white students.

Some progress on this front has indeed been made. All apartheid legislation related to education has been scrapped. New legislation and policies have been introduced to promote equity, a democratic ethos and a human rights culture within education. The education budget ensures that poor schools in historically disadvantaged areas access a greater share of financial and other resources.



The discovery in Limpopo that school textbooks had not been delivered to schools and dumped scandalised the Department of Basic Education

However, the formal measures to meet the aims of real equality are failing. The logic of a fee-paying system for primary and secondary schooling operating in a neo-liberal capitalist environment means that learners in poor schools continue to receive unequal education. Meanwhile, the sons and daughters of the political and economic

elite access the highest quality education that money can buy.

Rich schools, such as the former Model C schools and Independent schools, can charge high school fees because the parents of learners can afford to do so. This allows these schools to create conditions for quality education, such as: small class sizes and abundance of the best educational resources and equipment and lavish facilities.

The present situation of educational infrastructure and basic services in poor (and especially rural) public schools is testimony to the equality crisis. During 2012-2013, most schools in the mostly rural Limpopo province were without textbooks for almost the entire school year. Massive shortages of textbooks have also been reported in many other provinces. In 2011, the Eastern Cape government drastically cut school transport services, the school feeding scheme and terminated the positions of more than 4 000 temporary teachers filling vacant posts at critically understaffed schools (Capazorio, 2011).

According to the student-based movement - Equal Education - of the over 25 000 public ordinary schools in South Africa,

- 3600 have no electricity supply
- 2444 have no water supply, while a further 2563 have unreliable supply
- 11 231 still use pit-latrines while 970 have no ablution facilities
- 10% have stocked computer centres while 5% have stocked laboratories
- 8% have functioning libraries and most of these charge fees and pay for the libraries themselves.

By under-taxing the rich and tightly curbing social expenditure, in keeping with neo-liberal prescriptions, the government ensures that the vast majority in the schools in the townships, on the farms and in the villages across South Africa are left without enough funding to ensure quality and equal education.

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This publication was produced with the financial assistance of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The views expressed in these publication are those of the authors. In quoting from this publication, readers are advised to attribute the source of the information to the author/s concerned and not to the Department.



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The Education Policy Consortium has received support from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)



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