

**Social Class and Community in Post-Apartheid South  
African Education Policy and Practice.**

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of

Bongani Nkwanyana (1965-2009), Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee; Nhlanhla Vilakazi (1968-2010), Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee; Thandekile Dodo (1965-2007) Thuto Senotlolo Sa Bohle (TSEBO) Vaal community education initiative and Bophelong Community Services Forum; Anidah Malapane (1963-2005), Alexandra Community Forum and Nyawo Kunene (1966-2005), Durban Roodepoort Deep/Mandelaville Crisis Committee.

Organic intellectuals and comrades who died far too young.

## DECLARATION

I Salim Vally declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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## **Abstract**

This thesis traces and analyses the dynamics of policy formulation and implementation in South Africa over the past two decades and attempts to identify the possibilities for democratic processes to change an unequal and multi-tiered education system. The study suggests that what has been missing from most analysis of transitional policymaking in South Africa is a careful examination of social class, and particularly how and why social movements and social actors on the ground, who were initially central to policy formulation and critique, became largely marginalised once policies were institutionalised. The trajectory of the latter trend, related to the class nature of the post-apartheid state and the political economy of the transition from apartheid to democracy is explored in detail in several of the chapters that comprise this thesis.

The thesis builds an argument around class, political economy and community participation situated in critical education policy analysis as the theoretical approach. Critical policy analysis views the terrain of the state and therefore policy formulation processes as spaces of contestation and negotiation. It also allows insight beyond the symptoms of educational inequality and dysfunctionality and shows connectivity between education policy and social relations of power.

The major characteristics of an 'evaluative' case study which combines description, explanation and judgement is employed in the study of the Education Rights Project. Such a methodological approach allows for reflection on the generation of extant post-apartheid education policy and its implementation. Various chapters provide an account of how communities can use research to document violations of education rights and claim their rights which in turn also provide insights into the complex nature of democratisation of education and formal policy making arrangements.

The thesis also demonstrates how experiences of transformational education and activism actively seek to disrupt the dichotomies between formal and informal educational arrangements, the public and private spheres, and cultural and political spaces. The role of local education activism in South Africa has been relatively under-researched and largely ignored by mainstream education policy theorists; this thesis attempts to rectify this gap in South African education scholarship.

One of the questions explored is whether the elision of social class analysis and meaningful community participation in education policy deliberations has contributed to the failure in addressing and overcoming the profound inequalities and social cleavages that characterise the South African education system. Relatedly, this thesis examines the critical role of community, civil society and social movements in policy critique and development.

The study also focuses on issues impacting on the implementation of the right to basic education through formal policy and legislative frameworks and whether these fall short of the needs of people living in South Africa as well as the constitutional imprimatur around the fulfilment of their potential. The thesis suggests that educational reforms should be accompanied by a wider range of redistributive strategies, democratic participation, political will and clear choices about the social ends policy interventions seek to achieve. These issues are prompted by other framing questions such as does the right to education impact on the development of democracy and social transformation in South Africa, what are the obstacles and impediments to the fulfilment of educational rights and what is the relationship between the state and civil society in educational policymaking and the meaning of this relationship for the establishment of democracy in education?

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Critical pedagogues and organic intellectuals in education institutions, social movements and unions in many parts of the world, too numerous to mention, who struggle for social justice and humanity, often against great odds and personal safety.

## Abbreviations

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ACCESS	Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALN	Adult Learning Network
ANC	African National Congress
APF	Anti Privatisation Forum
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CEPD	Centre for Education Policy Development
CERT	Centre for Education Rights and Transformation
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CR	Community Researcher
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DNE	Department of National Education
DoE	Department of Education
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
DRD	Durban Roodepoort Deep
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ERP	Education Rights Project
EPC	Education Policy Consortium
EPU	Education Policy Unit
ETDP	Education and Training Development Programme
FET	Further Education and Training
GALA	Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDASA	Institute for Democracy in Africa
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
LPM	Landless People's Movement

NASGBs	National Association of School Governing Bodies
NECC	National Education Coordinating Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NQF	National Qualification Framework
PALC	Public Adult Learning Centre
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PASSOP	People Against Suffering Oppression and Poverty
PPEN	Public Participation in Education Network
RBE	Right to Basic Education
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RTE	Right to Education
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SANGOCO	South African Non-Governmental Organisation Congress
SANLI	South African National Literacy Initiative
SAQA	South African Qualifications Association
SASA	South African Schools Act
SDCEA	South Durban Community Environmental Alliance
SECC	Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee
SGB	School Governing Body
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
TSEBO	Thuto Senotlolo Sa Bohle
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNISA	University of South Africa



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

The rationale of this thesis builds an argument around class, political economy, and community situated in critical education policy analysis as the theoretical approach. This chapter will describe the primary analytical framework used throughout this thesis, particularly underscoring the implications of the neglect of poor and marginalised ‘voices’<sup>1</sup> in educational policymaking. The latter will link with the preferred research approach, participatory action research, and show how the research captured in this thesis has made an original contribution to knowledge of educational policies and practices. The overarching objective of this thesis is to identify the possibilities for democratic processes of educational change in an unequal and multi-tiered education system. Specifically, the compilation of research in this thesis demonstrates how the work of the Education Rights Project (ERP) has contributed to the body of scholarship on the role of social movement members in the making of social justice and equity-oriented education policies and the democratisation of education as a whole.

Through the articles that form the core of this thesis, I trace and analyse the dynamics of policy formulation and implementation in South Africa over the past seventeen years. I suggest that policy texts cannot be read separately from their implementation, nor can they be delinked from political and financial commitments to support them. Policy must also factor in, from the outset, personnel allocations, lines of authority, clear accountability, time frames and mechanisms of implementation. Most significantly for this study, I argue that policymaking cannot exclude those who are most affected by them from generating policy or the development of solutions. By meaningfully and respectfully ensuring that the perspectives, life experiences and ideas of communities of the marginalised are incorporated in policy related research, policymakers can take local challenges into account and better deliver on what is

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<sup>1</sup> Chapters two and six analyse and deconstruct the complexities involved in community participation and by extension the representation of community ‘voice’ in relation to education policy. The caveat issued by Indian writer and activist, Arundhati Roy, is useful in this regard, “We know of course there’s really no such thing as the ‘voiceless’. There are only the deliberately silenced or the preferably unheard” (Roy, 2004).

needed. I conclude by suggesting that what has been missing from most analysis of transitional policymaking in South Africa is a careful examination of social class, and particularly how and why social movements and social actors on the ground, who were initially central to policy formulation and critique, were largely marginalised once policies were institutionalised. The trajectory of the latter trend, related to the class nature of the post-apartheid state and the political economy of the transition from apartheid to democracy, is explored in detail in several of the chapters.

Much of the policy research conducted in South Africa to date has primarily identified the lack of implementation and/or financial constraints as the biggest barriers to education reform, without fundamentally challenging or questioning the original policy assumptions. In this study my argument is premised on a different set of assumptions that surround policy failures. In order for policy aims to effect change, policy design and implementation has to reflect the needs, understandings and social realities of its primary constituencies – not powerful stakeholders, protected interests groups or articulate policy crafters – “good policy” should be measured by its relevance and applicability.

On the evidentiary basis of various projects and initiatives provided, this thesis argues for more meaningful relations with communities. This is seen as necessary in order to enable a deeper understanding of the lived realities of school communities and their involvement in education policy and practice. Using Cornwall’s (2004) depiction of different forms of popular participation, the community examples in this thesis show how an ‘invented space’ which strengthens democratic processes in an unequal policy arena flowing out of the ‘claimed spaces’ of community mobilisation can be a useful alternative to the officially sanctioned but often ineffective ‘invited spaces’ of government’s formal arrangements and consultative forums. Thus the three related research based questions this thesis will explore are:

- 1.) How has extant education policy evolved in the post-apartheid period and what have been the consequences of this?
- 2.) What role have invited spaces of participation, such as formal structures of school governance played? and

- 3.) What invented spaces of participation have social movements and civil society created through the mobilisation of communities in engaging with education policy and practice?

The thesis also explores ancillary questions centred on the elision of social class analysis in education policy deliberations. The thesis suggests that neglecting social class has contributed to the failure in addressing and overcoming the deep inequalities that characterise the South African education system. Argument based questions thus include:

- 1.) What are the ideological implications of policy choices made since apartheid?
- 2.) What are the limits of a rights-based framework for education?
- 3.) How might an understanding of class inform an analysis of the deficiencies and inequalities that are manifest in the education sector?

The study will specifically focus on issues impacting on the implementation of the right to basic education through formal policy and legislative frameworks and whether these fall short of the needs of people living in South Africa as well as the constitutional imprimatur around the fulfillment of their potential. The thesis will also examine suggested educational reforms which should be accompanied by a wider range of redistributive strategies, democratic participation, political will and clear choices about the social ends policy interventions seek to achieve. These issues are prompted by other framing questions such as does the right to education impact on the development of democracy and social transformation in South Africa, what are the obstacles and impediments to the fulfillment of educational rights and what is the relationship between the state and civil society in educational policymaking and the meaning of this relationship for the establishment of democracy in education? An additional research question will focus on the relevance of the methodology employed in this thesis and how its innovative use could enhance scholarship.

The literature review focuses on 1. Theorising class; 2. Social movements and community; 3. Education policy and critical policy analysis; and 4. The post-apartheid state, the right to basic education and community voices.

The research design chapter discusses Participatory Action Research (PAR) including its viability, reliability and relevance to the conceptual and theoretical approach of this thesis. The chapter will also include critiques of PAR and will underscore the importance of class, community and contextual analysis. Trevor Gale (2001) points out that critical approaches to educational policy studies have been subject to increasing interrogation over methodological issues, often by critical policy researchers themselves. The argument is that “beyond brief descriptions of research logistics and a general commitment to the methodologies of a critical orientation, critical policy analyses offer few explicit accounts of the connections between the stories they tell about policy and the data they use to tell them.”(Ibid: 382). The research in this thesis attempts to make explicit the real connections between critical policy analysis and the data used to support this critique. Gale also argues for the use of quantitative data as a form of social accountability. The data in the chapter on the ERP, both qualitative and quantitative, is precisely an explicit attempt to use data as a way of holding the state to account to various working class communities.

Following Merriam’s (1988) taxonomy of case study research, this thesis will incorporate the major characteristics of an ‘evaluative’ case study. The latter combines description, explanation and judgement. Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) in their book ‘Reforming Education and Changing Schools’ show how contextualised case study research can be used to link policy and implementation and analyse the fit or discomfit between the two. This thesis will employ case study research of the Education Rights Project to reflect on the generation of extant post-apartheid education policy with its implementation.

The ERP was established on the 1st of February 2002 as a joint initiative of the Education Policy Unit and the Centre for Applied Legal Studies, both based at the University of the Witwatersrand. The ERP was formally launched on the 16th of September 2002 by the then United Nation’s Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Professor Katarina Tomasevski. From the outset, the ERP focused on the education rights of the most vulnerable sectors of South African society historically denied access to quality basic education. The ERP’s founding or ‘Framework’ document highlighted the significant disparities that exist within the provision of



basic education in South Africa; sought to define the meaning of the right to basic education within South Africa's current constitutional framework and provided an overview of the key policy initiatives relevant to the provision of basic education. The founding document also highlighted the challenges associated with this provision and the strategies the ERP needed to take in working toward the realisation of the right to basic education in South Africa. The various articles in the thesis and the praxis of the Education Rights Project together with the 'voices' of marginalised social groups will usefully allow for an examination of the 'fit' or disjuncture between policy and implementation through a contextualised analysis.

The role of local education activism in South Africa has been relatively under-researched and almost completely ignored by mainstream education policy theorists; this thesis will thus make an original and substantial contribution to a much needed area of scholarship. Social movement research remains largely inside the academy and has had little effect on the communities themselves. Frampton's (2006:11) critique of social movement theory in this regard is apposite:

Positioned as the authoritative voice on social action, social movement theory (despite moments of insight) has rarely moved far beyond academic discussions. This tradition is based on a hierarchical practice, where the researcher is not required to participate in movements and often writes about them as an outsider. Consequently, the knowledge created by social movement theory is often of little use to activists inside social movements and does not allow them to map out the social relations of struggle. By researching social movements rather than the social world that movements aim to unsettle, social movement theory often reifies activists and their work.

This study does not focus on social movements as the object of analysis but rather on explicating the social relations involved in activism for education rights in which these movements are engaged. The research findings presented in this thesis show that the process of mobilisation must go well beyond gathering communities to receive their input but also requires the creation of political awareness, identities, and ideologies that implicitly and explicitly have to do with processes of learning. The

thesis also demonstrates how experiences of transformational education and activism actively seek to disrupt the dichotomies between formal and informal educational arrangements, the public and private spheres, and cultural and political spaces (Alvarez et al, 1998). Various chapters will provide an account of how the ERP along with social movements have used PAR not only to document violations of education rights but also to act on addressing these violations. The research has also provided insights into the complex nature of democratisation of education and formal policy making arrangements and in terms of the power of the individual citizen to advocate for themselves and collectively through organisations and communities.

The compilation of research articles in the following chapters shows how in many of the communities and townships where the ERP was successful in influencing education policy changes, the power and legitimacy of social movements derives from their ability to mobilise as well as to educate. PAR in this instance created the space for a critical, multigenerational dialogue about research beyond rarified university walls; it also blurs the lines between pedagogy, research and politics. It is a long-term struggle that forces us to operate in these “in-between” spaces – sites of intense possibility and uncertainty – linking collective problems and issues to broader sets of social, political and economic forces and pressures – and to work to transform them. The chapters illustrate how questions of identity and therefore meaning and knowledge lie at the heart of the processes by which large groups of diverse people come together to embark on a path of collective action and social protest. Catherine Marshall (1999:69) writes that policy analysis “must consider whether a policy will empower and democratise, and whether it will dispense goods to the ‘have-nots’ as much as they consider traditional questions such as whether a policy is efficient” (Marshall, 1999:69).

Commenting on the link between schooling and the socio-economic background of learners, Patrick Watkins (2010:13) explains that,

...the learning process is not only affected by the quality of schooling, but also heavily influenced by the socio-economic background and environment (health, books at home, help from the community, to name but a few ingredients). So, when it

comes to education (as in many other fields) equity is not enough. Quite to the contrary, giving everyone the same amount and quality of education regardless of children's backgrounds is profoundly unjust and a recipe for reproducing inequalities.

Various articles and the chapter on the ERP describe how communities have documented the failure of existing policies intended to remove social and economic barriers that prevent poor children from accessing and completing basic education. They also show how social movements can facilitate direct and expanded participation of poor and disadvantaged communities in education policy making. In this thesis, I show how amongst other things, the communities have used quantitative and qualitative data to challenge the State's 'numbers' and 'statistics', which are forwarded by state functionaries as 'official justification' for its policies, and in this instance, the right to education (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1998: 264). The compiled research has enabled people to tell their own stories of their day-to-day experiences. In doing so, they have challenged powerful interests (who are fundamentally opposed - wittingly or unwittingly - to the interest of poor and marginalised communities) and who currently dominate the debate on social policy. Specifically, the community research described in chapter four documents school-level violations of the right to a free education and has compelled the government to revisit its policies on user fees.

The participatory research and educational activism discussed in the research design chapter is informed by critical thinking and analysis of social, political and economic contradictions and the possibilities for action to transform conditions of oppression - the explicitly political process of learning known as conscientization (Freire, 1968). The premise and outcome of the PAR process as discussed in this thesis is social action. The ideas of Paulo Freire on alternative research methods have heavily influenced the development of the research projects that comprise the ERP's work. Those within the ERP initiatives see their research as "the first step towards forms of political action that can address the injustices found in the field site or constructed in the very act of research itself" (Kincheloe and McLaren 1998:264). This critical research "becomes a transformative endeavor unembarrassed by the label 'political' and unafraid to consummate a relationship with an emancipatory consciousness" (Ibid).

Lastly, this study is framed by critical policy analysis which views the terrain of the state and therefore policy formulation processes as spaces of contestation and negotiation. Not all of the different social demands and actors are acknowledged by the state and therefore may not be manifest in formal policy arenas. The conceptualisation and analysis of the barriers to social justice and equality in education and the relationship between the state, civil society and class interests are informed and sustained by a tremendous body of work produced by global critical, postcolonial and political economy of education scholars. These are discussed more extensively in the literature review.

### **Structure of the thesis**

A matrix at the end of this section shows the logical flow of the study and the coherence between the separate articles related to the systematic and sequential development of insights conceptually, theoretically and methodologically. Conceptual coherence will be achieved through the theoretical framework and literature review section primarily through its focus on social class, community and education policy. It will outline the key arguments and studies made by local and global theorists around these concepts and will show the strengths and limitations of their analyses for this study. An original contribution will be made by extending and adapting some of the views, beyond their initial application, to support the education initiatives of South African social movements in poor communities. In concert with the latter, local education policy analyses will be critiqued for not paying sufficient attention to issues of social class and community voices in education.

The articles written over a period of time allow for an iterative process which assists the research process, provides richer details in the enfolding narratives and sequence of events and the development of conceptual categories which are helpful in illustrating and supporting the key arguments. Data collected over a prolonged period of time from more than one location is also helpful in case study research for the purposes of reflection, internal validity and triangulation.

All of the articles clarify why education reforms and policy should not ignore the contextual and structural character of poverty and inequality as well as the agency, ‘voice’, knowledge and collective experience of communities. The abstracts of the articles below distil the key concepts and issues which relate in clear ways to the theoretical framework. These concepts and issues together with methodological coherence involving participatory action research and critical policy studies between the different articles will be summarised in the matrix. The thesis will include the following published articles:

**Article 1:** ‘From People’s Education to Neo-Liberalism in South Africa’, 2007, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 34, No. 111, pp.39-56. Peer - reviewed, sole author.

This article provides a historical overview of education social movements in the seventies and eighties; education policy and education rights after 1994 and the involvement of contemporary social movements in education. The article, through an educational lens, explores the class nature of the post-apartheid state and the political economy of the transition from apartheid to democracy. It also points to pertinent epistemological issues involved in the production of knowledge and introduces the importance of PAR and its relation to providing voice to marginalised communities.

**Article 2:** S. Vally and CA Spreen, ‘Learning From and For Community: Participatory Action Research and Post-Apartheid Education’, 2008, *Journal of Learning*, Vol. 15, Issue 2. Peer - reviewed, primary author.

The second article argues for a broader and more purposeful approach to education reform involving civic engagement and social dialogue around the public purpose of education. It contends that education policy reform interventions are important but partial in relation to the social outcomes of education and the goal of social transformation. The article provides a deeper conceptualisation of participatory action research summarised in Article 1 by analysing the research of the Education Rights Project and mass based

community organisations. A case study of the Durban Roodepoort Deep community is used to emphasise the importance of transcending the limitations inherent in traditional or conventional research. This is accomplished through promoting the case for richer and complex qualitative data which recognises the categories of gender, social class and ‘race’ necessary for meaningful analysis. The paper argues that approaches to social enquiry based on solidly grounded information and knowledge can also have value for engaging with the policy and decision - making agencies of the state and with public representatives. It also explains why research conducted by the ERP and social movements has value for planning and organising local education campaigns to both inform local action and democratise issues relevant to educational struggles in communities while demystifying research and yet enriching scholarly and academic endeavours.

**Article 3:** ‘Citizenship and Children’s Education Rights in South Africa’, 2005, *Journal of Education*, no 35, pp.31-47. Peer - reviewed, sole author.

By analysing two key policy texts on Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Special Education this article speaks to the unresolved tension between two models of education provision. One model is based on the mobilisation of community initiatives and energies and the central role of community practitioners. The second emphasises institutional control and undermines the efforts of ECD provision established by communities during the struggle against apartheid. In doing so the article explores the ‘glossy rhetoric’ of education policies and legislation with its emphasis on the discourse of human rights, social justice and democratic citizenship and the actual realisation of this promise. The article is also a commentary on the discrepancy between the existing normative framework of society and its reality or the disjuncture between the policy as text and the reality as lived through critically examining children’s rights in post-apartheid South Africa. The article refers to a children’s participatory process facilitated by the Alliance for Children’s Entitlement to Social Security (ACCESS) that amplifies the lived experience of

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· ‘Race’ in inverted commas signals unease with its glib use as a biological category instead it is employed in this context, like gender and class, as a social construct.

those that are meant to be the beneficiaries of new policies. The article concludes by demonstrating why redressing the historical neglect of Early Childhood Education and generally education provision must consider the praxis of community based organisations and social movements.

**Article 4:** S. Vally and CA Spreen, 'The School-Community Nexus in South Africa', *Our Schools/Our Selves*, G. Martell and D. Clandfield (eds), 2010, Special Issue: The Struggle for Schools as Community Hubs, pp.125-144. Peer - reviewed, primary author.

This article engages with and problematises the notion of 'community'. It provides a historical overview of school-community relationships, under apartheid and in post-apartheid South Africa with emphasis on the evolution and role of School Governing Bodies. The article critiques the reliance on the formal structures of school governance. It questions whether School Governing Bodies (SGBs) in working class communities have enhanced democratic community participation in the governance of education and whether it has led to the diminution of disparities between rich and poor as many had hoped for. The article points to the irony of post-apartheid policies in that while the formal basis for greater democratic participation in the management of schools has been legislated, greater equity between schools have arguably not been attained. The article also examines the Public Participation in Education Network (PPEN) and other community based initiatives. It sets out the case for re-envisioning and reclaiming the public space of schools for community engagement and social development. The article suggests that the desire to promote schools as pillars of sustainable community development, in South Africa as elsewhere, clashes with market-driven initiatives and private service provisioning on school premises. This trend undermines the very notion of the school as a community hub for the public good. Instead, the article argues for the building of a school-community relationship which is able to capture the energies and creativity of the community, reminiscent of the struggles against apartheid.

**Article 5:** E. Motala and S. Vally, 'Race', Class and Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa in D. Kelsh, D. Hill and S. Macrine (eds), 2010, *Class in Education: Knowledge, pedagogy, subjectivity*, London: Routledge, pp.87-107. Peer - reviewed, primary author.

This conceptual article argues that extant post-apartheid educational analysis is limited since it does not deal with the deeper implications of social class and its meaning for educational reform. While social class is referred to, it is all too often understood as a descriptive term rather than an explanatory concept. The article contrasts contemporary discourse with the pre-1994 dominant view in the anti-apartheid movement which recognised the salience of class and which valued class analysis. The article also examines the relationship between class, 'race' and gender. It shows how class is significant not only in itself but relationally in its connectedness to questions of 'race' and gender and that education analysis in South Africa about these categories is rarely connected with questions of class. Nonetheless this article eschews a class reductionist analysis and draws on for instance, Critical Race Theory. The article explains why class analysis would enhance knowledge of specific local school communities both individually and in relation to society. It also implies a critical ability to interact with the experiential knowledge of marginalised communities. The article embraces the praxis of some initiatives in the educational field that engage democratically with working class communities. It views this dialogical interaction as an important development that must be extended methodologically and theoretically.

Chapter four reflects on the campaigns of the ERP, the implications of the research for education policy and implementation and show common threads in relation to theory, methodology and findings. Through the taxonomy of 'feeling', 'framing', 'knowing' and 'claiming' their rights the critical insights of community members and their experiences will show the importance of meaningful democratic participation for effective education policy and practice. The conclusion will synthesise the various articles, the literature review and the ERP case study that comprise this thesis.



Chapter	Concept and Method	Substance, Coherence and Logical Progression
1. Introduction and Rationale	<p>Concepts introduced: social class, political economy, social/cultural capital and community situated in critical education policy analysis.</p> <p>Also sets the stage for the preferred research approach: participatory action research.</p>	<p>Describes the primary analytical framework to be used throughout this thesis. Discusses the neglect of poor and marginalised 'voices' in educational policymaking. Then sets out the hypothesis that social class is occluded and meaningful community involvement in education policy making undermined. An additional research question focuses on the relevance of the methodology employed.</p>
2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review	<p>Extensive engagement of key concepts first introduced in rationale through local and global literature. Portmanteau concepts and categories such as community and participation examined.</p> <p>Critical policy analysis elaborated and promotion of alternative and non-formal policy spaces and discourses.</p>	<p>Deepening analysis of concepts and human rights and political economy framework.</p> <p>Explaining working class community involvement in education through showing their "thick desires" for education.</p> <p>Critically adapting and extending social capital concepts and showing its possible worth for meaningful community involvement. The latter embraces community agency involved in pressurising the state to deliver on reforms. Discussion of the Right to Basic Education and its relationship with the ERP allows for justifying the methodology employed and the limitations of formal education policy and the neglect of community 'voices'.</p>
3. Research Design	<p>Critical examination of PAR in South Africa and globally; its basic principles and its epistemological challenge to conventional and extractive research traditions.</p> <p>Also discusses PAR in relation to issues of objectivity, bias, validity and generalisability. This chapter also asserts that presenting the ERP research at community meetings through a participatory mode combined with peer</p>	<p>This chapter makes the theoretical case for using the ERP as an evaluative contextualised case study and PAR to examine issues of class, community, policy and implementation. It also lays the basis for the various articles in the subsequent chapters and the praxis of the ERP. This section also alerts PAR supporters to ways in which participatory processes re-inscribe unequal power relations between the 'expert' and the 'other'. Following Hickey and Mohan (2005) the study argues</p>

	involvement and examination by colleagues, academics and civil society groups assists with triangulation, internal validity and also acts as a source for explanatory outcomes. Explains how data, investigator and methodological triangulation were obtained.	that participatory approaches are more likely to succeed where 1. They are pursued as part of a wider radical political project; 2. Where they are aimed specifically at securing citizenship rights and participation for marginal and subordinate groups and 3. When they seek to engage with development as an underlying process of social change rather than in the form of discrete technocratic interventions.
4. Case Study: Education Rights Project	This chapter provides insights into how the data collected by community researchers was used to pursue collective rights and to contest and rectify policies and practices adversely affecting community access to and rights in education. It explains the method used by the ERP in the section on Movement Building and Education Rights Workshops and includes a narrative of the various and varied campaigns and initiatives of the ERP. Shows through the taxonomy of 'feeling', 'framing', 'knowing' and 'claiming' their rights to basic education how community members construct 'critical citizenship from below'.	The ERP case study provides concrete examples and the evidence of how the PAR process and community engagement enabled opportunities to investigate educational issues and policy. The latter strengthens coherence of the study by showing the importance of meaningful community involvement and draws attention to the important role of social capital in mitigating or in its absence, reproducing educational inequalities. Understanding the local class context provides the basis for the question on methodology introduced in the rationale. This chapter also elucidates the complex nature of the democratisation of education and formal policy making arrangements and the power of citizenry to advocate collectively through organisations and communities. Finally it expands on how the ERP's work combines progressive scholarship and research by linking directly with communities.
5. From People's Education to Neo-Liberalism	A historical overview of the Black Consciousness Movement's involvement in alternative education, the People's Education Movement of the 80s and the evolution of Workers' Education. Describes the education leg of the Poverty and Inequality Hearings	Critically debates human rights and the class nature of the post-apartheid state together with the responses of the independent social movements. Education policy, the condition of education in working class communities and the 'voices' of members of marginalised communities are documented. Discusses the formation

	<p>and the formation of the ERP. Examines judicial processes in relation to the attainment of collective rights. Includes testimonies of various community members.</p>	<p>of the ERP and its campaigns particularly against school fees. Debates the normative framework of society-the constitution, legislation and policies- and the reality of class inequality.</p>
6. Learning From and For Community	<p>Links education reform to the structural character of poverty and inequality. Emphasises the importance for richer and more complex qualitative and quantitative data which captures social cleavages in society necessary for meaningful social analysis and education policies. Discusses ERP research in one community - Durban Roodepoort Deep.</p>	<p>Explains why research conducted by the ERP and social movements has value for the mobilisation of strategies and for planning and organising of local education and other campaigns. Views the latter as democratising education policy and making it more relevant by understanding contextual issues. Also serves to demystify research for communities while enriching scholarship. The case study of the Durban Roodepoort Deep community in relation to the cost of education provides the evidentiary basis why community experiences and knowledge is both relevant and valuable for education policy.</p>
7. Citizenship and Rights	<p>The article speaks to the discrepancy between the existing normative framework of society and its reality. It seeks to do this through a discussion of the 'glossy rhetoric' of education policies and legislation informed by human rights, social justice and a democratic citizenship discourse and the actual realization of this promise.</p>	<p>This article contrasts the policy processes involved in producing two key policy texts on ECD and Special Education with community initiatives related to these areas. The contradictions and tensions in these two approaches allow this chapter to speak to the "disjuncture between policy as text and the reality as lived." This article also makes the point that education reforms and policies must be attentive to the praxis of members of community based organisations and social movements.</p>
8. School-Community Nexus	<p>Describes the continuities and discontinuities in school governance under apartheid and post-apartheid. Debates whether democratic community participation in education has been enhanced in contemporary times through school governing</p>	<p>The article attempts to analyse how issues of class remain woven into social and economic relations impacting on the school-community nexus. It also discusses how school governance and the funding model decided upon after 1994 continued favouring historically advantaged groups with the addition of the black middle class.</p>

	bodies. Examines public-private-partnerships and attempts by community organisations to intervene in school governance.	The article concludes by making the case for claiming the public space of schools for community engagement and development.
9. 'Race', Class and Education	This conceptual article analyses class and 'race' in South African historiography. It maintains that the recognition of class as an analytical category would provide greater clarity, methodologically and theoretically, to social analysis and interventions in education.	The article reveals the connections between education reform and the political economy of the post-apartheid state. Substantially, the article views class analysis as necessary to enhance knowledge of specific local school communities and the 'voices' of working class and poor community members in order to obtain greater clarity about the challenges of education reform.
10. Conclusion	Summarises the various chapters by drawing out the main concepts, arguments and the methodology used. Explains how this thesis contributes to the strengthening of conceptual categories underlying rights-based approaches to basic education, the relationship between policy and practice and the importance of socially oriented research and action.	Draws together the links between the socio-economic situation and the elision of social class and community in extant education policy and practice in post-apartheid South Africa. Argues, by drawing on the thesis as a whole that this omission has contributed to inadequately addressing the profound inequalities that beset the present South African education system. Explains why the vital advice of Fine (2009:180) for critical researchers to graft "fine-tune attention to shouts and whispers of resistance onto a wide-angle landscape that links political and cultural economies to everyday life in school and community" is so pertinent to this thesis. Shows how the thesis as a whole emphasises the importance of context and the agency, voice, knowledge and collective experience of communities. Through the praxis of the ERP and community organisations as exemplars gives credence to the possibilities of complementing official policies with alternative methodological approaches enabling policy to resonate and be responsive to the lived experience of poor communities.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review**

The literature review focuses on social class, community and education policy. It outlines the key arguments and studies made by local and global theorists around these concepts and will show the strengths and limitations of their analyses for this study. While the literature review is divided for the sake of convenience into the following four sections: theorising social capital and class; social movements and community; critical education policy analysis and the right to basic education in post-apartheid South Africa, these areas, as will be shown, are interconnected.

### **Theorising Social Capital and Class in Education**

In the seventies and early eighties the local and global literature on the political economy of education and the relationship between social class and education was extensive. Key texts included Richard Sennet and Jonathan Cobb's 'The Hidden Injuries of Class' (1973) with its examination of the consequences of anti-academic, anti-school behaviour among inner-city youth; Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis's 'Schooling in Capitalist America' (1976) which explained working class failure as the *raison d'être* of the capitalist system; and Paul Willis's 'Learning to Labour' (1981) which showed how working-class teenage 'lads' consciously resisted and rebelled against schooling and classroom authority yet continued to reproduce social class relations. The 'correspondence theory' of Bowles and Gintis (1976:131) and others in this period explained how schools reproduced the social relations that capitalism required:

The educational system helps integrate youth into the economic system...through a structural correspondence between its social relations and those of production. The structure of social relations in education not only inures the student to the discipline of the work place, but also develops the types of personal demeanour, modes of self-presentation, self-image, and social - class identifications which are the crucial ingredients of job adequacy. Specifically, the social

relationships of education - the relationships between administrators and teachers, teachers and students, students and students, and students and their work-replicate the hierarchical division of labour...

Correspondence theory was critiqued for ignoring the agency of those involved and the capacity of people to resist the system. The theory was also seen as overly deterministic and mechanistic for focusing primarily on the power of economic structures to influence education. The work of later writers such as Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren (1989) and Michael Apple (1996) explored the complex inter-relationships between class, 'race' and gender in education and the dynamic relationships between cultural reproduction and economic reproduction. These writers also document resistance and contestation to class, social and cultural oppression in education settings.

The theoretical approach employed in this study builds on the work of Giroux, McLaren, Apple and others. It allows for addressing the entire nexus of relevant issues in which education is one strand in the plethora of economic, political, class and racial policies and social forces that impinge on the everyday lives of working class students in South Africa. Jean Anyon, (2009:16) writing of the inner city schools of the United States similarly argues that,

the problems of schooling, jobs, segregation, police brutality and incarceration are tangled together in the fabric of everyday living in poor neighborhoods...only when the knot itself is undone do the threads come free. *I have retheorised urban school reform and education policy, therefore, to include necessary reform of the public policies that cause the social problems that constrict educational possibility... school reform without economic reform is a partial and only partially helpful solution. What this approach to school reform entails, of course, is that we retheorise solutions to the problems of urban education as extending considerably beyond policies that we normally think of as 'educational' [italicised by Anyon].*

This thesis demonstrates that social theory and critical research can use data which reveals: "...intimate traces of political economy, state policy, dominant cultural ideologies, and institutional dynamics...By grafting fine-tuned attention to shouts and

whispers of resistance onto a wide-angle landscape that links political and cultural economies to everyday life in school and community” and asserts that such studies can make a “significant contribution to critical scholarship on educational policy and practice” (Fine, 2009:180). Michelle Fine comments on the subjects of such research as embodying ‘thick desires’ “to be educated or to educate, to work in ways that are meaningful, to engage with politics, to be treated with respect, and to speak with voices that will be heard” (Ibid: 186). Reframing policy and the policy web from a political economy perspective requires us to name classes, racialised and gendered issues of power and control in education institutions; to differentiate between the practical, symbolic and transformative functions of education policy and decision-making; without losing sight of the role of education in the construction, prescription and circumscription of individual identities, desires, and subjectivities (Mehta and Ninnes, 2000). In this sense, theory that allows us to see beyond the symptoms and shows connectivity between the different issues is useful. The articles in this thesis eschew a deficit model of the poor in South Africa. Following Fine (Ibid) it will discuss the “thick desires” of communities situated within a human rights and political economy framework.

For this study, an adaptation and extension of Bourdieu’s use of cultural capital as disguised economic capital and as a lens through which the educational success or failure of children of various social classes could be explained has been important, notwithstanding the additional racial dynamic specific to the transition in South Africa (see Harley and Wedekind in Chisholm, 2004:211) and mindful of Ben Fine’s (2001; 2003) critique outlined below. Bourdieu’s notions of cultural capital will also be useful for exploring school-family relations and by extension school-community relations. Bourdieu (1983:243) writes,

The notion of cultural capital initially presented itself to me, in the course of research, as a theoretical hypothesis which made it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from different social classes by relating academic success, i.e. the specific profits which children from the different social classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market, to the distribution of cultural capital between the class and class fractions.

For Bourdieu, the education system is not meritocratic. Its major function is to maintain and legitimate a class divided system. Bourdieu suggests that this reproduction works through the formal curriculum and its assessment and through the hidden curriculum which valorises lifestyle, ways of being and behaviour - the *habitus*. Bourdieu maintains that family life provides resources or capital which yield important social benefits.

In a study subtitled 'Why students in Cuba do better in school' Martin Carnoy (2007:1) extends Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital by arguing that, "Some communities, regions and even countries have created environments and networks that - beyond families - help young people *want* to be academically successful and facilitate strategies that encourage them to achieve success". Carnoy (Ibid) argues that states can generate "just as potent a form of social capital in promoting educational achievement as families can... for low-income groups - those that have the least cultural capital and the most difficulty in acquiring and accumulating social capital on their own".

The articles that comprise the various chapters in this study and the literature review below amply demonstrate why unlike Cuba, the South African state is not able to provide the environment conducive to the formation of cultural capital. The articles in this study instead suggest that the possibility of producing the requisite cultural capital for learner achievement is more likely to come from organised community networks or movements consciously reflecting on educational goals.

Similarly, Annette Lareau (2000: xv), building on the notion of cultural capital, convincingly shows how middle-class parents in the US activate their class based resources - high status jobs, educational sophistication and organisational skills to help their children succeed in schools. Lareau does argue though that, "Broad social movements for educational change have demonstrated, however, that much like political power and economic wealth, cultural capital can be made subject to more egalitarian redistribution. A society in which every child has a 'home advantage' is attainable, if we act to make it so."



Kilpatrick et al (2003:424) explicate how the value of the notion of social capital as an analytical tool for community development is threefold: it represents both an existing set of resources within the community on which intervention may be based; a ‘public good’ goal in its own right; and also a resource that can contribute towards sustained autonomous development...” Similarly, Tara Yosso turns the research lens away from the deficit view of marginalised communities and instead focusses on the range of cultural knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts in their possession (Yosso, 2005). In addition, Yosso utilizes critical race theory discussed in chapter nine of this thesis, challenging traditional interpretations of Bourdieuan cultural capital notions. She outlines six forms of capital that comprise community cultural wealth which most often is “unacknowledged or unrecognized” (Ibid: 69): aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial and resistant capital (Ibid: 77-81). These forms of capital are dynamic processes and not mutually exclusive, for example:

...aspirational capital is the ability to hold onto hope in the face of structured inequality and often without the means to make such dreams a reality. Yet, aspirations are developed within social and familial contexts, often through linguistic storytelling and advice (*consejos*) that offer specific navigational goals to challenge (resist) oppressive conditions. Therefore, aspirational capital overlaps with each of the other forms of capital, social, familial, navigational, linguistic and resistant” (Ibid: 77).

The case study of the ERP (chapter four), the articles ‘From People’s Education to Neo-Liberalism’ and ‘Learning From and For Community’ (chapters five and six) show the possibilities that could engender the community cultural wealth and forms of capital championed by Yosso.

This thesis is attentive to Ben Fine’s caveats concerning the breadth of social and cultural capital literature’s application across the social sciences, its “lazy deployment” and fungible application from “one context to another, its general transferability from one practice to another ...and its exclusion of meaning and context in its analytical categories” (Fine, 2003:586). Fine reluctantly concedes that Bourdieu’s perspectives on cultural capital does emphasise issues of social power, social class and context (Fine, 2001). His critique is largely aimed at the social capital

literature influenced by James Coleman, Gary Becker and Robert Putnam who occlude issues of class relations and deny seeing capital as a historically specific social relation of class explanation (Fine, 2010a). Sharon Gewirtz et al (2005) show the relevance of Fine's critique through their comprehensive study of the New Labour Party's Education Action Zones policy. The latter was heavily influenced by Putnam's variant of social capital. Gewirtz et al identify 'top down' initiatives to operationalise social capital and call on policy makers and practitioners to pay closer attention to "local context in which policies are implemented and the voices ... and values of the people these policies are designed to help" (Ibid: 651). These critiques have been useful for clarifying the theoretical foundation of this thesis and situating cultural capital with economic structure and social class as well as local context, 'voice', and 'bottom-up' initiatives through social movements.

As the article on class, 'race' and state in post-apartheid education or chapter nine of this study makes clear (Motala and Vally, 2010), "throughout the period of the 1970s up to the early 90s, debate about class analysis characterized a vast array of writings including historical studies, sociology, political science and economic analysis in particular" in South Africa (Lipton, 1986; Legassick, 1973; Wolpe, 1988; Fine, 1990) and the new sociology of education movements in Europe and North America outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Analytical educational analysis in this period in South Africa revolved around the debate between liberal and radical discourses. The latter partly critiqued the liberal approach as inadequate in that it examined education separately from the wider economic, political, social and cultural context. The radical approach emphasised class, its intersection with 'race' and largely argued for using the tools of political economy. For instance, Cross and Chisholm (1990:43) insisted that instead of placing the "moral and legal responsibility for separate schooling at the door of the National Party and Afrikaner ideology" as adherents of liberal ideology did, the social policy of education and schooling was predicated on reproducing a super exploited black migrant work force and a stable white working class. Both Molteno (1990) as well as Christie and Collins (1990) used a Marxist framework to analyse the historical foundations of schooling in South Africa. Referring to Bantu Education, Christie and Collins (1990:182) asserted that, "...the central continuing feature remains, namely that schooling for the indigenous people of South Africa is in the main for the purpose of reproducing a certain kind of labour, as

required by the particular form taken by the accumulation process at a particular time”.

Michael Cross *et al* (2008:2) write that the Afrikaner nationalist and liberal education historiographies of this period were superseded by “an increasingly radical historiography promising alternative understandings of the South African situation and new theory bases for radical transformative projects of the apartheid project”. The four key books exemplifying the radical approach of this period are: Mokubung Nkomo’s ‘The Pedagogy of Domination’ (1990); Peter Kallaway’s ‘Apartheid and Education’ (1984); Bill Nassan and John Samuel’s ‘Education from Poverty to Liberty’ (1990) and Neville Alexander’s ‘Sow the Wind’ (1985).

The dominance of the radical discourse in education declined post-1994. Cross *et al* (2008:20) provide a few specific factors which contributed to this regression: 1.) A decline of the practice of critique particularly with regard to the role of the state; 2.) Disregard in scholarly work for issues of social justice and human rights that dominated radical discourses in the struggle against apartheid; and 3.) an almost unproblematic acceptance of neo-liberal approaches and positivism in social research. Cross *et al* (2008:24) also mention the exodus of intellectuals from the academe to “government and bureaucracy to the detriment of scholarly work.” The saliency of social class in education certainly remained explicit in a few circles in the South African post-apartheid academy, particularly for those employing a Bernsteinian approach focused on the curriculum and classroom processes around the relationships between social class, patterns of language use and socialisation (Bernstein, 1971). This thesis though is concerned with class as it relates to democratic education policy processes and community struggles beyond the classroom and its attendant impact on schooling generally.

Chapter nine of this thesis also laments the fact that social class as an analytical and conceptual category “has been a casualty of the post-apartheid period”. Chapter nine or article five (Motala and Vally 2010:93) argues that:

Post-modern theory, in vogue during this period, was used as a justification for the retreat from class, made even more seductive by its coincidence with the negotiated

settlement and the illusionary ‘miracle of the New South Africa’. It could be argued that intellectuals in South Africa have themselves been complicit in the elision of class as an analytical category, quite often consciously and disparagingly. There is also the possibility of timidity in the face of the avalanche of academic and public voices representing capital, which have made any reference to class, seem both archaic and ‘ideological’ as though these voices are themselves not ideological. The epic histories of class struggles and the associated political, social and economic analyses representing the viewpoint of Marxism appears to be transcended in this period by other “free-from-class” analytical paradigms both in South Africa and elsewhere. In our view, this is consistent with the decline of the scholarship which represented the strength of such analyses, itself a victim of the self-censorship imposed by scholars on any work that overtly recognized the importance of social class.

Analyses of social issues including education in the post - apartheid period is dominated by an uncritical focus on racial factors often ignoring the underlying class issues. This is not meant to imply that racial and gender issues are mere distractions from basic issues of economic inequality. John Saul in his essay, ‘Identifying Class, Classifying Difference’ (2006:64-5) shows that grappling with the relationship between these social categories is not limited to South Africa:

Himani Bannerji has underscored the ‘absurdity’ of attempting to see ‘identity and difference as historical forms of consciousness unconnected to class formation, development of capital and class politics.’ But in doing so she also emphasizes the impossibility of considering class itself outside the gendering (and ‘race-ing’) that so often significantly characterizes it in the concrete.

Joan Hanafin and Anne Lynch (2002: 36) in a paper that presents the views of working-class parents on home-school links partially attribute the “disappearance of social class as an issue in the debate on educational failure” to the shift of focus on the debate centered on school effectiveness. They make the point that within this debate “the voices of parents of educationally disadvantaged pupils are not heard” (Ibid: 36). The literature which sees social class as one of the most important determining factors of accomplishment in the educational arena and still one of the best predictors of who will be successful is present though not as extensive as its importance might merit (a

few examples are Drudy and Lynch, 1993; Power, 2000, Clancy and Wall 2000; Rothstein, 2004). Despite the continued salience of social class in education, Tom Nesbit (2006:171) in an article on adult education titled ‘What’s the Matter with Social Class?’ questions why social class is “rarely as well considered as the related vectors of gender and race”. Nesbit (2006:185) examines the intersections of class and adult education and argues that social class analysis can also expose through careful scrutiny:

the superficiality of a variety of currently prescribed educational reforms: the individualizing of educational opportunities, increased commercial involvement determining educational goals, privatization of schools and colleges, a return to so-called basics, the streaming of learners of all ages into cultural or functional literacies or core competencies, and the increasing pressures to work harder and longer.

Nesbit implores educators to “reassert a class-based approach ... that is grounded in the struggles of those who seek to build a fairer, safer, and more democratic society for all” (Ibid: 185).

Apart from notable chapters in Chisholm’s ‘Changing Class’ (2004) particularly an article by Crain Soudien (Ibid: 89-114) and Ken Harley and Volker Wedekind (Ibid: 195- 220) scant attention is paid directly to issues of social class in education over the past seventeen years. The articles in this thesis attempt to bring issues of class and community back to the forefront in theorising and understanding education policy in the South African context. Increasingly, significant empirical research studies over the past six years have found that family background, household resources and parent’s educational levels - in other words social capital available to their children - exerts a profound impact on learners’ performance (Crouch 2005, Van der Berg and Louw, 2007, Taylor and Yu, 2009).

### **Social Movements, Community and the ERP in Policy Making**

As previously described, radical education praxis, relative to the seventies and eighties has diminished but still exists, and its centre of gravity today has shifted to the new independent social movements. Chapter five provides the historical backdrop

to social movements mobilising for the right to basic education during apartheid and how these education social movements were demobilised post-1994. Ballard (2005) shows that this phenomenon of demobilisation is not unique. Mamdani warns of the postcolonial “marriage between technicism and nationalism” resulting in the demobilisation of social movements (Mamdani 1996:21) and Fanon observed that former “liberation militants disappear into the crowd and take the empty title of citizen” (Fanon 1967:137). Similarly in South Africa, those involved in education social movements previously expected that the new political dispensation would translate into a better and more equitable education system. It seemed almost as if civil society was collectively holding its breath. A plethora of new educational laws and policies boosted this hope. The prevailing and misplaced assumption was that after the 1994 elections the new political dispensation would automatically translate into a better educational system for all.

It took four years before social movements were re-constituted. Ballard (2005:83) writes:

The new generation of social movements appeared in earnest once the ANC’s second term in office began. The Treatment Action Campaign (formed in 1998)... Anti-Eviction Campaign, Anti Privatisation Forum, Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (2000) the Landless People’s Movement, Coalition of South Africans for the Basic Income Grant (2001) and the Education Rights Project (2002), have been amongst the more enduring and visible struggles to have reconstituted a vibrant oppositional civil society. Countless unnamed small scale and ephemeral struggles have also emerged across the country.

Although many of these movements emerged as issue-based around areas such as electricity and water cut-offs, environmental justice, privatisation, evictions and landlessness Ballard (Ibid: 85) argues,

Further movements such as the Education Rights Project and the Treatment Action Campaign address other aspects of state delivery around schooling and health. These all relate to the inability of people to pay for what they need and the failure of government to supply it at affordable prices. While these appear to be narrow single

issue struggles, they reflect the systemic nature of poverty and underpinned by high levels of unemployment.

Social movements are generally seen as separate and even outside formal political and therefore policy-making arrangements constituted by the state, political parties, and political organizations like trade unions (Kane, 2001). Contemporary social movement theory (Frampton, et al., 2006) also creates a binary opposition between other movements perceived to be based on a reductionist notion of class and economics or redistribution and new social movements based on culture and identity or recognition. This perception obscures the social and historical connections between culture and class. It also displaces questions of class relations and state formation. In this thesis, I suggest that the role and transformatory power of social movements is understood to have been shaped by specific beliefs and understandings about how democracy should work, the role of the nation-state and civil society, the operations of power, the nature of political consciousness, forms of collective action (in terms of both individuals and collective action), and the nature and processes of social change (Eschle, 2001). I proceed from the following definition of social movements by Morrow and Torres (2003:100):

A social movement is a collective actor constituted by individuals who understand themselves to have common interests, and for at least some significant part of their social existence, a common identity. Social movements are distinguished from other collective actors, such as political parties and pressure groups, in that they have mass mobilization, or the threat of mobilization as their primary source of social sanction, and hence power. They are further distinguished from other collectivities, such as voluntary associations or clubs, in being chiefly concerned with defending or changing society, or the relative position of the group in society.

This definition recognises that social movements have different conceptions of social change; not all social movements are integrally concerned with questions of unequal power, redistribution of resources, and social transformation (Castells 1997). In South Africa, social movements differ in their class composition, ideology and actions. Much of their activity has been spawned by the new conditions of

accumulation that lie outside the ambit of the trade union world and its style of organising (Desai 2002). Many, but not all, of the new social movements characterised by mass mobilisation are employing the methods of critical pedagogy. As Mody (1991:29) puts it, “their process is Freirean reflection and action, their direction is horizontal, their leadership is internal and their end is an equitable economic and social whole where the individual is one active subject”. For Greenstein (2003), the discourse of international human rights has also been strategically employed by social movements mainly in order to bolster political mobilisation and to legitimise public action, rather than as serious legal arguments. Some instances of the work of various social movements as well as the ERP through its public litigation work and critical legal and international human rights law analysis have arguably contributed to ‘serious’ legal arguments (Roithmayr, 2002; Wilson, 2004). I am cognisant of the critique of a ‘legalistic’ understanding of human rights (see Keet, 2006 and Mandlingosi, 2006). In chapter nine, this thesis examines the critique, the perspective of critical legal theory and its application to human rights endeavours and the work of the ERP.

Over the past few years significant debates and scholarship on South Africa’s social movements have centered on the relationship of social movements with the state, the limits of local and single-issue struggles, the leadership of social movements and the expansion of rights through litigation (Ballard, Habib and Valodia, 2006; Pithouse, 2006; Runciman, 2011; Sinwell, 2011; Bond, Desai and Ngwane, 2012). These writings record considerable tensions and contradictions within and between social movements yet they nevertheless constitute attempts by communities to collectively improve services and public goods through active citizenship.

### **Community Participation in Education**

I am also mindful of the portmanteau nature of categories such as ‘community’ and concepts such as ‘participation’ or ‘community participation’. They are often used glibly and amorously and can be imbued with different, even contradictory meanings. ‘Participation’ and ‘community’ have become ‘buzzwords’ and all multilateral agencies including the World Bank currently promote the use of the term (Uvin, 2010). Enver Motala (2011) attempts to unravel the complexities of



conceptualising and understanding the role of participation and community mobilisation. He provides a critical examination of why the idea of community participation is regularly called upon in the public domain and whether these purposes “are adequately theorised”. Motala (2011:2 - 3) poses the following questions:

What do those who refer to it think it is capable of resolving and around what issues is it possible to talk about the idea of public participation and mobilisation... serious contradictions sometimes exist in seemingly homogenous communities. What exactly are the complexities of identifying such publics and communities which in reality are the bearers of differing histories, pathologies, ‘cultures’ and traditions? What if any are the potential and operative change agents in such communities and how if at all are these related to the structures and relations of power in society?

Peter Kallaway takes issue with decontextualised calls for parental and community control of education as a solution toward addressing South Africa’s education failures (Kallaway, 2011). Kallaway argues that these calls:

...fail to grasp that only the state can undertake the massive task of ensuring that quality education is available to all our children. Pleas for public-private partnerships or increased community control are ultimately about reducing the role of the state or, worse, letting the state off the hook of one of its most significant responsibilities in a democracy, namely promoting social equity through the public school system... The solution to education’s multiple ills does not lie in less state involvement but in more effective state policies designed to include the majority of children in an effective, high-quality state education system. Only the state has the resources and the capacity to ensure and secure these ends. Such policies would emphasise the importance of retaining the idea of education as a crucial right of citizens in a democratic state and therefore a central responsibility of the public rather than the private sector.

It is thus important that this thesis is attentive to the caveats pointed out by Enver Motala and Peter Kallaway in that it couples the concept of ‘community’ in concrete ways to issues of social class, history and the structures and relations of power. In many ways community ‘participation’ in education has been limited to school decentralisation initiatives in South Africa. Lewis and Naidoo (2004) explore the relationship between decentralisation, democracy and participation. Their paper

discusses the limitations of decentralisation as a way of solving problems of democratic participation. They conclude by asserting that the technocratic character of school governance in South Africa makes it inaccessible to the majority of its communities, disempowers the poor, illiterate and marginalized and serves as a barrier for the full participation of people for whom it was intended.

More broadly, Hemson (2007:9) examines the often repeated view by government officials that there are formal processes laid down in policy and statutes for participation but argues that these are validly regarded by social movements to be non-existent or ineffective and that “existing formal democratic structures of society are not opening public decision-making to the historically dispossessed.” Similarly, a study of community experiences which attempt to engage with local municipalities in development planning and policy processes found that “insufficient consideration has been paid to public participation, and that existing policy frameworks, institutional mechanisms and programme interventions are failing to comply with government’s constitutional and statutory obligations in this regard” (Buccus, Hemson, Hicks and Piper, 2008:1). The latter study found that the “poor and marginalized have the least impact on policy and development planning” and new approaches to participation are required since the existing formal mechanisms are “inadequate, inaccessible and disempowering” (Ibid: 11). It also revealed that legislation allowing for ‘public participation’ through ward committees or community public meetings (called *Izimbizo*) were instead forms of consultation widely seen as formalities, rather than the actual participation of local communities in decision making or implementation.

In chapter four of this thesis the participatory action research work of the ERP with communities in KwaZulu-Natal in the same municipalities serves as a useful contrast to the study mentioned above. The ERP engagement also shows the possibilities for an alternative methodological approach to work with communities - one that encourages much deeper, substantial and more meaningful relations with communities.

In his conclusion Hemson (2007: 14) shows that the poor exhibit high levels of support for social movements that act in their interest. “[the] poor appear...more engaged than the middle class in forms of public participation, even though the

middle class has a high level of participation through, for example, school governing bodies, environmental issues and in suburban security groups.” Perhaps the reason for higher forms of participation in school governing bodies by middle class constituencies can be found in the study below.

Grant-Lewis and Naidoo (2004:7) after investigating local participation in school governing bodies assert that the

...South African government’s efforts to broaden participation in educational governance is serving technocratic, efficiency ends rather than broadening participation in any authentic way. To date SASA (the South African Schools Act) is not translating into the empowerment of school communities or stimulating substantial organisational changes. Rather, the initiatives are serving to reinforce existing patterns of power and privilege in schools and in the broader society. Our study suggests that the main reason for this is that, at all levels of the system, devolved school governance and participation of the school community in decision-making is being interpreted in a strikingly narrow way. The capacity to influence decision-making has been viewed in a formal, quasi-legalistic way restricted to institutional roles defined externally or defined by the most powerful actors at the school.

Chapter eight of this thesis critiques the over reliance on the formal structures of school governance to promote community participation. The chapter supports the view of Grant-Lewis and Naidoo by showing how community engagement is narrowly limited to parental engagement related to fundraising and argues that a technical and corporate model of school governance that protects sectional and exclusive interests will perpetuate inequality.

### **Education Policy and Critical Policy Analysis**

An analysis of the politics of education and education policy needs to include not just formal policy making apparatus but also the policy arenas created by social movements and organised civil society (Torres, 2000). These policy arenas constitute an alternative form of ‘public’ space where actors can dialogue, debate and mobilise on social issues (Alvarez et al 1998); Nancy Fraser (1989) calls these alternative

spaces and discourses that occur at the margins ‘counterpublics’ and ‘counterdiscourse’. These alternative policy arenas tend to pay more attention to historical and cultural contexts in which education policies are formulated and implemented as well as problems of unequal distribution of resources and social discrimination. They provide spaces for the validation and insertion of subjugated knowledge and experience into public discourse. In doing so, they present new and dynamic understandings about the classed nature of policymaking and practices of deeper and direct forms of democratic participation for both organised civil society as well as the individual citizen. In fact, the creation and maintenance of these alternative policy arenas re-situates the politics of education at the juncture of the state and civil society. Thus, the politics of formal and alternative policy arenas are presented as two partial and complementary sources of insight into the politics of education representing as they do two very different centres and relations of power (Marshall and Gerstl-Pepin, 2005). A brief analysis of these power struggles and public participation in educational policymaking in South Africa is provided below.

### **Policy development in post-apartheid South Africa**

Many analysts have commented on the context in which key education policies were initially developed in post-apartheid South Africa. Most concur that South Africa has an impressive compendium of education policies recognised the world over. In Chapter five however, I argue that this “jewel box of ideas and reforms” failed to provide realistic solutions to the on-the-ground needs and realities of the majority of South Africans. Similarly Sayed and Jansen have argued, “for all the dazzle of post-apartheid policies, there was considerable distance between policy and practice” (2003: 1).

Initially, policy making reflected a “negotiated compromise” - a careful balancing act between contradictory political imperatives, chiefly social justice and economic development. This attempt at consensus without addressing the social and class cleavages in society left an indelible imprint on the evolution of policies. The eagerness to overcome the legacy of apartheid, coupled with overwhelming public enthusiasm shielded the early stages of the policy process from scrutiny. Many of the initiatives were created under the prevailing assumption that after the 1994 elections

the new political dispensation would automatically translate into a better educational system for all. As a result, policy development churned ahead under the assumption that there were no conflicting interests once ‘stakeholder’ consensus was reached. Yet, the community voices gathered throughout this thesis suggests that in all the policy-related activity and analysis scant attention has been paid to what should be considered a central issue in understanding the past decade of education transformation - the effect of class and status, poverty and inequality on the implementation and impact of education policy. Central to this thesis is the question of why, despite the products of tomes of policy texts, does inequality still persist in South African schools and society<sup>2</sup>.

With the rollout of many policy initiatives in the mid-to late 1990s the Deputy Director General of Systems and Planning in the national Department of Education acknowledged that the country was “far from achieving our vision for education” and that redress of past inequalities was “in danger of being side tracked” (Vally and Spreen 2003: 434). The former Deputy Director General of Education in Gauteng, Enver Motala, listed the most egregious issues plaguing the school system as: the absence of basic school resources, poor quality of learning outcomes, the lack of adequately trained staff, poor student performance, corruption and profligacy, and the “inadequacies and failure of bureaucrats in the system as a whole” (Ibid).

Reflecting on these conditions in his article, ‘How policy creates inequality’, Jansen claimed that “measured in terms of net available onsite resources, the distance between black and white schools has increased in this short period since the legal termination of apartheid in the early 1990s” (1998:3). While policies were being introduced into schools, unions such as SADTU also denounced the national and provincial departments for “not promoting the interest of working class communities by addressing inequalities in the education system” (Vally and Spreen, 2003:435). SADTU criticised the government for failing to prevent overcrowding, failing to prevent additional costs of financing education being passed on to schools and consequently to parents, and failing to create a funding mechanism to address the

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<sup>2</sup> Despite significant attempts to equalize funding and resource allocation, material inequalities between schools continue to be stark. According to the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, South Africa needs 3 000 more schools and 60 000 classrooms. The infrastructure backlog includes 14 989 libraries and 18 258 laboratories (Department of Basic Education, 2012).

disparities between the previously advantaged and the previously disadvantaged. (SADTU, 1998). In commenting on these early developments, an article sardonically titled: '*In the Shadow of GEAR: Between the Scylla of a blurred vision and the Charybdis of obstructed implementation*' (Vally and Spreen, 1998) we suggested it was no longer credible to blame the crisis on poor implementation alone and that the technically rational search for best practice innovations which were 'cost-effective' or 'efficient' did no more than tinker with the fundamental educational and social problems in question. Further, this form of censure ignored the mainsprings of a system and its policies that maintained, reproduced and often exacerbated inequalities.

With the new focus of analysis centred firmly on policy implementation, Elmore's backward mapping approach came into vogue during the late 1990s. In this approach, Elmore (1980:1) argued for:

backward reasoning from the individual and organizational choices that are the hub of the problem to which the policy is addressed, to the rules, procedures and structures that have the closest proximity those choices, to the policy instruments available to affect those things, and hence to feasible policy objectives.

The view that implementation needs to be built into policy formulation from its inception rather than as an afterthought was well received by South African policy analysts, as was the notion first credited to Ball (1994) that policy should not be seen solely as 'text'. An additional concern for several analysts was that the policy development process was mediated by a variety of responses and pressure groups wherein the interests of an expanding black middle-class and whites assumed precedence. Drawing attention to the relationships between 'race', social class and education, a few chapters in Chisholm's *Changing Class* are devoted to understanding the changing political economy and the role played by a broader array of social actors. These new actors, Chisholm explains "can exist inside and outside the state and act as classed, 'raced' and gendered beings who themselves have changed in the context of broader social change" (Chisholm, 2004: 16).

Everard Weber's book *Teaching in the New South Africa at Merrydale High* (2006) also provides clear evidence of the gap between policy and practice and the dangers of

resorting to ‘social meliorism’ (Harley and Wedekind in Chisholm, 2004:211) at a fictitiously named school serving the largely unemployed working class of Mitchell’s Plain and the residents of informal settlements and migrant populations of Khayelitsha – two townships in the Western Cape. The book describes how some of the policies themselves have deprived the school of much needed human resources and have made far more difficult the task of delivering quality education to the communities the school serves. It is an important ethnographic study; rather than exploring place simply through a cultural lens, the book shows how historical, cultural and the political come together to mediate education policies. It sheds light on how new conceptions about teachers and teaching in South Africa intersect with their local context and resources and the ways in which specific policy reforms have impacted on teachers’ working conditions.

### **Education Policy and Social Class**

In very concrete ways the selected chapters in Weber’s book speak to the intersections of education policies and social class issues - for example the effects of teacher retrenchment in relation to the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the surrounding neighbourhood, and the school’s policy of non-racialism and integration at the institutional level is discussed in relation to the curriculum and outcomes-based education. The book is a firm riposte against those who ignore history and the role activism plays in creating democratic schools. Particularly relevant for this thesis is the first half of Weber’s book. It provides an extensive literature review which sets the stage for analysing teaching in light of the country’s historical experience, the social conditions it produced, and against the backdrop of the implementation of various reforms. Through these chapters and with an eye toward the literature of political economy and organisational theory, Weber discusses the changing nature of teaching in South Africa and relates this to studies of social class and local context, the state and issues of policy reform. Several of the chapters in this thesis also challenge the technocratic assumptions of policymakers and bureaucrats as well as some systems theorists that change will come from within state bureaucracies by improving state capacity, leadership and systems through organisational and bureaucratic reforms and not also from social struggle. Their premise is that pragmatism today should trump the ‘idealistic’ goals of the struggle of yesterday.

The view that also characterises the impact of globalisation and the macroeconomic context as inconsequential to what happens at the ‘chalk face’ is of a similar nature. Parallel to Weber’s analysis, while firmly rooted in the local and the ‘chalk face’, this thesis insists that political analysis on implementation studies must encompass ideographically informed perspectives of South Africa’s past as it relates to education and the present dialectic between the local and the global. As the following chapters show in similar ways, the work of the ERP has also become a powerful lever for describing the material conditions racial capitalism created in the communities by posing questions that relate to how the system of apartheid and the resistance to it are relevant to teaching and learning today.

Various chapters of this thesis attempt to examine the relationship between the political and economic assumptions underlying policies and their socio-cultural effects so that a deeper understanding of policy and practice is obtained. Following Foucault (1991) it is also understood that social policy research, while it draws on basic research and its theoretical foundations, is also about governmentality. The latter includes the prescripts of state and policy making bodies and the nature of power relations and their effects on the ideological and conceptual proclivities of policy and its decision makers. In an essay on governmentality and education policy in post-apartheid South Africa, Christie (2006) outlines the approach adopted by the new South African government in relation to constitutional ground rules, new legislation and managing the economy. She details how the state engaged with “particular practices and domains of knowledge, which themselves constrain the changes that are conceivable and credible” (Christie, 2006:373). While the actions of policy makers, the reasons for these and the methodologies of policy making and processes are important, this thesis is largely about how these policies are implemented and its consequence on specific communities and social categories.

Reflecting on the impact of policy failures today, Soudien et al (2001: 82) argue that “issues of equity and redress in school now play themselves out primarily through school choice and admission policies.” To illustrate, chapter four describes how the imposition of user fees raised several critical concerns about the policy implications around redress. The chapter points to two main policy outcomes of the user fees



approach: first, since individual school governing bodies were allowed to set their own fees with no limitations, historically privileged schools were able to maintain higher funding levels significantly above poorer schools (even within the same province) thereby maintaining the historic inequitable education expenditures. Second, the imposition of school fees seemingly had dramatic effects on student mobility – the trend is clearly towards fee-paying parents moving their children to better endowed schools, or worse, preventing enrolment of children of poorer parents (who were exempt from fees) from entering their school. As a response to the above concerns, the idea of soft zoning was proposed to guarantee pupils access to schools in their own district, regardless of ability to pay. While this form of zoning would provide access to schools, it was restricted to a minority of the neediest pupils. In previous research conducted by Mokgalane, Vally and Greenstein (2003:245) we showed that,

The larger the number of pupils would enrol in a given school without paying fees, the less would each one of them be able to benefit from school resources. The overall income of the school would be reduced, and it would have to be further divided over a larger number of needy pupils. The redistributive potential of this model is thus inherently limited.

As chapter five describes, ultimately the selection of user fees was made concurrent with the South African Schools Act (1996) which was a result of both political and economic choices. Not coincidentally, both of these weighty policy decisions which had dramatic effects on changing the course of education took place the same year that the macro-economic strategy GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy) was promulgated. Chapter five also shows in greater detail how GEAR moved away from the vision of the democratic movement which emphasised social reconstruction (and articulated the need for dramatically increased state funding of social services) and accepted the logic of international financial institutions emphasizing the need for a pusillanimous state as part of a package prioritising economic growth over redistribution.

## Globalisation and the State

Many of the articles and books mentioned below argue that in the past decade education policies in South Africa reflected elements of social justice, the desire to be internationally competitive and the need for fiscal discipline. I argue that the latter two areas have had the effect of undermining social justice issues. Previous research conducted as part of the Wits Education Policy Unit published in the book *South African Education Policy Review* (Chisholm, Motala and Vally, 2003) tracks the twists and turns of how early policies directed at redress increasingly were reformulated and evolved within constraints imposed by the interim constitution and the rise of neo-liberal economic policies with its attendant emphasis on fiscal austerity.

Until 2001 a major weakness of policy analysis in South Africa was the neglected role of the state and bureaucracy, rectified in the book *Education and Equity (2001)* edited by Motala and Pampallis. The book speaks to the irreconcilability of the state's macro-economic policies and its social justice intentions. The papers in *Education and Equity* argue that it was the adoption of GEAR in 1996 that set crippling limits on what it might have been possible to achieve in education and that the years since have shown what has proved to be the elusive goal of equity and redress. A chapter in the latter book by Sophie Oldfield shows how the priorities of redress and equity were unevenly sublimated to the rationale of the market led by restrictive fiscal and government policies. She writes:

In the educational sphere, this slippage [the state's emphasis on economic growth rather than the alleviation of poverty] is marked by a significant, albeit uneven, move from priorities of redress and equity for those citizens long deprived of education (facilities, teachers, appropriate curricula) to decentralisation and subjection to the market and private sector... In combination, these trends have created greater polarisation between rich and poor schools and communities, although within a process intended as educational transformation, amalgamation and equalisation. (Oldfield, 2001:37)

A contribution by Katarina Nicolou in the book (Nicolou, 2001: 53-104) similarly shows the deleterious effects of the macro-economic policy on issues related to school governance, the quality of education, classroom conditions, teacher training as well as ways in which the wider issues of poverty eradication, social redress and greater equality were marginalised.

Perhaps the most trenchant critique of the relationship between the global politics of education and early education policy formulation is found in the book *Education after Apartheid- South African Education in Transition*, (Kallaway et al 1997). The authors in this book argue that education policy development and implementation can be traced to the narrowly market oriented global discourse of the 1980s and that

... the master narrative of educational reform has, to a large extent, been framed by the international neo-liberal guidelines of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Instead of the vision promoted by People's Education for People's Power, the defining concepts of the new education have been rationalization, downsizing, line management, efficiency, equivalencies and outcomes based education. (Kallaway et al 1997:1)

Most of the policy-related research comments on South Africa's susceptibility to different economic, ideological and political impulses which framed education policies and how particularly in the mid-to-late 1990s, these were mediated through the governing discourse of economics (Spren and Vally, 2005). Tikly (1997) describes the state's balancing act between the need to promote economic growth and ensuring political stability. In analysing economic growth and the financing of schools, he relates opting for school fees to the government's preoccupation with growth rather than redistribution, basically linking the different funding options to economic choices. Chisholm (2004:14) also explains that new understandings of the state, bureaucracy and educational change have been linked to critiques of globalisation emphasizing the neo-liberal character of the state operating in a global context where "the marketisation of education and the imperative towards fiscal austerity form part of the constraining environment within which education policy reform occurs". Motala and Pampallis (2001) argue that given the range of forces which impact on the state, the pressures of globalisation are significantly important

and central to understanding the South African state. Their analysis of the state suggests that the macroeconomic shift from the Keynesian Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) to GEAR coincided with reducing social welfare provisions, curbing central state interventions and encouraging decentralisation and privatisation. The problem, explained by Fine (cited in Chisholm, 2004: 4) is that the policies were based on neoclassical and mainstream economic principles, which pay scant attention to the complexity of social and historical context and the consequences of market processes. Elsewhere it was argued that “if there is political will to question social and power relations that introduce global and market imperatives then there are indeed alternatives” (Vally and Spreen, 1998:437). The South African state could have and should have chosen another route toward development.

Interpretations of the state range from monolithic views to those which stress the partial or relative autonomy of the state and state actors. Contestations by competing factions, pressures and interests within the state often do lead to specific decisions about policies and their particular sets of structures and forms. The praxis of the ERP also shows that often state actors are responsive to pressure from below. Hlatshwayo (2010) shows how grassroots level participatory democracy resting on active social movements during the left government in the Indian state of Kerala, the Workers’ Party control of the Brazilian city of Porto Allerge and the practices of the Broad Front in Uruguay’s capital Montevideo led to an improvement in service delivery, minimised corruption and increased levels of accountability and probity. This pliability of the capitalist state does not mean that it is a totally independent mediator of class conflict and chapter nine of this thesis explains in some depth why the present South African state has distinctive class interests. The latter chapter following Prempeh (2006) and Fine (2010b) questions the extent to which the ‘developmental state’ and the ‘Third Way’ political project of seeking a middle ground between statist socialism and market reforms are significant challenges or alternatives to neoliberalism.

The major argument in the book *Education and Equity* by Motala and Pampallis, (2001) is one that builds on Elmore’s backward mapping approach by questioning the earlier assumption that policies failed because bureaucrats and education planners accepted policies uncritically without attention to implementation. Motala and

Pampallis also include an incompetent bureaucracy, the absence of systemic planning and the scarcity of resources as explanations for the failure of policies. They insist that the process of implementation must be examined in relation to the very policies from which it is derived and this consanguinity between policies and their implementation must be analysed simultaneously.

In *Policy Implementation*, Sayed and Jansen (2003) address the discursive influences that have shaped education policy, arguing that the tensions and contradictions militate against the broad values and principles outlined in earlier policy goals. A chapter in their book by Soudien (2001: 82) argues that policy development and implementation rested on a social reconstruction discourse that offered “idealized versions of teachers, students and parents as the state would like them to be” without requiring the state to meet its obligation to deliver the support that would enable change.

In *Changing Class*, Chisholm (2004) also maintains that South Africa’s education transition was “a pre-eminently political one: the economic consequences of apartheid are still acutely present” (Chisholm, 2004: 4). Jansen (2002) extends this argument introducing the notion of ‘policy as political symbolism’ in his attempt to explain why a major transformation of education has not occurred. Education policy, Jansen argues, “is best described as a struggle for the achievement of a broad political symbolism that would mark the shift from apartheid to post-apartheid society” (2002:46). For Jansen (2002), policies are made for symbolic reasons and for their political currency without any real commitment to their implementation.

Using policy research literature over the past eighteen years this literature review outlines the problems with technical, rational approaches to policy formulation, planning and implementation. Some of the authors have argued for the need to distinguish analytically between conceptual critique and implementation critique (Sayed and Jansen, 2003), while others suggest the problem is of implementation – lack of capacity – as explanations of the failure focused on explanations of the bureaucracy in setting “frameworks for change” and management systems, ignoring implementation issues (Motala and Pampallis, 2001) and others still examined how education was a vehicle for change, particularly social change (Chisholm, 2004). One

problem of policy formulation has been the inception of policy lodged within a set of distinct discourses and frameworks (particularly growth, skills and economic development) which shaped the subjective and analytical views of the nature and purpose of education. These discourses and frameworks have been characterised most by their tremendous shifts. For Enver Motala, these shifts reflect

the disjuncture between active and formal democracy, between mass mobilization and formal representation and the containment of the ‘ends of politics to the means of administration’ policy driven by pragmatism instead of reflection and theorizing ... where managerial imperatives emphasizing the discourse of outcomes, the measurement of inputs, budgetary parameters, normative guidelines and user fees, hold sway over rights. (as quoted in Vally, 2001: 2)

### **Class Revisited**

The major conclusion in Chisholm’s book is that “educational development and the emerging system have favoured an expanding, racially-mixed middle class” (2004: 7). She further argues that while this may not have been the conscious intent of policy - ‘redress for the poor’ suggests quite the opposite - “there is no doubt that the resulting social change is considerable in achievement and direction, but is characterized by the putative and loose coupling of a democratic project of deracialisation with neo-liberalism” (Chisholm, 2004:7).

It was assumed that one area for leveraging new forms of power was educational decision-making and the formation of school-governing bodies (SGBs). Chapter eight of this thesis discusses whether the dissimilar realities of ‘race’, class, gender and geographical location are factored into the democratic functioning of school governing bodies or the politics behind stakeholder decision - making. The system of open public responses intended to give broad stakeholder input will be examined to see whether it serves to modify policy formulations in favour of white interest groups and the emerging black middle class. These groups, although numerically small, were better organised and more vocal in their negotiations, while groups who sought more radical changes were less visible and tended to rely on their representatives in government to champion their interests. In the opening chapter of Sayed and Jansen

(2001:3) the point is made that the “demobilization of the mass democratic movement in policy change is not disconnected from the lack of understanding and resources required to influence the formal processes of policy enactment.” The state quite consciously, instead of incorporating the views of civil society and social agents, “seemed more receptive to advice from consultants who use theories and methods found with the world of human-capital approaches and rates of return analysis” (Vally and Spreen, 1998: 436).

In their eagerness to participate in the international political and economic arena, policy planners adopted educational reforms that emulated those in industrialised countries. The influence of private international consultants in diluting social justice issues in policy formulations should not be underestimated. An interview with one finance specialist who played a critical role in the adoption of the user fees school funding model is revealing:

I did play a role in influencing the governance debate ... by arguing that we needed to keep whites and articulate blacks within the public sector as an arena for state influence. Hence, the soft option in financing alternatives that did not force the strong redistributive thrust of the Task Team. This I presented to ... the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee. The Committee was sceptical at first but later realized that this matter affected not only white children but children of civil servants working in government. The notion was that there was a need to keep the black middle class involved in and as advocates for the public schooling sector” (Sayed and Jansen 2001:276).

Some analysts make the deprecatory observation that the black political elite desired the continuation of the former Model C schools in order to be able to “silently permit their own class interests to be taken care of without confronting their own, largely poor, constituencies” (Karlsson et al 2001:151).

Much of the policy research conducted in South Africa to date has primarily identified the financial constraints as the biggest barrier to policy implementation and reform, without fundamentally challenging or questioning the original policy assumptions.

Lastly, in order to advance human rights, address poverty and inequality, and provide access to quality schools for all South Africans an entirely different set of mechanisms and structures for ‘participation’ must be established. By ensuring ‘voice’ in policy related research, policymakers should take local challenges into account and better deliver on what is needed.

### **The Post-Apartheid State, the Right to Basic Education and Community Voices**

Often, statements of rights and rights discourse, while providing a useful universal framework as a reference point do not automatically translate into rights on the ground. Despite South Africa’s compendium of laws and policies ostensibly aimed at giving effect to rights to, in and through education, these rights do not exist in practice. Amartya Sen (2004:315) lyrically comments that human rights are often “confined within the juridical model within which it is so frequently incarcerated”. The research outputs of the three year (2003-2006) Right to Basic Education (RBE) project which I coordinated are pertinent in this regard. The studies presented below provide some factors that obstruct the full realisation of the right to basic education linked to the key issues of concern to this thesis - social class and community. Articulating with the Education Rights Project (discussed comprehensively in chapter four), the RBE study suggests the importance of an active and responsible citizenry who understand the law and its limitations and are willing to insist on their rights and mobilise when these are not forthcoming. The RBE initiative allowed space for the coordinators of the ERP and some of its reference group members to reflect and engage with scholars outside of the ERP.

The RBE project was initiated by the Education Policy Consortium which consisted of the Education Policy Units of Wits and Fort Hare universities as well as the Centre for Education Policy Development. The conceptual orientation of the various components of the RBE embraced a critical, rights-based, social inclusion and human capability approach. The framing of the project allowed researchers to include in their analysis issues of politics, class, gender, ‘race’, rurality, marginalisation, the social construction of knowledge and its relationship to power and ideology. The findings were clustered into the following themes: a) Democracy, State, Market, Development and Globalisation; b) International Human Rights Discourse and Human Rights



Instruments; c) Policy, Legislative Review and Implementation; d) Social Movements, Civil Society and Basic Education; e) Research Methodology f) the Voices of Learners; g) Case Studies and h) Popular booklets on Education Rights (see Appendix A). Thirty two research outputs were recorded, consisting of reports, journal articles, book chapters, conference presentations, desk top studies, empirical case studies, popular booklets and submissions to state departments and to ‘Chapter Nine’ institutions such as the South African Human Rights Commission.

The project aimed to critically appraise the broader socio-economic and development context and its bearing on the normative and regulatory framework of the right to education beyond policy and legislation. Central to the research agenda of the RBE project was an examination of the extent of a culture based on human rights, democracy, and critical citizenship in the socialisation of learners and whether such a culture is appreciated by educators. There was also the strong belief that the exercise of rights cannot be achieved effectively under conditions that deny the citizenry its right to be heard and the freedoms associated with the right to participation in public life. Therefore, notions of consent, agreement, representation, participation and accountability were problematised in the RBE. It called for an evaluation of the broader questions of development, democracy and the political economy of rights in post-apartheid South Africa, and a problematisation of the role, purpose and content of basic education.

The limitations of rights framed as legal and justiciable phenomena in effecting redress and equity, and the instrumental link between education and the economy, received considerable attention. Similarly, the structure of the education and training system and the role and possibilities for agency in advancing education rights were keenly interrogated. Central to the arguments of many of the studies is the importance of understanding and engaging with the relationship between human agency and social change, and the role of research and researchers in this endeavour. In this regard, a significant portion of the empirical research was based on participatory research methods in which the voices of school community representatives were foregrounded.

Despite good intentions, and undoubted advances in schooling after 1994, the data from this project recorded persistent inequalities in education and continued violation of rights. The analyses provided insights into why the quality of learning and teaching, social justice, democracy and human rights are compromised for many of South Africa's citizens. The study showed that the current interpretation and implementation of the right to basic education through formal policy and legislative frameworks fall far short of the needs of South Africans and the fulfillment of their potential. The project also generated valuable and rigorous insights into how the situation can be improved, through a combination of educational reforms accompanied by a wider range of redistributive strategies, democratic participation, political will and clear choices about the social ends policy interventions seek to achieve.

A series of pertinent research questions framed the project:

- What are the implications of the constitutional right to basic education for the policy and legislative framework of the education and training system?
- How do the deep social divisions in South African society, reflected by poverty and social inequalities, affect access to education?
- Does the right to education impact on the development of democracy, and what are the obstacles and impediments to the fulfillment of educational rights?
- How can the right to basic education be realized in a world where the public sector is increasingly threatened by the commodification of basic services, including education?
- What is the relationship between the state and civil society and the meaning of this relationship for the establishment of democracy in education?

At a conference in 2007 a consolidated report of the project was presented (Vally and Zafar, 2008). The main ideas in each discernible theme of the project (as delineated in Appendix A) are summarised below:

a) Democracy, state, market, development and globalisation.

The issues that emerged under this theme of the project called for an evaluation of broader questions of development, democracy and the political economy of rights in post-apartheid South Africa. This was not merely a critical theoretical exercise aimed at strengthening conceptual categories but a conceptualisation of the theoretical debate in relation to practice and policy, as well as its impact on the labours of the state and of socially-oriented research and action. The goals of education it was argued cannot simply relate to the objectives of economic growth, productivity or the enhancement of 'human capital'. An analysis of the various development paradigms pointed to the dangers of such a reductionist view of the role of education in development and the consequences of the commodification and marketisation of education based on a narrow human capital view of education. Such an approach, it was felt, prevents education as a public good from providing opportunities and capabilities for life chances to those who have been historically denied such opportunities. In this respect the project was, not uncritically, privileging the views of Amartya Sen (1999) on the relationship between development, education and capabilities. The concept of 'human rights as capabilities', proposed by Sen (1999) is defined as 'the substantive freedom of people to lead lives they have reason to value and to enhance the real choices they have' (Sen 1999: 293). Sen (2003) also points to a range of issues affecting basic education, including human insecurity, deprivation, illiteracy and innumeracy, barriers to access, the inability of poor communities to invoke their legal rights, health and gender discrimination.

The seduction of the 'knowledge economy', the pressure of playing by the rules of corporate globalisation and their impact on education was also examined under this theme. Recent developments in Venezuela, Uruguay and Bolivia show that not all nation states are naturally captive to globalization. This does not mean that the imperatives of international competitiveness have not lessened the autonomous agency of individual states. What it does suggest, however, is that the limits on state policy are, to a significant extent, self-imposed. In many respects, governments are not obliged to become the midwives of corporate globalisation. There are alternative paths to development and these largely relate to political will and state choices.

Enver Motala and Tsakani Chaka presentation to the conference based on an earlier paper (Motala and Chaka, 2004) raised issues with ahistorical and decontextualised understandings of education. They concede that skills, technological acumen and other learning attributes are important but not solely for their worth in the labour market, that is, for reasons of productivity and competitiveness, narrowly conceived; rather, they are crucial socially, politically and culturally and for enhancing the ability of citizens to participate in democratic processes. For them, basic education must evince ‘particular attributes that speak to the broader reconstructive purposes of education’s role in society’ and that the ‘ostensibly direct and functionalist relationship assumed to exist between education and economic growth or “economic success” is largely unproven’ (Ibid: 5). While broadly supportive of Sen’s view of education, Motala and Chaka also note his silence on issues such as the contestations arising from unequal social relations in the schooling system, as well as issues of education quality, learning, teaching and the curriculum. They highlight this critique by referring to the fact that, despite higher enrolment in South African schools after 1994, outcomes continue to be variable and differentiated along ‘race’, gender, social class and geographic lines. Motala and Chaka conclude by making a case for the broader humanising purpose of learning instead of a restrictive purpose largely limited to economic functions.

b) International and national human rights discourse and human rights instruments.

Various presenters commented on the uneasy reciprocity between the right to basic education and human rights (Vally and Zafar, 2008:68). They contend that, while the aim of the right to basic education is to promote and protect access to quality education, such sustained and broadened access should be supported by a human rights education that builds on the ‘agency’ of the rights claimants. They concur with Tomasevski (2001) who emphasised the importance of placing human rights at the centre of education policies and the translation of these rights into human rights obligations, arguing that rights based education entails safeguards for the right to education, and the advancing of all human rights through education.

The presenters questioned approaches that focus solely on human rights instruments without applying these to pedagogical practice. Such ‘declarationist’ human rights

education cannot be ‘experiential’, ‘participatory’ or ‘emancipatory’ because human rights declarations and international instruments represent a pre-determined curriculum framework that is anti-educational in design and conservative in its programming (Keet, 2006).

An important thesis advanced at the conference was that rights framed as legal and ‘justiciable entities’ often do not operate on a level playing field. Left unmediated, they can construct and replicate narrow and privileged social interests and relations. Thus, legal mechanisms and human rights instruments must be understood within larger realities of power. Similarly, the research argues that unmediated education policies and legislation that cater for access to basic education are inadequate because of their ‘bluntness’ in relation to the needs of transformation. Language in education policy is an example of how this occurs. For instance, the codification of the right of all learners to receive most of their primary school instruction mainly in their first language is an important policy step, but the failure of the state to properly resource additive bilingual and multilingual education has had the effect of solidifying the hegemony of English. The consequences of not having an adequate number of appropriately trained educators to teach in bilingual and multilingual classrooms, nor up - to - date and readily accessible learning materials in indigenous languages are that English and Afrikaans become the only practical choices for learners, parents and educators.

c) Policy, legislative review and implementation.

In her contribution to the conference, concerned with theorising the rural school learner as a cause, an object and a citizen, Catherine Odora Hoppers (Vally and Zafar, 2004:69) reminds us of the important intellectual frameworks proposed by Foucault and Chomsky. These frameworks have inspired several different outputs, from analyses of education rights as enshrined in legislation, through submissions to government, to individual researchers’ interactions with ordinary citizens. The real work of intellectuals, according to Foucault is to criticise the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent, and to criticise them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked. For Chomsky, the problem is a political one. We must

struggle against the injustices of our current society in the name of a higher goal - justice (Vally and Zafar, 2004:69). Informed by such frameworks, Odora Hoppers calls for a re - theorisation of rurality away from the deficit model. She critiques the construction of rural children as either causes or objects within the modalities of scientific rationalism, development and modernisation, constructions which have damaging consequences for rural children and communities alike. Constructing learners in rural contexts as citizens, she believes, will create the space for these children, their parents and their communities to actively affirm their rights to equality and justice. She challenged researchers to work within empowerment-oriented paradigms, in terms of which communities are encouraged to reconnect and engage with their own history, tradition and ways of being and seeing.

Xola Ngonini (Vally and Zafar, 2004: 69) detailed the history of rural areas in South Africa. He explored a range of definitions of rurality and the implications of these varied conceptual frameworks for the identity of people living in rural contexts. He considered the role of education and schooling in shaping rural areas under apartheid and capitalism, and demonstrated how the simple dichotomy of urban and rural is incapable of revealing how rural life is embedded in the institutional structures of wider society. Ngonini posited the possibility of moving beyond the currently dominant discourses of deficit, modernisation and charity and instead actually engaging with, and learning from, those who until now have been merely the objects of research. He hopes that, “in this way, it will be possible to draw conclusions which are informative and educative, not based on the panoptical and disciplinary approach which tends to possess knowledge about and on the Other” (Ibid: 69).

Samiera Zafar (Vally and Zafar, 2004:70) discussed the findings of a Human Rights Watch report which focuses on the right to basic education for learners in farm schools. Education policy with regard to these learners appears at best flawed and at worst in violation of the spirit and letter of their constitutional rights. Zafar’s paper reflects on the wider legal implications of clashes between the private property rights of farm owners, the right to basic education of the children of farm workers, and she laments the fact that the state’s responsibility for basic education is contingent on the goodwill of farm owners.

d) Social movements, civil society and basic education.

Chapter five of this thesis attempts to understand how a once powerful vision of democratic education has been reduced to little more than a mere ‘footprint in the sand’. In continuity with past struggles and visions, the new independent social movements emphasise free quality education at all levels, education with production, participatory democracy in education, critical thinking for political action and access to higher education for the poor and for workers. At the same time, however, they are shedding the disarming and misplaced hope that formal political and constitutional change is necessarily sufficient to realise socio-economic rights and democratic citizenship.

The RBE project related to the post 1994 social movements through the Education Rights Project (ERP). The latter is based on a model of working with communities in the pursuit of basic education rights. Through a dialogical relationship between the qualitative and quantitative research conducted by communities, and academic research conducted by people based in universities and research centres, the RBE project sought to ensure that scholarship contributes to ways of dealing with social challenges.

The importance of a research process as embodied in both the RBE and the ERP is that it problematises dominant political and theoretical discourses at the same time as promoting democratic and cooperative practices in the production and designation of what constitutes knowledge. It also demystifies research practices and facilitates a social and active response to complex policy issues. In so doing it seeks to ensure that human rights, and particularly the right to education, are realised and come to fruition in the everyday lives of individual citizens as well as in all communities. The following chapters will demonstrate how ERP’s work combines progressive scholarship and activism by linking directly with communities and civil society organisations.

## **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

Over the past decade, the ERP together with key South African social movements have engaged with a range of communities in attempting to fulfill the promise of post-apartheid education policy. Participatory Action Research (PAR) more fully discussed later in this chapter has been important to realise the aims and goals of the initiative. PAR provides for the collective ownership of the research with communities but it also requires that the research produce action - an essential element for activists and academics involved with social movements.

This thesis aligns itself with the views of Arjun Appadurai (2006) who argues that the ability to do research on one's social surrounds should be considered a basic human right. Appadurai argued that the right to research or "the right to the tools through which any citizen can systematically increase that stock of knowledge which they consider most vital to their survival as human beings and to their claims as citizens" (186) is a fundamental human right.

### **The ERP Research Process**

Typically before data collection begins, community activists attend an education rights workshop where issues the community feels strongly about are discussed. The importance of research in addressing these concerns is examined and a research project begins. The ERP trains researchers from the community who participate in the education rights workshop and who receive the endorsement of community structures. Once the research data has been collected, community researchers with the assistance of the ERP analyse and present the data at community meetings where a discussion is held regarding actions to be taken to deal with the problems identified. Actions taken often involve a combination of attempts to communicate with schools and education officials, parents and School Governing Bodies (SGB), attempts at legal redress, and most importantly, planning and organising local education campaigns.



The ERP also partners with communities with specialised interest groups, academics and others knowledgeable in the different areas of concern to communities, while ensuring that the nature of this relationship is both democratic and dialogical. In many cases, workshops highlight the need for research within the community, whereupon the ERP works collaboratively with members of the community-based partner to develop and implement a participatory action research plan. These participatory research initiatives are also a form of social accountability. They assert the need for civil society to have access to collective self-knowledge, which is independent of government, in order to hold the state to account for its policies.

Thus far, actions typically involve a combination of attempts to communicate with schools and education officials, parents and school governing bodies, to obtain legal redress and, most importantly, to plan and organise local education campaigns. The premise and outcome of such a research process is social action. The outcomes of the research inform the design of a campaign aimed at improving local education. This process contributes to democratisation on, for example, the impact of government budgets on local education, since communities themselves will have the data to challenge or support assertions made by the state or other organizations about education provisioning. In the case of one of the studies discussed in chapter six, the community of Durban Roodepoort Deep gained important concessions from the state in terms of the provision of transport.

In the tradition of C. Wright Mills' (1959) evocative writing on the 'sociological imagination', activist social scientists, by pointing out the connections between a person's individual troubles and connected social issues, can help create a vision of a society that overcomes or transcends these troubles. With the assistance of the ERP, a number of communities linked to social movements collected data about their communities on basic issues such as household incomes, the amount of school fees charged (as well as any violations of parents' or children's rights because of an inability to pay), the cost of uniforms, books and transport, and the provision of meals in schools. Together with ERP staff members, this data was analysed and presented at community meetings where actions to be taken to deal with the problems were identified.

## **Participatory Action Research (PAR)**

PAR in the academy today is largely seen as an acceptable methodology although its struggle for legitimation (Hooley, 2005) and its epistemological challenge to conventional traditions continues. PAR is not a methodology on its own but rather an orientation towards research and could draw on multiple methods -surveys, logistic regressions, ethnography, life stories, testimonies, performance and focus groups. Research could also be qualitative and quantitative or a combination of both.

The roots of PAR can be traced back to the praxis of Kurt Lewin who in the 40s coined the term 'Action Research' in a 1946 paper titled 'Action Research and Minority Problems' (Lewin, 1946). Lewin's research was concerned with the problems of prejudice and injustice at the time in the United States. The research was seen by Lewin as critical enquiry, a tool for social change and based on iterative steps and a spiral of planning, action and reflection on the action. Even at that time action research viewed participant knowledge as foundational to validity and participatory research as foundational to social change.

PAR borrowed from action research and became popular during the struggle for national independence in Africa, Asia and South America and from the seventies it was championed particularly by South Americans such as Fals Borda in Columbia and Paulo Freire in Brazil (Martin, 1997). Freire particularly saw education as a dialogical process and research as the dialectic between common sense and systematic observation followed by reflection and action.

PAR for these reasons and those outlined below has been particularly useful for relating to the rationale and theoretical framework of this thesis. PAR eschews linear research with a finite ending and this does complicate relating the 'findings' in a comfortable and neat way to the hypothesis. Anderson and Herr (2005:1) make the point that the process of reflection and the findings can seldom be "formulated as propositional knowledge." This is because PAR is oriented toward cycles of actions which spiral on for as long as organisations or community members take to address particular problems. The fact though that this thesis is steeped in critical policy

analysis complemented by the data collected through the process of PAR, mitigates this necessary complication.

Unlike extractive research, PAR facilitates participant involvement from the outset where communities ‘own’ the research in order to solve problems or bring about change. Issues related to the positionality of the researcher and one’s outsider status is tempered by collaboration with insiders and in which intervention for social justice and transformation is crucial to the research process. Community members are not mere passive objects of the research but equally collaborate in collecting information, and are involved in the analysis and actions that flow out of the research process. In this sense, people and communities involved in the research have agency as bearers of knowledge, creators of social meaning and changes to their conditions of living as well as to themselves as researchers. Additionally all matters pertaining to the research are transparent; research questions, project design and research methods are co-constructed; and the synthesis of the research are dynamic, interactive and collectively prepared and disseminated.

Some of the basic principles of PAR as pedagogy of transformation include:

- Recognition that knowledge is produced through participation, collaboration and action based on the needs of the community. This praxis rests on critical and collective inquiry, reflection and action;
- Enabling people to see the reality of their experiences while understanding the capacities for resistance and learning through praxis about complex power relations, histories of struggles and the consequences of oppression;
- Re-visioning the realities of the social world and then undertaking forms of collective challenge based on knowledge gained through critical inquiry;
- Contesting and transforming systems and institutions to produce greater justice – distributive justice, procedural justice, justice for recognition and justice for respect (Young, 2001);
- Strengthening resistance that leads to transformation – systematic and institutional change to promote social justice;

- Highlighting the fact that conditions of injustice are produced and are not immutable; designed to privilege and oppress; challengeable and changeable;
- Establishing and developing relationships of trust and mutual respect;
- Learning about the culture/s of organization;
- Understanding the multidisciplinary nature of partnerships

Budd Hall, has identified several key aspects of PAR relevant to the involvement of university-based researchers:

that the research involves professionals working alongside marginalised and oppressed groups; recognising the knowledge, power and strengths these groups already possess, seeking to develop these qualities through the process of research; that research questions emerge from the priorities of these groups who become active subjects rather than passive objects of research; that those taking part in the research become committed participants and learners in the process which leads to a committed involvement rather than the impartial detachment claimed by the positivist paradigm. (quoted by Martin, 1997:3)

The research of the ERP and the presentation of the data and research at community meetings through a participatory mode together with the peer involvement and examination of colleagues, academics and civil society groups assists with triangulation, internal validity and also acts as a source for explanatory outcomes. Denzin's (1970) taxonomy of different types of triangulation guided the research. The studies in this thesis involved 'data triangulation' where data is collected over time from more than one location from different collectives as shown in Chapter four and 'investigator triangulation' which relates to having more than an individual observer. The latter also incorporates checks such as seeking feedback from the subjects themselves concerning interpretations as discussed in the conclusion. Finally 'methodological triangulation' was obtained through different methods of obtaining information within a data collection method as shown in the questionnaires in the appendix.

Michelle Fine argues that scholars of participatory action research have relied upon and utilized varied methods in order to “interrogate the conditions of oppression and surface leverage points for resistance and change”. Fine (2008:215) emphasises that PAR is a

radical epistemological challenge to the traditions of social science, most critically on the topic of where knowledge resides...PAR further assumes that those who have been *most* systematically excluded, oppressed, or denied carry specifically revealing wisdom about the history, structure, consequences, and the fracture points in unjust social arrangements.

She also holds that PAR “embodies a democratic commitment to break the monopoly on who holds knowledge and for whom social research should be undertaken.” (Cammarota and Fine, 2008:215).

Fine (Ibid) examines PAR in relation to traditional features of social inquiry, in particular objectivity, bias, validity and generalisability. On objectivity Fine (Ibid: 222) says:

Strong objectivity is exercised when researchers work diligently and self-consciously through their own positionalities, values, and predispositions, gathering as much evidence as possible, from many distinct vantage points all in an effort to not be guided, unwittingly and exclusively, by predispositions and the pull of biography.

In terms of validity she suggests that

expert validity deepens through the practice of PAR in several ways: First PAR collectives include wide-ranging forms of contextualized expertise, born in experience and analysis, breathing in bodies often disregarded by social scientists except as objects. Borrowing from Gyiatri Chakravorty Spivak, in PAR “the subalterns speak”. And they get a hearing. That is, the very people invited to the table represent a wide swath of perspectives, biographies, and standpoints. (Ibid: 222 - 223).

Issues of construct validity, that is, the means to assess the extent to which theoretical notions are indeed meaningful and valid and to determine how cause relates to effect are central to the aims and principles of PAR. The ERP project provides the evidentiary basis of how young community researchers and activists critically analysed user fees in schooling and educated their communities using the constructs of rights and responsibilities to transform non-questioning observers of schooling to active, engaged and critical participants in the process of school change. In this sense “commonsense” constructs through the PAR process were collectively reconsidered. Fine (in Cammarota and Fine, 2008: 225) provides examples of how failure in education or low achievement previously relied on a deficit view of communities “thereby denying the ‘collateral’ consequences of finance inequity or under-resourced schools” but how through the PAR process students became adept at “...returning the analytic and political gaze back on inadequate educational systems-this is the work of construct validity.”

Anderson and Herr (2005:6) concede that “The thesis represents scholarship that generally makes knowledge claims that are generalizable, or transferable, beyond the immediate setting” and that an “action research study for a thesis must consider how the knowledge generated can be used by those in the setting as well as by those beyond the setting.” They provide a number of instances and studies that document successful collaborations used as case studies and the concrete results of the collaborations that could very usefully be transferred to similar contexts. For them these are instances of external validity or transferability of the findings- a standard feature of qualitative and case study research. Anderson and Herr (Ibid) also cite examples of action research thesis generating new theory that can be used to explain similar problems in other contexts. For instance, they refer to a PAR study that expanded the existing theory base in early childhood literacy. The researcher documented what she eventually called the ‘shadow curriculum’- “a product of children’s social networks in the classroom that supplements the enacted curriculum.”(6).

Fine (Cammarota and Fine, 2008:226) argues that instead of defining generalisability as a direct and technical extension of a finding or set of findings it should rather be seen “in ways that are expansive rather than formulaic and dependent on sample size.”

The many initiatives and campaigns of the ERP around the country, in different sites and settings as well as in different education sectors have revealed entrenched practices which perpetuate inequality. Similar to the work of Cammorota and Fine the research in this thesis has found, “*Within* each project we hear distinct and amazing insights particular to social context. But also *across* projects we witness stunning lessons of oppression, resistance, disappointment, resilience etc. I am tempted to call these a form of generalizability...” (227). Fine conceptualises two types of generalisability in PAR, the first is ‘theoretical’ generalisability which refers “to the extent to which theoretical notions or dynamics move from one context to another” and ‘provocative’ generalisability - that which “offers a measure of the extent to which a piece of research provokes readers or audiences, across contexts, to generalise to “worlds not yet”...to rethink and reimagine current arrangements.” (Ibid). The PAR process in many communities in South Africa through the work of the ERP and social movements have certainly instilled a sense of urgency in “reimagining current arrangements” while connecting with the education struggles of the past discussed in article one of this study.

Argyris and Schon (1991:86) describe the impulses of the participatory action research process and its attendant aims in the following way:

Action research takes its cues-its questions, puzzles, and problems from the perceptions of practitioners within particular local contexts. It builds descriptions and theories within the practical context itself, and tests them there through intervention experiments-that is, through experiments that bear the double burden of testing hypothesis and effecting some (putatively) desired change in the situation.

Anderson and Herr (2005) comment on the ‘double burden’ referred to by Argyris and Schon by discussing the tension between scholarly rigour such as creating valid knowledge about practice and the transformative relevance of the research. They assert that:

Unlike traditional social science research which frowns on intervening in any way in the research setting, action research demands some form of intervention. For the

action researcher, these interventions constitute a spiral of action cycles in which one undertakes

1. to develop a *plan* of action to improve what is already happening;
2. to *act* to implement the plan;
3. to *observe* the effects of action in the context in which it occurs;
4. to *reflect* on these effects as a basis for further planning, subsequent action and on through a succession of cycles, (Kemmis, 1982: p7).

This cycle of activities forms an action research spiral in which each cycle increases the researcher's knowledge of the original question, puzzle, or problem, and it is hoped, leads to a solution.

PAR is not new in South Africa and it figured prominently in the eighties and early nineties (see Walker, 1995). Wedekind (1997) describes how action research in South Africa resonated with left intellectuals during the politically charged environment of the 1980s. He critiques a particular application of action research related to in-service teacher education which in the eighties "became the preferred methodology for teachers doing their Masters degrees at a number of South African universities" (336). Wedekind describes the failure of teachers to critically reflect on their action and the inability to acknowledge "that one is able to change the situation one is involved in" (340). He takes issue with the theoretical flaws of the in-service programme as a misreading of Habermas's concept of an ideal speech situation (ISS) and the underdevelopment of the psychoanalytical introduced by Habermas; the action research process in this instance "obscured" differential power relations which impeded communicative action and thus "even if teachers are genuinely committed to a transformation, they still have to overcome a range of repressed thoughts which will impact on their capacity to change" (344).

Habermas (1971) argued that communication within any public sphere is distorted through the relations of power that form the context of the communicative act and as Wedekind mentions, these differential power relations are particularly pronounced in the South African context given the potent mix of "race, gender, status and age." (Wedekind, 1997: 346). Wedekind raises issues which require engagement since it challenges precisely the core of the action research spiral delineated above and the claims that action research empowers participants involved in the process. Herr and



Anderson (2005:26) refer to a “built-in conservatism” in much action research conducted in institutions by practitioners where role expectations perpetuating the status quo continues. They argue that advocates of organisational learning and critical reflection require mechanisms that can problematise taken-for-granted aspects of organisational life. The action research processes of communities described in this thesis involves social mobilisation led by self-consciously radical social movements involved in change beyond the classroom and not a reflection of teaching and classroom practice. Still, Wedekind’s critique and the points made by Hickey and Mohan (2005) below raise important issues including relations between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ involved in PAR.

In the book, *Participation - The New Tyranny*, Giles Mohan (2001) using concepts from postcolonial studies shows how participatory research in the developmental aid field while seeking to alter power relationships in favour of the marginalised can in fact reinscribe power relations between the ‘expert’ and the ‘other’. In their article ‘Relocating Participation within a radical politics of development’, Samuel Hickey and Giles Mohan (2005) also address the fact that ‘participation’ has become a fashionable buzzword amongst multi-lateral donor groups which promises development and empowerment on the one hand but where the practices of consultants actually promote and reinforce existing inequalities.

Both Jordon (2003) in an essay titled, *Who stole my methodology? Co-opting PAR* and D’ Souza (2009) provide the evidence that in fact knowledge produced using participatory methodologies has contributed to improved corporate governance. Increasingly multilateral agencies such as the World Bank use the knowledge gained through activist scholarship for purposes that are the very opposite of the inspiration for the research - to improve governance in the wake of rising discontent against their policies. Hickey and Mohan thus argue for the conceptual relocation of participation as an overtly political approach to development, “which requires re-engagement with ‘the political’ linked to an expanded and radicalized understanding of citizenship” (Hickey and Mohan, 2005:238). Using empirical evidence drawn from a wide range of contemporary approaches to participation, their paper shows that participatory approaches are most likely to succeed where 1. They are pursued as part of a wider radical political project; 2. Where they are aimed specifically at securing citizenship

rights and participation for marginal and subordinate groups and 3. When they seek to engage with development as an underlying process of social change rather than in the form of discrete technocratic interventions (p 237).

There is also the need to attend to questions emanating from activist research in regard to power dynamics and the valuing of certain forms of knowledge. For Chaudry (2009: 7), “These questions are often based on sophisticated macro- and micro- analyses of what, to an outsider, might seem a baffling network of relations, and shifting power dynamics.” Chaudry quotes political activist ethnographers George Smith and Gary Kinsman who appeal to activist researchers to go beyond “commonsense theorizing” and attend to actual social practices and organisation. Chaudry (Ibid: 7) also writes that, “Reflexivity is crucial when starting from, engaging with, and analyzing activist knowledge(s).” Complexities in studying social movements through the PAR process also often arise since much critical learning is gained informally and experientially, by acting and reflecting on action, rather than in formal courses. In a similar vein, Foley (1999:64) writes that the: “process of critical learning involves people in theorizing their experience: they stand back from it and reorder it, using concepts like power, conflict, structure, values and choice.”

Robin Kelley (2002:ix) crucially suggests that “too often, our standards for evaluating social movements pivot around whether or not they ‘succeeded’ in realizing their visions rather than on their merits or power of the visions themselves.” This is an important issue for those who gloss over complexities and who are impatient for change. In South Africa thus far, relatively few attempts have been made to theorise informal learning and knowledge production through involvement in social action (for some examples see Vally, 1994). Foley (1999) examines this topic in a way which analyses and validates the importance of incidental and incremental learning that takes place in a variety of social struggles. Echoing Foley’s contribution, John Holst (2002:87-88) uses the concept of “pedagogy of mobilization” to describe:

the learning inherent in the building and maintaining of a social movement and its organizations. Through participation in a social movement, people learn numerous skills and ways of thinking analytically and strategically as they struggle to understand the momentum of their struggles. Moreover, as coalitions are formed,

people's understanding of the interconnectedness of relations within a social totality become increasingly sophisticated.

Activist scholarship, by revealing the disjuncture between reality and socially accepted ideals, can and does provide knowledge useful for proactive mobilisation.

Some recent and noteworthy initiatives of PAR are mentioned below. Gardiner's evocative essay titled, 'Research and Democracy: A Quest for the Particular' (2007) describes the work of the Education Policy Consortium which included ERP staff members at Siyandhani Village, Giyani, in the Limpopo Province in 2003. Gardiner's description of the relationship between the EPC researchers and the community, mediated by the Community Reference Group and Community Researchers usefully addresses the outsider-insider research problematic in PAR. The village reference group constantly advised EPC researchers and the community researchers elected by the community "became familiars of each community, as it was they who conducted interviews, gathered life histories, organised the photo essays, liaised with teachers and learners over the writing of essays, kept journals and ensured that the community knew all about the project. Thus villagers engaged in the process of researching themselves... The Community Researchers kept journals, some of which were the richest source of insights that the research project produced." (Gardiner, 2007: 206)

Gardiner writes that the research itself became illustrative "of the process by which certain South African researchers have, through practice, discovered approaches to research that have the capacity to retrieve information about and promote democracy and human rights at local levels" (Ibid:199). Issues of positionality feature strongly in PAR. Gardiner poses the question as, "How should researchers who themselves were involved previously in the liberation process conduct research into educational development that promotes, upholds and advances the forms of democracy and human rights for which they had campaigned?" Issues of power, agency and expertise are linked to the understanding that, "Here are communities and schools that are politically free and the recipients of policies designed to provide the rights in the new Constitution and the Bill of Rights. However, the material, psychological, cultural and economic legacies of the previous oppression are painfully present and tenaciously

obdurate. How can researchers adequately address these issues in the research process?” (199).

ERP researchers have had sufficient grounded knowledge of these legacies to prevent glossing over or romanticising work with communities. Often, the internalising of oppressive relations and unequal power dynamics are present in the communities themselves and take the form of negative attitudes toward women and youth, and resistance to dialogical, non-hierarchical and non-authoritarian values of PAR. These do impose definite limitations on the PAR process but emphasise the importance of recognising and being attentive to power dynamics, the fact that these do change and often because of the research process itself and the understanding that PAR requires time to build trust, respect and confidence. Gardiner for instance refers to a process of “democratization” (206) where the esteem of community researchers grew in the eyes of the community and “transcended traditional boundaries of age rather than gender. In one case, a young woman CR [community researcher] was admitted into the society of village matrons. In another, a young male CR was asked to address the chief and his council on progress in the research project.” Importantly, “...these young people opted to investigate issues that all the other sectors of the communities avoided: teenage pregnancies, orphans and child-headed households, drop-outs from school, drug and alcohol abuse by young people HIV and AIDS, child abuse, and so on” (207).

Another recent example of PAR or ‘Transformative Research’ as the researchers preferred to call it was a joint initiative of researchers from four universities around collaborative research with two communities in KwaZulu-Natal in the Ixopo and Ndwedwe districts (Malcolm, et al, 2005; Keane, 2008). The central research question was to discover definitions of ‘relevant science education’ as articulated by the communities. The question intended to draw on the lived experiences of the participants though the researchers write that,

When the purposes of research extend beyond knowledge generation to participation, action and transformation, the consequences are less predictable and the research expands in ways that cannot be envisioned. Taken-for-granted processes are challenged, and the research issues, consequences, dilemmas, accomplishments, and

failures that emerge become subject to dialectic critique... The transformative action research has broader purposes than the generation of technical knowledge, and works largely from inside the community rather than from outside (Malcolm et al, 2005:1-2).

The researchers go on to describe how definitions of relevant science education centered on community development and school-community collaboration aimed at job creation, food security and the social development of the community. It was salutary for the scientists to realize that relevant science had as much to do with technical knowledge as it did with the power dynamics involved in research, "...researchers here cannot be mere voyeurs, the products are not only knowledge, but also, actions and transformations within the community" (16).

The next chapter provides practical examples of how the PAR process enabled social movements and communities opportunities to investigate educational issues affecting their lives and then determine actions to rectify these problems.

## **Chapter 4: The Education Rights Project: A case study of Class, Community and South African Education Policy.**

While civil society was initially disillusioned by the neoliberal direction of social and economic policies, they regrouped by 1998 to create a groundswell of support for free quality education. The initial impetus for this renewed activity began with the Poverty and Inequality Hearings organised by the South African Non-Governmental Organisation (SANGOCO).<sup>3</sup> The Education Rights Project was formed after the Hearings. It was established:

to determine and define the parameters of the right to basic education in SA with the purpose of securing access to basic education of a suitable standard for all people living in SA, focusing on the most vulnerable sectors of society ... to work with communities using proactive and reactive multi-pronged strategies such as litigation, advocacy campaigns, research and education on issues relating to the cost of school, farm schools, girl learners, adult basic education, and early childhood development (ERP Framework Document, 2001: 7).

Like the earlier People's Education Movement, the ERP's participatory research initiatives with the various emerging social movements and community organisations is a form of social accountability. It asserts the need for civil society to have access to collective self-knowledge, independent of government, in order to hold the state to account for its policies. Most of the articles and the work of the ERP addressed in greater detail below and in the appendices document the egregious ways in which macroeconomic policies as well as education related factors reproduce social class inequalities.

The ERP data based on household surveys and testimonies from Soweto and other urban areas in Gauteng such as the East Rand, Rondebult and Durban Roodeport Deep as well as rural communities in the Northern Cape, Free State and the Eastern

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<sup>3</sup> Between 31 March and 19 June 1998 over 10 000 people participated in the campaign by attending the hearings, mobilising communities or making submissions. The author was convener of the education leg of the Hearings.

Cape and working class townships in and around Durban show that access to economic and other resources contributing to social capital which the middle class and richer communities enjoy is absent for those the ERP has focused on.

In chapter two this thesis argued that in the absence of cultural capital, social movements could pressurise the state to provide the public goods for educational reform. Following Anyon (2005) this means redistributing wealth not merely educational opportunities. Anyon insists that school reform alone will not significantly change the plight of poor children nor conversely will “equitable macro-economic policies...by themselves create high-quality urban schools” (3).

The articles in this thesis attempt to link post-apartheid education reform to social reform and largely make the case that social movements and community organizations have an important role to play in educational transformation. This section attempts to capture how the ERP was established, the scope and depth of its intervention and its role in bringing together various working class communities around issues and themes of education rights and responses to official education policies. The ERP initiative potentially shows that education could be the focal point for bringing various social movements together in a larger movement that can begin to impact on current economic and social policies and hold the state accountable. The ERP surveys and case studies in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape are consistent with the results of other studies and confirm the reality that poverty and poor public service provision in poor communities are inextricably linked. It implies also that reforms that are directed at the educational system alone are not adequate. The structural character of poverty and inequality cannot be resolved through education policy reform alone.

In its first year, the ERP worked to develop a picture of the education rights context in South Africa by investigating education rights in five target areas-the cost of schooling; farm schools; budgetary and infrastructure provisioning; prevention of sexual harassment in schools; and adult basic education-through issue papers and research reports (See Appendix B for a list of issue papers and authors). By 2003, the ERP expanded its key areas of intervention to include early childhood development; the education rights of refugees and migrant workers; special needs education; the

rights of learners with disability and inclusive education; and language rights in education. It had also begun to formulate a coordinated plan to develop a grassroots movement for justice in education through a combination of human rights education, community-based advocacy, monitoring of policy implementation, and where appropriate, legal action.

Through its field research and community work, the ERP has developed a critical appreciation of many government policies and programmes designed to give effect to the right to basic education. The ERP worked with government and community-based partners to highlight the strengths and shortcomings of the policy framework and the government's efforts to implement it. The ERP's work with communities frequently exposes rights violations on school and policy levels, including cases of learners and parents unfairly charged school fees, discriminatory admissions policies, and landowner interference with teaching and learning in farm schools. The ERP retains legal services to fight these violations as needed. The project's legal work takes three forms:

1. Constitutional litigation, intended to establish legal precedents which have an impact beyond the immediate parties to give content to the right to basic education;
2. The provision of legal assistance to communities who would not normally be able to afford a lawyer; and
3. *Amicus curiae* interventions which will assist courts in constitutional cases concerning either the right of access to education or the provision of education of an adequate standard.

Community organisations through the ERP play a more confident role in accessing educational provision by establishing networks, increasing pressure on official role players and developing skills and knowledge through research. In this way, community organisations and social movements in South Africa can begin to collectively produce the requisite social capital required for learner achievement. These notions were referred to in the literature review of this thesis where social capital as an analytical tool for development builds on and strengthens the existing set of resources within the community. This section will provide the evidentiary basis for



how social capital can be leveraged toward educational policy change. Instances that will be highlighted include the changes brought about through campaigns and participatory action research in school fees and transport policies.

In mid-2002 a reference group of twenty academics, representatives of civil society including teacher unions, NGOs, public litigation groups specialising in particular education sectors and education economists was formed (Appendix C). The ERP saw its engagement with communities as a way towards:

- Establishing local campaigns to protect and advance education rights
- Organising and facilitating workshops where the meaning and content of basic education could be discussed and debated at the community level
- Making presentations to the various provincial and national education departments, education parliamentary committees, and chapter nine institutions such as the South African Human Rights Commission on violations of education rights and what steps can be taken to realise and protect these rights
- Researching and documenting instances where the government mandate to make the right to education a reality is not being met
- Identifying cases that can be litigated where clear violations exist (for instance, schools withholding reports because of non-payment of fees, or the prevention of learners from attending school because of non-fee payment)
- Assisting communities to gain access to professional advice from the organizations making up the ERP reference group and
- To inform other sectors of society about the plight of vulnerable communities and their basic education rights through the media (ERP Framework Document, 2001).

Between 2002-2008, the ERP engaged with at least 200 poor communities throughout the country on issues related to the ERP's focus areas (ERP narrative reports, 2002-2008). Instead of working with individual parents and learners (as traditional litigation

approaches tend to do), the ERP chose to interact with all established social movement and community-based organizations on a non-sectarian basis and whose activities required accountability to the communities they represent. This arrangement enabled the ERP to maximize the impact of resources at its disposal, create unity around rights issues and minimised rivalry between different groups in the various communities the ERP partnered with. The ERP has also worked with school governing bodies, teacher unions, principals, as well as district education officials. The ERP has as a strategic choice encouraged social movements to pursue the education rights of the communities they represent through constructively interacting with statutory bodies as the preferred option. Often the ERP facilitated discussions and arrangements between aggrieved communities and state officials.

The ERP often acted as a facilitator with communities to define what they considered barriers to free, quality public education and helped communities define their own strategic plan and program of action to meet their rights. The ERP also partnered communities with specialised interest groups, academics, and others who had specific information in areas of concern to communities. It encouraged a democratic and dialogical relationship through these partnerships. In many cases the numerous workshops conducted by the ERP within and by communities encouraged a process of participatory action research. These engagements often resulted in large scale campaigns and research projects including: the cost of education; farm schools; adult basic education; sexual harassment of women and girl learners and the rights of refugees. Some of these initiatives are outlined below. While all the campaigns and initiatives overlapped and fed into each other, for the sake of coherent presentation they are divided into the following sections: 1. Movement Building and Education Rights Workshops; 2. The Cost of Education Campaign; 3. Adult Basic Education Campaign; 4. Large Scale Projects with communities including the KZN-ERP Project; 5. Surveys - Perceptions of High School Students and their understanding of education rights, attitudes to schooling and the violation of human rights; 6. The Education Rights of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants; 7. Case studies in Durban Roodepoort Deep and Rondebult ; 8. Education Rights Booklets; and 9. ERP involvement with Learners and Youth.

## **Movement Building and Education Rights Workshops**

In 2003, the ERP set in motion a coordinated plan to develop a grassroots movement for justice in education. The plan included youth camps and community/civil society workshops on the history and political economy of education and the legal framework of the education rights of learners and communities. The ERP also sought to raise consciousness around the state of public education by frequently publishing opinion pieces and providing interviews to the mainstream media and participating in civil actions. On 16 June 2003, retracing the original march by school pupils which sparked-off the June 16<sup>th</sup> Uprising, the ERP collaborated with social movements in Soweto for a march which attracted 5000 community members highlighting the continuing inequalities in education 27 years after the student uprisings of 1976.

The ERP strategy for mobilising communities to advocate for education rights embodies principles of organic participation, organisational partnership and community leadership. Firstly, the ERP builds a relationship with community-based civil society organizations in a non-sectarian manner while cognisant of local democratic structures and context. Such partnerships have included social movements, progressive non-governmental organisations, teacher unions, and youth/student and parent's organisations. Secondly, in collaboration with the partner organisations the ERP develops a popular education and mobilisation plan for the specific community. This plan usually begins with mass meetings or public hearings on the community's rights to, in and through education which is often followed by an education rights workshop in the community focusing on quality public education.

Hosted by the civil society/community-based partner, the education rights workshops address the legal rights of learners, parents and educators while focusing on the problems expressed by the community and the formation of an action plan for addressing these challenges. Plans differ from community to community but in all instances include advocacy; legal literacy; communication with state and statutory structures; pertinent civil society organizations as well as teacher unions, school governing bodies and parent or student organizations.

The ERP acts as a facilitator for communities to define their own barriers to free, quality public education and subsequently to define their own strategic plan. The ERP also partners communities with specialised interest groups, academics and others knowledgeable in the different areas of concern to communities, while emphasizing that the nature of this relationship is both democratic and dialogical.

Much of the ERP's work takes place outside the office or courtroom in a diverse range of rural and urban communities across South Africa. The ERP's community work aims to:

- assess whether and how school conditions in the communities the ERP works with violate their learners' right to basic education
- address individual cases of rights violations where necessary
- inform parents and learners of their rights under existing education legislation and policy
- engage communities in a critical dialogue on school conditions, government education policy, the Constitution and the right to basic education
- test the limits of rights-based strategies for social change and
- provide, where appropriate, support for litigation under the right to basic education (ERP Framework Document, 2001).

The ERP initiates its work with communities through workshops hosted in partnership with social movements and civil society organisations. Workshops provide ideal opportunities for people to assemble, be informed of their rights, articulate their needs and demands, and formulate a plan of action to access the right to basic education. These events often provide a springboard for longer-term interventions, involving advocacy, participatory research, or litigation. Workshops are designed to empower communities to do their own research and to determine and drive their own strategies for change through a PAR process. Under the PAR model, the ERP works collaboratively with members of community-based partners to develop and implement a research plan. When the research is complete, the community has produced an advocacy tool, and they have acquired the requisite skills to complete further research as needed. In other cases, education rights workshops lead immediately to various

forms of advocacy, including direct intervention with school administrators, governing bodies, and local or provincial state education structures. Many education rights violations occur and must be handled on a student-by-student basis therefore the community strategy will often include further training for residents who will handle rights violations through departmental and legal channels. The most important aspect of the ERP's popular education and mobilisation strategy is the organic participation and control of community members and partner organisations over the process which aims to build lasting empowerment to combat the small and large scale barriers to free quality public education.

The ERP has conducted workshops across the country with several thousand members of organisations from marginalised communities. Appendix D lists these organisations.

The table below provides examples of ERP workshops in the period 2002-2003.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Partner</b>	<b>Location</b>
12/13 Oct,2002	Education Needs and Rights	Anti Privatisation Forum	Workers' Library, Johannesburg
9/10 Nov	Education Action Plan	Anti Privatisation Forum	Workers' Library, Johannesburg
16 Nov	Farm Workers' Rights	Nkuzi Development Association	Doreen Bridge, Limpopo
17 Nov	Farm Workers' Rights	Nkuzi Development Association	Hope Farm, Tshipise, Limpopo Province
23/24 Nov	Education Rights Workshop	SADTU and Anti-Discrimination Task Team	YMCA, Petermaritzburg, KZN
28 Nov	Education Rights Workshop.	Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee	Diepkloof, Soweto.
27-28 Feb 2003	Education Rights Workshop and Report Back on Preliminary results	APF-Sol Plaatjie/DRD	Community Hall, Roodepoort Deep, West Rand.

	of Survey.		
4-6 March	Education Rights Workshop and Legal Clinic.	Concerned Citizens Forum/KZN Education Crisis Committee	Diakonia Conference Centre, Durban.
14 March	School Fees and the Law.	Soweto Representative Council of Learners from 20 high schools.	Funda Centre, Diepkloof, Soweto.
18-19 March	Education Rights Workshop.	Anti-Eviction Campaign.	People's Power Secondary School, Khayelitsha, Cape Town.
11 April	Introductory Education Rights Workshop.	Bophelong Community Service Forum (BOCOSFO).	Bophelong Community Library, Lekoa.
23-24 May	Education Rights Workshop.	BOCOSFO	As above.
7 June	Education Rights Workshop.	Anti-Privatisation Forum.	Vosloorus, East Rand
19-21 June	Education Rights Workshop.	Youth 4 Work, Gauteng.	Workers' Library, Johannesburg.
9 August	Education Rights Workshop.	Daveyton Community Peace Committee	Dumehlezi Primary School, Daveyton.
20-22 August	Education Rights Workshop.	Anti-Eviction Campaign and Representative Council of Learners of Khayelitsha.	Khayelitsha, Cape Town.
16-17 September	Education Rights Workshop.	Jubilee 2000, Bathlabile Rural Development Trust and Youth 4 Work.	MJ Gateway Conference Centre, Polokwane, Limpopo.

3-5 October	Education Rights Workshop.	Youth 4 Work.	Sinikwe High School, Mdantsane, Eastern Cape.
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**Table 2: Education Rights Workshops with focus, partner and location in 2002-2003.**

### **The Cost of Education Campaign**

Despite a long and complicated process of local consultations and contestations, various White Papers and reports, the final funding model for public schools was determined at the behest of international consultants employed by the Department of Education. These consultants recommended the institution of user fees, called the Middle Class Mandatory Fee Clustering Option (Mokgalane and Vally 1996:7). For these consultants a decline in funding for previously privileged schools would "propel middle-class parents out of the public school sector and into the independent school sector. Among these departing would be many opinion formers and decision makers whose influence in favour of sustained or enhanced public funding for public education would consequently diminish" (Ibid). To prevent this exodus of middle-class parents the consultants proposed raising resources through user fees from parents who were willing to pay to maintain school quality beyond what would be affordable from the provincial education departments' allocation.

After much contestation in the period 1994-1996, the user fees model was self-consciously introduced as a scheme to maintain funding levels at previously privileged schools and thereby keep the middle-class in the public school sector. In the end, "an influential task team comprised of members from the Financial and Fiscal Commission, the Departments of Education, Finance and State Expenditure, the Review Committee and the international consultants, had concluded that the Middle Class Mandatory Fee Clustering Option would be the most desirable" (Mokgalane, Vally and Greenstein in Chisholm et al, 2003: 224). It is important to note how these influential actors were brought in alongside other 'policy experts' (in this case mostly economists and members of government finance committees) to legitimate the highly

contestable and largely unviable notion of school fees over the objections of grassroots organisations.

Although the option did not provide convincing answers to a number of problems that emerge in terms of its own assumptions, it was nonetheless adopted. Questions raised included, what will prevent fee-paying parents from moving their children from schools with a preponderance of non-fee-paying parents to better-endowed schools within the public school system? The corollary to this was that fee-paying parents might wish to prevent the enrolment of the children of poorer parents who would be exempt from fees, in order to protect the revenue-raising power of their school community and bar 'free riders' from enjoying facilities to which they did not contribute.

The user fees option whilst making no provision for free basic education, nevertheless prohibited the turning away of learners whose parents were indigent, withholding the reports of such learners, excluding them from social and cultural activities of the school or discriminating against them in any other way. A formula for exempting parents based on their gross household income in relation to the annual school fees of the school was also developed.

The exemption policy however was fraught with problems. First, many families eligible for exemptions did not apply because of the burden it imposes - that is, the process was too time-consuming, the cost in dignity or in spending time to acquire information was too high, or because the school discriminated unfairly against those who were granted exemptions. Seleoane (2002:26) writes,

... it requires a lot of courage to parade one's poverty, and it borders on the insensitive to expect people to. Part of the argument for enforcing socio-economic rights is precisely that poverty erodes the victim's dignity and sense of worth. To say that people will only access education for free if they can show that they are poor is out of sync with the rationale for having a justiciable system of socio-economic rights...the likelihood is that learners and their parents will not try to access the right if they have to demonstrate their poverty as a condition.



The statutory exemption system in many instances did not cover secondary fees, like uniforms and transport. Also the exemption scheme was too broad to adequately cover those at the margins who did not qualify for any sort of exemption, but for whom school fees would be an unconstitutionally heavy burden. Finally, evidence indicated that school governing bodies abused their discretion by significantly restricting partial exemptions to a small percentage of the fee, or arbitrarily denying those who have applied for partial or total exemption. (ERP Narrative Report 2004).

The imposition of user fees raised several critical concerns about the policy implications around redress. Firstly, since individual school governing bodies were allowed to set their own fees with no limitations, historically privileged schools were able to maintain higher funding levels significantly above poorer schools (even within the same province) thereby maintaining the historic inequitable education expenditures. Secondly, this option seemingly had dramatic effects on student mobility - the trend was clearly towards fee-paying parents moving their children to better endowed schools, or worse, preventing enrolment of children of poorer parents (who would be exempt from fees) from entering their school. As a response to these concerns, the idea of soft zoning was proposed to guarantee pupils access to schools in their own district, regardless of ability to pay. Apart from reproducing socio-spatial discrimination - a legacy of apartheid residential planning - it was restricted to a minority of the neediest pupils. Mokgalane, Vally and Greenstein in Chisholm et al, 2003:245) point out,

The larger the number of pupils would enrol in a given school without paying fees, the less would each one of them be able to benefit from school resources. The overall income of the school would be reduced, and it would have to be further divided over a larger number of needy pupils. The redistributive potential of this model is thus inherently limited.

Ultimately, the selection of user fees was made concurrent with the South African Schools Act (DoE, 1996) which was a result of both political and economic choices. Not coincidentally, both of these weighty policy decisions which had dramatic effects on changing the course of education took place the same year that GEAR was promulgated.

Other equity reforms introduced in the mid-1990s sought to equalize funding among the provinces, schools and socio-economic groups. The Norms and Standards for School Funding (DoE, 1998a) implemented in 2001 intended to guide the distribution of the provincial departments' non-personnel expenditure between schools. Public schools are ranked on the basis of two factors: the poverty of the school community and the conditions at the school. Schools are ranked from poorest to least poor and the subsequent resource allocation is based on the position of a school poverty index. The funding principle in the policy determines that 60% of available recurrent non-personnel resources should go to 40% of the poorest schools. Several articles have outlined many problems with the policy from its outset, including: the inadequate funding base for a meaningful re-distribution of recurrent non-personnel expenditure, the cumbersome administrative and bureaucratic requirements for securing funds led to under-spending by poor schools, and few schools used their money for maintenance – one of the three funding categories designated by the policy – suggesting more pressing needs elsewhere (Tikly, 1997, Spreen and Vally, 2006)

As part of the Centre for Education Policy Development's 2000 Plus Project (Kgobe, 2001), researchers collected data on twenty-two schools across a diversity of school types in South Africa. At the low end of the fee spectrum, the data indicates that of the twenty-two schools examined, the majority of previously black schools charged school fees of less than 50 rand per year, and half were charging less than thirty rand per year. In contrast, six schools (none of which were historically white schools) were charging over R1000 per year and some as high as R3150.

Similarly, in a study conducted by the University of Witwatersrand's Education Policy Unit (Porteus, 2002) in the Gauteng province, researchers concluded that the disparity in ability to charge user fees contributed significantly and dramatically to inequalities in expenditures per learner. In this regard, the study confirmed several relevant facts. First, the vast majority of Gauteng schools receive no or negligible income via school fees. Not surprisingly, these schools are located in communities that rank in the bottom three quintiles of the government's assessments of community poverty. Comparatively, formerly advantaged schools raise a significant amount of money via fees. More specifically, schools located in communities that rank in the top

two quintiles of community wealth obtain a very high proportion of their budgets through parent contributions.

Secondly, and most importantly, the research data from Gauteng illustrates that the additional funding provided by school fees created dramatic disparities in funding available per learner. The research compares the levels of funding per learner before fees are taken into account and after fees are taken into account. The results graphically demonstrate the dramatic difference that school fees create for learners in middle class and wealthy communities.

Likewise, the Budget Information Service of IDASA illustrates the differential impact of a school's ability to charge fees on its budget for learners. IDASA's research compares the annual budget for a hypothetical "rich" and "poor" school with the same number of learners and teachers. Their calculations assume that the "rich" school charges R2500 rand annually per learner, while the "poor" school charges only R50 per learner. According to the calculations, even after taking into account the targeted allocations towards the poor school for non-personnel costs, the rich school spends R4178 per learner, while the poor school spends less than half, R2046 per learner.

The CEPD's 2000 Plus longitudinal study found that "Given the lack of non-personnel expenditure invested at the school level, schools in practice increasingly rely on school fees to cover the basic costs of electricity, water, maintenance and textbooks" (Kgobe, 2001). Even after planned distribution of public funds are completed, "poor schools can still expect to have less than have the budget of a more advantaged school" (Porteus, 2002:13). Porteus outlines several problems with the original policy assumptions for school funding. Policymakers wrongly assumed that the school governing bodies would have the capacity to determine parental income – ignoring the difficulty in accurately getting this figure, but they also disregarded the social implications and the potential to undermine social cohesion within a community. The policy also assumed that parents living in poverty would be in a position to engage constructively with school authorities to request an exemption from paying fees. Porteus also notes that the policy "does not provide for state compensation of schools where parents receive this exemption" (2002:14) hence, the

lower the socio economic status of a school community, the lower the school fees, the fewer who pay fees and the increased irrelevance of the exemption process.

Despite an overall increase in funding to education, it is quite clear that this policy widened inequality. The evidence suggests that the hope that money saved by the state through the imposition of mandatory fees, which could be deployed for developmental and redress purposes, did not come to fruition. While the National Norms and Standards for School Funding placed emphasis on giving the poorest public schools and those in bad physical condition a larger resource allocation than relatively richer schools, it has not significantly reduced inequalities. This was primarily because it only applied to non-personnel costs which accounted for 10% or less of provincial education budgets, and in many provinces these have been declining.

Furthermore, the state seems to be shedding its responsibility for the provision of education and transferring it to school governing bodies. The Amendment to the Education Laws Act (DoE, 1998b), which allows governing bodies to employ additional teachers with their own financial resources, permitted further discrepancies between schools and lead to the growth of a labour market in teachers. Clearly, the labour market involving the purchase of teachers gained momentum as the state was determined to reduce personnel expenditure at a time when teacher shortages were becoming more severe. This is partly a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic; the closing of teacher training colleges; attrition rates not matching new teachers qualifying from universities and previous teacher rationalisation policies. More affluent schools were able to choose the most experienced and skilled teachers to the disadvantage of those schools, which have less to offer (Vally and Spreen, 2010).

Ironically, given the emphasis on redress and equity, the funding provisions of the South African Schools Act promulgated with the user fees option appeared to have worked to the advantage of public schools patronised by middle-class and wealthy parents. The apartheid regime favoured such communities with high-quality facilities, equipment and resources. Vigorous fund-raising by parent bodies, including commercial sponsorships and fee income, have enabled many such schools to add to their facilities, equipment and learning resources, and expand their range of cultural

and sporting activities. Since 1995, when such schools have been required to downsize their staff establishments, many have been able to recruit additional staff on governing body contracts, paid from the school fund.

The Poverty and Inequality Hearings in the years 1997-1998 (referred to in chapter five below) reported on the onerous burden user fees imposed on poor families and the ERP since its formation focused on this area. In August 2002 Daria Roithmayr, a professor of law and a member of the ERP Reference Group, was commissioned by the ERP to produce a paper on the constitutionality of school fees (Roithmayr, 2002). The paper showed that the school fees policy acted as a barrier to accessing basic education. Roithmayr argued that the school fees policy perpetuated inequalities in basic provision and breached the constitutional right to equality. The paper outlined a number of strategies that the ERP should pursue in challenging the fees policy. These suggestions were incorporated into the ERP's plans together with a programme of political action.

The programme of action included the formation of a 'Fees Forum' which included organizations such as COSATU, SADTU, the TAC and the Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security (ACCESS). This advocacy approach worked in tandem with legal interventions such as support to members of the South Durban Community Environmental Alliance (SDCEA); the Western Cape based Anti-Eviction Campaign and the Gauteng based Anti Privatisation Forum (ERP, Second Narrative Report, 30 November 2002:3). Members of these organizations were being threatened with legal action by schools for non-payment of school fees. Often debt collectors were sent to harass parents. The ERP also took up the cases of residents of the Sol Plaatjie settlement (also known as Durban Roodepoort Deep) whose children's school reports were withheld for non-payment of school fees (Ibid: 4).

As the campaign against school fees gathered momentum the Department of Education instituted a review of the school fees model (DoE, 2003a). In response the ERP also developed and publicised a detailed submission to the Department of Education. Apart from numerous meetings and communications between the ERP and district officials from the Department of Education around individual complaints relating mostly to school fees, the ERP organized five major encounters with the government between March and August 2003. These included formal responses to

the government initiated Review of School Funding document; a parliamentary presentation; public debates with Department of Education officials and presentations at various seminars of ERP research on school fees and the difficulties faced by communities. The table below partially conveys these engagements in the year 2003.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Action [clarify expand on activity]</b>
March-June 2003	Response to Review of School Funding	-Parliamentary presentation  -Use of various media to communicate and advocate around our responses  -Workshops and meetings with various social movements to formulate a joint response
27 <sup>th</sup> March 2003	ERP members debate with the Deputy Director General of Education in a seminar organized by the CEPD and the Wits EPU	-Debate
April/May 2003	Workshops to finalise formal submissions to DoE on the Review of School Funding document.	-Formal submissions by the ERP and assistance by the ERP to the APF, SADTU, and NASGBs in their submissions.
21 <sup>st</sup> May 2003	Presentation of ERP research results to inter-provincial meeting of the Values in Education Directorate in the Department of Education.	-Presentation
14 <sup>th</sup> June 2003	Keynote address to SADTU national conference by ERP coordinator on school fees	-Presentation
15 <sup>th</sup> August 2003	Public Meeting on the DoE's	-Public meeting,

	Review and the Action Plan on school funding.	Johannesburg City Hall attended by 500 people.
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**Table 3: ERP’s Cost of Education Campaign and engagements with state officials.**

The extensive lobbying and campaigning of community-based organisations, social movements, the ERP and others pressured the government to relent and a process officially called the ‘Ministerial Review of the Financing, Resourcing and the Costs of Education’ was set into motion. Chapter five provides details about this process, the ERP’s engagement with it and its results.

### **The Adult Basic Education Campaign**

In May 2003, the ERP commissioned Peter Rule of the University of KwaZulu-Natal to research and write an Issue Paper on adult education (Rule, 2003). Key findings of the Issue Paper included the following:

1. Significant legislation was passed in the preceding four years aimed at reducing and eventually eliminating illiteracy, but most of the legislation was not implemented.
2. That although adult basic education is an unqualified constitutional right and not subjected to progressive realisation such as other socio-economic rights for instance the right to housing and healthcare, adult education received only less than 1% of the education budget.
3. Many community based and ABET programmes and state-run programmes came to an end even though adult illiteracy remained an acute problem.

The Issue Paper recommended a number of concrete proposals around social mobilization, advocacy, research and litigation in order to promote and enforce the right to ABET. The sections below discuss some of the key actions the ERP embarked upon as a result of the Issue Paper.

The ERP hosted a national ABET civil society stakeholders meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2004 at Wits University. The meeting was attended by twenty-two key ABET

specialists, academics, practitioners, adult learners and social movement representatives (See Appendix E). Key outcomes of the meeting included:

- The creation of a space to fight and build new possibilities for ABET in South Africa.
- A common understanding of the challenges facing the sector and the development of common approaches to these challenges.
- The establishment of an ABET Reference Group consisting of a cross-section of civil society.
- The discussion and adoption of the ERP programme of action for ABET.

Initially, the ERP held a series of meetings with communities in the Lekoa/Vaal region linked to social movements such as the Landless People's Movement and the Anti-Privatisation Forum. These interactions revealed a trend involving community literacy educators who received training and certification at UNISA through the South African National Literacy Initiative. Despite their enthusiasm and positive track record, the stipend these community educators relied on was withdrawn. Funds were channeled away from community-driven and based literacy programmes to industry - based learnership programmes. This development resulted in the non-sustainability of many community literacy initiatives.

The case of Thuto Senotlolo Sa Bohle (TSEBO) community educational initiative in the Vaal, Gauteng, provides a glimpse into how a creative community project arose, proved its worth and yet these energies were squandered by an unresponsive state. TSEBO, linked to a community organisation affiliated to the APF was established in 1999. In 2001 TSEBO participated in Minister Asmal's ministerial South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI) project in partnership with UNISA. Fifteen ABET practitioners were certified by UNISA in 2001. By 2006 the number of ABET practitioners rose to forty nine and cumulatively close to two thousand adult learners were registered for ABET levels 1 and 2. During the lifespan of SANLI, TSEBO received learning materials and stipends for its practitioners. This fell away when the SANLI initiative came to an end. Although TSEBO continued using four schools in Bophelong as venues they were increasingly under pressure from the school



governing bodies to pay for the use of the school premises. (TSEBO Abet struggles, Background document, 2006; TSEBO Newsletter, 2003)

In 2005 TSEBO expanded its activities beyond Bophelong to other townships in the Vaal such as Boipatong, Sharpeville, Bekkersdal, Kanana and Sebokeng. Besides adult literacy, TSEBO also encouraged: food gardens; initiated an eye examination/spectacles programme; established five early childhood day-care houses and the training of early childhood educators; started a “clothing for orphans” programme; as well as encouraged youth in the area to become involved in drama and performance poetry. (TSEBO Newsletter, 2003).

TSEBO members approached the district official from the Department of Education on February the 22<sup>nd</sup> 2005 to request assistance for their 1225 learners and 30 practitioners. The district official promised to visit the TSEBO Centre the following week but this did not occur (Interview with the coordinator of TSEBO, Thandelike Dodo, 12/11/2005). The head of ABET in the district was also approached and despite his promises of support none was forthcoming. The coordinator of TSEBO, Thandekile Dodo used the opportunity of a radio talk show on Lesedi FM which happened to be interviewing the MEC for Education in Gauteng to raise their concerns. The MEC provided the contact details of the provincial ABET head. After the TSEBO coordinator contacted this official and agreed to provide details in writing. According to Dodo, “My communication has yet to be acknowledged and he does not answer his office nor his mobile phone” (Ibid).

After a workshop with the ERP, TSEBO learners and practitioners together with other community members marched on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September during the global week for literacy to all Bophelong schools and the local offices of the Department of Education. The memorandum delivered to the Department of Education included the following demands: Recognition of TSEBO by the Department; the integration of the TSEBO practitioners into the Department’s programmes and remuneration schedules and allowing the use of school premises (after normal school hours) for TSEBO’s literacy programmes and for other community programmes.

Following the protests, four officials including the senior manager of the Bophelong district met with three TSEBO representatives on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 2005 to discuss

the demands listed in the memorandum. The responses of the department officials as reflected in the minutes of the meeting are revealing:

According to the GDE District 8 they recognize TSEBO for the fact that it is a registered NGO and for its educational work in the region. It was made clear though that this does not mean that they will give our practitioners salaries or facilities for free...In terms of access to schools the department does not have powers to force schools to give us or allow us to use their facilities for free, because governing bodies are in charge of the schools and they pay for electricity, cleaners, caretaker and security...

The minutes also listed the following responses in bullet form:

- There's no way the GDE can provide allowances for the practitioners as there is no budget for that.
- No budget for the learner support materials.
- Tsebo should privatise in order to get direct funding from the GDE (this means TSEBO should lose its NPO status and focus on profit making mechanisms)
- Then TSEBO can apply for funding from the GDE, provided that the legal documents are available...

The Department of Education in November 2003 published the National Norms and Standards for funding of Public Adult Learning Centres (NSF-PALC). The policy was aimed at determining the budget allocation for ABET at adult learning centres. In response, the ERP with the assistance of Ivor Baatjes produced a discussion paper intended to generate critical reflection and debate amongst various people and organisations involved in ABET as well as broader civil society. The ERP discussion document resulted in a submission by the ERP to the Department on its proposed policy on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December (Education Rights Project, 2003). The submission summarised the current reality of ABET provision and asserted that the proposed model would likely lead to a further reduction of the ABET budget while passing on substantial costs to learners. The ERP submission also outlined an alternative model of ABE provision, funding and delivery. This alternative model was not taken on board.

Seven years later Ivor Baatjes makes the following critical points:

First, the participation rate in Abet is estimated at 2%: many adults who could benefit from Abet experience multiple deterrents associated with poverty.

Second, the conditions in learning centres mirror those of the poor public schools that house these centres, which are plagued by numerous problems including a lack of resources. Third, the quality of Abet programmes has been questioned and remains largely alien to the immediate realities and needs of adults, areas that the department of education has failed to address in spite of promises to do so. The formalisation of Abet now produces the curriculum categories of formal schooling and is nothing more than simply "school for adults".

Fourth, many workers in companies are still excluded from skills development and progression into vocational education and training. Adult basic education provided by companies remains predominantly "literacy in English", with scant opportunities for skills training - a demand that trade unions continue to make. Abet in the workplace is also being used as a barrier to further skills training and advancement.

Fifth, adult education units at universities have been significantly reduced in the past decade. Most adult education departments at universities have been closed or reduced to programmes in education faculties.

Sixth, many civil society organisations with many years of experience in Abet have disappeared and have made way for private "service providers" whose main interest in Abet is profit and who often present quick-fix solutions. Many of the providers operate within the Seta industry, in which a good understanding of adult education does not exist and in which quality assurance mechanisms to evaluate programmes are absent or inadequate

Seventh, workers without 10 years of education are most vulnerable to unemployment. Only 8% of those without 10 years of schooling find themselves in formal employment as companies choose to employ workers with higher levels of education. And eighth, the right to basic education has been denied to adults a number of times when learning centres have been

closed as a result of poor financial planning by provincial departments of education (<http://mg.co.za/article/2010-11-12-where-is-the-public-outcry/>).

### Large scale projects with communities

The aim of these large scale community projects, often relying on participatory action research and integrated into and articulating with the various ERP campaigns, workshops and booklets (discussed below) are manifold: 1) Through these projects the ERP aims to both inform its own members and the members of those community and social movements involved in the projects about the education crisis and opportunities for social mobilisation; 2) the projects provide empirical data necessary for advocacy, holding education officials accountable and litigation strategies; 3) the research process provides training in the rudiments of research protocols and advocacy skills for members of the community organisations, particularly for young, often unemployed members; 4) allows the ERP to apply, develop and refine the participatory action research process and finally to demystify research and overcome the artificial divide between scholarly academic work and activism.

Concretely, the research involved in the projects discussed below assisted communities in *inter alia*, persuading the education departments to provide subsidised transport in the case of the Gauteng communities of Rondebult and Durban Roodepoort Deep; review the school fees model as explained in the earlier section and in many instances address education rights violations. Table 3 below illustrates the focus, outputs and results in some of these large scale projects.

Project	Focus of Research	Outputs	Results
Rondebult, East Rand, with the local South African National Civics Organisation and concerned parents.	Transport and the costs of schooling	-Research report -Several meetings with the community and district officials -Extensive media coverage	-Provision of fully subsidized transport by the state from August 2003.
Durban Roodepoort Deep (DRD)/Sol Plaatjie with the	Transport and the costs of schooling	-Research report -Several meetings with the	-Provision of some transport from

APF.		community and district officials  -Print media coverage	August 2003
Soweto, with the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC)	Knowledge of education rights amongst youth and the extent of the violation of human rights.	-Research report based on 3 sets of questionnaires involving ----youth	-Understanding rights violations and the extent of knowledge about rights amongst learners and youth.  -20 youth researchers trained.
Lekoa/Vaal: Orange Farm, Sebokeng and Sharpeville with Youth 4 Work.	Knowledge of education rights amongst youth and the extent of the violation of human rights.	-Research report based on 3 sets of questionnaires involving youth	-Understanding rights violations and the extent of knowledge about rights amongst learners and youth.  -20 youth researchers trained.
Kathorus, Katlehong and East Rand with Youth 4 Work	Knowledge of education rights amongst youth and the extent of the violation of human rights.	-Research report based on 3 sets of questionnaires involving youth	-Understanding rights violations and the extent of knowledge about rights amongst learners and youth.  -20 youth researchers trained.

KZN, 12 communities around Durban with Concerned Citizens Forum and the Centre for Civil Society.		-Database of rights violations established.  -Research report	-Violations of education rights brought to the attention of school governing bodies, school management teams and education officials.
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**Table 4: Focus, Outputs and Results of ERP/Community Organisations' Large Scale Projects.**

**KwaZulu-Natal Education Rights Project**

After receiving numerous complaints throughout 2002 and 2003 the ERP established the KZN-ERP in June 2003. The project aimed to:

- Educate and empower communities to challenge education rights violations
- Facilitate inter-community co-operation around the campaign for free education
- Transfer organising and basic research skills to community based activists
- Establish a campaign around the right to free education in KwaZulu-Natal
- Establish an updated database of rights violations
- Bring violations of education rights to the attention of school governing bodies, principals and education officials.

The initial workshop involved community activists from different townships surrounding Durban. They were introduced to the ERP's aims and objectives and the reality of what can be achieved given available resources. Activists were taught rudimentary research skills including how to conduct interviews, collect household data and plan community meetings. Education legislation and policies related to the

right to education were made familiar to the activists. They were also taught to investigate conditions in local schools and the obstacles encountered by schools in attempting to provide quality education.

For the remainder of the year a series of twelve education rights workshops were held in eight communities surrounding Durban involving 420 participants. These communities were: Mpumalanga, Ndwedwe, Umlazi, Kwamashu, Mount Moriah, Bayview, Sydenham and Lamontville. Each workshop consisted of thirty five participants including representatives of learners, teachers, parents and a principal of the local high school.

A joint community workshop was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2004 at the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Howard College Campus attended by representatives of the different communities mentioned above. At this gathering after the participants spoke to education conditions at their townships,

100 questionnaires each were handed to the 12 community facilitators to distribute to learners in their respective communities. Each facilitator was also given five qualitative questionnaires for five parents in their communities to fill in. Community facilitators conducted parent interviews in their areas and compiled the relevant data. They also interviewed school principals in their areas, evaluated the school facilities and collected the questionnaires from learners (KZN-ERP, research report compiled by Fazel Khan, 2004).

Preliminary findings were presented to each of the communities that participated in the research, feedback and verification took the form of discussions in the report back meetings to test for authenticity and communities decided on various programmes of action for their areas. Communities jointly decided to establish the Free Education Coalition in Action. This coalition of community, school and university-based organisations campaigned in and around Durban for the right to free and quality education until the no-fee schools policy was implemented by the Department of Education.

The findings of the research uncovered a pattern of financial discrimination at schools, the difficulties of poor households to meet their utility bills and rent, the inadequate nutrition of learners and violence in schools. All of these issues impact on the right to, in and through education discussed in the conclusion.

## **The Education Rights of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants in South Africa**

Violent attacks against migrants from other parts of Africa over the past ten years have placed the spotlight on the inadequate responses of the state as well as the systemic violation of the general human rights of migrants. While research on xenophobia has increased in recent years, investigations into the specific violation of the education rights of migrants have lagged behind. The ERP endeavoured to fill this need.

The South African constitution and national education legislation as well as the Refugee Act consistent with international treaties, guarantees the right to basic education of refugees and asylum seekers. Yet, research suggested that 30% of refugee and asylum-seekers households in the Johannesburg area were not sending their children to school and the vast majority were not aware of their education rights (CASE, 2003). In addition, serious violations and barriers preventing the attainment of the right to education of migrants has been recorded by the Education Rights Project in schools and communities around the country.

During the course of its various campaigns, the ERP found that most refugees and asylum seekers were discriminated against. In 2004, the ERP and Khanya College, a Johannesburg based non-governmental organization, embarked on a research study into the barriers preventing access to education for Johannesburg's inner-city migrants, with a special but not exclusive focus on asylum seekers and refugees. The project commenced in November 2004 and ended in February 2006. Research was conducted through focus groups, in-depth interviews and participatory workshops (see Appendix G).

Beyond data collection, the research process also involved providing participants with information, legal advice and support. The project resulted in the production and wide distribution of the ERP booklet on the education rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants (Mohta, 2005) and the formation of education rights organisations consisting of and led by immigrant organisations (Mohta and Ramadiro, 2005). Research teams unraveled a complex web of social, economic, cultural and poverty-related difficulties faced by refugee and asylum-seeking children. Key issues related



to the cost of education; admission and registration; age norms; lack of documentation and language issues (Mohta and Ramadiro, 2005).

Toward the end of 2010 the ERP continued to build on the limited research already conducted. The latter included research in Johannesburg by the Education Rights Project and Khanya College with migrant communities as well as the research conducted by Wits University's Forced Migration Studies Programme and the work of Save the Children and the Solidarity Peace Trust among unaccompanied minors in Musina. The ERP received a grant from the Foundation for Human Rights to continue its work on the education rights of refugees and migrants in the provinces of Limpopo, the Western Cape and Gauteng. The project hoped to achieve greater understanding and awareness of the right to education for migrants among the key role players and the public at large, strengthening the ability of migrant communities to pursue their education rights and hold the state and responsible parties accountable for violations of the education rights of migrants.

The project was implemented in the sites listed in Appendix I. The target population, key stake holders and partners are listed under the heading of each site. Sites, target groups and partners were chosen on the basis of the concentration of migrants, particularly migrant learners; instances of both attempts at pursuing the right to education for migrants and incidences of violations. Partners were chosen on the basis of their engagement, research and interest in the education rights of migrants and access to migrant communities.

The rationale for the selection of sites and target groups for this project was to enable the study of different refugee groups in a combination of rural communities, urban areas, townships and in the different regions of South Africa. Some of these areas were also 'hotspots' during the widespread xenophobic outbreaks in 2008 and others were not. Understanding this differential response of the broader community was an issue to be explored. The selection of sites allowed for the useful profiling of the communities in terms of existence of support structures, duration of residence, unaccompanied minors, gender issues and the extent to which they are incorporated into the broader community through for instance receiving social services, access to schooling including overcoming obstacles preventing schooling and participating in community structures and events.

The project examined in great detail the barriers and violations of the right to education encountered by migrants in Gauteng, the Western Cape and Limpopo; government policy and practice on this issue as well as that of school governing bodies, school management teams, trade unions and local municipalities. It included education rights awareness amongst migrant communities, social movements and those accountable to ensure the provision of education.

The project completed a comprehensive literature review on the education rights of migrants; collected available quantitative data; analysed rights-based indicators assessing the conformity of the education rights of migrants in South Africa with international human rights standards and treaties and local legislation; involved site visits culminating in the collection of quantitative data, case studies and testimonies; and arranged workshops for migrant communities on education rights. An important part of this project was the development of a list of indicators corresponding to the 4A rights framework principles of availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability. Indicators based on education as a human right, place vulnerable groups such as refugees and the key principle of non-discrimination at the core. In so doing, they make these groups and violations of their rights more visible, thus creating the conditions for a culture of accountability whereby such groups are enabled and allowed to question state performance. The indicator matrix developed by the ERP and its UK-based partner the Right to Education thus included transversal principles such as participation, non-discrimination and. Education is recognised in various international instruments and in the South African constitution and education legislation as a legal right with corresponding obligations for duty-bearers. This is why compliance with this right needs to be assessed and monitored with appropriate indicators.

Traditional education indicators mainly rely on quantitative data, often disclosing very little about the quality of the education provided. The indicators were therefore supplemented by various case studies and testimonies in the sites identified. Right to education indicators can evaluate whether education is provided in an environment respectful of the child's dignity and development, whether it promotes respect for learners as well as teachers, whether and how it is provided to all groups and whether it teaches and upholds human rights. In other words, right to education indicators measure not only the right to education but also rights in and through education.

## **Survey-Perceptions of high school students and their understanding of education rights, attitudes to schooling and the violation of human rights**

The ERP together with youth activists from community-based organisations undertook an extensive survey on the perceptions of high school students and their understanding of education rights, attitudes to schooling and the violation of human rights. The survey was conducted between 2005 and 2006 in Ekurhuleni (East Rand) and Soweto. It involved 1700 students and was accompanied by a household survey similar to the one developed for the KZN ERP project and completed by parents or the head of households.

In Ekurhuleni, surveys were primarily distributed at ten secondary schools: Alafeng, Buhlebuzile, Ilinge, Landulwazi, Ntombizodwa, Sijabulile, Thoko Thaba, Thuto Lisedi, Thuto Phele and Tiisetong. In Soweto, surveys were primarily distributed at five high schools: Anchor, Daliwanga, Letare, Mncube and Vuwani. Some of the egregious findings of the research showed that:

- 49% of pupils did not have food or money on the days they had neither breakfast nor lunch;
- 34% of pupils did not know that schools are not allowed to refuse them admission if they did not pay school fees;
- 10% believed schools could turn away pupils infected with HIV/Aids; and
- More than a quarter believed schools could exclude pregnant pupils.

Some of the key findings on the understanding of education rights are graphically represented in Appendix H.

Prior to conducting the surveys, the ERP trained a group of twenty five young researchers from the education committee of the APF residing in areas the surveys were conducted in. The training involved formulating the questionnaires, collecting the data and processing the findings for use in on-going campaigns for quality public education. The results of the research allowed the ERP to gauge primarily learner's understanding of education rights and the disjuncture between education policy as text and legislation and the actual reality in schools. Many instances of the violation of education rights were uncovered and variously passed on to school governing bodies,

district officials and public litigation groups. The findings also allowed the ERP to plan future interventions. One such area was the need to campaign for extending the Primary School Nutrition Scheme to secondary schools. The ERP also produced a booklet on school nutrition in 2010.

### **Case Studies: Durban Roodepoort Deep (DRD) and Rondebult**

Chapter six draws on contextualised case studies of two communities, Durban Roodepoort Deep (DRD)<sup>4</sup> or Sol Plaatjie and Rondebult<sup>5</sup>. Both communities had relatively strong social movements affiliated to the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF) and soon after its formation the ERP began to engage with these communities.

Both communities were formed by the (sometimes multiple) displacements of poor families by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council as part of efforts to ‘clean up’ the expanding city. The process of eviction and resettlement was tremendously disruptive for children and their education. Neither community had schools nor health services at the time of the research. In addition, families had been severely affected by the loss of support networks as well as disruption of income generation.

On requests from the communities, the ERP facilitated PAR workshops for parents, learners, and other interested community members where they learnt to formulate research questions, analyse research data, and to use the data to advocate or advance their claims to the right to education. The community researchers designed and carried out a door-to-door survey of 763 households in DRD. The door-to-door census included questions about the size of households; average household income; sources of household income (formal employment, unemployment, part-time

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<sup>4</sup> Durban Roodepoort Deep (DRD), also known as Sol Plaatjie, is a community living in what previously was a hostel or compound for mine workers of the Durban Roodepoort Deep Mines. In January 2002 about 2 500 families were evicted by the Johannesburg metropolitan council from Mandelaville informal settlement in Diepkloof, Soweto. By the time the approximately 900 Mandelaville families arrived at the hostel, the buildings had suffered significant structural damage. In the first few weeks the community lived in dire conditions without shops, transport, schools, or clinics. About 800 families however stayed in the hope that while they waited for the promised houses, school transport would be provided to send their children to school and a temporary clinic would be built. The promises were not kept.

<sup>5</sup> Rondebult is an RDP township established in 1998. It is located a few kilometers from Leondale / Spruitview in Ekuhuleni. The community is made up of people who formerly inhabited squatter settlements in and around Katlehong. Similar to many re-settled communities, schools have not been established and children have to travel long distances to school.

employment, and other sources of income); the costs of schooling (transport fares, school fees); out-of-school youth (the number, age, duration out of school and reasons; grades at which children exited); and children who had never been to school (age, reasons). In Rondebult, the researchers decided to use interviews, focus groups and a short questionnaire to gather data. The question items for the snapshot survey were constructed in a workshop with a non-random sample of parents that were negatively affected by the cost of education in the community of Rondebult. The parents also participated in the data collection. With the assistance of the ERP, the data was analyzed and then presented at community meetings where a discussion was held regarding actions to be taken to deal with the problems identified.

Chapter six analyses the different findings of the research into education provision for the two communities, this overview though will limit itself to arguably the most difficult area for the residents - transport.

In the 'RDP housing' settlements and in areas such as Durban Roodepoort Deep and Rondebult there are often no schools. Parents have to largely bear the cost of transporting their children to school, and this has been an onerous burden for families. ERP data shows that transport in Rondebult is the second biggest education expense. It accounted for up to 38% of education costs or 13% of household income (Ramadiro, 2007). In the latter sample ERP found that all the parents in the survey group have had their children denied entry onto the bus because of the inability to pay bus fares. The vast majority of parents were unable to pay for the bus fare for between two to three months (the majority cited three months as the average in one year) (Ibid).

Alternatives to the school bus in the order of most frequency include: walking; riding a bicycle; staying with relatives or friends who live closer to the schools; or not going to school at all (Ibid). Learners travel to the nearest schools, which may be five to fifteen kilometers away from their place of residence. In Gauteng, the state paid thirteen cents a kilometer per child since 1997 (revised to 15 cents a kilometer per child in March 2003). (Ramadiro and Vally, 2006). Without exception, this was not adequate to cover the transport costs of learners in these two communities. In one community the amount that parents had to pay increased from R40 in June 2002 to between R50 and R70 in 2003 per child, depending on the distances (Ibid).

Bus companies are subcontracted by the state to provide transport. Learners without monthly cards are not allowed onto the bus. When learners have not taken a bus for a month or two – they occasionally stay with relatives living closer to the schools, walk, use a bicycle, or simply do not go to school – they have to pay a full fare for the periods when they do not use the bus. If this is not done they are not allowed back on the bus. The bus company has complained that the state subsidy is too meager. In order to break even, the company must be assured that families will use the bus throughout the school calendar year.

In Durban Roodepoort Deep the majority of respondents reported that their children stay out of school for two weeks every month or every other month because the parents or guardians cannot afford the bus fare. In both communities, a large number of older children simply dropped out of school or could not sit for the matriculation examinations because of the cost of transport. The families of those who do continue with their schooling have to make huge sacrifices (Ibid).

The following vignettes forcefully illustrate the transport difficulties and the life experiences of communities in poor communities (Ramadiro and Vally, 2006):

Bongani and Mlungisi's story:

Bongani and Mlungisi are grade 10 learners. They respectively attend school at Madibane and Fidelitas, both schools are located in Diepkloof. Their schools are located approximately 12 kilometers from Durban Roodepoort Deep (DRD); the taxi fare is R13 for a return trip. The school provides stationery and textbooks. Uniforms cost between R80 - R300, and lunch is about R5. These learners simply do not go to school when they do not have taxi fares, and they know of children from DRD who have stopped going to school during the first term of school owing to an inability to pay taxi fares. The two learners would like to transfer to a nearby school. But schools will not give them their reports and transfer papers until they have paid in full the R150 school fee. Bongani and Mlungisi thought that it will probably take long for the state to build a school, and that in the meantime, containers should be set-up to house a primary school - so that smaller children do not have to travel far to school. They also believe that a clinic should be established because many people in DRD only go to clinics when they are extremely ill and this is a time when chances of recovery are slim.

### Nowethu and Nolindile's stories:

Nowethu has three children; all three are of school going age. Her husband works in Wynberg and spends about R100 on transport to work every month. Nowethu and her husband try with all the means at their disposal to get their children to school. Two of the children attend school at Thembelihle Primary. Door-to-door transport costs R300 per month for both children. The third child goes to Orola High (in Zola) and her transport costs are up to R200 per month. As a result, she does not have much money left for school fees, uniforms or food.

Nolindile also has three children. All three are at primary school in Braamfisher. Nolindile and her husband have been unemployed for a long time. She cannot afford any amount of school fees charged, no matter how little. During the time we were having this conversation, she had absolutely no food in the house and had no idea what she was going to eat that evening. She is very desperate and needs a job urgently.

### Dipuo's story:

Dipuo has a child at a primary school in Dobsonville. She pays R120 per month for a door-to-door kombi and R150 per annum in school fees. She can manage the transport and school fees, but then the school demands a blazer and tracksuit costs which she cannot meet. In addition she has to pay for stationery and textbooks (the textbooks she has not bought as they cost too much). She says that in DRD there are a number of children who do not attend school; this is especially prevalent amongst older children. She thinks the high levels of crime in DRD are related to low school attendance. She argues that if there were no schools fees charged and that free transport to school was provided, many more children from the area would attend school. When it rains many children do not go to school, and are in turn subjected to corporal punishment for non-attendance. As her contribution to education in the community, she has taken it upon herself to assist children of neighbours with homework.

## **Education Rights Booklets**

An integral aspect of the ERP has been the development, production and distribution of a series of booklets that address rights to, in and through education. The easy-to-use booklets are designed for any reader to access the legal framework of South African public education in most areas of consistent violation. The booklets are extremely popular and print runs of 10 000 booklets have been produced on three separate occasions.

The booklets are typically developed in a participatory way with community members, social movements, academics and experts, activists and NGOs. For instance, those contributing to and providing insights for the Education Rights of Refugees booklet included the Coordinating Body for Refugee Communities; the Papillion Foundation and the Refugee Parents' Body. Focus group meetings were also held which included the UNHCR; Lawyers for Human Rights; the National Consortium for Refugee Affairs and teacher unions. Similarly other booklets involved social movements such as the Treatment Action Campaign, the Anti-Privatisation Forum and groups such as Khanya College.

The issues, themes, questions and useful contacts for follow-up issues included in the booklets are informed by the ERP's interaction with communities and their involvement in expressing the need for a booklet in a particular area; the queries that the booklet should address; piloting of draft versions and distribution. The booklets also aim to be aesthetically accessible and the use of graphics and the layout of the booklets also attempt to encourage epistemological access (Morrow, 2009). Most of the booklets have also been translated into isiZulu and seSotho. Particular attention is given to the accuracy and veracity of information provided in the booklets and they are always reviewed by Department of Education officials or experts in particular fields before they are printed. The ERP is in possession of correspondence and evidence attesting to the fact that the booklets are relied upon and used not only by community members, learners and educators but also by education non-governmental organisations, the education department's district, provincial and national education officials and academic researchers.



Nine of the booklets can be accessed on the ERP website: <http://www.erp.org.za>.

Booklets include:

- Know Your Rights: School Fees (2003);

The following booklets were published in 2005:

- HIV/AIDS: The Rights of Learners and Educators;
- Sexual Violence: The Rights of Learners and Educators;
- The Education Rights of Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Migrants;
- Language Rights and Schools;
- Religion and Schools;
- Disability: The Rights of Learners;
- School Governing Bodies: Rights and Responsibilities;
- Admission Policy: Your Rights;
- Corporal Punishment and Bullying: The Rights of Learners;

Booklets published in 2010:

- Racism and Education;
- School Nutrition;

Booklets published in 2011 include:

- Environment and Education: Rights and Responsibilities;
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Rights in Education;
- Facilitating Literacy: A handbook for community-based literacy workers.

Importantly, the research and the form of publications are influenced by attempts to engage with the important constituencies affected by policy. Consciously, research by the ERP and the publication of research such as these booklets attempts to be accessible to wider audiences than conventional research can be. In the case of social-policy research there are many possibilities for the publications of research and many modes of doing so. See for example Appendix A (RBE and ERP outputs). In fact these modes are demanded by the very process of engagement. In addition to the

production of written work for the research process itself (training and induction of researchers, to clarify the objectives of the research for relevant communities) there can be a welter of writings emanating directly as a result of the research. These could include reports and policy briefings for decision-makers, media and ‘popular’ writings, booklets, issue papers, monographs and advocacy materials, discussion documents, conference presentations and academic writings. All of these forms of written work as well as dramatic forms of expression feature in the ERP praxis and its dissemination.

### **The ERP’s involvement with learners and youth**

The work of the ERP in communities and its campaigns served to attract young people including high school pupils to various education rights workshops and also assisted in young people joining different social movements. Early in its existence the ERP responded to this enthusiasm by designing various programmes and strategies specifically aimed at learners and youth. These interventions included youth camps, drama, poetry and creative writing groups as well as research and skills training, marches and various campaigns.

In June 2002, sixty young people from Small Farm, a township fifty kilometers from Johannesburg formed a theatre and music group which they called the Sedibeng Committed Artists. A number of the artists participated in the education rights workshops organised by the ERP. With the assistance of the ERP and Khanya College, they developed a script for a play on education rights which had a significant impact on communities in and around Johannesburg. Khanya College assisted the artists with administrative and logistical support.

The play is called ‘Twasa’ and focuses on the rights of learners in school emphasising the cost of education. It also exposes sexual harassment and the roles and functions of school governing bodies. Between 2002 and 2003 the play was performed in fifteen schools and communities:

<b>Performance for School/Community</b>	<b>Area</b>
Mosioa Primary School	Small Farm
Mojala Thuto School	Small Farm

Senopotso Secondary School	Sebokeng
Madibane Secondary School	Diepkloof
Fidelitus Secondary School	Diepkloof
Tokelo Secondary School	Small Farm
E.D. Mashabane Secondary School	Small Farm
Esokwazi Secondary School	Small Farm
Fundulkwazi Secondary School	Sebokeng
Monaladito Secondary School	Sebokeng
Community Memorial Service	Orange Farm
United Civics of South Africa	Vosloorus
Ikageng Community Crisis Committee	Potchestroom
Mandela Village-DRD	Durban Roodepoort Deep
Bophelong Community Service Forum	Bophelong Vanderbijlpark

**Table 5: Plays, poetry and music at schools and communities**

Besides various local campaigns the following table summarises a few key activities in 2003.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Location</b>
June 16 <sup>th</sup>	Right to Free Quality Public Schooling.	A march of 5000 largely learners from schools in Soweto. Meetings and rallies in Durban and Cape Town.	Cape Town, Durban and Gauteng.
September 21 <sup>st</sup> -23rd	Political Economy of Education residential seminar.	Bringing together 200 learners and youth from Gauteng Representative Council of Learners and Youth 4 Work organisation,	Shaft 17 Conference Centre, Johannesburg.
October-December	Identifying and discussing national campaigns with	Preparatory workshops	KZN, Gauteng, Limpopo, Eastern and Western Cape

	youth members of various social movements.		and North West Provinces.
December 12 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup>	Coordinating mass action for quality public education	Residential seminar for 350 learners and youth	Wits School of Education, Parktown, Johannesburg

**Table 6- The ERP’s engagement with youth and learners**

Some of the young people involved in the various activities of the ERP collaborated with Khanya College in 2004 to produce a special issue of the Khanya Journal to coincide with the June 16<sup>th</sup> commemorations (Khanya, 2004). The issue was titled, ‘Education Struggles After Apartheid’ and included articles, personal narratives and poetry which discussed issues such as the cost of education; uniforms and the non-delivery of textbooks; the failure of education policy and practice; alienation and unemployment among the youth; sexual violence and xenophobia. The journal also focused on the significance of the June 16<sup>th</sup> uprising as well as global youth and student struggles. The joint ERP/Khanya journal’s editorial written by Nerisha Baldevu, Nina Benjamin, Molefi Ndlovu and Brian Ramadiro concludes:

For many activists, especially those currently active within the education movement today, the history of student struggles in South Africa is not only a source of inspiration, but also provides an opportunity for critical reflection on that history with a view to charting new perspectives and strategies in present-day struggles. As with the first article by Vally, the Barometer [a regular feature of the Journal] provides a link to the generation of 1976. A few writers in this edition talk about the death of the dream of free and quality education. But like the generation of 1976 they are saying “Mobilise! Don’t Mourn!” (Khanya, 2004:4-5).

In August 2006 the ERP initiated a series of workshops titled ‘Empowerment through the Arts’ with eleven local and established musicians and poets as well as three international artists from Zimbabwe, Nigeria and the United States. The workshops encouraged students to read and write their own poetry. The initiative from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> of August involved over 2500 people through a combination of interactive workshops between learners and the artists; a public poetry celebration of National

Women’s Day and a public music and poetry benefit concert (ERP report, Cultural Exchange Project, 2006). The table below summarises the performances, participants and venues:

Date	Venue	Participants
7 <sup>th</sup> August 2006	Bona High School, Orlando East, Soweto	305 students; International artists: Omekongo Dibinga (Nigeria), U-Meleni Mhlaba (Zimbabwe); Local artists: Zweli Kush, Kabelo Mofokeng, 4M and Majesty
7 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Metropolitan College	154 students; Omekongo and U-Meleni; Local poets: Prince Shapiro, Aviwe, Jacqueline and Regimental.
8 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Thuto Ke Matla Comprehensive School, Tembisa	243 students; Omekongo ,U-Meleni and Farai – a poet from Zimbabwe; Local poets: Moshira, Bongekile and Selby.
8 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Oxford Combined College, Kempton Park	162 students; U-Meleni, Omekongo and Farai. Local artists: Prince Shapiro, Makatra, Tori and Nyiko
9 <sup>th</sup> Aug	National Women’s Day, Xarra Bookstore, Newtown	200 people; Artists: Aviwe, U-Meleni, Nwabisa Sofoyiya, Nosipiwo Pindelo, Mpho Matlebjane, Fikile Zwane and Kabelo Mailula.
10th Aug	Matume Primary	360 pupils and 6 teachers; Omekongo and U-Meleni; Local artist: Zweli Kush
10th Aug	Tsolo High and Sapphire High, Bophelong	392 students and 5 teachers; Omekongo, Farai and U-Meleni. Local Zweli Kush and Prince Shapiro.
12 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Heart of Afrika Benefit Concert for ERP	350 people; International artists: Farai, U-Meleni and Omekongo. Local poets and musicians: Botsotso Jesters, Kgafela, Common Man, Zee, Ayob, Bianca, Zamantungwa, Skin2Skin, Romeo and Bonisile.

**Table 7: Empowerment through arts workshop**

One of the key artists, U-Meleni Mhlaba, involved in the cultural week reflects on the week in her blog (<http://www.u-meleni.com/?section=bio>). Her reminiscences enthusiastically capture the ERP's successful venture of using the arts to promote education rights. Mhlaba talks about the deprivations learners are confronted with but also the "thick desires" (Fine, 2009) to learn and create:

"Reflections on my work in SA" - August 14, 2006. We ( meaning Omekongo and I) visited 7 schools in Soweto and in the outskirts, and shared our work as well as local artists: Aviwe, Kgabelo, Slimco, Makata, Tiro and the students shared w/us. There was Bona School, Thuto Ke Maatla, Mteropolitan College, Tsolo School...and others...

Most schools sadly were very poor...no books, broken windows, hardly any chalk, no computers, but some had sound systems, microphones etc...however the students were all intelligent, eager, open and very talented, very socially & politically aware and vocal. I was so proud of them and they reflected that back to me. The ages of the youth ranged from 5 -21. What they lacked in materials they made up of in passion for education and creativity. I fell in love with the children of South Africa!

All schools had uniforms but could tell that some were wearing hand me downs. In spite of the poverty, the fact that most lived in Shantytowns as they told us, they have incredible drive to learn. One school we visited Evaton Primary School had won several awards for their incredible drama and theatre pieces which we have on tape. The staff was amazing! So many teachers dedicated to the youth but with a lack of resources. Still the respect they had for their students was evident. What i realized and saw are that there are similar issues that some of my students face in America, in Boston in the inner city. I performed some poetry on domestic violence, child abuse/rape etc...and sadly many girls shared with me afterwards that they had been raped. They ranged from 12-16...

This chapter described how in collaboration with social movements, the ERP develops popular education and a mobilisation plan within and across communities. These actions are aimed at pursuing collective rights and contesting policies and practices adversely affecting community access to and rights in education. The narrative of the various and varied campaigns and initiatives of the ERP in this chapter provide the evidenciary basis of how the PAR process and community engagement enabled opportunities to investigate educational issues and policy. This chapter also showed the complex nature of the democratisation of education and

formal policy making arrangements and the creative power of citizenry to advocate collectively through organisations and communities. Finally it expanded on how the ERP's work combines progressive scholarship and research by linking directly with communities and being sensitive to the local context.

In a forthcoming article (Thapliyal, Vally and Spreen, 2013) relevant to this section, the authors usefully adopt a situated analysis of the politics of rights or the possibilities for political learning and action that emerged through the ERP. This chapter shows the multiple and inter-connected ways in which the township communities involved constructed 'citizenship from below' by 'feeling', 'framing', 'knowing', and claiming their rights to basic education (Cornwall and Molyneux 2006; Molyneux and Lazar 2003).

### **Feeling Rights**

In Durban Roodepoort Deep, community members in an ERP education workshop sought to stimulate discussion about the right to education; attempted to gain insight into the community's view of the relation between education and imaginations for community development; to identify key barriers to the right to basic education; and to develop plans around local action. Importantly, the workshop was also used to consider the methodology for community participation and the data required to investigate issues relating to the right to basic education (Vally and Spreen, 2008). These discussions viewed formal education as encompassing both individual and social benefits of schooling. Some expressions of this sentiment included the following views of participants (Ramadiro and Vally, 2006):

“Education opens doors to self-development and community, and increases chances for meaningful participation in society.”

“Ulwazi (knowledge) leads to freedom and social harmony.”

“Education is a means to gain access to skills, professions and to setting up independent enterprises.”

“Education facilitates communication across different peoples and cultures.”

“I would like to go school if the government would open one for us. Through adult education we may be able to get help in matters like reading the South African

constitution. I do not like it when people interpret for me what rights I have. In meetings they come with big and difficult words that you do not understand. If I get that little education I would be able to say I hear what you are saying but make my own point.”

In these conversations, participants were able to ‘feel rights’ which Molyneux and Lazar (2003) describe as the opportunity to reflect on the personal and day-to-day implications of rights. They were able to tell their own stories about their struggles to educate their children under the most difficult circumstances. In giving testimony to their resilience they were able to foster a collective identity and reframe problems to identify opportunities for collective action. The process of coming to see themselves as people with rights and with the capacity to exercise their rights was further strengthened by their successful engagements with local education officials.

We claim victory for bringing a school closer to DRD as a result of which small children are not left behind by the school bus to and from school. We are now trying to get government to extend the school and to install adequate toilets at the school (Ramadiro 2005).

We do not have free and quality education in this community. Whatever gains we have made for our children around school transport and the erection of the primary school is what we have fought for ourselves. Until we get up again to fight, children will continue getting sick everyday here because of raw sewerage [which] stream down the streets (Ramadiro 2005)

These quotes underline a sense of self that is inherently powerful - the ‘power from within’ and demonstrate the ways in which framing and claiming rights constitute acts of substantive agency (Molyneux & Lazar 2006). These views of members of the community should be contrasted to the ‘deficit’ view of an elected representative quoted in chapter six:

I do not know why children are not in school. I think you should ask their parents they might be in a position to answer your question. There are buses and there is a school nearby - what more do you want from government? If they do not want to take a bath and go to school, how am I supposed to answer that question? I do not know



whether or not buses will be provided for the children next year; if they are not provided I would have little influence on that issue because it does not fall under my department (Ward councillor quoted in Vally and Spreen, 2008:7).

### **Framing Rights**

Some demands were easier to frame than others. For instance, ERP facilitators struggled in a few instances to understand the reluctance of some community members to call for free education (Ramadiro and Vally, 2006). The Durban Roodepoort Deep ERP workshop is a case in point. In the beginning the facilitators thought the groups were simply not making the connection with the long history of struggles to make quality education free for all or the fact that state-provided education is in any case, strictly-speaking, not free given that even the unemployed pay taxes. After much discussion it became apparent that the groups were reluctant to call for ‘unqualified’ free education because they did not want to feed the social stereotype that the poor do not want to do things for themselves. Their argument was that education should be free in the context of widespread and chronic unemployment but when things got better they were willing to make monetary contributions to the education of their children.

This exchange underlines the impact of official discourse that seeks to ‘privatise’ and ‘normalise’ poverty (rather than reducing the growing gap between the rich and the poor) by portraying the poor as irresponsible burdens to society. Discussions about the lack of participation in school governing bodies raised similar issues about the ways in which the extremely poor are penalised as apathetic and disinterested parents by institutions purportedly created to enhance their voice and participation.

As the household surveys data in this thesis in a number of communities reveal, the costs of schooling were intrinsically connected to low parental participation in the school governing bodies. For one thing, the prohibitive cost of transport made it difficult for parents to attend meetings at schools that were located at considerable distances from their homes. The second reason that emerged was that the governing bodies spent the majority of their time discussing school fees. Parents reported that

there was little point in going to meetings when you had not paid and could not pay the current school fees. Despite these barriers, self-criticism was common as the participants agreed that many parents and caregivers were not interested in participating in school governance. At the same time, it was clear that the absence of the community in SGBs did not preclude their agency and involvement in other forms of participation made possible by various social movements.

### **Knowing Rights**

With the help of the ERP, members of various communities learned the rudiments of research to develop and conduct household surveys on the issues that were of greatest concern to them: school fees, employment, transport, child labour, feeding schemes, infrastructure, facilities and so forth. They used their findings to negotiate with local school administrators and officials as well as to educate the public at large with the help of sympathetic media. The ability to speak with knowledge and authority about their struggles to educate their young is no small achievement given that school administrators and education officials have historically enjoyed greater legitimacy in official education discourse and decision-making.

This is not however to suggest that knowledge alone is power but that it can contribute to the expression of power through what Jeannie Oakes (2006:96) calls “informed and activated participants”. Communities were also able to frame their demands and organise and mobilise effectively in order to create spaces in which to share their testimonies and make demands on local representatives of the state. The challenges of mobilisation are underlined by this community member:

We are trying so many things to mobilise around education, but the thing is the community is not as united as we would like to be. To involve the community in education we use popular plays as an educational tool and as way of speaking to parents about the issues that young children face (Ramadiro 2005).

The conditions for political actions already existed in many communities because of their participation in the actions of the new social movements. The possibilities for mobilisation and organised action were also facilitated by the history of successful

collaboration between the researchers based at ERP, the APF and other social movements (Vally and Zafar, 2008).

### **Claiming Rights**

The research conducted by the communities was utilised by social movements, trade unions, student organisations and a range of civil and social organizations as well as sections of the mainstream media to criticise and campaign against the continued use of school fees. Communities working with the ERP also reached out to other township communities with a view to building alliances and strengthening the emerging education rights coalition:

We are trying to co-operate with many other communities around the issue of school fees. We have done this by holding joint workshops, protests and marches. We also work with NGOs interested in the issue. These have opportunities for us in DRD to see that our problems are not that different from those of other communities and to learn from struggles of other people (DRD) (Ramadiro 2005).

Katarina Tomasevski speaking at the launch of the ERP at the University of the Witwatersrand, (Tomasevski, 2002) argued that rights-based approaches had the power of “naming and shaming” states to comply with their obligations. When situated in a larger political project, a case can be made that rights-based approaches are not only important for monitoring and implementation but for transforming the terms of civic engagement. At the micro-political level, township communities were able to successfully engage local school officials to claim basic services like transportation, sanitation, exemption from school fees and nutrition. The ERP initiative with various communities has shown that the process of social transformation is a process of continuous struggle and incremental victories. These communities continue to monitor issues related to the cost of education (McFarlane 2007, see also <http://abahlali.org/node/7717>).

At the macro-political level, the issue of the cost of schooling continues to be contested by coalitions of social movements, academics, teachers unions, and other

civil society organizations. A number of problems remain with the quintile system (Hall and Giese, 2009; Vally 2010). While the introduction of the no-fees school policy has resulted in relieving the burden of the costs of education on poor parents, it is argued that the funding provided to schools is still not sufficient, nor has the no-fees policy resulted in quality improvements in poorer schools. Research with communities has indicated that many schools serving the same socio-economic communities are ranked in different quintiles, which results in the unequal allocations to schools. The complicated exemption process has increased the stigma for poor learners and failed to address the racialised and classed politics of SGBs. In addition, individual schools continue to enjoy the 'right' to deny access to those who cannot pay; situations in which individual parents are pitted against individual schools. The following extracts from a lengthy press statement released by the Abahlali baseMjondolo shack dwellers movement on the 6th of January 2010 illustrates the points made in this conclusion: (<http://abahlali.org/node/7717>):

Here in Motala Heights the situation is really bad at the Motala Heights School. The school is blatantly acting against the law and blatantly discriminating against the poor kids and actively denying them their right to education. Sometimes people fill out the fee exemption forms and they are just ignored. Sometimes the school secretary just refuses to give parents the fee exemption forms and shouts at them and ill treats them when they request the forms. This secretary acts like the school belongs to her. If you haven't got money you are nothing to her. She is like a big closed door to the poor people...

When the New Year comes people are told to re-register their children and the secretary tells the poor parents that they can't register their children because they owe money. A deposit of R500 is charged to re-register each child... The principal even says that people who are getting the Child Support Grant, which is supposed to be for food for their children, must give the grant to the school. What does he think these children will eat? Does he think that a child can study with the pain and weakness of hunger? Letters have been sent to parents that owe money for school fees. These parents have been handed over to Protea Credit Control and this company is threatening to take them to court and to seize their few possessions against their debt.

After interventions from our movement, with support from Ivor Baatjes, the school agreed to release the reports. With a lot of effort we can win these struggles each year,

just as we can win struggles against evictions, but we should not have to struggle to defend our basic rights that are guaranteed to us in law. We do not pay school fees because we have no money. Some children are going to school with nothing in the stomach. Sometimes the only income in the family comes from a father who is pushing the trolleys for the richer people at the shops. The women who are washing for richer people are earning R20 a day. The women who are working in factories are earning R250 a week. This is not even enough to pay for water and electricity. We are so much in struggle just to survive that we cannot pay school fees.

Kids from very poor homes are dropping out of school because they are being insulted because their parents can't pay their fees. They are called out and embarrassed in assembly. They are made to stand on chairs in class. Some kids are coming from abusive homes. School should be a sanctuary for these children but they are being screamed at in school because their parents are poor. They are ill treated at home and in school. Often this bad treatment pushes our kids out of school. When our children are forced out of school they start to be with the wrong people and to do wrong things. They see no future for themselves and they become angry. They get mixed up in drugs and crime. They fall pregnant.

Our kids also count. All kids deserve to see a future.

As a movement we want to extend our deep thanks to Dr. Ivor Baatjies, who formerly worked with the Education Rights Project and the Paulo Freire Institute is now at the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation at the University of Johannesburg, for his years of support for our struggle for equal education rights for all children in Motala Heights. Dr. Baatjies has informed us that CERT will be monitoring the Motala Heights School closely this year, especially when it comes to admitting children at the beginning of the new term. Dr. Baatjies is available to explain the law around education rights in South Africa and why the actions of the Motala Heights School are in gross violation of the law and basic education rights...

The extracts above shows that the mere insertion of rights language into public and policy discourse as we have seen in South Africa since 1994 does not automatically translate into the fulfillment of rights nor is it sufficient to ensure that the state will meet its commitments. States and other duty-holders have shown a marked preference for addressing the recognition dimensions of rights and evading the implications for

redistribution and meaningful participation (Fraser 2001). The current formulation of rights as imperfect obligations which are to be progressively realized was not intended to help states and other duty holders avoid or transfer their obligations. As a consequence of global restructuring and liberalisation, rich and poor nations have weakened to a point where tax revenues are insufficient to meet their public obligations (Castells 1997; Greider 1997). Moreover, neoliberal versions of ‘good governance’ have contributed to the production of forms of decentralisation that perpetuate exclusion (Davies 2002). In a climate where the right to education is counterpoised to the trend toward the commercialisation and liberalisation of trade in education services, active and direct participation by marginalised constituencies in decisions concerning the provision and delivery of education is imperative. Rights-based critiques are therefore an effective albeit limited tool for engaging the state and pursuing accountability.

The next five chapters are published peer reviewed articles written after the establishment of the ERP. Education reforms and policy in the post - apartheid period, the contextual and structural character of poverty and inequality as well as the agency, ‘voice’, knowledge and collective experience of communities form the common threads of the chapters. These threads link the theoretical fabric and key concepts such as social class and community together with methodological coherence involving participatory action research and critical policy studies.

## Chapter 5: From People's Education to Neo-Liberalism in South Africa<sup>6</sup>

In his address at the anniversary celebration of the foundation for Human Rights in Pretoria, 29 November 2006 Neville Alexander posed the following question:

*Why is it that in spite of a constitution that was arrived at in 20th century model of democratic bargaining and consensus building and which are enshrined some of the noblest sentiments and insights concerning human rights, we are living in a situation where very few of those rights appear to be realised, or even realisable, in practice?*

This paper attempts to answer this question through an analysis of the struggle to attain education rights in South Africa. This exercise it is hoped, will also allow us to further unravel the class nature of the South African state, the political economy of the transition (for extensive and excellent analysis of the latter see Marias, 1998; Bond, 2000 and Alexander, 2002) and the importance of the oppositional role of the independent social movements.

A founding principle of South Africa's constitution is common citizenship and equal enjoyment of an array of citizen rights including freedom of belief, religion, expression, assembly and association. A range of socio-economic rights including the right to basic and adult education and the rights of children are emphasised in the Bill of Rights. There can be no doubt that the end of formal apartheid and the attainment of a liberal democratic dispensation has been a momentous victory for the people of South Africa and of humanity. The lyricism of the phrases in our constitution and the promise of its words of justice, after decades of apartheid, has become a symbol of hope for advocates of social justice the world over. Yet two years into the second decade of our democracy, social injustice remains pervasive and inequality is growing, despite progressive changes to various aspects of our society, reminding us, once again of Marx's view that 'One cannot combat the real existing world by merely combating the phrases of this world'.

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<sup>6</sup> Vally S (2007), 'From People's Education to Neo-Liberalism in South Africa', *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 34, No. 111, pp. 39-56.

Unfortunately, the resonant words in the constitution can do nothing on their own and social processes that give them effect tend to thwart whatever progressive promise they might hold (Bakan, 1997). This is not to deny the possibility that constitutional litigation can get results especially where social injustice is congruent with the liberal form of rights such as discrimination on the basis of colour or gender. Legal scholars can also acknowledge the gap between the words of the constitution and the law's practice. Yet, this paper argues that the constitution and the various laws that supplement it, including education legislation rests on and sustains specific patterns of asymmetrical social relations and political order. The constitution has not been able to compensate for the systematic undermining of ideals of social justice by the routine operation of society's structure and institutions.

Veneration of the law is often possible because of the focus on normative questions within the legal system from a narrow juridical point of view (Mosher, 1997). In the last section of this essay, following Mosher, I will show how attempts to rectify asymmetrical social relations by social movements in South Africa are sometimes reduced to finding solutions within the boundaries of the legal system. Law as a social phenomenon, including the constraints of the wider social structure as well as its ideological and economic dimensions can be easily missed. All too often the laws autonomy from politics and society is the presumption.

Institutions such as the South African Human Rights Commission, the Commission for Gender Equality, the Public Protector and others, for all the good work some of them do, often disguise the vicious nature of society we live in. The discourse of rights, championed as the mainstay of our public institutions and the constitution has often served to promote a fiction (Felice, 1996). Acting as if certain rights exist for all in an equal way inhibits people's ability to recognise when they are in fact, illusory, and why society does not act to protect these rights. A single mother in Soweto compared to a suburban corporate executive cannot be said to have the same power of political persuasion or opportunity. These are real distinctions that give some people advantages and privileges over others. The fiction that promotes the view that real social differences between human beings shall not affect their standing as citizens, allows relations of domination and conflict to remain intact.



Taking Suffering Seriously by William F. Felice comes with recognition that ruling ideology, often in the form of rights, disguises reality, blurs perceptions and creates illusions (Felice, 1996:34). Taking suffering seriously also means taking active steps to disclose the discrepancy between the existing normative framework of society and its reality. It also comes with an understanding that protecting human rights should take into account that the most pervasive and chronic forms of distress are a consequence of economic, social and political structural circumstances that impact upon groups, as well as upon individuals.

This view of collective human rights is opposed to the liberal conception of rights based on the notion that those who succeed in society do so because of their own individual attributes, and those who fail, do so because of their deficits and weaknesses. This view is possible because the philosophical foundation of the dominant human rights discourses sees human beings as individuals instead of as social beings-products of a web relations-social, economic and political, from which social relations arise.

Felice critiques neo-liberalism from the perspective of the collective rights of millions of people around the world trapped in permanent conditions of poverty at the margins of economies (Felice, 1996: xii). These inequalities and injustice makes a mockery of our basic humanity let alone human rights. Falk, in his preface to Felice's book, concurs that neo-liberalism as an operational ideology, despite its pretensions of expediently promoting democracy, is radically inconsistent with the defense of human rights, if human rights are perceived in relation to suffering rather than as 'abstract ground rules governing the relations of individuals to the state' (Felice, 1996:xii).

Pointing to the double standards often employed in human rights discourses and the presentation of values in an apolitical and ahistorical way, the veteran Tanzanian activist and intellectual Issa Shviji (2002:3) writes:

*The setting of human rights standards through international conventions and declarations is itself a very contentious political process. We should be wary therefore of a perspective on human rights which does not treat [it] in the context of history and social struggle.*

Shivji contends that the various conventions of the United Nations and declarations of human rights differentially bequeath rights without challenging the unequal world order and therefore in essence leaving the human rights landscape unchanged.

### **Education Social Movement in the Seventies and Eighties**

In this section I argue that the nature of the negotiated settlement, the continuation of the capitalist character of the state (despite the discourse of human rights and development) and the incorporation of South Africa into a global market economy ruptured the education principles and practices established by civil society in the 1970s and 1980s. Understanding these social processes will reveal how the once hegemonic education vision in the democratic movement has been reduced to mere ‘footprints in the sand’. I refer here, for example, to free quality education at all levels, education with production, participatory democracy, critical thinking for political action and access to higher education for the poor and workers. Also, how traditions of worker education based on collectivist learning were transmuted into competitive individualism, exclusionary stratification and an emphasis on more formal hierarchical forms of knowledge and the notion of improving learning through rationalised learning outcomes (Cooper *et al* 2002). This section concludes with the belief that while radical education praxis has been weakened, it still exists, and its centre of gravity has shifted to the new social movements post-1994.

#### People’s Education

In the 1980s up to the early 1990s the concept of Peoples’ Education, in contrast to the apartheid education system, captured the imagination of many South Africans. It promised liberation from an authoritarian and unequal education system to one which could provide an alternative and a basis for a future democratic system fulfilling the potential of its citizens. It was defined variously as ‘an educational movement, a vehicle for political mobilisation, an alternative philosophy, or a combination of all three’ (Motala and Vally, 2002:174)

A significant influence on and the forerunner to the People's Education movement of the eighties were the ideas and methods of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Freire's ideas were introduced to the University Christian Movement and through it to the South African Students Organisation (SASO) as early as 1970. Although the state banned Freire's books, hundreds of copied versions of *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* were clandestinely distributed at black universities and 'eagerly studied by the young activists of the Black Consciousness Movement' (Alexander, 1990:22). SASO students and others applied Freire's ideas to many literacy and other 'conscientisation' projects in urban townships and rural areas. The appeal of Freire's pedagogy to educational activists and theorists resided in fact that:

*Freire's anti-capitalist social theory accorded with the experience of and the insights at which the liberation movement in South Africa in general and the educationists active in it in particular had increasingly arrived at;*  
*The situation out of which Freire's pedagogy had been formed resembled that which existed in South Africa's ghettos homelands;*  
*Freire's pedagogy method of combining education/culture with conscientisation and politicisation accorded with the views of the BCM and was subsequently adopted by the broader liberation movement.*

The specific organisation of the liberation movement in the late seventies and especially in the eighties as a grassroots movement anchored in groups and projects in the 'community' brought with it an exceptional sensitivity regarding democratic principles. This sensitivity reinforced by Freire's pedagogy became integral to the practice of People's Education.

People's Education was seen as the vehicle for conscientisation, promoting critical thinking and analysis and alternative governance structures in education. Critical thinking in this sense should not be confused with what is traditionally thought of as merely problem-solving skills, in vogue again through Outcome Based Education, serving the post-Fordist production process. Rather, critical in this sense implies being able to understand, analyse and most importantly affect the socio-political and economic realities that shape our lives. The emphasis on democratic governance was expressing in the call for the establishment of Student Representative Councils and

Parent-Teacher-Student Associations (PTSAs). The concept of democracy, access and equity emerged in the call for a unitary anti-racist and 'anti-sexist schooling system, an end to sexual harassment and corporal punishment, better resource provisioning, different curriculum and free compulsory education. From mid-1980s, supporters of People's Education were not only concerned with the transformation of schools; they also provided the impetus in the formation of hundreds of non-government education organisations and also actively challenged academics and the academy around three key areas: 1) accountability within the university and communities around them; 2) implementing People's Education in the universities themselves and 3) support for developing People's Education in schools through the production of alternative courses and teaching methods (Motala and Vally, 2002:183).

While radical interpretations of People's Education remained dominant throughout the better part of the 1980s, liberal views on education gained cachet from the beginning of negotiation between the ANC and the apartheid regime in the early 1990s. The role of civil society organisations and even the language of People's Education become increasingly marginal to the overall project of education change. The discourse and content shifted substantially from radical demands which focused on social engagement and democratising power relations, to one which emphasised performance, outcomes, cost effectiveness and economic competitiveness. Simultaneously this form privileged secretive negotiations (hardly a Gdansk-like transparency) instead of People's Power on the streets and in the classrooms. The reasons for this included the particular interpretations given to equity and redress in the negotiation process and the nature of the participatory process in policy-making.

The National Education Conference (NEC) in 1992 and the establishment of the National Education Training Forum (NETF) in 1993 provide useful examples of how state and civil society organisations began to engage in education policy formation. The NEC, composed of constituencies active in the oppositional activities of the 1980s, attempted to define a policy agenda based on the principles of People's Education, linking the structure and content of education and training to the ideological and political project of civil society, emphasising equity, situating education within a more holistic development framework, including economic restructuring, democratic governance and changing social relations at the school level.

The NETF, on the other hand, while framing its goals in terms of the principles of democracy, inclusiveness, and transparency, in fact often reflected the interest of its broad stakeholder grouping which favoured business and the state. The NETF's two important contributions were the proposed development of qualifications framework, later the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and proposals for curriculum reform. It could also be argued, however, that it supported a technocratic framework for education related to issues of economic growth and human resource development at the expense of addressing issues related to social justice and redress. As Chisholm and Fuller (1996:705) note, 'In the NEC the democratic movement was dominant; in the NETF it was hopeless outnumbered by representatives of the old order'. The NETF represented the principle political agency in the pre-election period. It served to critically weaken and emasculate the radical content of the NEC's broad education agenda.

During the NETF process constituencies were excluded from contributing to the development of a more equitable and effective education and training system. Although this exclusion was not formal, it resulted from lack of resources and planning by organisations that deferred to the ANC. There emerged a clear shift away from civil society's earlier emphasis on changing social relations and bottom-up approach to policy making.

#### Trade Union Education

Cooper *et al* (2002:112) argue that:

*the vision of the meaning and purpose of worker education had not emerged easily – it came out of long years of building organisation and struggle within the labour movement; nor was it easily maintained. Although it gained widespread support during the height of the struggle against apartheid, this vision no longer dominated the labour movement by year 2000. On the contrary, in contrast to the earlier period, it is now based on 'consensus politics' which assumes the essential compatibility of all 'stakeholder' interests.*

Having won some rights for time-off for shop-steward training through recognition agreements, union education became increasingly planned and structured from the early 1980s onwards. A significant feature of this period was the emergence of new forms of worker self-education, in particular, shop-steward councils and all-night seminars known as *siyalala* (Vally, 1994). Important processes of informal education took place in the shop steward councils as worker leaders with experience in building strong shop floor structures in the 1970s passed their knowledge on to the insurgent workers of the 1980s. Demonstrating a strong commitment to trade union education, shop steward councils begin to formalise these learning processes by appointing one worker as an education secretary who was charged with co-ordinating education for the council. Later education committees linked to councils were also formed. All these education initiatives were influenced by the growth of broader political struggle from the early 1980s onwards, and expressed a desire on the part of workers to shape and influence the nature of this struggle. This period saw the growth of militant civic, youth, and student struggles in which workers became increasingly involved. Through their informal learning experience as well as the intensive education carried out in shop-steward councils and through *siyalalas*, worker leaders gained confidence to engage with their unions' intellectual leadership on controversial organisational and political issues.

Unions have been referred to not only as 'school of labour' but also as 'laboratories of democracy', where workers could test out new ideas, arrived at new understanding, and develop and enrich collective practices (Vally, 1994). Grossman (quoted in Cooper *et al* 2002:120) writes,

*Workers searched memory, each other, history, the world, political texts, for ideas and knowledge, bringing everything into their intellectual embrace.*

Workers came up with the concept of 'moving meeting', turning buses and trains into vehicles of mass education to popularise the campaigns. Education work within Cosatu also built on the growing tradition of worker cultural initiatives: at Cosatu's second congress in 1987, there were poetry readings, worker choirs, plays and art exhibitions. The mid - to late 1980s saw the emergence of over 300 cultural locals within the federation and the rapid growth of workers' theatre (Vally, 1994). Worker

plays gave expression to the feelings of alienation of workers in factory conditions and their bitter experiences of racism, poverty and arbitrary dismissals.

During the height of the struggle in the 1980s, the labour movement played an educative role not only for organised workers, but also for many other sections of the black working class. Workers brought to community organisations traditions of participatory democracy, accountability, worker-leadership and mass action as well as a critique of capitalism and a growing vision of a transformed socialist society. The development of its vision of worker education was also closely linked with community and school struggles for a People's Education.

At the very moment at which workers were participating in mass action on a larger scale than ever before in South Africa's history, a very different process was getting under way. By 1988, it was clear that the broad liberation movement was being led to a course of negotiation with the apartheid state. The labour movement came under pressure to review its role, as well as its strategies for change and its vision of the future (Cooper *et al* 2002:123). In line with the newly dominant politics of a negotiated settlement in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the trade union leadership responded by shifting its declared vision from that of opponent and adversary towards a stated goal of 'equal partner' with business and government. This involved participation in tripartite negotiating forums over policy development for a post-apartheid era. Increasingly, the leadership of the labour movement insisted on partnership with the former 'capitalist enemy' and a common commitment to international competitiveness and appeals for foreign investment. These changes were to have two significant kinds of impact on worker education. First, the priorities, form of delivery, and key target audience of trade union education were shifted. Second, the labour movement was to become increasingly involved in workplace training issues guided by a new commitment to increased productivity and international competitiveness (Cooper *et al* 2002:123). This had significant impact on the nature of worker education. Cooper *et al* (2002:124) explain:

*In the late 1980s and early 1990s, unions began to engage in a wide range of policy forums with management and later with the post-apartheid government. They faced growing pressures to produce 'experts' who could engage with*

*management and government on questions of education and training policy that ultimately came to reflect concerns about productivity and profitability. This reflected a worldwide trend to reshape worker education in the light of the new politics of the post-cold war era. Whatever else this involved, it meant a pressure to turn away from the struggle to acknowledge and affirm experiential learning, in favour of the certificated knowledge of 'experts'. Once the knowledge based on certificated expertise was advantaged, it became increasingly difficult to challenge its authority and affirm any other kind of knowledge.*

Crucial aspects of the earlier progressive tradition in worker education were being challenged. This went together with associated challenges. It undermined the notion that worker education was a source of value for the workers' movement and the working class as a whole, not simply an instrument for personal career development. An article in the *South African Labour Bulletin* in 1992 commented on the growing exodus of key trade union leadership from the trade union movement into government or into management, and quoted one worker leader as saying that trade unions were not only 'the best schools of working class' they seem to be the 'best source of trained personnel for everyone else in South Africa' (Ibid.p.124). Whereas earlier Cosatu resolutions on worker's education had stressed its role in liberating the working class, the 1991 Third Education Conference resolutions were far more moderate.

During the 1990s, union education programmes became more directed towards union leadership and full-time staff, with little or no education for the rank and file. This was paralleled by a growing tendency within the unions to formally elect more educated workers to leadership positions resulting in the style, language and setting of education increasingly directed towards this layer of workers. These developments had a particularly exclusionary effect on women workers who are generally less formally educated, and who usually fall into the less skilled categories. It also eroded the tradition of the older generation of workers (often with lower levels of formal education, and less fluent in English) and prevented them from passing on their experience and knowledge.



## **Education Policy and Education Rights after 1994**

A plethora of policies and acts were introduced after 1994 to redress the legacy of disparities and inequalities left by apartheid. The South African Schools Act of 1996 and the National Education Policy Act of 1996 govern the administration of education in South Africa. The South African School Act repealed the many discriminatory education laws that existed under the apartheid education system. The National Education Policy Act is aimed at ‘the advancement and protection of the fundamental rights of every person’ to education as guaranteed in the constitution; the Act empowers the national minister of education to determine national education policy in terms of the principles embodied in the constitution; the Act provides an infrastructure that requires consultation with a wide variety of bodies before determining policy. The government dismantled the pre-1994 education system, consolidating the eighteen segregated departments into one central department and nine provincial departments. The constitution vests substantial power in the nine provincial legislatures and governments to run education affairs subject to the national framework, and each province also has an education department. School attendance is compulsory for South African children from ages of seven to fifteen.

Equity reforms introduced in the late-1990s did appear to try to equalise funding among the provinces, schools and socio-economic groups. The Norms and Standards for School Funding (Department of Education, 1998), was intended to divide the distribution of the provincial departments’ non personnel expenditure between schools. Under these guidelines, schools were ranked on the basis of two factors: the poverty of the school community and the conditions of the school; subsequent resource allocation was based on this school poverty index. The funding principle determined that 60 per cent of non- personnel resources should go to 40 per cent of the poorest schools. Many problems with this policy have been identified elsewhere (see Wilderman, 2001 and Chisholm *et al* 2003).

While the ‘Norm and Standards’ policy does shift funds to the poorer schools, it only distributes on average, 7.8 per cent of provincial education department’s budgets (Chisholm *et al* 2003:765). For Wildeman the aim of the policy was to isolate the

primary beneficiaries, the ‘poorest of the poor’ and increase the ability of the state to hold on to the twin objectives of fiscal discipline and redress.

Relative to schools in other African countries, South Africa has a favourable enrolment of girls although this achievement in the context of a high level of violence and sexual harassment is often nullified. Many education policies in the last decade were formulated under the prevailing assumption that after the 1994 elections the new political dispensation would automatically translate into a better educational system for all- gleaming rhetoric that suggested anything replacing the past was better. Moreover, dissimilar realities of ‘race’, class, gender and geographical location were not factored into the politics behind ‘stakeholder’ composition (Motala, Vally and Modiba in Chisholm *et al* 2003:592). Policy documents reflected a ‘negotiated compromise’- a careful balancing act between contradictory political imperatives, chiefly social justice and economic development. This attempt at consensus without addressing the cleavages in society left an indelible imprint on the evolution of policies.

Those previously involved in education social movements, expected that the new political dispensation would translate into a better and more equitable education system. It seemed almost as if civil society was collectively holding its breath. The new educational laws and policies boosted this hope. The initial hope for change from above was misplaced but by 1998 civil society began to move from a sense of disillusionment and powerlessness to a situation where it tentatively began to reassert itself. The initial impetus for this renewed activity began with the Poverty and Inequality Hearings organised by the South African Non-Governmental Coalition (SANGOCO). Between 31 March and 19 June 1998 over 10 000 people participated in the campaign by attending the hearings, mobilising communities or making submissions.

The Hearings were organised thematically and were held in all nine provinces, dealing with employment, education, housing, health, the environment, social security and rural/urban development. These hearings were supplemented by background papers compiled by NGOs and research organisations. Research focused on the legacy of poverty and inequality in each sector and its impact on people’s lives, the extent to

which current practices and policies contributed to improve conditions, and recommendations on the measures required to assist groups to access their socio-economic rights. The Education Policy Unit (of Witwatersrand University) coordinated the gathering of submissions and served as a resource for the Education Hearings. The Hearings provided concrete evidence that the inability to afford school fees and other costs such as uniforms, shoes, books, stationery and transport were some of the major obstacles blocking access to education. In some cases, parents or even the pupils themselves discontinued schooling as the costs of these items imposed too heavy a burden on the family. The lack of electricity, desks, water and sanitation facilities in schools were also referred to in a number of submissions. Overcrowded classrooms continued to be a standard feature in poor communities. Frustrated by unfulfilled promises, many poor communities, particularly women in these communities, scraped together their meagre resources in order to provide rudimentary education facilities. A random look at some of these testimonies will be useful (Vally in Chisholm *et al* 2003:470-472):

*Annah Mokgabane said that the pre-school in Bofula' is a little shack built by the community. There is nothing that the children can entertain themselves within the pre-school'.*

Adam Dichaba explained how parents were bearing the costs of running the pre-schools:

*We are paying for those teachers because we know the need. The government promised us that it will help us sometime, but it has done nothing thus far.*

Although many hoped that education would provide the key to the door out of poverty, Konela Lekafola speaking for the Free State Unemployed Graduate Initiative (FSUGI) soberly reminded those assembled at the Hearings that thousands of graduates are unemployed and have no employment opportunities. Many people like Johanna Sebetlela expressed the fear that her younger brother would drop out from school because 'so many standard tens have passed but they are just roaming around because there are no jobs.' While FSUGI aims to discourage anti-social acts by getting 'young graduates to assist with voluntary service in the community', Konela

felt at the very minimum they required some form of basic subsistence and training to sustain their activities. In the long-term Konela insisted that 'education alone is not enough. We need a new economic system based on need and not on profit'. After attempting to meet with different government ministries, Konela had come to the realisation that, 'It is not us that cause the problem but government policies and deficits'. In addition to the verbal testimonies, co-ordinators received scores of written submissions from parents, teachers, and school governing body members, early childhood education and adult education and training providers groups. These ranged from carefully worded, logically argued views of research organisations to the poignant testimonies of some of the most marginalised such as child workers and prisoners.

The poor identified a range of obstacles preventing the eradication of poverty. At the conclusion of the nationwide Hearings the conveners arranged a list of responsibilities for politicians, government officials, the private sector and civil society in order to ensure that the fight to end poverty becomes the nation's priority. For government officials and politicians these included reversing the neo-liberal macro-economic strategy, increasing social spending and meeting basic needs; renegotiating the apartheid debt and releasing this money for poverty eradication as well as treating individuals and their concerns with respect and dignity. Unfortunately the Hearings arrived at a cul-de-sac in the absence of grassroots community organisations to take the demands forward.

Three years after the Hearings, the Department of Education's School Register of Needs Survey (Department of Education, 2001) which quantifies the provision of all infrastructures for South Africa's schools continued to show that adverse conditions persist and in some cases have even increased. It estimated that 27 per cent of schools had no running water, 43 per cent no electricity, 80 per cent were without libraries and 78 per cent of schools had no computers; 12 300 schools used pit latrines and 2 500 schools had no toilets at all. In schools that did have toilets, 15,5 per cent were not in working order. Schools requiring additional classrooms numbered over 10 700. According to the Survey, the number of state-paid teachers decreased dramatically by 23 642 while school Governing Body-paid educators increased by 19 000. Clearly, a labour market involving the purchase of teachers has begun as the state is determined

to reduce personnel expenditure as teacher shortages become more severe- a result of the HIV/AIDs pandemic and previous rationalisation policies.

A consequence of this trend, while saving the state bill of many millions, is the increase in disparities and inequality between schools. It is largely rich schools that can afford employing additional teachers to supplement the number of state paid educators. While the argument that the state's savings on personnel costs automatically translates into an increase in non-personnel expenditure is tenuous at best, it is a certainty that the practice places additional burden on communities to carry the overall costs of education. The maintenance of school buildings has also seriously declined as schools prioritise other areas such as the payment of utility bills. In many instances School Governing Bodies, contrary to the vision of the role of PTsAs in the 1980s, have become 'glorified fund-raising committees'. They are constantly under pressure to increase user fees and at times illegal prevent children from poorer backgrounds access to schools.

Additional concerns relate to the dire lack of retention of students and the state of adult education. According to the Department of Education's statistics only 40 per cent learners who enrol at entry level (Grade 1) reach Grade 1. Ivor Baatjes (2003) poses the rhetorical question:

*Can we really talk about a democracy when almost 10 million of our adult population remain poorly educated and lack the basic knowledge and skills necessary for active participation in the society?*

Adult basic education continues to receive just above one per cent of the education budget. Most NGOs that worked in this field no longer exist because of lack of funding and, as a result, public adult learning centres are poorly supported.

While previously Technical and Further Education would have catered almost exclusively as a lever for the disadvantaged, they are now course-designed with specific niche training needs in mind. In this conventional human capital explanation, knowledge is valued according to its potential economic outcome and education becomes purely instrumental to economic production and growth. And life-long

learning is a signifier for life-long adaptation to the 'needs' of the global economy. The message to workers is about a skill crisis rather than jobs crisis. 'Get retrained and jobs will come', is the message from management and various government training bodies set up by politicians eager to be seen to be addressing job creation. The reality, of course, is that alarming levels of unemployment continue. The assumption is that unemployment and low standards of living is a result of the inability of workers to keep up with technological change and that socio-economic development is contingent on the 'productive' role of education.

Education is seen as an economic investment in which students and workers are value added products and a means by which the economy is to be improved. Education and training are transformed into a panacea for economic performance as it is assumed that investment in human capital and technology will automatically increase productivity on the shop floor. It also conveniently transfers the responsibility for unemployment to individual deficiencies, implying that lack of employment is a reflection of a person's skill level and abilities instead of an intrinsic deficiency of the economic structure and how employment is distributed.

At the same time, macroeconomic policy as expressed in GEAR means the marketisation of education, public-private partnerships, fiscal austerity, budgetary constraints, cost recovery and cuts to education and other social services. Much of the costs of education are passed on to parents and students. Policy in South Africa sees the education and training system as a vehicle to improve productivity of the workforce and hence the competitiveness of the South African economy, while simultaneously providing rhetorical support for redistribution and redressing historical imbalances. It has been shown elsewhere that these two goals do not necessarily complement each other (Samson and Vally, 1996).

### **The New Social Movements and Education**

The lack of public educational provision and educational inequalities prompted the Education Rights Project (ERP), formed by staff from Education Policy Unit together with activists from various social movements to comment that:

*The right to basic education and adult education for those from working class communities is no more than a mere constitutional declaration.*

The difference though with the period of the Poverty and Inequality Hearings was the presence of nascent but increasingly expanding social movements. These included the Anti-Privatisation Forum (APF), the Landless People's Movement, the Anti-Eviction Campaign and the Concerned Citizen's Forum. The ERP worked closely with these movements in its five campaign areas namely, the cost of education, infrastructure and facilities, sexual harassment and violence, farm schooling and adult basic education.

Like the earlier People's Education Movement, the ERP's participatory research initiatives with the various emerging social movements and community organisations is a form of social accountability. It asserted the need for civil society to have access to collective self-knowledge independent of government in order to hold the state to account for its policies. It is used as a social check on the state's 'numbers' and 'statistic' which are forwarded by state functionaries as 'official justification' for its policies, and in this instance, the right to education. This critical research according to Kincheloe and McLaren (1998:264) 'becomes a transformative endeavour unembarrassed by the label "political" and unafraid to consummate a relationship with an emancipatory consciousness'. Those in the ERP initiative see their research as 'the first step towards forms of political action that can address the injustices found in the field site or constructed in the very act of research itself' (Ibid.).

During a process of collecting testimonies detailing the views and experiences of learners, teachers and community activists about their local schools, cold statistical data on school fees, transport, feeding schemes, child labour, infrastructure and facilities were given new meaning. The troubles and struggles of individuals and communities to educate their young in very trying conditions, to make the hard-won constitutional right to education a reality, are vividly portrayed in these testimonies. For instance, in Gauteng, a number of communities linked to social movements have designed or are in the process of designing and collecting data about their communities on basic issues such as the amount of school fees charged, cost of uniforms, books and transport, provision of meals in schools, household incomes and

violation of their rights because of their inability to pay fees. With the assistance of the ERP, the data is analysed and then presented at community meetings where a discussion is held regarding actions to be taken to deal with the problems identified.

The importance of such a research process is that it promotes democratic and co-operative practices in the production and designation of what constitutes knowledge, demystifies the research and facilitates a social and active response to complex policy issues. The outcomes of the research inform the design of a campaign aimed at improving local education. This will ultimately contribute to democratising the debate on, for instance, the impact of government budgets on local education as communities themselves will have the data to challenge or support assertions made by the state or other organisations about provisioning for education.

Issue papers on the five campaign areas have been written and debated in the ERP and its reference group consisting of researchers and social activists working in education. An issue paper on the fifth campaign area, adult basic education, is currently being prepared. In this way the project ensures that scholarship makes a contribution to dealing with social challenges and that, without romanticising the capacity of communities to conduct research, that communities themselves profoundly inform, direct, own and use research produced through their efforts.

Throughout the country, initiatives such as the ERP in alliance with social movements have created a groundswell of support for free quality education. Due to the extensive lobbying and campaigning of social movements, and unfavourable press coverage of the costs of schooling, the government initiated a Ministerial Review of the Financing, Resourcing and Costs of Education. In September 2002 the Government set up a reference group of 27 members, consisting of a core team from the DoE, and “prominent economists and managers from inside and outside government” (DoE, 2003a: 8) as well as the World Bank.

Although the purpose of the review was to “stimulate and inform constructive discussion” on how government schools are resourced, the Review Report was formulated amid numerous complaints by labour and community-based organizations, who charged there was no participation by any representatives of the labour



movement's education unions, school educators, governing bodies and community organizations (APF submission, April 2003). In addition to the lack of participation by key groups, critics argued that the Review was not adequately publicised to encourage wide ranging responses and the time frames for submissions did not allow for democratic processes to run their course.

Beyond the limitations in democratic participation, several submissions of the Review by civil society organisations raised additional key criticisms. Perhaps most striking is how the Ministerial Review addressed non-personnel funding norms (which consist of only 5-10% of the budget) whilst remaining largely silent on the other 90%-95% of the budget which addresses post-provisioning personnel expenditures. This omission, SADTU argued had major implications for redress and equity in the system (SADTU response submission 2003). Despite its recognition of some major strides in shifting non-personnel funding towards the poorest schools, SADTU also assailed the report for the 'unreliable data' upon which the allocations were based and called into question a formula which has tended to penalize poor communities with a reasonable existing infrastructure. SADTU describes "large disparities between provinces in per learner non-personnel spending" and vastly different poverty profiles ... which it claims ends up "robbing the poor to pay the very poor". (Ibid, p2).

The ERP in its submission pointed to some of the other erroneous assumptions put forward by the Review and vigorously criticized the skewed use of research data to write off claims of public dissatisfaction with school funding and deleterious conditions. For example, according to the report, opposition to fees only comes from a minority (15%) of parents. For some, serious concerns were raised over the Review's use of the particular survey that suggested parents found "school fees reasonable". After conceding that the survey question was ambiguous (it was unclear whether the question addressed the user fee system or fees at the school in question) the Review revised its claim to suggest that there was a 'sense of satisfaction of parents with the system' (DoE, 2003a:88). Participatory research done by the Education Rights Project (ERP) indicates significant dissatisfaction with the school fee policy, with most participants calling for the abolition of school fees. (ERP Narrative Reports 2003-2007).

Motala (2003:4) also calls into question the lack of specificity of the report. She writes: “While a number of extremely important issues are raised, the specific legislative, resourcing and governance mechanisms of how they are to be addressed are not made clear.” The policy adjustments proposed by the Review are not linked to time frames or resource commitments. It is understandable therefore that some have cynically speculated that the report should be read for its political currency shortly before the general election and an “attempt to head-off and manage the growing grassroots discontent instead of a realistic endeavour to achieve redress and equity” (ERP submission 2003).

The ‘closed budget approach’ in the Review was also criticised. The premise of this approach is that the available resources for public schools are essentially fixed and the only way to consider what priorities should be addressed and what administrative systems to put in place is within the parameters of this closed budget. In contrast to the constitutional imprimatur on the state to: “respect, protect, promote and fulfil the right to a basic education, whatever the budgetary implications this approach might be” (ERP, 2003:3). Hence, the Review provides no questioning of fundamental policy choices underlying the approaches to government funding of schools or the user fees policy:

*The Review attempts to shift blame around key problems to local communities. This is akin to blaming the victims themselves instead of self-critically taking responsibility for the many failures in the education system. For example, problems schools face in paying their utility bills is largely and strangely ascribed to "runaway consumption of water and electricity", this in a country where 43% of schools do not have electricity and 27% have no water. The latter deficiencies are not even addressed. Instead, the Review suggests the favoured neo-liberal prescriptions such as pay-as-you-go electricity meters and vouchers for those schools that have electricity. The Review states that a variation of this option would be to explore "the possibility of rationing electricity supply eventually, so that ESKOM would cut electricity after the monthly consumption limit had been exceeded and then to re-connect it at the beginning of the next month" (ERP submission 2003:2).*

The ERP also found fault with further class - based assumptions that 'school fees serve an important accountability function' (DoE 2003a: 98) and the ultimate dismissal of governmental responsibility, the Review suggests that funding and resources are not the problem and argue that "certain schools perform well despite deplorable conditions" (DoE 2003a:66).

There were some in academia though who argued against the scrapping of school fees. In an article originally titled 'On the constitutionality of school fees: A qualified defence,' Fleisch and Woolman critique an ERP issue paper on school fees by reiterating arguments contained in the Ministerial Review, they write: "...empirical evidence suggests that school fees do not constitute a significant barrier to access, cannot be organically tied or causally linked to an inadequate basic education and would not meaningfully enhance human dignity if eliminated" (2004:111). They also argue that a fees based system encourages community engagement and a vested interest in parents and learners participating in the schooling system. Based on these arguments it would not be churlish to suggest that the second part of their paper's title should be amended to read 'a qualified defence for privilege'. This thesis has already provided evidence that the user fees based system was consciously decided upon in order to placate white and middle class interests that they would not lose control of their schools. A number of studies, including a few mentioned in this paper, clearly disputes the Ministerial Review's assumption that school fees and secondary costs are not a significant barrier to education.

Fleisch and Woolman also accept the Ministerial Review's view that there is a large variation between the performances of poorly resourced schools, and conclude disingenuously that therefore resources alone do not determine educational outcomes. The latter statement is of course not disputed; what the ERP research challenges though is the assertion that school fees are not a barrier to accessing schooling. The fact that certain schools are able to perform well despite "deplorable physical conditions" (DoE 2003a:66) should not, however, be used as a punitive reason for failing to resource all schools adequately and redressing the apartheid legacy. As an aside it should also be pointed out that the 'basic minimum package' arrived at in the Ministerial Review was set on the experience of atypical schools that perform well

with low levels of resources or as it was stated, “well performing but poor primary schools” rather than representative poor schools.

In June 2003, recommendations from the Ministerial Review led to a ‘Plan of Action for Improving Access to Free and Quality Basic Education for All’ (DoE 2003b).

Briefly the ‘Plan’s’ proposals were that:

- From 2004 the poorest 40 percent of schools (schools in quintile 1 and 2) would not charge fees;
- A proposal to revamp the exemption system, to include ‘hidden’ costs and uniforms and to make exemptions automatic where families qualify for welfare grants;
- Government can only afford a R500 basic minimum package per average learner;
- A basic minimum package for the poorest schools to provide for non-personnel, non-capital goods costing between R600 to R1000, well above funding levels for poor learners in several provinces;
- Provincial shortfalls in complying with the new national minimum norms and new resource targeting tables can be remedied by re-prioritising within existing budgets.

Some of the Plan’s proposals have been promulgated in an Education Laws Amendment Act (The Presidency, 2006). The latter Act calls for an annual list of schools designated ‘no fee schools’ through the Government Gazette.’. A more fundamental problem which will exacerbate inequalities between fee-rich and poor schools is that while poor schools are prohibited from raising fees, middle and high income schools are permitted to top-up state funding to an unlimited level.

Finally, there was no serious engagement with alternative positions such as free education through progressive taxation. This approach is in line with the National Association of School Governing Bodies (NASGB) proposal, which is not to encourage an exodus to rich schools, but to “demand a complete and radical transformation in the resourcing of education that will ensure access to quality education for all” (NASGB submission 2003). Rather than tinkering with the various

equity formulas for redistribution (to allegedly favour the poorest) it was suggested to radically change the funding pie. Put plainly in the words of the NASGB:

*It is our view that only a progressive policy of taxation that favours the poor, enabling the state to access much more financial resources from the wealthy, will enable an education system of free education, the scrapping of school fees and the redistribution of resources from rich to poor. (NASGB submission,2003:4).*

## **Conclusion**

Many of the new social movements characterised by mass mobilisation are employing the methods of critical pedagogy. As Modi (2000:23) puts it,

*their process is Freirean reflection and action, their direction is horizontal, their leadership is internal and their end is an equitable economic and social whole in which the individuals are one active subject.*

The new social movements in South Africa are evolving and remain uneven in many respects. Much of their activity has been spawned by the new conditions of accumulation that lie outside the ambit of the trade union world and its style of organising (Desai, 2002).

Greenstein (2003:39-48) argues that the affiliates of the Anti-Privatisation Forum/Landless People's Movement use the discourse of rights mainly in order to bolster political mobilisation and legitimise public action, rather than as a serious legal argument. In terms of the activities of these organisations he also points out an internal contradiction where activists use illegal tactics in the fight to assert legal rights. These tactics, Greenstein argues, has yielded limited results and have not moved beyond the boundaries of protest and pressure politics. For Greenstein the Treatment Action Campaign through the 'legal activist route' instead poses a fundamental challenge to the way power is reconfigured in post-apartheid South Africa. Greenstein is surprisingly sanguine about the ability of judges and law courts

to correct the unequal distribution to power in society. Ollman's sardonic riposte to those who believe in the impartiality of the Constitutional Court is appropriate:

*The Supreme Court is where the Wizard of Oz, with a wave of his Constitutional wand tries to turn a land bleeding with capitalist excesses into a Walt Disney fairy tale about 'the rule of law'. The purpose of it all is not justice but legitimation (Ollman, 2001:7).*

Furthermore, Mosher (1997:617-626) writing about the 'harms' to social movement by dominant lawyering practices in Canada finds resonance today in South Africa. Problems which clients present to lawyers are quickly conceptualised and categorised as 'legal' problems. Avenues open for the resolution of any given problem thus, not surprisingly; appear to lie within the boundaries of the legal system. In practice, lawyers and sociologists like Greenstein rarely acknowledge the possibility of non-legal forms of action and remedies. For Mosher,

*... the lawyer's world is professionally centred and dominated; some might say myopic. Part and parcel of this tendency of lawyers to look to the law and the legal system is the belief that legal remedies are both attainable and efficacious.*

Another feature of lawyering is its commitment to instrumentalism. Perhaps precisely because lawyers believe in the efficacy of legal remedies, their practices are dictated by efforts to obtain them. Within this outcome orientation (wherein the world of possible outcomes is circumscribed by the notoriously narrow range of judicial remedies), 'success' is understood to be the securement of a favourable result. This is true both of individual client representation and of instances of 'interest group' representation, wherein groups seeking social change have optimistically (but often unrealistically) presupposed that the securement of a favourable judicial result would lead to substantial change in the lives of their members. Over four years since ruling in favour of the housing needs of the poor, the conditions of residents in the celebrated Grootboom case has not improved. Doctrinal juridical analysis rarely opposes or attempts to critique the social, economic and political conditions underpinning legal doctrine, legal process and particular legal results.

Bakan's (1997:152) central claim in his book on the Canadian Charter of Rights (eerily similar to our own Bill of Rights) is that constitutional litigation and rights discourse are blunt tools for redressing social injustice. His conclusion is appropriate for this report:

*The struggle for social justice is much larger than constitutional rights; it is waged through political parties and movements, demonstrations, protests, boycotts, strikes, civil disobedience, grassroots activism, and critical commentary and art.*

Throughout the country, initiatives such as the ERP and the Campaign for Global Education have created a groundswell of support for free quality education. In the course of the ERP's work with communities we have heard numerous stories of hardship, dashed expectations and often of an uncaring, aloof and callous bureaucracy. Yet increasingly, silent apathy and hopeless resignation is giving way to creative initiatives and courageous attempts by young people, their parents, some teachers and education officials to challenge the prevailing system. More and more people are realising that ultimately real education transformation will depend on the capacity of the poor and their supporters in different sectors to mobilise, coordinate their struggles and become a powerful social movement.

#### Endnotes

1. The demands for review of funding came from a variety of civic and social organisations-chief among them were civil society groups, student and community organisations who were key in boycotting school fees; the Global Campaign for Education; the Education Rights Project; and the South African Democratic Teachers Union.
2. It is worth underscoring the role that social movements played in pressuring the government for a comprehensive review, particularly because their absence from the Review Communities and its deliberation is striking.

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## **Chapter 6: Learning from and for Community: Participatory Action Research and Post-Apartheid Education<sup>7</sup>**

Fourteen years after the first democratic elections in South Africa there exists amongst critical educators a realization that public school reforms that are directed at the educational system alone are not adequate. It is abundantly clear now that successful education reforms must be based on an understanding of the contextual and structural character of poverty and inequality. These cannot be resolved alone through education policy reform - including the equalization of educational finance across the system - because of the externalities which constrain the conditions for educational access and most importantly, educational quality. Solutions also require the voice, knowledge, experience and information gathered by locally-based social movements.

Educational interventions remain important but are partial in relation to the social outcomes of education and the goal of social transformation – i.e. the transformation of South African society from amongst the most unequal societies on earth to a more equal society. What is required is a broader and more purposeful approach to social reform and redistributive strategies, a clearer orientation to the underlying values of society, to issues of wealth and income distribution and social empowerment and the relationship between a purposeful state and civil society. Only through true civic engagement and social dialogue around public purpose is education likely to deal with the deeply entrenched social pathologies which affect South Africa and other developing societies.

More important perhaps is the suggestion that a large part of the problem confronting community social movements is the inability of decision-makers to construct a proper dialogue about the complex relationship between the delivery of services and the persistence of poverty. The approaches adopted by some of the grassroots initiatives mentioned in this article speak to possibilities where poverty and oppressive

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<sup>7</sup> Vally, S and Spreen, C.A. (2008), 'Learning From and For Community: Participatory Action Research and Post-Apartheid Education', *Journal of Learning*, Vol. 15, Issue 2.

conditions are pervasive and emphasizes the importance of community participation in campaigning for access to quality education and other social goods. The research constitutes a critique of more conventional approaches to reality, in which the certainties of academic approaches appear to be taken uncritically, and debilitate the communities of the poor and oppressed.

In criticising the dissonance between academic research and action Jean Dreze (2002: 20)<sup>8</sup> has this to say:

social scientists are chiefly engaged in arguing with each other about issues and theories that often bear little relation to the world... The proliferation of fanciful theories and artificial controversies in academia arises partly from the fact that social scientists thrive on this confusion (nothing like an esoteric thesis to keep them busy and set them apart from lesser mortals)... To illustrate, an article in defense of rationality (vis-à-vis, say, postmodern critiques) would fit well in a distinguished academic journal, but it is of little use to people for whom rational thinking is a self-evident necessity – indeed a matter of survival... It is no wonder that ‘academic’ has become a bit of a synonym for ‘irrelevant’ (as in ‘this point is purely academic’).

Dreze is at pains to show that he is not dismissing the importance of academic rigour but that scientific pursuit can be enhanced even further if it is grounded in “real-world involvement and action” (Ibid: 21). Traditionally, learning and academic research has been largely disdainful of the importance of the voices of marginalized communities. Their rich and valuable experience is equated with ‘anti-science’, its traditions, history and culture is effaced from public view and all of it is regarded as irrelevant to policy analysis. Removing the experience of those most affected by policy from the framing and discussion of “solutions” has meant a reliance on conceptions which have no orientation to the relevance of local histories, culture, tradition and value systems. In effect, policy decisions rely in the main on contested bodies of data, poor conceptions of issues such as poverty and inequality, and a-historical, decontextualized political and economic agendas that manipulate the outcomes in the interests of particular ideological interests.

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<sup>8</sup> Dreze is a long-time collaborator with Amartya Sen on initiatives relating to public action by community groups in India.

South Africa has a proud history of resistance in and through education. This resistance has generated popular epistemologies and pedagogies against racial capitalism. The ‘peoples’ education movement’, ‘worker education movement’ and ‘popular adult and/ or community education movement’ (see Cooper et al, 2002 and Motala and Vally, 2002) are examples. This praxis, relative to the struggle against apartheid has diminished but still exists, and its centre of gravity today has shifted to the new independent social movements as they resist the impact of neo-liberalism and increasing poverty and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa.

This article discusses the interaction of ‘popular’ research and resistance in poor and working class communities. It uses participatory action research as an epistemological challenge to the established and formal endeavours of the social sciences. We concur that “those who have been most systematically excluded, oppressed, or denied carry specifically revealing wisdom about the history, structure, consequences, and the fracture points in unjust social arrangements” (Cammarota and Fine, 2008:215). We present a case for popular research in informing public policy, and conclude with a discussion of what socially engaged research suggests for democratic transformation in post-Apartheid South Africa.

Over the last few years activists in South Africa have participated in a range of research projects in education and other areas of social policy. They have deliberately conceptualized and conducted research in and through communities where the challenges of poverty, oppressive conditions and social exclusion are pervasive. In doing so, they have explicitly set out to stimulate discussion about these conditions and their underlying causes, to mobilize responses to these and to raise public consciousness about the issues confronting such communities. Importantly, academic and other research institutions are increasingly trying to promote and advance their civic engagement and public purpose by strengthening their connection between research, education and social needs. This has led to the emergence of stronger links between researchers based in academic institutions and community activists. This spotlight on democratic participation and purposeful civic engagement has stimulated the development and uses of research in communities, having direct effects on the accountability of public representatives about the use of public resources and by implication on how academic scholarship is viewed (Motala, 2007). This article

builds a case for the praxis of socially-engaged research and participatory action methods as legitimate, rigorous and relevant social-scientific endeavours.

A number of reasoned arguments have been advanced to support such a perspective about the development of research. Perhaps the most important of these is the realization that often social research “objectifies” communities and reduces complex theoretical and practical issues to data gathering and often produces outcomes which are patronizing and even offensive to such communities. This is largely because, especially in regard to communities which are bedevilled by egregious poverty and its social effects, research regards such communities as being in “deficit”, devoid of history, knowledge, thinking and struggle. The solutions to “their problems” lie in the perspective of such research, in some or other external intervention based on the advice of researchers and consultants whose expertise is relied upon to make “recommendations” about the “problem”. Often this means the intervention of researchers and consultants with little or no orientation to the deeper social characteristics of such communities, the diversity of its composition, its history, language, culture, traditions and experience of resistance, and even less to its reservoir of knowledge, experience and social consciousness.

These arguments are not to be conflated with arguments about local approaches to knowledge, as we argue later, but point to the critical importance of historical and contextual approaches to social analysis and for a better understanding of the character of such communities. They argue the importance of transcending the limitations inherent in superficial survey data and the case for richer and complex qualitative data which moreover recognizes the categories of gender, social class, ‘race’ and identity necessary for meaningful social analysis.

While the surveys referred to in this article, carried out mainly by the communities themselves, do not pretend to resolve the complexities of research, they are nevertheless important illustrations of the attributes of such research and its importance to learning and contextual analysis. They demonstrate both the context within which particular social questions arise and to assert the importance of adducing qualitative information as complementary to the value of data adduced through surveys and its associated methods. Such a complementary approach is important for

the production of evidentiary data which has both qualitative and quantitative attributes having value both to social analysis and practice. Not only is such analysis important to enhance theory and the explanation of social phenomena but it is also instructive for developing strategies to counter the effects of social policy and practice on communities struck by poverty, exploitative and oppressive social conditions.

Such approaches to social enquiry based on solidly grounded information and knowledge can also have value for engaging with the policy and decision-making agencies of the state and with public representatives. The research relies on the assumption that it has value for the mobilization of strategies and for planning and organizing of local education and other campaigns to both inform local action and democratize issues relevant to educational struggles in communities.

The further assumption of such research is that in order to resist the power of dominant discourses and the practices based on these, communities would need to form autonomous organizations representative of their interests and seek greater public accountability from state agencies and decision-makers. In South Africa, despite the promise of post-apartheid reform and the positive gains made through it, democratic accountability through open engagement about how public choices are made remains a serious problem. At this time the almost continuous cycle of sometimes violent public protest action taking place across the country, arising from issues of 'service delivery' is, despite the denials of some bureaucrats and politicians, a concrete expression of the failure of such accountability and democratic engagement.

As this article is being written, many poverty stricken neighbourhoods in South Africa have become engulfed in an orgy of appalling xenophobic violence directed against fellow Africans from other countries, who, fleeing from countries beset by civil war, despotic government and poverty are perceived to be taking the meagre resources available to a frustrated local population. Eschewing romanticism, Howard Zinn, writing of another context although apposite here, sagaciously counsels, "...the victims, themselves desperate and tainted with the culture that oppresses them, turn on other victims" (Zinn, 2004:2). As an aside, this violent intolerance toward the 'other' is also a sad commentary on the failure of numerous formal policy texts,

constitutional reforms and new institutions meant to usher in a more caring and compassionate society. Included in this is the new curriculum, ostensibly, infused with social justice concerns. Rather it has been left to the new social movements and the trade union movement to mobilize ordinary citizens against these xenophobic attacks. Many of these organizations, including the ones mentioned below have rapidly, without state assistance and often in the face of police provocation staged marches of many thousands in the main centres of the country and provide ongoing relief to those considered foreigners.

The lack of service delivery around education, housing, health (particularly the HIV and AIDS pandemic), electricity, sanitation and water has resulted in townships and informal settlements becoming “hotbeds of activism”; in a written reply to a question posed in the National Assembly, the Minister of Safety and Security conceded that there were over 10 000 protests in the years 2006/2007 (National Assembly, 2007). Out of these sustained protests, mass organizations such as the Landless People’s Movement, the Anti-Privatisation Forum, Anti- Eviction Campaign, the Treatment Action Campaign and the Abahlali Base Mjondolo (Shack-dwellers movement) have been strengthened. The new social movements have increasingly allied themselves with local education resistance. The praxis of uniting social movements, activists and scholars through institutionally based programs such as South Africa’s Education Rights Project (ERP), discussed later in this paper is the outcome of historic relationships and grass-roots struggles and their longstanding commitment and engagement addressing issues of social change. This alliance also entails a democratic commitment to knowledge and for whom social research should be undertaken and in this sense the focus of research is not solely on the social movements but also on explicating the social relations of struggle in which these movements are engaged.

Over the last few years there has been an abundance of data pointing to the high - even rising - levels of social inequality, income poverty and unemployment. The quality of jobs is also declining as permanent secure employment is replaced by precarious and vulnerable forms of intermittent employment at low pay and with little or no benefits. Many, like COSATU, prefer using the more accurate expanded definition of unemployment in South Africa which is 41% (COSATU, 2006). Unemployment is highly racialised, gendered and unevenly distributed by region. Of



the unemployed over 70% are under the age of 35 (Ibid). Black women and those in rural areas fare worse in comparison to men and urban areas.

According to a United Nations Development Programme report released in May 2004, nearly 22 million South Africans (48,5 % of the population) fell below the poverty line- earning R354 a month - compared to 20,2 million or 51% in 1995. (UNDP, 2004). With Brazil, South Africa has the most unequal income distribution in the world. For Black households who constitute the great majority of the population, the Gini coefficient rose from 0.467 to 0.501 even while there was an improvement in these indices for other racial groups (Bhorat and Kanbur, 2006). Equally disturbing statistics exist in respect of income poverty and many other human development indices including health, sanitation and child mortality. HIV and AIDS have ravaged many working class communities as pharmaceutical companies block the use of generic medicine and the state drags its feet in rolling out antiretroviral drug treatment.

Given these realities, social and other opportunities for mobility and progress are severely constrained for a significant section if not the majority of people. The pervasiveness of this reality and the sense of disillusion and disempowerment about it inspired the need for the re-insertion of the voice of those who felt most marginalized by the inability of the new state to address its pressing needs. The initial impetus for this activity was provided by the Poverty and Inequality Hearings organised by the South African Non-Governmental Organization Coalition (SANGOCO). In 1998 over 10 000 people took to the streets, participated in public hearings and made submissions about their experiences of continued poverty and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa. A more recent publication about community based struggles for social change speaks more fully about the many and accumulating struggles of researchers and social activists engaged in and with communities in issues beyond educational struggles (Ballard, et al, 2006).

Importantly the hearings focused on the legacy of poverty and inequality in each sector and its impact on people's lives; the extent to which current practices and policies contributed to improve conditions and recommendations on the measures required to assist groups to access their socio-economic rights.

The hearings brought public attention to these issues nationally and exerted pressure on government officials and politicians to re-examine and reverse contested strategies such as the government's neo-liberal macro-economic strategy (GEAR-Growth, Employment and Redistribution) and its negative effects on the promise of providing for basic needs and services. A consequence of the macro-economic strategy of the government in which costs containment was the key, was the emergence of privatization of public services in a range of areas including education, health, housing and even the supply of water. This was simultaneously a concrete expression of the increasing grip of human capital theory conceptions of development applied to the public schooling system and the extension of these through stringent budgetary constraints and fiscal austerity allied to marketization, 'public-private partnerships', cost recovery and cuts to education and other social services.

Over the past few years a new layer of cadre are insistent that there must be alternatives to neo-liberalism and resistance against the status quo in South Africa is growing. New independent grass roots social movements have formed and are establishing continuity with past movements. They are beginning to expose the hollowness of electoral promises around social delivery and corruption and have taken the lead in resisting neo-liberalism in all spheres of life.

Subsequent to the poverty and inequality hearings of 1998, the staff from the Education Policy Unit together with activists from various social movements formed the ERP in 2002. The ERP worked closely with these movements in its five campaign areas namely, the cost of education; infrastructure and facilities; sexual harassment and violence; farm schooling and adult basic education.

Like the earlier People's Education Movement (See Motala and Vally, 2002), the ERP's participatory research initiatives with the various community organizations, is a form of social accountability. It asserted the need for civil society to have access to collective self-knowledge, independent of government, in order to hold the state to account for its policies and in this sense an incitement to 'return the gaze' (Bannerjee, 1995). It is used as a social check on the State's "numbers" and "statistics", which are forwarded by state functionaries as "official justification" for its policies, and in this instance, the right to education. According to Kincheloe and McLaren (1998:264) this

research “becomes a transformative endeavour unembarrassed by the label ‘political’ and unafraid to consummate a relationship with an emancipatory consciousness”.

Those in the ERP initiative see their research as “the first step towards forms of political action that can address the injustices found in the field site or constructed in the very act of research itself” (Ibid). This is learning and research which challenges the binary opposition and Manichean divide between ‘academic’ and ‘activist’ as identity categories. The ERP like the practices of many of the new social movements, uses the tools of research to “systematically increase that stock of knowledge which they consider most vital to their survival as human beings and to their claims as citizens” (Appadurai, 2006: 168). In doing so they “de-parochialise” research by breaking the monopoly of experts and specialists on the means of knowledge production and grounded movements engage in the “capacity to aspire” - linking individual problems to the larger social, economic and political forces and endeavouring to transform these (Ibid, 176).

During a process of collecting testimonies detailing the views and experiences of learners, teachers and community activists about their local schools, cold statistical data on school fees, transport, feeding schemes, child labor, infrastructure and facilities were given new meaning. The troubles and struggles of individuals and communities to educate their young in very trying conditions, to make the hard won constitutional right to education a reality, are vividly portrayed in these testimonies. In addition to collecting personal testimonies the ERP designed tools to collect local quantitative data about the cost of schooling (e.g. school fees, books, school uniforms), violations of education rights, and basic household and community data.

The importance of such a research process is that it promotes democratic and co-operative practices in the production and the designation of what constitutes knowledge; it demystifies the research and facilitates a social and active response to complex policy issues. The outcomes inform the design of a campaign aimed at improving local education. This ultimately contributed to democratizing the debate on the impact of government budgets on local education, as communities themselves now have the data to challenge or support assertions made by the state or other organizations about provisioning for education.

The DRD research was conducted over the period 2003 -2005<sup>9</sup>. In brief, it consisted of house-to house surveys where in-depth interviews were conducted by local youth activists with community members. Members of the community were engaged throughout the development of the research process, its methodology and design and in carrying it out. With the assistance of the ERP, the data was analyzed and then presented at mass community meetings where a discussion was held regarding actions to be taken to deal with the problems identified. Here, democratic discussion and debate was critical to influence social policy and practice and the choices made by government and eventually led to important concessions by the state regarding the costs of school transport. It also reinforced the view that communities themselves required the data necessary to challenge or support assertions made by the state or other organisations about provisioning for education. What was realized moreover was that until communities are able to act autonomously, powerful interests opposed to the interest of working class communities will continue to be dominant in the making of social choices and its underlying values.

Durban Roodepoort Deep (DRD), also known as Sol Plaatjie, is a community living in what previously was a hostel or compound<sup>10</sup> for mine workers of the Durban Roodepoort Deep Mines. The hostel is approximately five kilometres from downtown Roodepoort, and about a kilometre from a relatively new settlement known as Bramfisherville in Soweto. These residents had come to DRD about January 2002 when almost 2 500 families were evicted by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council from an informal settlement known as Mandelaville in Soweto. Mandelaville has its genesis in the Soweto Uprising of 1976. The site was a municipal building razed to the ground by students in 1976 and from about 1977 a handful of homeless families and individuals began occupying the burnt down building. The residents had moved from Mandelaville on the assurance that DRD would be a temporary stop on the way to more permanent and properly serviced arrangements, including housing through the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (directed

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<sup>9</sup> The details of the methodological approaches, research design, a detailed report of the data collected and its limitations are not dealt with in this paper and are available by reference to the Report done for the purpose. See Vally and Ramadiro, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> These constituted dormitory bed-spaces for migratory male workers under the apartheid system and ensured direct controls over the lives of these workers.

especially at poorer communities). In the first few weeks of the settlement, nearly as many people were moving out and as were moving into the settlement owing to dire conditions like the absence of basic amenities shops, schools, clinics and transport, and rampant violent crime.

Approximately eight hundred families stayed, in the hope that while they waited for the promised houses, school transport would be provided and a temporary clinic would be built. From the preliminary data gathered through a door-to-door census of 763 households in the area, the community evinced some clear characteristics:

- The average household income was R894 [\$1 equaled 7 South African Rand at the time of going to press] per month. 55% of households reported at least one member of the household in formal employment, 21% of them were employed on a part time basis, and only 5% of households had at least two people in formal employment. One hundred and twenty six households reported that apart from income earned through employment, they did not receive any other income.
- Just less than fifty per cent of households were paying for child school transport. These households paid an average of R115 per month for each child, and more than fifty per cent of households had more than one child, paying up to R230 per month in transport fares.
- The average school fees in DRD were R201 per month. There is large variation in the amount of school fees households pay reflecting the number of children of school-going age in each household: in general, households with at least two children at school paid an average of R288 on school fees per month. The most cited reasons for not attending school were the cost of school fees and transport.

In February 2004, the Education Rights Project, the Anti-Privatization Forum and an Education subcommittee formed by the community of DRD co-hosted a workshop for caregivers with children of school-going age. The workshop sought to stimulate discussion about the right to basic education, to gain insight into the community's view of the relation between education and imaginations for community development, to identify key barriers to the right to basic education, and to develop plans around

local action. Most importantly the workshop was also used to consider the methodology for community participation and the nature of the data required to investigate issues relating to the right to basic education.

The group identified several barriers to basic education. Firstly, the existence of undemocratic and unrepresentative school governing bodies was noted by many. It was reported that members of a school board of governors tended to be drawn from caregivers who could afford to pay school fees. The consequence of this is that the views and interests of very poor parents were marginalized. Secondly, the cost of schooling was seen as particularly onerous. For this group the burdensome costs were, in the following order: scholar transport, school uniforms and school fees. Thirdly, the use of corporal punishment in schools was pervasive. Despite the prohibition against corporal punishment the participants believed that this practice was still common, especially in primary schools. Finally, internal community migration and forced removals exerted a negative effect on schooling. Many participants reported that their children had lost school years as a result of poverty induced internal migration from city to city and of forced municipal removal of shack dwellers by the state.

Community members also reflected on the conditions which could improve the quality of schooling. Their proposals included the construction of a school within a reasonable walking distance from where children lived, state provision of at least one meal a day for school children, and free stationery and textbooks for all grade levels. Suggestions about how to confront and deal with these barriers included the need for all adults in the community to inform themselves of the education rights enshrined in the constitution and other legislation. A call was made for a public meeting with local education officials where the community could raise its concerns, suggestions and demands. The media was identified as a potentially useful partner both showing the poor conditions under which the people lived and as means of increasing pressure on the government to act. Above all else the group emphasized the importance of independent self- organization, mobilization and public protest by the community itself. In their reflections in the middle of 2005, after much struggle and protest, members of the community said:

We do not have free and quality education in this community. Whatever gains we have made for our children around school transport and the erection of the primary school is what we have fought for ourselves<sup>11</sup>.

We are concerned about the safety of our children. I cannot say that we are happy about the school that has been recently erected near DRD because the fact is our children have to walk some distance to this school. They [i.e. government] must not pretend that they brought this school because they wanted to; they are responding to the pressure of our children. The reason why I do not approve of the school being outside this camp is that this is not a safe place and children can get murdered or raped on their way school. Even more important, if this school was inside this camp we could meet and talk to the people that are teaching our children – at the moment they are strangers to us. .... here, in this camp, we are expected to produce doctors, lawyers, ministers...you name any top position...presidents, who can understand the situation of the poor<sup>12</sup>.

I really do not think that the right to education applies to my community – because children that need to be at school are not at school because they cannot pay school fees. It really does not matter that there is a law about school fees exemptions because schools are unwilling to implement it<sup>13</sup>.

I am not sure why some children do not go to school. It may be because the parents do not have money for food and therefore cannot concentrate in class because they are hungry. With regard to adults I know that many of them, just like me, would like to go to school but there is no opportunity, however, to do so in this community<sup>14</sup>.

I think that a reason for why some children are not at school has to do with the eviction from Diepkloof. People lost birth certificates and report cards. These are difficult to get back when you do not have money to make endless trips to the Department of Home Affairs<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Percy Khoza, community leader and school bus organizer 10/12/2005 (translated from isiZulu)

<sup>12</sup> Tata Rabbi, elderly community and religious leader, 09/12/2005 (partially translated from isiXhosa and isiZulu)

<sup>13</sup> Daniel Dabula, Deputy Chairperson Mandelaville Crisis Committee, 07/11/2005 (translated from isiZulu)

<sup>14</sup> Dudu Dube, leader of a women's forum, 09/12/2005 (translated from isiZulu)

<sup>15</sup> Percy Khoza, community leader and school bus organizer 10/12/2005 (translated from isiZulu)

These views of members of the community should be contrasted to the ‘deficit’ view of an elected representative who appears callous, aloof and indifferent:

I do not know why children are not at school. I think you should ask their parents they might be in a position to answer your question. There are buses and there is a school nearby – what more do you want from government? If they do not want to take a bath and go to school, how am I supposed to answer that question? I do not know whether or not buses will be provided for the children next year; if they are not provided I would have little influence on that issue because it does not fall under my department<sup>16</sup>.

The case study above provides an example of the effects of the policy choices of government – especially through its orientation to the costs of education. Despite clear evidence that school fees constitute a real barrier to the right to education for poor working class communities, until very recently government remained steadfast about a fee policy which inevitably led to the exclusion of many children from schools. The reason for this seems to be the unbending resolve of policy makers to pursue conservative macroeconomic policies in which the choice of austerity measures outweigh the imprimatur of the rights enshrined in the Constitution. These measures, whose inspiration lies largely in the monetarist discourses, policy advice and practices of agencies like the World Bank, trump all other considerations regardless of history and context.

The implication of this is that the right to education will remain largely unrealized for the rural poor and working class children and systemic inequalities and disparities will continue to exist for both girls and boys not only because of factors endogenous to the educational system itself but because of the larger and external constraints on the exercise of the right to education. Despite the greater educational access attained in South Africa, compared to most of the African continent, education inequity continues to be a fundamental and systemic characteristic of the system.

This research is consistent with the results of other studies and confirms the reality that poverty and poor public services provision in poor communities are inextricably

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<sup>16</sup> Councillor P. M., [name in the possession of the author] ward 17, 07/11/2005



linked. In discussions about the context of changing societies in the developing world very little attention, if any, is paid to the importance of the experiences and knowledge that lie deep in the reservoirs of the lived reality and reflection of these societies. Even less attention is paid to the constitutive struggles they undertake to preserve and protect their histories, cultures, traditions, religious, languages and epistemologies. Yet the history of ignoring such epistemologies is replete with the skeletons of failed “development” and other projects based on the conceptions, theories and practices that are totally inappropriate for the possibilities of genuine development. Despite this reality the failed discourses of modernization continue to be purveyed as salient to the conditions prevalent in structurally underdeveloped social formations and strong global institutions continue to put huge resources into these failed modes of “development”.

Our intention here is neither to romanticize the value of local, traditionally based, indigenous or other epistemologies nor to argue the case for a postmodern discourse. We are also mindful of Hobsbawm’s (2004: 5) view that:

The major immediate political danger to historiography today is “anti-universalism” or “my truth is as valid as yours, whatever the evidence.” This naturally appeals to various forms of identity group history, for which the central issue of history is not what happened, but how it concerns the members of a particular group. What is important to this kind of history is not rational explanation but “meaning”, not what happened but what members of a collective group defining itself as outsiders – religious, ethnic, national, by gender, lifestyle or in some other way - feel about it. This is the appeal of relativism to identity-group history.

To enable a reasoned enquiry about “what happened” in the first place, it is necessary to seek recognition of the heritages, normative value systems, legacies and experiential knowledge of communities which have hitherto been ignored in the construction of their destinies. It is, as Cabral (1973) said, necessary to “return to the source” even while we acknowledge that such sources too must invariably contain the paradoxes of local and regional histories, the markings of its own internal struggles and of its engagement with other knowledge, both the richness and the poverty of some of its expositions, the claims of social hierarchies and the diversity of its voices.

Yet this experience and knowledge too has an insistent right and a claim to relevance and legitimacy because of the directness and testable authenticity of the basis of its experiences.

Rarely is it understood that these voices too could make a real contribution to the discourse of democratic development, to finding solutions, through engaging in participatory research about the nature of the issues confronted by communities. The role of these voices as potential agents for social change is wholly ignored and this has consequences for how research is conceptualized and practiced. Yet the rise in new social movements taking up the newly formed democratic spaces - through a praxis based on an understanding of participation that speaks to peoples lived experiences - has created a groundswell of support for transformation around education. Through dialogical research partnerships apathy and hopeless resignation is giving way to creative initiative and courageous attempts by young people and their communities to continue the long South African traditions of democratic engagement from below.

Although many of the social movements are not always able to provide sophisticated alternatives to the status quo, it is precisely the constituencies they represent that have brought about the most significant changes to South Africa. Popular energies, which once sustained the powerful pre-1994 education social movements, are again resurgent. These new social movements have not only established continuity with past struggles but have also shed the disarming and misplaced hope that formal political and constitutional change is sufficient to realise socio-economic and democratic citizenship.

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## Chapter 7: Citizenship and Children's Education Rights in South Africa<sup>17</sup>

In the book 'Upside Down', the South American writer Eduardo Galeano in his usual lyrical style, writes of the abominations confronting children today as he divines another possible world, one which has its priorities right, a world which should be put 'right side up' (Galeano, 1998). He explains how today's world hands down a death sentence to thousands of children every hour through hunger and disease. Galeano laments that the poor are mostly children, and children throughout the world are mostly poor:

Among the system's hostages, they have it the worst. Society squeezes them dry, watches them constantly, punishes them, sometimes kills them; almost never are they listened to, never are they understood. They are manual labour on farms and in cities or domestic labour at home, serving whoever gives the orders. They are little slaves in the family economy or in the informal sector of the global economy where they occupy the lowest rung of the world labour market (Galeano, 1998, p.13).

South African children are not an exception. Nearly 60% (11 million) of all children in South Africa live in dire poverty on less than R200 per month (Berry and Guthri, 2003). For these children, the noble and admirable words in our Constitution that grandly proclaims that every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care and social services is often hollow. In Southern African countries a new cruel twist has been added through the HIV/AIDS pandemic, infecting and affecting millions of young lives.

Karl Eric Knutsson (1997) in his seminal book *Children: Noble Causes or Worthy Citizens?* also makes the salient point that if we wish to understand the situation of a substantial number of children today, we need to look at childhood in all relevant contexts, including processes which influence the conditions of childhood. For

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<sup>17</sup> 'Citizenship and Children's Education Rights in South Africa', 2005, *Journal of Education*, no 35, pp.31-47

Knutsson, the starting point is the environment of ‘many poverties’. The landscape of these poverties embraces knowledge, health, and the lack of power over one’s own life, social relationships, deficient habitats and the poverty of damaged environments. Knutsson emphasizes “these poverties contribute to the poverty of confidence and the poverty of self-respect and dignity” (Knutsson, 1997, p.20).

In 1998, the Poverty and Inequality Hearings (Chisholm, Motala and Vally, 2003) heard verbal testimonies and received written submissions that provided new insights into the problems confronting children in South Africa. It provided evidence that the inability to afford school fees and other costs such as transport, learning materials and uniforms, were major barriers to formal education for a significant number of families. In one of these submissions, Marcus Solomons, once a political prisoner on Robben Island, and now working for the Children’s Resource Centre, argues that children learn primarily through play and yet that activity “which is essential for the development of the child, is for the majority of the children in South Africa, accomplished in the most unhealthy, increasingly dangerous and most unstimulating of environments” (Chisholm, Motala and Vally, 2003, p.472).

Solomons points out that the Cape Peninsula has twelve impeccably groomed and manicured golf courses ranked amongst the best in the world. Yet there are no parks for children on the Cape Flats that even come close to the quality and facilities of these golf courses. He indignantly concludes that “what this in effect means is that the average white South African male in the Cape Peninsula (with a few black males joining them of late) has much more playing space than the average black South African child. We cannot think of a better example to demonstrate the immorality of the situation in this country at present” (Chisholm, Motala and Vally, 2003, p.472).

The historical neglect of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in South Africa continues ten years after the first democratic election. According to the South African Human Rights Commission’s Fifth Economic and Social Rights Report, “There is nothing in [the Financing Review of Public Schools] on the funding of [ECD] for ages 0 to 6. Currently only 13% of children have access to this crucial level of education, which, according to international research, is vital in preparing learners for

subsequent success. [Ad hoc] pilot schemes and vague undertakings made by the DoE to comply with the Education for All targets are not enough” (SAHRC, 2004, p.28).

Many studies have revealed the pedagogical importance of pre-primary education and the correlation between its absence and school failure, dropout and high repetition rates (see for instance Halpern and Myers, 1985; International Development Research Centre, 1983). The lack of access to quality ECD not only impacts negatively on children’s development, but also on the ability of the primary caregivers (usually women) to pursue their own income earning, educational and other activities. Despite this understanding, provinces continue to devote meagre resources to ECD. It is also unconscionable that the previous minister of education, Kader Asmal, in his Tirisano statement of educational priorities, ignored ECD. The relegation of ECD was consistent with Asmal’s confident assertion that, “We in the Ministry are convinced that success in our new policy areas such as ABET and ECD depends much on our success in getting basic education right. We must concentrate on the schools . . .” (ANC, 1998, p.12).

Many thought that Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Development (DoE, 2001a) heralded a new dawn for ECD. A critical analysis of this White Paper is thus necessary.

### **Education White Paper 5 on Early Childhood Education**

This White Paper suggested a national schooling system of provision based on a Reception Year for children aged five. A small community-based component was also mooted. Subsidies would be allocated on the basis of 70% of the cost per learner of public primary schools or 54% of the cost per learner in public secondary schools. The White Paper also proposed that all children entering Grade 1 by 2010 would have participated in an accredited Reception Year programme.

In a comprehensive analysis of the White Paper and the policy process leading up to it, Porteus (2001) argues that an unresolved tension between two models of ECD provision existed from the beginning of the formal policy process. These models are:



- Community-based and multi-aged, based on integrated intersectoral provision, and
- School-based emphasizing the provision of a Reception year for one age group.

For Porteus, these two models represent profoundly different ways of conceiving of ECD services. She also questions the way in which the decision to base ECD provision largely in schools and around one age group was made. Prior to the White Paper, a national audit to quantify the scope and nature of ECD service provision and a national pilot project based on the audit was embarked upon.

Porteus points to various conceptual weaknesses in the audit and implementation limitations in the pilot. The auditing process focused on verifying the existence of sites from outdated lists rather than aggressively seeking to identify services previously not registered. The audit found that 83% of the 23 482 sites were community based, and almost the same number multi-aged (3-5 years). A mere 17% were school based (DoE, 2001a). Despite these findings, the National ECD Pilot Project was restricted to considering reception year services for five-year-olds and minimal state funding. The criteria for choosing sites in the pilot excluded most services in informal settlements and rural settings. Those sites that were not registered with the government and those that did not have at least 50% of children in the 5-6 year-old age range were eliminated from the pilot. Also, sites that received welfare grants and were part of the nutrition scheme (targeting the lowest income groups) were excluded. Despite the research bias in favour of Reception year programming, over a three period most provinces agreed on the importance of the community, intersectoral support, the non-institutional nature of quality services, multi-age models and the central role of community practitioners.

Contrary to these findings, the ECD policy as conceptualized in White Paper 5 revolves around Reception Year provisioning. This prompted Porteus to speculate that a decision was made before the research was complete and that the proposals in the White Paper undermine “. . .the best advantages of community based centers . . . (the mobilization of community energies) . . .” and embraces the worst aspects of community ECD provision “. . . the low costs (reflecting neglect rather than purpose) . . .” (DoE, 2001a, p.16). The latter refers to the most problematic aspect of the community based sector, that of systematically underpaid practitioners. The White

Paper also does not explore alternative models such as the Impilo Pilot Project in Gauteng, which put forward a financially viable proposal for intersectoral, and multi-age community based family and child centres, providing a model for comprehensive ECD service provision - a model which UNICEF's 'State of the World's Children Report' saw fit to recognize.

### **Education White Paper 6: Special Education-Building an Inclusive Education and Training System**

Published in July 2001 this White Paper (DoE, 2001b) was preceded by a National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training and a National Committee on Education Support Services. Based on deliberations by these bodies, the Education Ministry released a Consultative Paper on Special Education in 1999. White Paper 6 is informed by various submissions made as a result of the Consultative Paper. The proposals in White Paper 6 are directed toward establishing an inclusive education and training system providing more support within mainstream schools for learners with mild to moderate disabilities. Such 'full-service' schools will be phased in over time, beginning with the districts involved in a national district development programme. The intention is to convert, in a phased way, approximately 500 out of 20 000 primary schools to full-service schools. It is envisaged that learners who require low-intensive support will receive this in ordinary schools and those requiring moderate support will acquire this in full-service schools. Those who require highly intensive support will continue to receive this in special schools.

Although White Paper 5 mentions a 'special programme' targeted at four year-old children from poor families and/or infected by HIV/AIDS, White Paper 6 is silent on this issue. This is a serious omission given that studies have shown the vulnerability of children below the age of five. It is estimated that the infant mortality rate below five will more than double by 2010 to stand at 99,5 per 1000 (Berry and Guthri, 2003).

Despite the vision of an inclusive system which goes beyond narrow categorisation of medical disabilities and learning needs arising from physical, mental or neurological impairments, and now encompasses socio economically deprived learners, its

implementation is in doubt. Implementing the limited proposals of White Paper 6 still entails considerable costs. Funding implications include the recruitment of about 280 000 out-of-school learners, sustained advocacy, the provision of necessary physical and material resources to convert schools to 'full-service' and, most importantly, the requisite professional development of staff. Given the emphatic dismissal of additional funds to the national education budget in the fiscus, a fully inclusive system is not feasible in the short term. The Department thus proposes a time frame, which will only fully realize its objectives by the year 2021.

Evidence in other countries that have moved toward integration and inclusion suggest that these policies have not produced the kind of changes envisioned (Tshoane, Tleane, Vally and Jansen, 2001). Nor have they sufficiently satisfied the disability rights movement, who see the changes as piecemeal and limited primarily as a result of insufficient resources to accommodate students with disabilities in regular classrooms. Also, the focus of attention is the individual child and not on the education system as a whole, which perpetuates disadvantage. Failure to address these issues results in depoliticising education reform and converting decision making into technical problems to be resolved by experts. These issues are even more acute in South Africa where general inequality is rampant and schooling even for 'able' learners perpetuates unequal social relations which shape and sustain injustice.

### **Citizenship in South Africa: legislation and policies**

Since 1994 a plethora of policies such as the two White Papers discussed above, and legislation have been formulated and which speak to issues of children's human rights and democratic citizenship. While I outline some of the egregious policies that encapsulate the official conceptualization of citizenship, I examine whether these notions address the power relations that saturate society and its educational provisions, the 'storylines' that help shape who we take ourselves to be and become and whether our differences become inequality and hierarchy (Walker, 2001).

Education policies in South Africa, to a lesser or greater extent and through various permutations, encompass and reflect elements of social justice, the need to be internationally competitive (with emphasis on science and technology to develop

requisite 'productive' skills) and the imperatives of fiscal restraint (expressed as cost-containment measures and the increasing marketisation of education). These directly relate to global trends and have the effect of undermining social justice in education often framed in a human rights and democratic citizenship discourse.

A founding principle of our Constitution is common citizenship and the equal enjoyment of an array of citizen rights including freedom of belief, religion and opinion, expression, assembly and association. A range of socio-economic rights including education and the rights of children are emphasized. One year after the first democratic elections the White Paper on Education and Training promised the overhaul of curricula. The new curriculum emphasizes "common citizenship" and the learning area 'Human and Social Sciences' aims to produce "responsible citizens in a culturally diverse, democratic society". A specific outcome in this learning area is active participation in the promotion of a democratic, equitable and just society. Another is that learners will be helped to exercise their responsibilities and rights as citizens.

Enslin (2003) writes that schools are to contribute to citizenship and democracy education through more than the formal curriculum. The South African Schools Act provides for democratic governance of schools with educators, learners and primarily parents working in partnership with the state in deciding the policies and rules that govern their schools. Also relevant to the preparation for citizenship was the initiative of the Minister of Education that established a working group on Values in Education in February 2000. It identified six core values to be encouraged in learners: equity and equal rights, tolerance, multilingualism, openness, accountability and social honour<sup>18</sup>. Based on a report of this group, a Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy was issued the following year by the Department of Education. The Manifesto articulates a framework for values in education which is both attentive to citizenship and strongly focused on the constitution.

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<sup>18</sup> Although the working group was circumspect about the dangers of a xenophobic nationalism and a narrow patriotism, it saw the need to celebrate national trappings such as the flag, anthem and coat of arms in order to build a common identity. It also made the controversial recommendation of a weekly pledge of allegiance at school assemblies (since discarded). Besides being uncomfortably reminiscent of Republic Day vows, the bland pledge might have reduced the intention and substance of the working group's sentiments to mere ritual without meaning.

Enslin's analysis does not take into account the disjuncture between the policy as text and the reality as lived. Furthermore, a few educationists have compellingly shown how Curriculum 2005 has worked "counter to its transformatory social aims" (Harley and Wedekind, 2004, p.211). I support the view of Apple and Beane who write that the most powerful meaning of democratic citizenship is formed "not in glossy political rhetoric, but in the details of everyday lives"(Apple and Beane, 1999, p.120). For instance, while School Governing Bodies are portrayed as organs for participation in local, democratic citizenship, the reality is that the decentralizing function of these statutory organs has become a burden for poorer parents.

School Governing Bodies (SGBs) face an invidious situation. To protect the revenue-raising power of the school, it is in their interest to minimise the enrolment of non-paying pupils. For schools serving impoverished communities, the burden of establishing, retrieving and exempting parents from paying fees is particularly onerous. SGBs have become cost and budgeting centers. Many parents on these bodies view their role as co-opted and glorified fund-raisers rather than co-decision makers in educational matters. Many point out that the state is shedding its responsibility for the provision of education and transferring it to the SGBs. Recent amendments to education laws, and developments in the provision of educators confirm this view.

Allowing exemption from paying user-fees to some parents is generally fraught with many complications. Some of these include the fact that procedures involved in obtaining the exemption are often cumbersome; the School Governing Body is often unco-operative, resisting the loss of (scarce and valuable) income; and parents are reluctant to seek rebates as they fear that their children might be ostracised or victimized. Although the South African Schools Act and the Admissions Policy for Ordinary Public Schools make no provision for free basic education, they nevertheless prohibit the turning away of learners whose parents cannot pay, even while these parents can be sued for non-payment; preventing learners from sitting for exams; withholding the reports of learners; excluding them from social and cultural activities at the school; or discriminating against them in any other way. Mandla Seleokane exposes some of the problems associated with this approach.

First it requires a lot of courage to parade one's poverty, and it borders on the insensitive to expect people to. Part of the argument for enforcing socio-economic rights is precisely that poverty erodes the victim's dignity and sense of worth. To say that people will only access education for free if they can show that they are poor is out of synch with the rationale for having a justifiable system of socio-economic rights. The approach we have requires people to parade their poverty, the very thing that socio-economic rights are meant to protect them against (Vally, 2002, p.6).

Not only are there various illegal sanctions imposed on poor parents but many simply refuse to forego their dignity, since a condition for receiving an exemption from paying school fees depends on demonstrating their poverty. It is no accident that the National Department of Education's (NDE) Report to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) attributed the high drop-out rate partially to poverty. According to the NDE, while about 1.3 million learners enrol every year for school in Grade 1, only about 570 000 – fewer than half – make it through to Grade 12).

While the infusion of human rights, social justice and conceptions of democratic citizenship in the new curriculum are positive<sup>19</sup>,<sup>2</sup> the reality is that under conditions where teachers are not provided with adequate training and resources to sustain this initiative, it is akin to providing teachers merely with 'a lamp and three wishes'. It is clear that the conditions and context for effective implementation of both the new

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<sup>19</sup> The Wits Education Policy Unit (EPU), South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), Centre for Education Policy Development, Evaluation and Management (CEPD) Development, Evaluation and Management (CEPD) submission to the committee that reviewed Curriculum 2005, is also pertinent in its contention that "there is a danger that teachers can practice *laissez-faire* curriculum development which pays little attention, compromises or even excludes content related to human rights and social justice" (2000, p.2 of submission).

Suggestions by the Wits EPU/SAHRC/CEPD submission around content prescription on human rights education and a compulsory anti-discrimination component in pre-service education and in-service courses were not engaged with. For the Wits EPU/SAHRC/CEPD (2000) the practices of human rights education should be:

enabled both through a cross-curricula approach and a dedicated learning area. Given our historic context, human rights education should not be diluted into soft curriculum options, but rather practiced within a strong enabling framework. The two approaches reinforce and are complimentary to each other and also reduce the possibility of marginalizing the field. We might reach a stage in our future where the need for a dedicated area will be obsolete, but for now it is imperative that we maximize the entry points for the practice of human rights education into the formal education and training sector.

curriculum and values in education are not in place in most schools. The rationalization of teachers and the decentralization of the financial affairs of schools have aggravated the extreme resource shortages and the lack of teacher preparedness.

### **Human rights and education**

The human rights approach to education requires recognizing education as a fundamental right that gives rise to governmental obligation to respect, ensure, protect, and promote that right. Rights-based education entails safeguards for the right to education, human rights in education, and the advancing of all human rights through education. National and local governments have the duty and obligation under international human rights standards to guarantee that education is available, adaptable, accessible and acceptable. Accessibility encompasses three dimensions. It includes economic and physical accessibility as well as the repeal of discriminatory measures and barriers to education, implying, *inter alia*, that education institutions should be within reasonable proximity and should be affordable. One of the mechanisms to create equal opportunity is to make education compulsory and free. Acceptability means that functioning education institutions and programmes have to be available in sufficient numbers. It also implies that institutions and programmes should have buildings to afford protection from the elements, adequate sanitation facilities, clean drinking water, trained teachers, teaching materials, libraries, and laboratories. Both these guarantees of accessibility and acceptability do not fully exist in South Africa. Much research over the past few years has shown how the user fees funding mechanisms at schools serve as exclusionary devices for huge numbers of young people (see for instance Vally, 2002).

The Department of Education's own School Register of Needs Survey (2001c) also shows that the guarantee of accessibility does not fully exist. The Needs Survey released at the end of November 2001 estimated that 27% of schools have no running water, 43% have no electricity, and 80% have no libraries. Only about 8 000 out of over 27 000 schools in South Africa have flush sewer toilets while close to 12 300 schools use pit latrines and 2 500 schools have no toilets at all. Even in schools that have toilets, 15.5% are not in working order. Schools requiring additional classrooms

number over 10 700. The Survey also revealed that the number of state-paid educators has decreased dramatically by 23 642 while School Governing Body paid educators have increased by 19 000. Clearly a labour market involving the purchase of teachers has gained momentum as the state is determined to reduce personnel expenditure, and teacher shortages become more severe as a result of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and previous rationalization policies. A consequence of this trend, while saving the state a salary bill of many millions, is the increasing disparities and inequalities between schools. It is largely schools that serve richer communities that can afford employing additional teachers to supplement the number of state-paid educators. The survey also showed that the number of schools that reported weak or very weak buildings increased from 4 377 in 1996 to 9 375 in the year 2000. Transport to and from schools remains a serious concern for learners in the rural areas. Provinces with a high number of rural schools, such as the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo have thousands of learners who walk for long distances. It is not uncommon for learners to walk for 10-20 kilometres to get to school (Vally, 2002).

The human rights framework also recognizes the link between the right to education and other human rights. This is because education operates as a multiplier, enhancing the enjoyment of all individual rights and freedoms where the right to education is effectively guaranteed, while depriving people of the enjoyment of many rights and freedoms where the right is denied or violated. The quality of education, particularly in countries like South Africa is also a human rights issue. For instance, while the high enrolment rates in South Africa are positive, this is eroded by the conditions of schooling for many young people. To put it starkly, getting young people to school is important but does not make sense if the young women who get there are then raped. Also, the high enrolment rate does not reveal the ability of the system to retain learners.

### **Human rights and democratic citizenship**

The interrelationship between education and democratic citizenship becomes even clearer when it is looked at from a human rights perspective. At the most basic level, economic and social rights have both direct and indirect effects on democratic citizenship. They have direct effects in that they ensure minimum equality of access to



civil and political rights for all citizens. Any significant denial of the necessities of life (such as education or employment opportunities) involves a diminution of citizenship for those so denied, both in itself, and by impairing their capacity to engage in civil and public life on the same terms as others. Thus, social and economic rights should be seen as necessary conditions for citizens to exercise their civil and political rights.

In an insightful analysis of South Africa's macroeconomic strategy and its implications for human rights and democratic citizenship, Oupa Lehulere (1998) makes the point that:

we are presented with a one-way traffic: free markets produce democratic freedoms, but the democratic processes of society must not interfere with the markets. Instinctively and subconsciously, we shy away from a critique of the impact of GEAR-type macroeconomic strategies on first generation rights because we reproduce the assumptions of the dominant paradigm about free markets and freedom.

Lehulere emphasizes that the relationship between first generation or political and civil rights, and second generation or socio-economic rights, must be asserted in a fundamental manner. He believes that the obstacles for the achievement of socio-economic rights begin of necessity to undermine first generation rights. He argues, for instance, that the decision-making processes that led to the adoption of neoliberal policies had to be insulated from mass pressure and therefore needed to be secretive and undemocratic. The fact that GEAR and neoliberalism have corroded and continue to corrode South Africa's democratic institution can lead to many turning away from democratic institutions and cultures. Gear's failure to deliver on socioeconomic rights is, as it turns out, its greatest blow to first generation rights.

South Africa's negotiated settlement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Bill of Rights clauses in the Constitution and the establishment of Chapter Nine institutions like the South African Human Rights Commission, the Commission for Gender Equality, the Public Protector and others have provided a fairy tale façade often serving to disguise the often vicious nature of the society we live in. This reality

is obscured by the language of rights that mask privation by presenting values that are unattainable for the majority. These values are then meant to be the pillars upon which our society is constructed. Deprivation of the right to eat, work in a dignified way and the right to shelter, health and education surely nullifies the illusions of employment equity, equality and freedom. Acting as if certain rights exist for all inhibits peoples' ability to recognise when they are in fact, illusory, and why society does not act to protect these rights. A single mother in Soweto compared to a Sandton corporate executive cannot be said to have the same power of political persuasion or opportunity. These are real distinctions that give some people advantages and privileges over others. The fiction that promotes the view that real differences between human beings shall not affect their standing as citizens, allows relations of domination and conflict to remain intact.

Felice (1996, p.34) recognizes that “ruling ideology often in the form of rights, disguises reality, blurs perceptions and creates illusions”. It therefore becomes vital to disclose the discrepancy between the existing normative framework of society and its reality. This realization comes with an understanding that protecting human rights should take into account that the most pervasive and chronic forms of distress are a consequence of economic, social and political structural circumstances that impact upon groups, as well as upon individuals.

This view of collective rights is opposed to the liberal conception of rights based on the notion that those who succeed in society do so because of their own individual attributes and those who fail to do so because of their deficits and weaknesses. This view is possible because the philosophical foundation of the dominant human rights discourse sees human beings as individuals instead of as social beings – products of a web of relations: social, economic and political from which social relations arise.

Falk, in his preface to Felice's book, concurs that neo-liberalism as an operational ideology, despite its pretensions of expediently promoting democracy, is radically inconsistent with the defence of human rights, if human rights are perceived in relation to suffering rather than as “abstract ground rules governing the relations of individuals to the state” (Felice, 1996, p.xii).

Conventional wisdom asserts that education can serve as the life raft to rescue people from the sea of protracted poverty. A colder and more simplistic extension of this theme contends that in post-apartheid South Africa, opportunities abound and the poor have only themselves to blame. This ‘blaming the victim’ or deficit argument accepts uncritically the prevailing rhetoric of political liberty and fails to comprehend the obstacles of what Amartya Sen calls, substantial “unfreedoms”. While conceding that individual agency is central to addressing deprivations, Sen argues that there is deep complementarity between individual agency and social arrangements. It is the argument of this article that while enthusiasm for education abounds amongst the poor, various social and economic relations, influences and factors prevent the overcoming of deprivation. This, despite progressive legislation and our Constitution that guarantees the right to basic education and democratic citizenship.

At the beginning of this paper, Galeano’s quote referring to the children of the world ended with the lines “almost never are they listened to, never are they understood”. In South Africa today, some are beginning to listen and understand. A recent children’s participatory process facilitated by the Alliance for Children’s Entitlement to Social Security (ACCESS) established that the most common concerns of vulnerable children are hunger and the inability to pay school fees. The problem is particularly stark for those who live in compromised home environments, children with disabilities and chronic illnesses, those living on the streets, in informal settlements, children of farm workers, refugees and those affected by HIV/AIDS. The plaintive voices of children, collected during the ACCESS research are extremely suggestive of the “unfreedoms” confronting the poor:

The teachers shout at you. They say that we cannot sit on the seats at school because we don’t pay school fees. The teachers like to swear at us. They don’t have a good way of approaching children. They keep on teasing us about the school fees. It is not nice because we also like to pay, we just don’t have the money.

The big challenge in our school is the pen, crayon, etc. If we don’t have these things we are not allowed to come to school. Teachers beat us for that. Our

teachers don't understand that we don't have money. Our parents and aunts also shout at us when we ask them to buy things for school.

I will be happy if I can have money for transport because I am far away from school. I walk a long distance to school and I pass next to the dangerous place and I walk a long distance to school.

My problem is I don't even have a chance to read my books. After school I go to work. When I come back from work I already feel like sleeping and I just sleep because I am tired. I wake up late. I am always late here at school. I've never been early. Another problem is that I am always tired, I am always tired.

My problem is that I don't have parents. My parents are no longer living. So I don't get things the way I used to when they were still living. Even the money that I work for I give my sister to go to school with. She goes to school far away and needs money for transport. Then I end up getting these few cents.

We lived in a good house in Dobsonville. I lived with my mom and my two brothers and it was nice until my mother lost her job. She disappeared for a few weeks. I needed bus fares and fees for school. I stopped to go to school totally because my mom wasn't there and we lost the house, we lost everything. We moved to this one roomed house because it was the only thing we could afford. I was feeling so bad, I was thinking of committing suicide. I had the whole plan of how to kill myself. We lost that house and had to move to the shelter here in town. (Shirin Motala, ACCESS Board Member.

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Throughout the country, initiatives such as ACCESS, the Education Rights Project, and a number of new social movements have used the democratic space available today to increasingly create a groundswell of support for human rights in education. The praxis of these organizations is based on an understanding of democratic citizenship that speaks to peoples' lived experiences. In my interaction with people involved in the ECD sector, numerous accounts of hardship, dashed expectations and encounters with

an uncaring, aloof, and sometimes a callous bureaucracy are often mentioned. Increasingly though, silent apathy and hopeless resignation is giving way to creative initiative and courageous attempts by young people and their parents to continue the long South African traditions of democratic participation from below. More and more people are realising that ultimately, redressing the historical neglect of ECD and addressing the landscape of 'many poverties' will depend on the capacity of the poor and their supporters in different sectors to mobilize, co-ordinate their struggles and become a powerful social movement.

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## Chapter 8: The School-Community Nexus in South Africa<sup>20</sup>

‘Race’, class, gender and spatial inequities were the bedrock upon which the development of apartheid capitalism was predicated. These elements continue to remain tightly woven into social and economic relations impacting on the school-community nexus. The adoption of a neoliberal macroeconomic framework in 1996 (Vally and Spreen, 2006) by the new government, has compounded unemployment which today stands at 41% . South Africa's Gini coefficient index - which shows the level of income inequality - stood at 0.679, overtaking Brazil as the country with the widest gap between rich and poor (Pressly, 2009). This inequality is complicated by extreme levels of violence and the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic which have ravaged South African communities and schools over the last decade and a half. In this article we interrogate the historical and political dimensions of social service provisioning and its link with public education and suggest that a non-commodified relationship between schools and communities is essential to turn the situation around.

According to the newly formed Public Participation in Education Network (an initiative consisting of social movements, trade unionists, teachers, and academics involved in education):

Our schools must become sustainable community institutions that can be mobilized as hosts towards caring for vulnerable children. For this to happen overburdened staff must be given support by health, psychological and social service professionals. This is not happening at present in most schools. Quality education is not only about the curriculum; these issues of poverty matter as well ([www.ppen.org.za](http://www.ppen.org.za)).

The reliance on the formal framework and the misplaced and disarming hope that the neoliberal state would deliver has prevented South African communities from building on the energies and creativity that previously existed in their struggle against apartheid education. The PPEN call to action reads in part: “The absence of

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<sup>20</sup> Vally, S and Spreen, C.A. (2010), ‘The School-Community Nexus in South Africa’, *Our Schools/Our Selves*, G. Martell and D. Clandfield (eds), Special issue: The Struggle for Schools as Community Hubs, pp.125-144.



meaningful participation has led to the disempowerment of our communities, the failure to engage with the ideas and the potential solutions about the most difficult challenges of education, and a feeling of despair about any possibilities for change” (Ibid). For PPEEN and other community based initiatives the reliance on formal structures of governance and the ‘expert’ advice-divorced from the reality and the everyday experience of communities-has failed. Rather what is required is the re-envisioning and reclaiming of the public space of schools for community engagement, intergenerational learning, and reciprocal relationships for community engagement and social development. This article suggests that the desire to promote schools as pillars of sustainable community development in South Africa as elsewhere, clashes with market-driven initiatives and private service provisioning on school premises undermining the very notion of schools as a community hub for the public good.

This article will provide a historical overview of school-community relationships in South Africa, first under apartheid and then in post-apartheid South Africa with emphasis on the evolution and role of the school governing body (SGB). The latter was meant to be the vehicle through which the community had a determining role in local democratic school governance. We also comment on social inequality in communities and its impact on schooling as well as state sanctioned attempts to foist public-private-partnerships on schools. Finally, we describe attempts by a vital civil society to win back schools and education as a public sphere unencumbered by the market and bureaucratic state control.

### **Historical overview of community involvement in South African schools**

Basic to the reform of school-community relations in post-apartheid South Africa is the South African Schools Act of 1996 (SASA). The Act replaced the multi-school models of the various apartheid-era education departments with two legally recognized categories of schools: public schools and independent (private) schools. It also provided for a significant decentralization of power to the school level through the establishment at all public schools of school governing bodies with considerable powers subject to national norms and standards determined by the National Education Department. These powers included determining admission policies; administering and controlling the schools’ property, building and grounds, including the right to rent

them out of for fundraising purposes; recommending the appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff; and running the financing of the schools for cost-centers. The latter included charging fees and suing parents if they did not pay the fees. Presently, as a result of massive mobilization by social movements, teacher unions and non-governmental organizations, 60% of the 25,000 public schools have been designated as no-fee schools (for a description of this mobilization see Vally et al, 2008).

Prior to 1994 fifteen apartheid Ministries of Education existed in South Africa: the Department of National Education which was responsible for national norms and standards, ten 'homelands' or 'bantustan' departments, and four racially-defined departments for Africans outside of the homelands, 'coloureds', Indians, and whites. Each department had its own school community models. In all departments school level structures were variously known as school committees, school boards or management councils. They consisted of parent representatives and had no decision-making powers. In the segregated schools for black groups (that is, Africans, 'coloureds', and Indians) these committees had very little credibility as the struggle against apartheid gained momentum (Motala and Pampallis, 2005).

The struggle against apartheid education took on a coordinated dimension with the establishment of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) in the 1980s (Motala and Vally, 2002). The NECC called on parents to withdraw from statutory parents committees at school and instead urge communities to establish parent-teacher-student associations (PTSAs) outside the control of the apartheid system. The PTSAs grew rapidly particularly after 1990 and gained a high level of popular legitimacy in many communities and were seen as organs of people's power at the local level (Motala and Pampallis, 2005). While PTSAs were uneven throughout the country they nonetheless suggested a desire among many communities to develop systems of democratic school governance and provide a voice to previously powerless communities around issues of education.

After the unbanning of the liberation movements in February 1990, the apartheid government under pressure to ease racial discrimination and cognizant that such measures were essential to influence the structure of a future South Africa, began to restructure various social institutions including the education system.

At the end of the 1980s, the apartheid regime had begun to prepare the country's white public schools for transition to a new democratic government. As part of that process, government asked parents to choose from three models of integration and school funding (Vally, 2008).

A vote for Model A schools would have made state schools completely private. Model B schools would have remained state schools, but could admit black students up to 50% of the school's maximum enrolment. Most notably, a vote for Model C schools would have created so-called "state-aided schools." These schools would have received 75% of their budgets via state funding, and would have been responsible for supplying the remaining 25% of their operating budgets through user fees from parents and private voluntary donations. Model C schools, like Model B schools, could also admit black students capped at 50% of enrolment.

At the end of the voting period, the majority of parent bodies in white schools had voted to remain state schools, or "status quo" schools. In 1992, however, the government required that all Model B and status quo schools convert to the Model C form. It has been argued that the government undertook such unilateral restructuring, and adopted the mechanism of school fees, in part to shift control of schools to local white communities and out of the hands of a soon-to-be-elected democratic government, which was certain to be majority black. Thus, at the time that the new democratic government took over the reins of power in 1994, most historically white schools were Model C schools and charged school fees.

The drafters of policies related to the organization, governance and funding of post-apartheid schools did not have a free hand to change this situation. Various White Papers and discussion documents were issued between 1994 and 1996 yet these remained inconclusive. A number of legislative, administrative and negotiating processes were required in order to put these new policies into effect. For instance, Section 247 of the Interim Constitution stipulated that negotiations with governing bodies of schools in the public sector (largely white Model C schools) were essential before alterations could be made to their rights, powers and functions.

Section 247 of the Interim Constitution considerably strengthened the powers of governing bodies (benefiting primarily middle-class and 'white' schools) whereby local communities would have ownership and local accountability and could thus control how monies would be raised and spent. From the onset, negotiations over the Schools Bill were marked by controversy and hundreds of parents staged walkouts of meetings with members of governing bodies and provincial Departments of Education. In terms of giving their inputs on school user fees wealthy parents claimed that copies of the legislation did not reach them on time, violating their constitutional right that the powers of governing bodies could be altered only when "an agreement resulting from bona fide negotiations had been reached with such bodies..." (Chisholm and Vally, 1996:12).

Initially the funding levels in former Model C schools were left relatively unchanged. This is yet another example illustrating the complexities around 'participation', 'consensus' and the sway of conservative forces as a result of the negotiated settlement between the apartheid regime and the liberation movements. Tikly commented, "Leaving the question of access for blacks to historically white schools...to market forces is extremely problematic in the South African situation. If past experience is anything to go by, there is every reason to believe that many white parents will continue to prefer to set higher fees rather than admit more blacks" (Tikly, 1997:179). This was confounded by the over-demand for limited places in historically white schools, creating upward price pressure on school fees further excluding the poor.

A carefully devised system of open public responses intended to give broad stakeholder input instead served to modify policy formulations in favour of white interest groups and the emerging black middle class. These groups, although relatively numerically small, were better organized and more vocal in their negotiations, while groups who sought more radical changes were less visible and tended to rely on their representatives in the new democratic government to champion their interests.

The influence of private international consultants in diluting social justice issues in policy formulations should also not be underestimated. It was argued that "instead of

incorporating the views of civil society and social agents, the government seemed more receptive to advice from consultants who use theories and methods found within the world of human-capital approaches and rates of return analysis” (Vally and Spreen, 1998:4).

An interview with a finance specialist who played a critical role in the adoption of the user fees school funding model is revealing: “I did play a role ... by arguing that we needed to keep whites and articulate blacks within the public sector as an arena for state influence. Hence, the soft option in financing alternatives ... The Committee [referring to the committee reviewing the funding model] was skeptical at first but later realized that this matter affected not only white children but children of civil servants working in government. The notion was that there was a need to keep the black middle class involved in and as advocates for the public schooling sector” (Sayed and Jansen, 2001:276). Some analysts make the deprecatory observation that the black political elite desired the continuation of the former Model C schools in order to be able to “silently permit their own class interests to be taken care of without confronting their own, largely poor, constituencies” (Karlsson et al 2001:151).

Initially, the Review Committee favoured the ‘Partnership Funding Option’ where fees would be set by individual schools but within limits determined by provincial departments. Crucially, wealthy parents would continue to pay fees on a sliding scale but at least 50% of all parents would be completely exempt from paying fees. However, a second White Paper on the Organisation, Governance and Finance of Schools (DoE 1996), partly a response to the Review Committee’s report, introduced a User Fee option. Also worth commenting on is how the Review Committee’s earlier recommendations towards a more equitable solution were diluted because the Department aimed for reaching a ‘principled consensus’ which grew out of an emerging interest in decentralized approaches to decision-making.

The option largely based on user fees was introduced as a scheme to maintain funding levels at previously privileged schools and thereby keep the middle-class in the public school sector. In the end, “an influential task team comprised of members from the Financial and Fiscal Commission, the Departments of Education, Finance and State Expenditure, the Review Committee and the international consultants, had concluded

that option four would be the most desirable” (Mokgalane, Vally and Greenstein, 1996: 8). Earlier the persuasive powers of international consultants and their impact on policy initiatives were noted. This point is raised again to show how these influential actors were brought in alongside with other ‘policy experts’ (in this case mostly economists and members of government finance committees) to legitimate the highly contestable and largely unviable notions of governance and school fees.

### **Tirisano – A Call to Action**

In 1999 Former Education Minister Kader Asmal’s Tirisano or “Call to Action” outlined the government’s statement of priorities to revitalise South Africa’s education and training system. Tirisano was developed in response to the rampant inequality that continued to persist in the educational system, making long-term and sustainable social development extremely difficult. The increasing social inequality further served to disempower large parts of society which over time gave rise to social alienation and the criminalizing of parts of society. Many felt the gains of the democratic struggles of the past were placed at risk.

Building on the South African Schools Act (SASA) Tirisano continued to focus on the pivotal role of school governing bodies as “indispensable links between schools and the communities they serve”. While SASA emphasized that school governing bodies in poorer communities must be strengthened in order for them to become viable, essential to Tirisano was the importance of community ‘ownership’ of the school and factors which contribute to the establishment of a culture of learning and teaching.

The SASA was the first attempt in South Africa to adopt legislation that would provide for parental participation in the governance of schools. Yet, as many studies since then have shown (Motala and Pampallis, 2005), the ideas of a ‘community’ or neighbourhood school, which the SASA is based on, is fast disappearing. The phenomenon of migration has become widespread and this choice is not only exercised by middle-class parents. Many black working-class parents sacrifice much to enroll their children in better-resourced schools, despite their own material constraints and limitations imposed on them in terms of location and cost of

schooling. Many of these schools are situated far from townships, making parental participation in school governance difficult or impossible. Just as importantly, 20% of school going age children are orphans (Statistics South Africa, 2008) and ‘community’ involvement in the form of the SGBs is premised on parental participation.

The state’s notion that schools should become the focus of community life hinges on parental involvement, which the phenomenon of migration and the HIV/AIDS pandemic is reducing more and more. While the obvious solution is to improve the conditions and quality of teaching and learning of schools in all areas, a creative interim option suggested early on was the clustering of schools to share facilities (Smit and Hennessy, 1994). The advantage of this recommendation was aimed at moving schooling away from the apartheid heritage of separate group areas and allowed for the optimal and equitable use of resources for education. Sadly, the post-apartheid government did not pursue this option.

### **Partnerships between schools and communities**

Issues around community participation in schools require further debate. Early on in the establishment of SGBs, Sayed and Carrim (1998) warned that the provisions of the SASA – particularly those that dealt with parental participation and finances – circumscribe inclusiveness in ways that would further marginalize working-class and rural people. They argued that while the notion of community participation had tremendous emotional and popular appeal, the reality is that as societies become more fragmented along lines of class, colour, gender, inter alia it becomes difficult to sustain an unqualified commitment to community participation in the education system.

Karlsson, McPhearson and Pampallis question the notion of partnerships which was promoted through Tirisano:

One of the main concerns of the developers of policy for school organization, governance and funding – at least those traditionally associated with the ANC – has been to redress past injustices and to achieve greater equity in resource

provision and educational opportunity. The concept of partnerships between the state and local school communities has been developed to address precisely this in the context of the limited availability of state resources to fund transformation. “the problem with this approach, though, is that the main beneficiaries are those communities which are able to contribute the most resources to particular partnerships with the state.

These writers show that community participation in the governance of education has not led to the diminution of disparities between rich and poor as many had hoped. The irony is that the post-apartheid policies, though laying the basis for the improvement of schooling through greater democratic participation by communities in the management of schools, have not shown how they can become an efficient mechanism for the redistribution of educational resources for the attainment of greater equity in education.

So while ‘community’ as the basis of participation potentially provides a strong sense of solidarity, it may also mask fundamental differences within groups. It is crucial, therefore, to engage with the notion of community in actual settings through actual practice to prevent participation from having the unintended effect of promoting privilege and exclusion, rather than democratizing the educational system or facilitating the empowerment of historically marginalized individuals. The formation of mass-based organizations representing governing bodies will be crucial in determining how these issues will manifest themselves.

Tiriso’s community-school idea was intended to boost the flagging Culture of Learning and Teaching and Service (COLTS) campaign and partnerships for school improvement. More importantly, the COLTS campaign was met with varying degrees of success over the past 15 years. Many studies have analyzed the campaign and specific recommendations have been made that were largely ignored. A study by Chisholm and Vally (1996) identified a number of issues in Gauteng schools – infrastructure; facilities and resources; leadership, management and administration; fractured and adversarial relationships between principals, teachers, students and parents; the socio-economic context; and the often distant relationship between schools and the education departments – in understanding and addressing what has



been perceived as a ‘collapsed’ culture of learning and teaching. The study matched an analysis of each issue with strategies for intervention coming from insider perspectives of what happens in schools. While common themes were discernible, the study also made the point that homogenizing solutions are inappropriate in dealing with the complexities and highly unpredictable character and uniqueness of individual schools and particular community contexts.

### **School Governing Bodies: Promises and Pitfalls of Democratic Governance**

Although the SASA emphasized the need to support school governing bodies in poorer areas, there was little direction as to how this would have been done. Over the last decade a number of analysts have shown that mechanisms and policies for democratic governance were not reducing inequalities between schools. In fact, there is growing evidence that shows inequalities are increasing (Karlsson, McPherson & Pampallis, 1999; Spreen and Vally, 2006). Underlying the critique is that schooling will be differentiated less by ‘race’ than by class because of the real possibility of market competition in schools. The Amendment to the Education Laws Act, (1998) allowed governing bodies to employ additional teachers with their own financial resources, further permitted discrepancies between schools. More affluent schools have been able to choose the most experienced and skilled teachers to the disadvantage of those schools which have less to offer.

We have argued previously that the state seems to be shedding its responsibility for the provision of education and transferring it to school governing bodies (Spreen and Vally, 2006). Parents on the SGBs are increasingly viewing their roles primarily as co-opted fund raisers carrying out provincial and national level instructions and not as decision makers in education matters. Training for governing bodies around the country is uneven at best. The unpreparedness of governing bodies and the complexity of their tasks resulted in serious difficulties. The loss of teachers results in severe and in some cases violent disruptions in a number of schools, partially as a result of the inability of SGBs to provide leadership.

Areas such as the adequate provision of learner and teacher support materials; electricity, libraries and laboratories are critical. Increasingly more black schools are

being threatened with closure as a result of the exodus to slightly better equipped schools. Equally important through is the working and service conditions and the professional development and support to teachers as well as increasing the capacity and professionalism of officials in the departments of education. Many schools have had vacant posts for long periods. The South African school system is highly differentiated and is based on social class reflecting the broader inequalities in society. The labour market in teachers – with only some school governing bodies able to afford additional teachers to thus reduce the burden on a few teachers and permit smaller class sizes is one example of the inequalities. While there are successes around democratic school governance there are, because of inequalities, also numerous examples of frustration, demoralization and anger.

Ironically, given the emphasis on redress and equity, the funding provisions of the South African Schools Act promulgated with the user fees option appeared to have worked thus far to the advantage of public schools patronised by middle-class and wealthy parents. The apartheid regime favoured such communities with high-quality facilities, equipment and resources. Vigorous fund-raising by parent bodies, including commercial sponsorships and fee income, have enabled many such schools to add to their facilities, equipment and learning resources, and expand their range of cultural and sporting activities. Since 1995, when such schools have been required to downsize their staff establishments, many have been able to recruit additional staff on governing body contracts, paid from the school fund.

### **Social Inequality and Schooling: Poverty, HIV/AIDS and Violence**

South Africa has very high rates of child poverty. In 2007 two-thirds of children (68%) lived in households with a per-capita income below R350. (The poverty line is set at R350 per person per month, Statistics South Africa, 2008). The 2007 general household survey indicates that there were 3.7 million orphans in South Africa (Ibid). This includes children without a living biological mother, father or both parents and equates to 20% of all children in South Africa. It is driven primarily by the AIDS pandemic. The same survey indicates that there were 150,000 children living in a total of 79,000 child-only households across South Africa. SGB policy and school-

community relations are premised on the existence of adult figures as parents when the reality is vastly different.

Many researchers have found the performance of South African schools far below that of other countries including much poorer neighboring countries (Spren and Fanscali, 2005). South Africa achieved the lowest score on the 2006 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) which evaluated the performance of grade 4 learners from 40 countries (Howie, S et al, 2007). In 2008 the Department of Education released the provisional findings from the 2007 Grade 3 National Assessment. It also showed very low achievement levels in literacy - the mean literacy score was 36%, and over half of the learners failed to master the contents of the learning areas related to reading (Department of Education, 2008). Yet, the one area that could make a substantial difference to this situation-the provision of libraries and the enjoyment of reading-is appalling. Only 8% (1,837 schools) of public ordinary schools have functioning libraries and most of these schools with libraries are schools which charge fees and pay for the libraries themselves (Department of Education, 2009).

Many have also expressed great concern over the unacceptably high levels of violence in many South African schools. Beyond the admonition of bringing the conditions and disciplines of compulsory schooling to bear on teachers and learners – regular attendance, punctuality, and a relevant code of conduct – there has been nothing explicit in the educational transformation policies concerning a concrete programme to deal with violence or a suggested approach to address it that relates to the context of communities in which the schools are located.

Increasingly research underscores the importance of counseling to combat the effects of poverty, HIV/AIDS, violence and social tensions in South African schools. Budgetary constraints prevent education departments and most poor schools from employing specialized teachers to assist schools with these pervasive problems. Occasional visits by social workers have failed to address these problems and to win the confidence of school communities. The majority of schools with the greatest need still do not provide:

- An alternative support structure in the context of high levels of

dysfunctional families;

- Meaningful life-defining and reflective activities found in artistic and cultural expressions; and
- Forums to process traumatic life experience resulting from violence and or death and instill in children a sense of confidence and self-esteem.

There is a critical need for rehabilitation centers in a number of highly volatile school districts around the country. Models for supporting schools to combat violence by providing skilled trauma counselors or professionals such as psychologists are becoming increasingly important. These personnel are essential in assisting learners as well as supporting teachers to deal with conflict situations and adversarial relations. A solution we suggested previously is to relieve well-liked and trusted teachers of their teaching responsibilities in order for them to provide counseling services. Imparting the necessary skills to these teachers and reworking their teaching time and schedules is only beginning to address the problem. Reports indicate that while some teachers have embraced this role, and are trying to resist the abuse of children and pre-empt violence in schools, the heavy workloads and an unsympathetic management often prevent them from making an impact. With increased budgetary constraints on schools, these teachers are often the first to be declared in 'excess' and transferred elsewhere.

Punitive measures against learners are also a problem. This is not to deny serious problems around drug abuse and violence. Yet, the procedures in most educational policies around these issues are punitive and do not address root causes or broader social connections to the problem. Some programmes, particularly those designed to combat HIV/AIDS have even increased youth resistance and dissent. Simultaneously, the youth are increasingly being denied access to important wellness and cultural programmes including art, music, physical education, extra-mural activities, and/or access to nurses and trained psychologists. The withdrawal of these essential programmes suggests that schools are no longer valued as sites and symbols of the public good and institutions where the youth need to be treated with much greater compassion, solidarity and trust and where their preparation for active citizenship is

of primary importance. The corporate model of school governance that protects sectional and exclusive interests is proving disastrous in South Africa.

### **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in Education**

As a result of the failure of public education those advocating for private education and variations of private education have become more and more vociferous in recent years. Talk of public-private- partnership promoted by the South African state has acquired greater credibility. Advocates of right-wing reform stridently demand a variety of responses ranging from outright privatization of education and the withdrawal of the state, to various versions of market-friendly policies and public private partnerships (PPP).

There has been an upsurge on private provisioning of schools in both cities and in rural areas, and a number of multinational companies have promoted themselves via support to individual schools. For instance, Unilever South Africa, the producer of a major washing brand Omo, regularly publishes full page advertisements in South Africa's largest circulation newspapers promoting their installation of computers and sports facilities in schools and student bursaries. Commenting on its commitments to public schools in South Africa the Chairman of Unilever suggests, "We help people feel good, look good, and get more out of life with brands and services that are good for them and good for others." (Sunday Times, 2010) The article unabashedly also states "targeting housewives and mothers, it [Unilever] has undertaken numerous campaigns to empower and upgrade the quality of life for its consumers. Recognizing that mothers everywhere want a better life for their children and acknowledging the desperate need for education in South Africa, Omo found child development to be a perfect fit for its 'cause-related' marketing initiatives." Ethne Witley, public affairs manager of Unilever said the Omo Schools Campaign was established in partnership with the Department of Education to "give pupils a helping hand with their educational development."

## **Community-School Non Commodified Partnerships**

A few years ago there was a proposed amendment to the SASA focused on parental involvement which triggered a widespread debate in South Africa. Many criticised the new proposal for forcing parents to accept responsibility for the poor performance of their own children in a situation where state support has been lagging and where the contextual realities of poor communities have been ignored. A particularly strong critique came from the SADTU General Secretary, Thulas Nxesi, who stated, “The Department and Ministry of Education are looking for scapegoats for the inadequate performance of the education system: teachers, learners, principals and now parents – everyone except the bureaucrats who preside over the system.” (Vally and Baatjes, 2007).

It is unfortunate that except for the proposed random search and seizure measures against learners, other aspects of the draft bill including revising the minimum norms and standards for infrastructure and capacity in public schools did not generate equal interest. We argue that quality education is linked to the proper resourcing of schools – both material and human – and if not present as is the case in many schools, positions the limited parental involvement and school governing bodies to be mere ‘glorified fund raising committees’.

It is trite to ask, as one commentator did immediately following the controversy around the proposed amendment, ‘Should parents be more interested in the education of their children?’ It is extremely rare for parents and caregivers not to be concerned about the performance of their children - parents have and continue to make tremendous sacrifices. It also undermines the close to 200,000 volunteer citizens who participate in school governing bodies nationwide. Rather, in relation to the SASA amendments the question should have been framed as, ‘What are the difficulties and obstacles parents face preventing their meaningful involvement in democratic school governance?’

Research, including reports commissioned by the department, has pointed to many difficulties. These include the fact that in many provinces, most parents are unemployed so getting to meetings, particularly for rural parents is onerous. Other

obstacles include language; insufficient capacity around key areas of school governance; the difficulties in navigating through complex laws and regulations; weak channels of communication with and support by provincial departments of education and conflicts between parents and educators around the meaning of governance and management. These problems can be addressed while ensuring meaningful partnerships and public accountability of the schools' performance. The draft bill purports to do this, but in reality could widen divisions and exacerbate conflicts.

The Former Minister of Education has stressed that the aim of the amendment was not punitive but was intended to benignly issue a "notice" to offending schools concerning the standard of performance of learners and other matters. This we feel was disingenuous - the bill unambiguously stated schools would receive, "written warning notice" as well as the clause - "If the Minister approves the notice he or she must publish in the Government gazette the names of those schools identified by the Head of Department". This is not developmental but rather an exercise in naming and shaming. Moreover, the pressure on administrators to prevent the school from being 'listed' will result in increasing tensions with educators.

In the context of rising poverty and inequality and growing protests over service delivery, communities have grasped a fact that sometimes seems to elude bureaucrats: progress (or lack thereof) in schools cannot be divorced from poverty and its consequences. We cannot expect children to come to school ready to learn if they are without parents or if they are hungry; if they have been evicted from their homes or if they lack a light by which to read at night. In this context extending a properly run, non-profit school feeding scheme to all grades and ensuring public transport is also critical and relates to quality education.

Continuing with the legacy of pre - 1994 community efforts, issues of inequality and failure in the public education system have become a focal point for social mobilization. Communities once again understand that the corporate model of school governance that protects sectional and exclusive interests will perpetuate inequality. Demonising learners and teachers, privatizing public education and giving up on equity is not the way to transform our society for the public good. We highlight a few examples of community initiatives that illustrate this understanding. On the 21st of

March 2010, Human Rights Day in South Africa, 10 000 community members marched to parliament demanding the roll out of school libraries in every public school. One of the speakers at the March and popular singer Simphiwe Dana referred to herself as “a survivor of Bantu Education, not a product of it” and said that her mind survived partly because she had books in her school library. She urged government to restore dignity back to the children of South Africa ([www.equaleducation.org.za](http://www.equaleducation.org.za)). The Caring Schools Network is another school-community initiative which brings together sixty organisations around the country and promotes partnerships with schools and communities focussing on vulnerable children ([www.caringschools.co.za](http://www.caringschools.co.za)). The PPEN initiative has embarked on working with communities throughout South Africa to organise themselves into education action committees to support education in local areas. It laments the fact that:

Fifteen years after our first democratic elections, our education system is in a crisis... The absence of meaningful participation has led to the disempowerment of our communities, the failure to engage with their ideas and potential solutions... It has also led to the failure of proper systems of accountability about what happens in our schools and how and what education takes place. We have failed to use the energies that existed in these communities in their struggles against apartheid education ([www.ppen.org.za](http://www.ppen.org.za)).

These initiatives eschew a technical rationality parading as ‘solutions’ which often encourages or sees the encroachment of private providers as unproblematic. Instead, they place their hope on the community to revitalise public education. Appropriately, Munir Fasheh (1990:35) writing of community education in occupied Palestine expresses the view that, “The idea of transforming reality is linked to hope, and hope is linked to the belief that change is possible and that we are all responsible for it. Community education embodies the hope that today’s technological-military logic and power can be swept away by human logic and human strength.”

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## Chapter 9: Class, “Race,” and State in Post-Apartheid Education<sup>21</sup>

Over the last few years a number of important texts have been written about the post apartheid education system in South Africa. These have dealt with a wide variety of topics, relating mainly to the progress of the reform policies and the initiatives of the post-apartheid state. They have included writings on educational management, school governance, curriculum, language, assessment, equity, teacher education, early childhood development, adult basic education and many other issues involving the process of educational reform in post-apartheid South Africa. These texts have also dealt with external influences on the education system and system change, arising from the wider remit of state policies such as the financing of education and the democratic state’s orientation to educational investment, labor markets and globalization (Sayed and Jansen, 2001; Motala and Pampallis, 2002; Chisholm, 2004; Fiske and Ladd, 2004).

Questions about social and historical disadvantage, marginalization, exclusion, poverty and inequality and other such abiding social phenomena are invariably referred to in the texts about education in South Africa, and without exception, nearly every critical commentary or analytical writing on educational reform refers explicitly to the implications of these characteristics of the educational system. These writings are at pains to point out, quite rightly, that the educational system is characterized by deep inequalities, especially noticeable in relation to poor communities, even more so in rural communities, and that there are considerable backlogs arising from the discriminatory and racist history of South African education and the deliberately distorted distribution of educational expenditures to favor white people. They emphasize, often convincingly, that the interests of the “poor and marginalized” must be the foundation on which the post-apartheid educational system has to be built and that there are constitutional and other imperatives to achieve a just, fair, equitable and humane social order. Even the *mélange* of official policy texts look impressive at face value.

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<sup>21</sup> Motala, E and Vally, S (2010), Class, ‘Race’ and Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa. In D. Kelsh, D. Hill and S. Macrine (eds). *Class in Education: Knowledge, pedagogy, subjectivity*, London: Routledge, pp.87-107.

Yet few of these texts and policies have dealt specifically with the existence of social classes for the unfolding reform process in the aftermath of the pre-1994 negotiations. Where class is referred to, as in the case of Chisholm (2004)<sup>22</sup>, the discussion is essentially about the effects of educational reform on social class formation in the post-apartheid period. Class formation is understood in its complexity as “having both a social and economic phenomenon and class is understood as having both cultural and material dimensions” (Chisholm and Sujee, 2006: 144). Soudien, (SADTU, 2006) in a chapter titled “Thwarted access: ‘race’ and class,” comprehensively shows how working class communities because of their vulnerable economic and cultural situations feel alienated from the state’s education reform process and how the provision of education continues to be structured on racial and class lines. This is of course very important; especially to show that despite the best intentions of the reform process there is evidence of the growth of social bifurcation through education.

Our concern here is not only about the effects of the reform initiatives, nor is it about issues that are endogenous to educational systems important as these might be in themselves. An analysis of the social class effects or of how social class gets “done” is necessarily limited for our purposes even though it is of great importance otherwise, since it is concerned with issues of policy and practice, with how the resources of the state are socially distributed and who is privileged by this and also how social class divisions are related to educational practices. These approaches to class do not - because that is not their intention - draw attention to the question of why such effects or processes of social reproduction are visited on some social classes more than on others in the first place and whether this is related in any way to the even more fundamental structural and relational attributes of capitalist societies.

These points of departure in the framing of educational analysis are significant but do not explain these differentiations as inherent to the forms of capitalist development in South Africa and their a priori implications for social systems including education. In our view the recognition of class as an analytical category inherent in South African

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<sup>22</sup> Chisholm’s work is an important exception in this regard. For Chisholm, the title of her book *Changing Class* “suggests both the active process of effecting change within social classes and classrooms and the nature and process of that change”(p.2)The major conclusion of the book relates to how present policies favour an “expanding, racially-mixed middle class” (p.7).

capitalism would provide greater clarity to social analysis and to strategic interventions. It can reveal the relationship between social class and reform and show how reform processes are constrained by the existence of particular structural conditions in society. Even if better policy choices are made, their effects are likely to be muted by the underlying characteristics of such societies where material and objective conditions define questions of access in a pre-emptive way. Analyses that do not recognize the intrinsic nature of these characteristics and the constraints they impose on reform processes will remain limited.

The absence of rigorous and complex social analysis has profound implications at another level. If the condition of poverty is not analyzed and understood as an enduring and inherent characteristic of societies at a particular stage of their historical development, in this case, as a phenomenon of capitalist development in South Africa, then the necessary interventions of social reform will be weak. This is so because such interventions are likely to be regarded as the interventions made by a “caring” welfarist state, out of a benevolent concern for the “most disadvantaged” and as a “helping hand” to such communities within the framework of “their” disadvantage. Such an approach to social policy is both patronizing and ineffectual over the long term since it does not provide any basis for mobilization against the causal basis of poverty and the deeply entrenched structures of social differentiation, nor does it address the question of social agency and the ability of such communities to use their historical experience, knowledge and traditions to deal with social disadvantage in an empowering way. This failure results largely from a “deficit” view of such communities, regarding them as being struck by the inescapable conditions of lacking the basic resources for their survival.

The role of the state in such a case is inevitably conceived of not as a facilitative democratic state, in which the primacy of social agency for change is recognized, but merely as a “charitable” and social welfare state. Worse still is the fact that these deficit descriptions about the abiding characteristics of poverty are damaging because they re-enforce conceptions of social change from above. In this approach, social interventions of a charitable nature are the solution to the “problem”, since the “poor will always be with us”.

Class analysis would enhance our knowledge of specific local school communities better both in themselves and in relation to the society as a whole. Class analysis also implies the ability to listen to the voices of the most oppressed social classes because through these voices greater clarity might be achieved about the challenges of development. The praxis of some initiatives in the education field is beginning to do this in recent times in South Africa. This is an important development and must be extended methodologically and theoretically. It has also broader implications about the discourse of “development” which also invites greater clarity through class analysis. It implies that our analysis of its possibilities takes account of the social pathologies, divergent interests and inherent contradictions of capitalism in South Africa. Development as an idea is an area of considerable ideological contestation and unless the concepts of development (including how it is related to different class interests) are openly acknowledged, more is hidden than revealed in the use of the concept of development (Motala and Chaka, 2004).

The absence of class analysis or in relation to other deeply inured social structures of differentiation such as gender leads to a debilitating failure in our understanding of the deeper characteristics of society and disables policy actors from seeking more penetrative social interventions in education and social policy in general. The failure to provide such analysis in education could be attributed to several factors. Firstly, it could be argued that the limitations of extant educational analysis result from the pre-occupation with a range of education policy related matters. Analysts have concentrated largely on the state’s educational reform processes and more recently on the vexed question of “implementation”, sometimes de-linked from policy matters because policy itself is often regarded as unproblematic. This in turn is related to the issue of the “capacity” of government to implement policies. In our view it is not possible to view the reform of education in post-apartheid education without reference to the unfolding dynamic of the negotiation process that took place before 1994. An analysis of this process would have revealed for educational analysts the conditioned nature of reform especially in regard to its implications for working class children. We will return to this area later.

Secondly, where social class has been referred to, this is done tangentially, mostly to recognize the social location of students as “poor”, or “disadvantaged”, to provide

descriptions of the conditions under which children (and even communities) are found, to evoke characterizations of the conditions prevalent in “poor” and ‘disadvantaged’ communities, and to provide testimony for the rigors of school life, the intractability of the problems of access, the grinding incapacities and effects on the lives and potential opportunities for the children of the “poor”. These descriptions have meaning because they evoke for policy-makers, administrators, the general public and even academic commentators, a sense of urgency about the challenges of achieving educational equity, fairness and social justice in and through education. They make graphically evident the educational symptoms that typify the conditions under which “poor” communities learn since they deal not only with issues of infrastructure or the lack of it, the lack of teachers in critical subjects, poor or non-existent learning materials, indefensible approaches to teaching and learning, but also provide rich evidentiary material about the social cleavages predetermining the life chances and opportunities available to the children of the “poor” and the intractability of these conditions.

Thirdly, while there is a wide range of references to “race” and “gender” and a great deal of statistical information of value relating to these social characterizations, they remain de-linked from any conscious appreciation of the impact of social class and its deeper structural implications on the very communities of the “poor” and “disadvantaged” which is the subject of educational theory, policy and practice. For instance, the report produced by the Nelson Mandela Foundation, *Emerging Voices* (2006), contains rich and evocative testimonies of the social conditions affecting learning in poor rural communities in South Africa. It speaks about the desolate and inhospitable conditions for children in rural schools and from communities that are severely impoverished by the circumstances of their past history in which “race” was the defining characteristic of state provision, and indeed of the trials visited upon the daily lives of young women and girl learners in communities where gendered roles are definitive. It speaks about the lack of the fundamental resources for a meaningful social life and of the difficult conditions under which learning is expected to take place. These descriptions of the conditions of “disadvantage” do not however set out to explain the socially relational nature of “race” and gender to class in the context of rurality, that is, their existence as expressions of much deeper, more profound and



obdurate attributes of societies in which social divisions (amongst other divisions) are both inherent and egregious.

Fourthly, and this is understandable, greater emphasis has been placed on analyzing the state's reform initiatives within the classroom and there is quite a large body of work relating to issues of the financing of education, global influences and the privatization of public education. But as we have argued there is a paucity of analysis regarding the non educational "externalities" that affect classroom practice.

The project here is a modest one; it is to "restore" the value of class analysis in the traditions of South African social theory even if that is done by abandoning some of the more reductionist approaches to class analysis. It does not pretend to resolve all the historical debates about class based analysis. It sets out only to argue why in South Africa at this time any social analysis that does not pay attention to questions of class will be impoverished by that failure.

We accept that that there is much other causality for explaining social fragmentation. These give rise to social differentiation, incoherence, prejudice, religious and other divisions, marginalization and even violent conflicts. Ideological and political issues too play a huge role in defining historical conjunctures and these must be seen in a complex interplay with issues of class, "race" and gender. We therefore do not accept class reductionist approaches as adequate explanations about these conflicts although we have no doubt that these conflicts are likely to be exacerbated by the underlying contradictions of capitalism either within nation states or globally. Nor do we, on the other hand, deny that even such conflicts might well be an expression of conflicts over social resources and wealth, conflicts germane to much class analysis. Other research is necessary to understand the nature of these conflicts which express themselves in factionalist, sectarian, religious, territorial, ethnic and other forms of division and we make no claim to examining all these contingent and conjunctural factors here.

## **The Importance of ‘Class’ in Social Analyses**

The main argument of this paper is that while many educational analyses about South African education have great merit, they have largely ignored any direct reference or analysis of the social pathologies and structures created by racial capitalism in South Africa and have consequently not provided any theoretical (or practical) basis for understanding the continuing and pervasive phenomena of class and its relevance to analysis of school reform in South Africa. These social pathologies are an expression of the more fundamental social cleavages that exist in society and unless understood and analyzed more fully, interventions in the schooling system alone (which are necessary and critically important) will have only a limited effect. The idea of “class” represents much more than a gradational approach to material inequality and speaks rather to the inherent consequence of a particular form of production as constitutive of class in political economy. This means that the social category of “class” represents an important expression of the historical, structural, ideological and largely refractory barriers to social mobility which characterizes class-ridden societies.

The best hopes of educationists to address these impediments through policy interventions are constrained by their very intractability and their effects on large parts of society. Our view is that no amount of educational policy or practice can, by itself, overcome these deeply entrenched and fundamental attributes of capitalist societies, and that unless they are properly understood and analyzed, policy interventions can become no more than the capricious hopes of politicians, bureaucrats and social reformers. The latter, despite their good intentions, face for instance the dilemma that “legally and politically sanctioned demands and guarantees remain unreconciled to exigencies and capacities of the budgetary, financial and labor market policy of the capitalist economy” (Offe, 1994: 37).

The analysis here will also show how the category of “class” is significant not only in itself but relationally in its connectedness to questions about “race” and gender, and that educational analysis in South Africa about these categories is rarely connected with questions of class. “Race” in particular is examined largely in relation to the achievement of greater “race” equity and the quantification of improvements in relation to it. Where “race” is used for analytical purposes, moreover, its use is

explained as historically necessary given the policies and practice of the apartheid state in the allocation of resources and the continuing existence of racially defined school cohorts. Its justification is therefore largely about questions of output and measurement, for evaluating the progress of reform and the achievement of the goals of equity.

Very little, if any attention is paid to the social construction of racial identities (more especially in relation to their differing social class locations), and their pervasive effects on the lives of learners, on the curriculum, on the struggles of learners and their communities in regard to education and in relation to educational policy and practice. These socially relevant categories of analysis (class, “race” and gender) must be used in an integrative way to produce a more diverse and complex yet more illuminating picture about the combination of forces that shape educational policies and practice. This is because their combination as social and historical factors has had particularly devastating effects on working-class communities.

Back in 1999 it was argued that the shadow of apartheid ideology continued to cast its Stygian gloom not any longer through racially explicit policies, but by proxy and exclusions on the basis of social class (Vally and Dalamba, 1999). It was understood that a study of post apartheid racial integration in schools had first to acknowledge racism as linked to capitalism in South Africa and to understand it in its historical context. Racism is woven deeply into the warp and woof of South African society and nothing short of transformation of the social totality can overcome it. The writers of the South African Human Rights Commission report supported the view that racial inequality in schools was not merely an aberration or an excrescence, but structurally linked to wider social relations and the economic, political and social fabric of society. The apartheid education system engineered “race”, class, gender and other categories to serve and reinforce the political economy of the racial capitalist system. Present-day racism in education in South Africa has to be understood with reference to this history and to contemporary political and economic disadvantage and patterns of inequality in society. Racism in education does not constitute an autonomous form of oppression, but rather is inextricably linked to power relations and reproduced in conjunction with class, gender and other inequalities.

In this article we will therefore concentrate on both an explanation of the analytical importance of “class” and on its relationship to “race” since this has largely been left out of the analytical taxonomies in post-apartheid South Africa. The clarification of how the concept of class and its relation to “race” is understood in educational theory will shed light, even if indirectly, on the question of social cohesion and in particular, on whether such cohesion is possible or achievable in post-apartheid society.

Social class as an analytical and conceptual category has been a casualty of the post-apartheid period. Initially, the post-1994 period signaled a pre-occupation with the immediacy of the reform process in which “consensus”, “mediation” and “social compact” were given primacy, and because of the relationship between these reform processes and the ideological ascendancy of particular globally hegemonic capitalist approaches to “modernization” and “development”. Post-modern theory, in vogue during this period, was used as a justification for the retreat from class, made even more seductive by its coincidence with the negotiated settlement and the illusionary “miracle of the New South Africa”. It could be argued that intellectuals in South Africa have themselves been complicit in the elision of class as an analytical category, quite often consciously and disparagingly.

There is also the possibility of timidity in the face of the avalanche of academic and public voices representing capital, which have made any reference to class, seem both archaic and “ideological” as though these voices are themselves not ideological. The epic histories of class struggles and the associated political, social and economic analyses representing the viewpoint of Marxism appears to be transcended in this period by other “free-from-class” analytical paradigms both in South Africa and elsewhere. In our view, this is consistent with the decline of the scholarship which represented the strength of such analyses, itself a victim of the self-censorship imposed by scholars on any work that overtly recognized the importance of social class.

We support the assertion of Saul (2006: 88) in a chapter titled, “Identifying Class, Classifying Difference” that class analysis and class struggle imply:

...a crucial demand to transcend the structural and cultural limits of capitalism that is too easily lost to view, not only by post-modernists but also

within the commonsensical hegemonies and glib universalisms that currently haunt us. It is a discourse that is both central to human emancipation and essentially not co-optable either by liberalism or reformism.

### **Class and 'Race' in South Africa**

The events of the last two decades of apartheid, and especially the importance of working class mobilization around specifically class issues (in conjunction with more general issues of political and social rights) and the vigorous contestation around the relationship between such forms of mobilization and the “national question” could hardly have been irrelevant to an understanding of the apartheid state and its demise, nor indeed of the particular form of post-apartheid compromise and social compact. Analysis which does not pay careful attention to the interaction between class and the “national question” in the last decades of apartheid is likely to represent a truncated version of South African history and could not be taken seriously.

In South Africa itself, debate about class analysis is found in a vast array of writings which characterized historical studies, sociology, political science and economic analysis in particular, throughout the period of the 1970s and 80s (Lipton, 1986; Legassick, 1973; Wolpe, 1988; Fine, 1990). There is evidence of similar analysis in earlier writings too (Roux, 1964; Simons and Simons, 1969). A number of these analyses attempted to explain the relationship between “race” and class in South Africa and how this relationship is conceptualized as critical to an understanding of the struggle against apartheid.

For instance in an interview with Callinicos (1992: 115-6), Alexander talks about how “pre-existing social relations” were transformed by the development of mining capitalists at the end of the nineteenth century, drawing a necessary connection between the development of capitalism and racism. The consequence for him was that it was not possible to get rid of racism without dealing with its “capitalist underpinnings in South Africa”. He refers to Wolpe’s (1989) writing on the subject approvingly as clarifying the “contingent” relationship between racism and capitalism:

At certain times racial ideology was and is functional for the accumulation of capital, whereas at other times it could be dysfunctional. So there is no necessary connection, it is a contingent one ... This is of course a different thesis from the liberal thesis, which is that racism is allegedly dysfunctional in regard to capital accumulation.

In a more recent article on the subject Alexander (2004: 1) deals specifically with the question of how “race” is understood outside the domain of human biology where its “invalidity” is acknowledged but where “inherited perceptions” remain:

The articulation of race science and stereotypes deriving from perceptions of racial difference is a manifestation of the social constraints on the integrity of academic and professional practices. Nonetheless, as a social construct, race is real and has obvious pertinent material effects. On these matters, there is more than sufficient consensus in the social sciences today.

Alexander relates these perceptions to colonial conquest and particularly to the second British occupation of the Cape. For him, “race theory in South Africa is not the excrescence of Afrikaner nationalism in the first instance. The prime suspects are in fact British soldier-administrators, missionaries and other organic intellectuals of British imperialism” (Ibid: 3).”

Alexander questions both “idealist and economic reductionist” theorizations of racism, and argues for a “historical materialist” analysis of the causal factors explaining racism. In regard to the relationship between “race” and “class” he argues that it could be reasonably generalized (Ibid: 5):

that conservative and liberal-pluralist approaches have tended to attribute to the category of “race” an independent causal value, however different the levels of sophistication of individual analysts might be. On the other hand, radical approaches have tended to veer in the direction of broadly economic reductionist or, more narrowly, class reductionist, explanations. Political developments in the world and in South Africa during the last 15 years of the 20th century left their influence in the form of a kind of paradigm drift that affected all these schools of thought. On all sides, there has been a shift to a

much more pragmatic stance in social science scholarship. In the case of some formerly avowed Marxist approaches, one is tempted even to speak of a return to empiricism.

Du Toit (1981: 461)) too sees apartheid as an integral part of capitalism in South Africa. He too regards the struggle against apartheid as inseparable from that against capitalism in South Africa and refers to Legassick's view that "National oppression is simply a form of social oppression, but a form which calls forth its own anti-thesis: 'national liberation'." In his introduction to *Race, Class and the Apartheid State*, Wolpe (1988) complains about the "undeveloped" nature of South African analyses about the state and politics. For Wolpe, the preoccupation with racial concepts in the definition of the "society" in South Africa results in a perspective on the state which treats that state "as the instrument of oppression of Whites over Blacks but (precisely because class relationships are not normally included in the analysis) as neutral in the relationship between classes" (Ibid: 7). He makes this complaint in the context of the increasing political conflict of the 1980s in South Africa in which the apartheid state was confronted by militant organization intent on its overthrow. These challenges threw up a number of important theoretical questions. They raised questions about how the relationship between "race and class" was conceived and how the relationship between the "political structure" and the "capitalist economy" was understood. This clarification was important not only for theoretical purposes but also to inform political perspectives and objectives.

Wolpe argued that where "race" is given primacy in the analysis of apartheid, the state would be regarded as "exclusively a racial order". As against this he ascribes to the African National Congress and South African Communist Party (SACP) the view that is informed by the theory of South Africa as a colony "of a special type", a theory based "on a conception of linkages between race and class, ... which accords to the black working class a leading role in the overthrow of the apartheid system" (Ibid: 1).

For Wolpe, "race" and class stand in a "contingent relationship" to the South African capitalist economy and "white domination" and the idea that racism was functional, and necessary to capitalist development, forecloses any analyses of the "uneven,

asymmetrical, contradictory and unstable” nature of the relationship between capitalism and “race” (Ibid: 8).

Wolpe uses the concept of “class” in a Marxist sense, while “race” is used strictly to refer to social categorizations. In his critique of Wolpe’s *Race, Class and the Apartheid State*, Fine (1990) argues that Wolpe regards class, in the South African context, as an “abstraction”, while regarding race as a “concrete social reality”. Fine (Ibid: 92) attributes this analysis to Wolpe’s “economistic” conception of class, which, “Reduces the relation between capital and labour to a merely economic relation removed from all juridical, cultural, sexual and political dimensions . . . and leads directly to a reification of race despite all warnings against ‘race reductionism’”.

Indeed, Fine (1990) argues that this approach to “race” and class prepares the ground for Marxists to endorse nationalism. For Fine, the very idea of race in South Africa is the “critical ideological glue” which underwrites the social order and power relations. The idea of “race” confronts the population as though it is real while in fact it is “the ideological expression” of the particular form of exploitation. He argues that “the state demands that people behave as if race is, whatever they actually believe in their heart of hearts”. The consequence of this is that “people reproduce the lie as reality” and by so doing they are not only oppressed by apartheid but reproduce its lies and “hypocrisy” in their daily lives (Ibid: 93). For Fine “race” is not “real”. It is, in his words “the illusion of those who exercise power and seek profit at the expense of life. It is the triumph of abstraction over reality, the lie over truth.” (Ibid: 94).

We are not persuaded about Fine’s perspective about the “unreal” and “hypocritical” nature of the concept of “race” because it oversimplifies the complex relation between “race” and class. The view of the Trinidadian Marxist C.L.R. James quoted in Walter Rodney’s seminal work, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, is apposite here,

The race question is subsidiary to the class question in politics, and to think of imperialism in terms of race is disastrous. But to neglect the racial factor as merely incidental is an error only less grave than to make it fundamental (Rodney 1972: 100).



While “race” is not an adequate explanation for exploitative processes or for the structural attributes of capitalist political and economic systems that does not automatically imply that it has no explanatory value in relation to “class” and the process of exploitation. Indeed it is precisely because racist policies and strategies have come to be used in societies, both for capitalist accumulation and for engendering social conflict, and by the ruling class of global hegemonic states like the US to advance their global exploitative interests, that ideas about “race” (and other such discursive categories such as “civilization”, and “culture”) have such powerful meanings in the public consciousness, in global politics and ultimately in the control over resources. Although the US does not use explicitly racial language in its ideological discourses it has been cogently argued that its discourse and practice is racist nonetheless. This is because it is premised on false conceptions about “modernity” and “pre-modernity”, the “clash of civilizations” and “culture talk” and such ideas which mask its underlying imperialist intentions (Ali, 2002; Mamdani, 2004).

The last two decades have shown how pervasive the impact of racist stereotyping has been in the orientation of western institutions and states towards the people of the Middle East in this phase of “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey, 2003). It means that despite the seeming “modernity” and “rationality” of western governments and their ideologues together with international agencies like the World Bank, IMF and WTO, they continue to define societies, whole continents and civilizations in racialized terms. These realities can hardly be explained away as signifying nothing more than “hypocrisy” even though it is true that the idea of “race” is not sustainable from any scientific perspective and has limited explanatory value for the purpose of understanding political economy and capitalist forms of exploitation.

The history of post-colonial Africa where deep divisions based on constructions of “race”, “ethnicity”, religion and other affinities have wreaked havoc over many societies. While these conflicts may sometimes be attributable to conflicts over resources, they are not easily explained away by that alone. Simply rejecting these deeply embedded social norms, practices and histories, often developed over many centuries preceding the advent of capitalist accumulation, as “hypocrisy” is disarming and does not provide a basis for understanding them. In other words, the idea that

“race” (or other such conceptions and practices) is a social construct does not automatically imply that it has no explanatory value especially about how power is constituted through racist categories and/or gender to reinforce the structural attributes and impediments of working class lives. The explanatory value of “race” and gender lie in the power to reveal the relationship between these social constructs and class without suggesting that they provide a better explanation of “exploitation”.

The fact that “race” is less able to explain the objective and material basis of exploitation in relation to the law of value is therefore not simply a reflection of the underlying material basis of exploitation. It is in fact a concrete expression of and inseparable from the racist forms of control over the labour process in capital accumulation in South Africa. It is not simply imagined. Far from it, “race”, in certain historical conjunctures, provides the particular form, defines the content of exploitative relations by giving it such a form (historically, especially outside Europe), and defines the modalities for the extraction of surplus value. The entire edifice of legal norms and repressive legislation predicated on racial forms has no meaning unless it is understood as the developed expression of capitalist exploitative practices and controls over the working class.

The limited understanding of ideology also goes to the root of how knowledge is accessed – epistemic questions. An unintended consequence of reductionist conceptions of class is the effacing of the concrete and lived experiences of the working class and of women in racialized societies. This also explains the failure to pay attention to the impact of racism within advanced Western capitalist societies themselves, and the view that it has a limited impact in such societies. In reality deeply racist practices continue to abide in these societies because of the nature of their predatory relationship with countries of the Majority World whose resources they largely control. The necessity for these controls are no less an objective basis for, and an expression of, racist and globally hegemonic, even if contradictory relations that pertain between advanced capitalism and the rest of the world.

Regrettably even many left leaning scholars and activists, especially those who are schooled in Marxism in the West, continue to be dismissive of racism as intrinsic to global capital’s agenda and therefore do not fully understand the relationship between

“race” and exploitation on a world scale. As a consequence they do not understand the specificities of accumulation in developing societies as these are affected by globally organized structures in which forms of difference - “cultural”, “racial”, “religious,” etc. - are fundamental to capitalist accumulation.

How the relationship between “race” and class is conceptualized is therefore of great epistemological value because it speaks to the privileging or the denial of particular experiences. In South Africa, the struggles against apartheid are also testimony to the developed consciousness of working class organizations in their understanding of “race” and other forms of division. A great deal of emphasis was placed by these organizations on policies and campaigns about how racism must be dealt with in practice in the struggles against apartheid capitalism. Without these experiences, the ideas and values of intellectuals, unschooled in the context of racialized working class struggles, their histories and their lives, become increasingly dominant.

While “race” is not adequate to explain relations of production and the process of exploitation, it has huge explanatory value in the analysis of the particular forms of power - state, legal systems and dominant ideologies - which class analysis alone does not do. Marxist approaches to theorization are considerably more enriching and explanatory of the complex relationship of the forms of capital accumulation and power in developing societies. To wit, the experiences of racialized and gendered workers are important as a source of knowledge of the processes of exploitation and the state and cultural practices that reproduce an inequitable hierarchy of racialized and gendered workers and these experiences need to be understood in the framework of the social relations of production.

The argument here can be exemplified by reference to the debates between Critical Legal Theorists and Critical Race Theorists in the US where issues of “race” and class have a similar resonance in social analysis. There the adherents of a school of thinking described as “new left” activists at the Conference on Critical Legal Studies had argued that liberal and conservative approaches to the law regarded the law as separate from politics. This untenable distinction between law and politics was based on the idea that legal institutions are based on “rational, apolitical and neutral discourse with which to mediate the exercise of social power” (Crenshaw, et al, 1995:

xviii). Politics though, they argued, was embedded in legal categories with the very “doctrinal categories with which law organized and represented social reality”. This meant that the political character of judicial decision-making was obscured by technical discussions about “standing, jurisdiction and procedure” based on such concepts as “rules, standards and policies”.

This critical tradition was a precursor of what came to be known as Critical Race Theory. It drew on Critical Legal Theory and the civil rights movement and was intent on developing and enriching the former by adding a “race intervention into left discourse” and a “left intervention into race discourse” (Ibid: xviii.). Its perspective that law was not neutral was useful and “formed the basic building blocks of any serious attempt to understand the relationship between law and white supremacy” (Ibid: xxii). For it “race and racism functioned as central pillars of hegemonic power” in the US and it saw the “rights” discourse as legitimating “the social world by representing it as rationally mediated by the rule of law” (Ibid: xxiii).

Critical Race Theory speaks to the “embeddedness” of the practices and values of racism, despite these not being formally manifested. It argues that the forms of power which existed prior to the formal and legal recognition of discriminatory policies, continue to exist through the distribution of resources and power and that concepts of merit continue to obfuscate the reality of privilege and power in favour of those who determine the very meaning of “merit”. The ostensibly neutral “baseline” is in reality heavily laden with particular distributions of power and privilege. Critical race theory would therefore “neither apologize for affirmative action nor assume it to be a fully adequate political response to the persistence of white supremacy.” (Ibid: xxx). It also argues that the failure of liberal (and even left) efforts at understanding questions of racial ideology and power truncates its approach to global politics - and, what Claude Ake called, the “heirarchization of the world” (Ibid: xxviii).

Matsuda (Ibid: 64) too is critical of the “unsophisticated rights-thinking that can be a seductive trap for those on the bottom.” For Matsuda it is important that the oppressed themselves are sceptical of the claim that the law is free from value, politics, or historical conditions and the skills of interpreting social questions are enhanced by the direct experience of oppression. Matsuda suggests that,

Those who have experienced discrimination speak with a special voice to which we should listen...the perspective of those who have seen and felt the falsity of the liberal promise ...can assist critical scholars in the task of fathoming the phenomenology of law and defining the elements of justice (Ibid: 63)

We might add that the experience of racism can enhance an understanding of class and the particular forms of capitalist power in those parts of the world subjected to the most brutal and racialized forms of exploitation and oppression and that such experience and reflecting upon it would augment the power of class based analysis.

According to Ruccio, Resnick and Wolff (1991), “class” also has great relevance in the context of global capitalism. The changes now characteristic of global capitalism through the activities of multinational corporations, the rapid changes in national stock and capital markets and the existence of rapid transmission information networks were preceded by similar sea-changes in the production system at the turn of the last century. Does the rapid development of capitalism beyond the confining limits of the nation state “mean that we are also beyond class, as proclaimed in so many quarters”, they ask. Their unequivocal answer is that they do not think so,

We argue that the tendency of class to be de-emphasized (or forgotten altogether) in analyses of global capitalism loses something very important for understanding critical issues in the world today – from calls for protecting national markets or, alternatively, for “belt-tightening” in the face of international competition to debates about the contours of postmodernism (Ibid: 26).

After reviewing competing orientations to the problem of how class is situated in this nexus of national and international dimensions of capitalist development, they conclude that there are serious limitations in these approaches to understanding the import of class analysis against the background of such international development. Although in the approaches they review, class is recognized, “a problem from our perspective arises when class is made secondary to those other processes and therefore is displaced from the center of analysis or from analysis altogether” (Ibid:

28). Against this their proclaimed purpose is to address “some of the important space (and time) dimensions of class processes” in understanding the relationship between nation states and international relations and to examine “international value flows” from a class perspective defined in terms of “surplus labor” (Ibid: 29). In their view the increasing role of international economic activities require that analyses should be fore grounded in the class dimensions of society if change is to be achieved. This is especially important for conceptions of social justice and democracy that include the notion of collective public participation in the “production, appropriation, and distribution of the surplus labours they perform” (Ibid: 37).

This approach to globalization would be enriched by also focusing (together with class) on the particular “non-class” strategies adopted by imperial powers for instance, the manipulation by them of “political Islam” and other social fractures to advance the interests of global capitalism.

### **National Democratic Revolution**

As we argued earlier, questions about class (and “race”) are not only of theoretical value. They also have great relevance to the question of political practice, about the orientation of political organizations of the left to issues of class formation, class alliances and compromises, and the very strategies and tactics formulated in struggles for revolutionary social change. The analytical usage of class in South Africa is closely linked to conceptions of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR). In this paper we cannot traverse the wide literature about the NDR which has been the subject of considerable debate for many decades, in relation to liberation movement’s strategy. More recently – in the post 1994 period, the issue of the NDR has been raised in the conferences of the ANC, South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). It is clear that the content of the NDR remains contentious and will continue to be the subject of continuous discussion and debate; that it is profoundly linked to the question of the leadership of the NDR and class alliances, class struggle and the outcomes of the transformation process in South Africa.

At a 2005 conference of COSATU, a key paper (COSATU, 2005: 1) complained about the absence of class analysis in post-apartheid South Africa and posits the view that for the SACP, the main task of the “post-liberation” period is that of advancing the NDR “whose main content is the liberation of black people in general, and African people in particular, from the oppression of colonialism, racism and apartheid” (Ibid: 1). It argues that this implies more than “formal political liberation” and the existence of formal institutions of political democracy and insists that it includes the idea of socio-economic liberation which frees the “black majority from the socio-economic legacy of poverty, underdevelopment, exploitation and inequality”. Moreover this liberation was to be achieved by the actions of a “bloc of class forces among the historically oppressed, with the working class playing a leading role”. It recognizes the influence of different class forces on the unfolding of the NDR and reasserts the importance of understanding the dynamics of class struggle (Ibid: 2).

The COSATU paper’s analysis refers to shifts in the state’s recent orientation to interventionist policies, its adherence to the idea of a “developmental state”, the recognition of market failure and realization of the weaknesses of neo-liberal prescriptions. The document attributes this largely to the ANC’s engagements with its mass base driven by electoral concerns more than any “major breakthrough” at the level of policy and the agreement “among all the class and strata forces represented in the ANC on the need for a more interventionist policy, a developmental state, etc. – all of this in a context of greater tolerance for this in the global conjuncture.” (Ibid: 13)

Many of the issues reflected in the debate on the nature of class construction in the apartheid period have an obvious resonance with the issues that have arisen in the context of a discussion of the NDR today and it would be foolhardy to pretend that the positions adopted within the alliance foreclose other approaches to the “national question” which are not traversed here. For instance in criticizing Wolpe’s position on the NDR, Buroway (2004) speaks specifically of the view which he attributes to Wolpe and which it can be argued is substantially that of the SACP (despite his disagreements about the “colonialism of a special type” thesis). He criticizes Wolpe’s because he

could not imagine separating the socialist project from the national bourgeois project. At most he saw this as a clash of the short term and long term interests so that the National Democratic Revolution would be the first stage and the socialist revolution the second stage. He didn't see what Frantz Fanon saw: two very different, opposed projects that existed side by side, that vied with each other within the decolonization struggle. If the national bourgeois road were taken then, according to Fanon, hopes for a socialist road would be ground to zero. (Ibid: 22).

In a prescient talk given in 1992, Neville Alexander (1994: 66) argued, "... the present strategy of the ANC never was and does not have the potential to become the continuation of a revolutionary strategy for the seizure of power". Alexander predicted that the eventual settlement would be for a power sharing arrangement between Afrikaner and African nationalism in which the denouement would be at the expense of the urban and rural poor.

Factors which persuaded the ANC-SACP leadership to probe a historic compromise in about 1986/87 included the collapse of the Soviet Block; the destabilization policies in Southern Africa; the fatigue and exhaustion of the struggles of the 1980s and the "overt and subtle arm-twisting by the liberation movement's imperialist 'benefactors'" (Ibid: 86). The political registers of the ANC and the fundamental outline of post-apartheid South Africa all became negotiable. Alexander agreed that all negotiations imply compromise but responded to this banal statement by arguing that "...if the purpose is to place oneself in control of the levers of the state power within a capitalist framework, one has to realize and accept that the end effect will be to strengthen, not to weaken and much less destroy, that system". (Ibid: 87).

After the negotiated settlement in South Africa the state tried to convey itself as a neutral force and as the promoter of a "fraternity of common purpose". It did this through its "stakeholder" representation in the policy-making process which led many to assume that there were no conflicting interests in establishing policies once consensus had been reached. The eagerness to overcome the legacy of apartheid, coupled with overwhelming public enthusiasm, shielded the policy making process



from scrutiny. As a result, policy development churned ahead under the assumption that there were no conflicting interests once consensus was reached.

While policies were being introduced into schools, some also came out denouncing the national and provincial departments for “not promoting the interest of working class communities by addressing inequalities in the education system” (South African Democratic Teachers Union, 2003: 1). They criticized the government for failing to prevent overcrowding, failing to prevent additional costs of financing education being passed on to schools and consequently to parents, and failing to create a funding mechanism to address the disparities between the previously advantaged and the previously disadvantaged. In a sardonic comment titled: “In the Shadow of GEAR: Between the Scylla of a blurred vision and the Charybdis of obstructed implementation” (Vally and Spreen, 1998), an argument was made that it was no longer credible to blame the crisis on poor implementation alone and suggested that the technically rational search for best practice innovations which were “cost-effective” did no more than tinker with the fundamental educational and social problems in question and ignored the mainsprings of a system and its policies that maintained, reproduced and often exacerbated inequalities. This does not mean that there are no feasible and practical reforms which make a difference or address issues of inequality, an area that cannot be done justice in this article.

Significantly, the mediatory role of the ANC-led government founded on the basis of its consensus-seeking mandate has given considerable legitimacy to its educational policy decisions. False assumptions about democracy and consensus have clouded the policy process. Furthermore, South Africa’s negotiated settlement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Bill of Rights clauses in the Constitution and the establishment of institutions like the South African Human Rights Commission, the Commission for Gender Equality, and the Public Protector have provided a fairy tale façade often serving to disguise the often vicious nature of the society we live in (Felice, 1996). The language of rights that masks privation by presenting values that are unattainable for the majority obscures this reality. These values are then meant to be the pillars upon which South African society is constructed. A single mother in a township compared to a well-heeled corporate executive cannot be said to have the same power of political persuasion or opportunity. These are real distinctions that

give some people advantages and privileges over others. The fiction that promotes the view that real social differences between human beings do not affect their standing as citizens, allows relations of domination and conflict to remain intact.

Locating and understanding the present reality including inequalities in schooling, means locating and understanding the straightjacket of dominant class relations and the class formation of the present state. The ANC government came to office in 1994 on the back of promises to prioritize the redistribution of natural and human wealth/resources as the means to achieve equality. The years since have witnessed the state's clear, even if at times contested, political and ideological acceptance of the broad framework of a globally dominant, neo-liberal political and economic orthodoxy. Many recent writers on the political economy of the post-apartheid South African state have concluded that rather than an aspirational developmental state saddled with "two economies" we have neo-liberalism twinned to liberal bourgeois democracy - that is, two "right wings." A reluctance to delineate this and developments leading to this outcome as the cause of generalized inequality in our society hinders the search for solutions to the egregious inequalities plaguing the schooling system.

It will be clear from the conclusions drawn that our approach to class is not simply about pointing to the effects of education policy and practice on different social classes. What we deal with here though is more fundamental - it is about the conceptual categories used in social analysis and the value of class analysis as critical to social and organizational thinking. In summary:

1. Extant educational analysis is limited in its explanatory power because it does not deal with the deeper implications of social class and other characteristics of developing societies and their meanings for educational reform.
2. Class analysis is critical to the question of leadership in social transformation, changing class relations, class alliances, strategy and tactics.
3. The theoretical constructs which we regard as appropriate are not important in themselves, but are used for the purposes of clarifying the refractory problems faced

by developing and under-developed societies. They are related to issues of social justice and the distribution of material opportunities to improve the conditions of life of whole societies without privileging class hierarchies or minorities in society. This means that class analysis has value for re-examination of the idea that democratic societies are identifiable through the guarantees they provide to “rights bearing citizens”; that everybody is “equal before the law”; that everyone has the same “opportunities”; and that learners are indistinguishable except by their schooling abilities. Invoking class requires a more rigorous analytical platform in which the social basis underlying the material conditions of life of education constituencies are examined so that the relations of power, consciousness and other questions also come into view.

4. How class is understood in South Africa, especially in relation to issues of “race” and gender is of fundamental importance. Approaches to class which do not appreciate its specificities in the context of racist forms of accumulation are both reductionist and less meaningful for practice, and for understanding the way in which struggles against the specific form of capitalism in South Africa bore the imprint of its structural and other attributes. And the same can be said of the question of gender. It is not enough to analyze capital in general as though the law of value has a universal form applicable to all exploitative contexts. Put another way, the forms of exploitation (based on its historical development including the struggles against it) prevalent in Europe, the US and other advanced capitalist systems are different from that in the developing world, and the experience of workers in these systems are very different from each other although surplus value is derived from exploitative relations in all instances. In this article we have shown the relational nature of class and “race” in South Africa as intrinsic to a historical view of the process of capitalist development in South Africa. Space constraints preclude a similar analysis of the relationship between class and gender which is also necessary.

5. Although we have dealt with the relationship between issues of class, “race”, gender and globalization fleetingly, there is a clear relationship. Policy development that does not take this into account is likely to fail given the implications of global change on the role of nation states. It has been convincingly argued that there is a strong relationship between “state logic” and the role of capital in the global political

economy. This has had important implications for how the nation state is conceptualized and how class relations are constituted as a consequence. Class cannot be understood in the context of national states alone, since, as Tabb (2005: 50) has argued, national policies need to speak to global issues also:

‘Policy failure’ needs to be theorized in the context of the goals of policy makers, what class interests they represent, and so how ‘bad’ policies may be the best policies available given the contradictions of capitalism. It is an economic and political system structured not only by class domestically but by North-South relations put in place by colonial and neocolonial power symmetries.

6. Class analysis is inseparable from issues of class struggle. Although that is not dealt with here, class struggle remains the most important motive force for social change in history. The implications of this for democratic South Africa, in which the state has a critical role in mediating the effects of capitalism, need to be carefully analyzed in relation to the question of agency and social change in democratic societies.

In our view, therefore, class analysis continues to have great relevance to social enquiry. It is important not only for theory but also for practice - based on clear theory and analysis. The absence of analysis based on class especially in relation to its related categories of “race” and gender in South Africa impoverishes our social analysis, theorization, strategies and practice. The weaknesses of any analysis invariably give rise to poor and sometimes failed strategies. Class analysis has salience in a reforming South Africa since it too is marked by the contradictions of capitalist development even while undergoing the process of social reform. Capitalist development cannot avoid these contradictions which arise from the forms of ownership and control over capital and other productive resources and the share of these resources accruing to capital and labour, and between the rich and poor, urban and rural communities, men and women, working class and other social classes, managers and capitalists themselves, the public and the private sector. An analysis of the processes of reform in South Africa must reckon with these contradictions if it has to have any explanatory value. Such analysis would indeed be ideological and not neutral and not pretend to be objective. The proponents of such analysis must declare

their acceptance of the underlying tenets of such analysis based on a critique of political, social and economic systems and the underlying causes of social division and conflict.

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## Chapter 10: Conclusion

This thesis emphasises the importance of community and the critical insights of community members and their experiences in relation to the limitations of conventional approaches to social policy in education and training. Conventional approaches to education policy over the past seventeen years in South Africa as opposed to the transformational approach discussed in chapters three to four of this thesis largely eschew meaningful community involvement. Inherent to dominant approaches to education policy is also the idea that human capital development is the panacea to social ills. Issues relating to the role of education and training in the creation and promotion of a democratic citizenry; meeting the aspirations for social justice; human rights and the promotion of the cultural life of communities are regarded as a distraction from the goal of economic growth and international competitiveness. Crucial to these perspectives is the view that human capital development has no other role than the narrowly described techno-economic aims to which it is attached.

Such approaches are often silent about the conditions under which human capital development takes place and ignore the structural, institutional and global constraints impeding the possibilities for addressing the social class challenges faced by South Africa's citizenry. The social fragmentation as a result of the policies of the apartheid state and the intractability of its effects which have passed into the post-apartheid state cannot be wished away. Similarly, the structural conditions which relate poverty and inequality to education have a profound impact on development including deeply entrenched institutional factors which impede the possibilities for progressive and transformative education and training.

In essence, research which has no orientation to the dominance in the globe of the role of unfettered free markets masks the complex array of structural, institutional, individual and social issues which face policy makers in developing societies. This thesis emphasised that a critical orientation and an understanding of the wider conditions affecting policy is essential for effective policy and practice aimed at benefitting marginalised groups.

In answering the first research question related to the evolution of policy in the post-apartheid period this thesis first endeavoured to show through concrete examples why the conventional conception of policy is unlikely to succeed since it views the policy process in rational and linear stages. Such perspectives are critiqued in this thesis since policy should be understood by the iterative interplay between declaration and actions, as well as the mediations resulting from competing internal and external interests. The policy process is inherently political and dynamic, involving contestation and compromise. Conventional frameworks of policy-making derive from presumptions of ‘organized rationality’ that tend to ignore or underplay the political nature of decision-making and contestation about education. Legitimate and valuable knowledge in these frameworks of public planning have been dominated by positivist and quantitative research and data that meet epistemological criteria such as objectivity, technical rationality and generalisability. This study shows education policy as a space of contestation and situates this analysis of educational policy making structures and dynamics in historical, global, and local contexts.

It was clear prior to 1994 during the melee of constitutional negotiations and the ‘negotiated compromise’ as well as after, that contestation between different social actors took place on the policy terrain. Chapter two traced the dynamics of education policy through seven significant books written by South African authors on policy formulation and implementation in post-apartheid South Africa. Common to all the books are key chapters which explore the history, evolution and trajectories of policy theorising and research in South Africa - in one direction, looking at the emerging democratic state and its policy formulation and implementation; another in understanding the relation between education, society and wider social changes given the legacy of apartheid; and finally illustrating different policy responses to globalisation and international economic imperatives for transitional states (Spren and Vally, 2010). Absent from the books though is the significance of resurgent social movements which challenge and protest inequalities including educational inequalities. This thesis posits the view that:

policies must be judged from the vantage point of practices on the ground, everyday life, rather than glossy political rhetoric, ideal-type statements of intention, blueprints

or ‘magic silver bullets’. This view largely eliminates from scrutiny the communities and their organisational manifestations... (Ibid, 434).

The second research question around the limitations in the formal state-initiated ‘invited’ spaces of participation was answered in significant detail in chapters two, six, seven and eight. These chapters provided an historical overview of school-community relationships, under apartheid and in post-apartheid South Africa with emphasis on the evolution and role of School Governing Bodies (SGBs). The chapters critiqued the reliance on the formal structures of school governance and questioned whether SGBs in working class communities have enhanced democratic community participation in the governance of education and whether it has led to the diminution of disparities between rich and poor as many had hoped for. The chapters unravel the irony of post-apartheid policies in that while the formal basis for greater democratic participation in the management of schools has been legislated, greater equity between schools have arguably not been attained.

The case study of the ERP in chapter four and the articles in chapter five and six revealed the extensive nature of the invented spaces of participation created by civil society and the forms of mobilisation in creating these spaces. Beyond the third research question then, while raising the visibility of excluded populations and showing concrete possibilities, the research in this thesis also highlights the inadequacies of current institutional arrangements to enforce the constitutional commitment to socio-economic rights including education rights. The collaborations inherent in organisations such as the ERP, Equal Education and the Public Participation in Education Network and other organisations and between progressive academics, non-governmental organisations and research centres based at universities with communities whose education rights are being systematically violated is an integral part of the work of the democratisation of education.

These efforts have increasingly given communities the tools to inform, direct, own and use research to claim a space in the formal policy arena and to demand accountability from state actors. The intention here is not to romanticise the capacity of communities to conduct research but to underline the very real possibilities for social and institutional transformation through expanding the social capital at the

disposal of working class communities as discussed in the literature review. The thesis also attempted to contribute to the strengthening of conceptual categories underlying rights-based approaches to basic education and the theoretical debate about the relationship between practice and policy and its impact on the work of the state and socially-oriented research and action. More specifically, the presentation of community experiences in this thesis should be seen as an example of the “possibility of the most extensive form of dialogue that focused on the activities of constructing theory and research as well as policy and practice” (Ginsburg and Gorastagia 2001:191). Community initiatives and the efforts of civil society as documented in this thesis while exposing the classed nature of policymaking and practice also provides tentative possibilities for deeper and direct forms of democratic participation in education.

Various chapters in this thesis explore the ‘argument questions’ posed in the introduction centered on the ideological implications of post-apartheid policy choices, the elision of social class and community in education policy and the rights-based framework for education. Chapters two, five and nine make the case that the omission of class analysis and meaningful participation of poor communities in policy has contributed to the failure to adequately address the profound inequalities that beset the present South African education system.

This thesis attempts to contribute to filling the dearth in South African scholarship concerning the critical role of community, civil society and social movements in policy critique and development. All the chapters relate to these issues and questions, by drawing on the links between the socio-economic situation, political change and education in the post-apartheid period. The thread that runs through this thesis abides by the lyrical advice of Fine (2009:180) to critical researchers of the need to graft “fine-tuned attention to shouts and whispers of resistance onto a wide-angle landscape that links political and cultural economies to everyday life in school and community”.

The first article in this thesis (chapter five) referred to popular energies which once sustained pre - 1994 education social movements (Vally, 2007). The second article concluded with the view that new social movements are once again resurgent and have not only “established continuity with past struggles but have shed the disarming

and misplaced hope that formal political and constitutional change is sufficient to realise socio-economic and democratic citizenship” (Vally and Spreen, 2008:8). Article three (chapter seven) spoke to the unresolved tension between two models of education provision with regard to early childhood education. One model, based on the mobilisation of community initiatives and energies and the central role of community practitioners and the second emphasised institutional control. The article argued that the latter undermined the efforts of ECD provision established by communities during the struggle against apartheid. The article also explores the ‘glossy rhetoric’ of education policies and legislation with its attendant emphasis on the discourse of human rights, social justice and democratic citizenship and the actual realisation of this promise. In doing so it also served as a commentary on the discrepancy between the existing normative framework of society and its reality or the disjuncture between the policy as text and the reality as lived.

Article four (chapter eight) in dealing with the school - community nexus in South Africa, problematises the notion of ‘community’ and points to a paradox that while the formal basis for greater democratic participation in the management of schools has been legislated since 1996, greater equity between schools have not been attained and social class divisions have arguably increased, often displacing erstwhile racial divides.

Article five (chapter nine) is a conceptual article which argues that extant post-apartheid educational analysis is limited since it does not deal with the deeper implications of social class and its meaning for educational reform. The article contrasts contemporary discourse with the pre-1994 dominant view in the anti-apartheid movement which recognised the salience of class and which valued class analysis. It explicates how class is significant not only in itself but relationally in its connectedness to questions of ‘race’ and gender and that education analysis in South Africa about these categories is rarely connected with questions of class. The article explains why class analysis would enhance knowledge of specific local school communities both individually and in relation to society. It also implies a critical ability to interact with the experiential knowledge of marginalised communities. The article embraces the praxis of some initiatives in the educational field that engage

democratically with working class communities. It views this dialogical interaction as an important development that must be extended methodologically and theoretically.

All of the articles clarify why education reforms and policy should not ignore the contextual and structural character of poverty and inequality as well as the agency, voice, knowledge and collective experience of communities.

The transformational approach of this thesis embraces a human rights perspective which views education as having an intrinsic rather than an instrumental value. The latter is commonly manifested in concerns for human capital development, cost-effectiveness, and efficiency. The understanding of a rights-based approach to education builds from and is situated in the 4As framework developed by the late Katarina Tomasevski (2003), which states that education should be: Available - user fees and secondary costs should not be a barrier and schools should have adequate infrastructure, facilities, trained teachers and textbooks; Accessible - systems should not discriminate and positive steps should be taken to reach the most marginalised and vulnerable; Acceptable - the content of education should be relevant, culturally appropriate and of quality; Adaptable - education should respond to the changing needs of society and to different contexts (Tomasevski 2003). The right to education framework has multiple dimensions: first, education is a fundamental right, meaning that governments are obliged to ensure education for all children. At the same time, the framework urges for rights in and through education, requiring curricula and pedagogy that is meaningful and responsive to the needs of all learners.

The 4A framework understands human rights considerations to inform every facet of the education system. Legislation gives effect to the right to basic education and defines some of the corresponding duties and duty-bearers. But in the absence of clear norms and standards, many governmental obligations remain loosely specified (Lake and Pendlebury, 2008). Under a rights-based approach, government has an obligation to respect, protect, promote and fulfill these rights through policy and legislation. Rights should be seen as social capital which can extend and deepen meaningful access to education and mobilising public action for its full realisation is imperative. Importantly too is the view of Sen that a theory of human rights “cannot sensibly be

confined within the juridical model within which it is so frequently incarcerated” (Sen, 2004:315; see also Keet, 2005 and Madlingosi, 2006).

This thesis is also cognisant of the dangers of ‘constitutional romanticism’ or proceeding as if rights exist for everyone instead of recognising circumstances where people’s rights on paper do not translate to rights on the ground (Spren and Vally, 2006). The concerns and needs of those who are most vulnerable are crucial to defining what is meant by the right to basic education. Lake and Pendlebury (2008:23) make the point that while “legislation and litigation can get results, enduring respect for human rights is sustained not just by a country’s constitution, government and legal system.” Quoting Pogge (2002) they argue that rights are secured by “a vigilant public that is willing to work towards the political realisation of the right” (Ibid: 23). So, too, is “an active and responsible citizenship that understands the law and its limitations and are willing to insist on their rights and mobilise when these are not forthcoming.”(Vally, 2007:5).

The ERP experience with social movements provides us with rich insights into the complex process of the democratisation of education and specifically the challenges of guaranteeing that every citizen has the right to access basic education. It confirms that deep social divisions in South African society is reflected both at the ‘chalk - face’ and in the socio - economic reality of communities and that poverty and social inequalities do create differential conditions of access to education.

The community struggles in this thesis also provide insights into the complex relationship between human agency and social change and the role of research and researchers in this endeavour (Vally and Zafaar, 2008). This thesis showed how communities documented the violations of education rights which have been promised to them by the South African state. In addition, the participants collectively constructed a situated understanding of what it means to have rights and entitlements in education.

Their testimonies stand in stark contrast to human-capital dominated, decontextualised, and ahistorical understandings of education. Based on their life experiences, the communities were able to arrive at an expanded understanding of the



minimum requirements for the right to basic education, including abolition of school fees until employment and incomes increase, school uniforms and school transport subsidies, schools within a reasonable walking distance from where children live, and free stationery and textbooks for all grade levels. In short, our collaborative research project, framed by the international legal discourse of the right to education supported a political process by which township residents 're-presented' themselves as citizens with fundamental political, economic, and socio-cultural entitlements and duties. In addition, the ERP projects led to a number of different forms of citizen action that extended beyond direct engagement with the state to building alliances and coalitions within civil society.

The de-mystification of the research process also facilitated the articulation of a sophisticated critique of current education policies on basic education. The validation of local and subjugated 'knowledges' helped participants to reclaim their identities as political actors and active citizens based on, and not in spite of, their lived experiences of poverty, discrimination, and exclusion. Chapter four and the appendices show that PAR can support not only the deconstruction of official or expert power - in the political and the academic domain - but also support new understandings of how to wield power in less oppressive and more reflexive ways (Kesby 2005).

In keeping with the PAR principle of constant reflection and action or the spiral notion of an iterative learning cycle, the praxis of the ERP with communities has informed and influenced the current work of the ERP. For instance, continuity has been established with the learner surveys conducted by community members in Soweto, Ekurhuleni and Kwa-Zulu Natal (see chapter four) which found *inter alia* that the lack of nutrition amongst learners is a pervasive problem and based on this work an ERP booklet on school nutrition was published and disseminated toward the end of 2010 (Esakov and Vally, 2010). Similarly, an ERP booklet was produced in collaboration with and at the prompting of migrant groups based on the ERP refugee and migrants' project. In the past few years the ERP has emphasising rights *in* education. For example, the ERP has partnered with the Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA) in response to the discrimination of LGBTI learners and educators and homophobia including by members of social movements. This included a series of education workshops in communities and an ERP/GALA booklet on the rights of

LGBTI learners and educators. Three months of literacy workshops with community members in Freedom Park near Soweto and Evaton in the Vaal also led ERP staff members to produce a publication titled, ‘ Facilitating literacy: a handbook for community literacy workers’ (Baatjes, B and Baatjes,I 2011). This ERP booklet will also assist literacy programmes in other communities.

### **Limitations and questions for further research**

The staff complement of the ERP since its establishment has not exceeded three full - time paid personnel. The ERP relied on a large number of volunteers and field workers from social movements. The latter were paid a small stipend that covered transport, communication and food costs. Although inundated by requests from many communities around the country, financial constraints limited the ability of the ERP to hold education rights workshops and run campaigns in many areas.

The ERP while successful in partnering with social movements did not forge stronger links with teacher unions, except in a few local areas. Similarly, apart from a few academics in some universities, a stronger relationship between education social movements and the academy was not developed.

Other egregious areas and issues that did not receive the sustained and intense focus that was required included issues of gender discrimination and education around the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Neglect of the latter two areas had a poignant and profound impact on weakening many social movements.

The absence of a significant number of trained community researchers and official education data - often inaccurate – was also a limitation. Reconciling survey and household data collected by ERP with government data was a challenge.

Finally, except for some notable instances such as the re-instatement of school transport in Durban Roodeport Deep, it has been difficult to show direct causation and correlation between the ERP campaigns and community action with official policy change since state functionaries rarely concede that they succumb to pressure from

social movements. Often the state does change policy such as in the case of school fees as a result of community pressure. This thesis has provided documentary evidence of the extent of the engagement with state officials, the research and the vigorous campaigns that accompanied ERP's 'cost of education' campaign. Yet, policy changes are most likely portrayed as a consequence of the state's own careful study of and responsiveness to problems. Ballard (2005: 94-5) does make the point though that the social movements have:

influenced state policy through, in effect, making certain courses the state wanted to pursue more difficult for them. Social movements are setting boundaries and limits to state activity (or inactivity) that might not otherwise be there. Resistance comes to redefine what the government sees as the path of least resistance, so to speak. Pro-poor policies suddenly seem attractive in comparison to being tied up in expensive and time consuming court proceedings or being faced with hostile protestors.

Some questions for further research revolve around:

- The role and responsibilities of university - based researchers in community education struggles
- The 'insider' - 'outsider' relationships in PAR
- As social justice - oriented researchers and analysts, how can we be more effective in policy change?
- How do popular educators engage with oppressive social relations in intersectional ways that simultaneously address gender, 'race', social class, disability, migration and spatial inequalities?

Despite many unanswered questions, the experiences of the ERP since 2002 has taught us following Fine (2009:186) that the “‘thick desires’, “to be educated or to educate, to work in ways that are meaningful, to engage with politics, to be treated with respect, and to speak with voices that will be heard” exist in poor and working class communities of South Africa. The research has also shown that that the exercise

of rights cannot be achieved effectively under conditions that deny the citizenry its right to be heard and the freedoms associated with the right to participation in public life. The research also underlines the importance of rights awareness and the kind of human rights education that stresses the indivisible nature of human rights – the interconnectedness between economic, social, political and cultural rights. These kinds of collaboration between the academy and communities whose education rights are being systematically violated are an integral part of the work of the democratisation of education. As mentioned earlier, these efforts have given communities the tools to inform, direct, own and use research to claim their space and voice in formal policy arenas. The research and experience of the ERP with community members has also showed that the omission and elision of social class and community as understood in this thesis will continue to impoverish education policy and practice. It is my hope that the reflections presented in this thesis will stimulate debate on the ways in which we think about, analyse, make and implement education policy.

In the process of collecting testimonies detailing the views and experiences of learners, teachers and community activists about their local schools, cold statistical data on school fees, transport, feeding schemes, child labour, infrastructure and facilities were given new meaning. The troubles and struggles of individuals and communities to educate their young in very trying conditions, to make the hard - won constitutional right to education a reality, are vividly portrayed in these testimonies. A number of communities have designed or are in the process of designing and collecting data on basic issues and violations of their rights. These voices help us take a step back to understand the failures of policy, as Apple and Beane (1999) suggest, outside its “glossy political rhetoric” and place them in the gripping “details of everyday life” in order to fulfill the promises of South Africa’s constitutional democracy.

Despite tentative and uncertain conclusions and often overwhelming challenges there is solace in the view of Ballard (94) who argues that:

The obvious tangible effect of social movements on the political landscape of the country is that they represent the interest of the poor and marginalized and apply

pressure on the government to pay greater attention to the welfare of these groups. This is an avenue for marginalized people and those interested in the plight of the marginalized to impact on material distribution, on social exclusion, and on claiming a certain degree of influence and power over the state itself.

Although many of the social movements are not always able to provide sophisticated alternatives to the status quo, it is precisely the constituencies they represent, that have brought about the most significant changes in this country. Popular energies, which once sustained the powerful pre - 1994 education social movements, are again resurgent. These new social movements have established continuity with past struggles but have also shed the disarming and misplaced hope that changes to the political dispensation and a progressive constitution is sufficient to realise socio-economic rights and democratic citizenship.

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## Appendix A

### Thematic List of Outputs for the Right to Basic Education Project and the Education Rights Project

Theme	Type of Research Output	Publication/Title	Participating Unit/ Authors
<b>Democracy, State, Market, Development and Globalisation</b>	CEPD Occasional Publication Series, Occasional Paper no.4	The Case for Basic Education	CEPD: Enver Motala and Tsakani Chaka
	Paper presented at the International Education Rights Conference in Ramallah, Palestine, November 2004	The Impact of Globalisation on the Education System in South Africa	Wits EPU: Brian Ramadiro and Salim Vally
	Quarterly Review	Education as Market Fantasy or Education as a Public Good?	Wits EPU: Salim Vally and Andre Keet
	Book Chapter	The Globalisation of Education Policy and Practice in South Africa in George Martell (ed) Education's Iron Cage and its Dismantling in the New Global Order	Wits EPU: Salim Vally and Carol-Anne Spreen

	Book Chapter	Education Rights and the Commodification of Education in P. Bond, H. Chitonge and A. Hofman (eds) The Accumulation of Capital in South Africa (Rosa Luxemburg Foundation/ Centre for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal)	Wits EPU: Salim Vally
	Paper presented at the Centre for Civil Society, University of KwaZulu-Natal	The Limits of Representative Democracy- Citizenship and Education Rights	Wits EPU, Salim Vally
	Paper presented at the DITSELA conference, Elijah Barayi Centre, Yeoville	The Political Economy of Education- Key Trends, Issues and their Significance	Wits EPU, Salim Vally
<b>International Human Rights Discourse and Human Rights Instruments</b>	Unpublished Paper	Right to Basic Education in Poor Communities in South Africa: A Review of the International Human Rights Instruments	Ft. Hare EPU: Syphorosa Rembe
	Unpublished Paper	Education, Human Rights and the Law	CEPD: Enver Motala

	Quarterly Review	Human Rights, Citizenship and Education	Wits EPU: Salim Vally and CEPD: Enver Motala
<b>Policy, Legislative Review and Implementation</b>	Quarterly Review: Issue on Learners in Rural Schools	Learners in Rural Schools	CEPD: Samiera Zafar
	Paper also presented at the International Conference on the Right to Basic Education, Amsterdam, November 2004	The Cause, the Object, the Citizen: Rural School Learners in the Void of Intersecting Policies and Traditions of Thought	CEPD: Catherine Odora Hoppers
	CEPD Public Policy Seminar, November 2004	Education and Rurality	CEPD: Xola Ngonini
	Unpublished Article	The Right to Education for Asylum Seekers, Documented Migrants and Refugee in South Africa.	Wits EPU: Sarah Motha
	Unpublished Article	Farm Schools: Poison or Remedy? A Review of a Human Rights Watch Report	CEPD: Samiera Zafar

	<p>Paper presented at WCCES conference, Cuba October 2004</p> <p>Unpublished Article</p> <p>Dossier of rights based cases and articles on the violation of education rights. Wits EPU Submission to the SAHRC Public Hearing on the Right to Education</p> <p>Submission to the Department of Education on the proposed amendments to the school fees regulation</p> <p>Journal Article</p>	<p>Decentralisation and Democracy: Uneasy Bedfellows</p> <p>Vignettes on Policy Implementation at the Rural Chalk Face</p> <p>Education Rights violations.</p> <p>ERP Submission on the amendments of SASA on school fees</p> <p>Citizenship and Children's Education Rights in South Africa. Journal of Education</p>	<p>CEPD: Hersheela Narsee</p> <p>CEPD: Samiera Zafar</p> <p>Wits EPU: Sarah Motha and Salim Vally</p> <p>Wits EPU: Brian Ramadiro and Salim Vally</p> <p>Wits EPU: Salim Vally</p>
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		(UKZN).	
<b>Social Movements, Civil Society and Basic Education</b>	Journal Article	The Law, Education Rights and Social Movements- From People’s Education to Neo-Liberalism, in Review of African Political Economy	Wits EPU: Salim Vally
	Book Chapter	Education Rights and Social Movements in South Africa, in S. Macrine, D. Hill and P. McLaren(eds) Organising Pedagogy: Educating for Social Justice Within and Beyond Global Neo-Liberalism (Routledge)	Wits EPU: Salim Vally
	Paper Presented at the World Social Forum, Mumbai	Arenas for Research and Action between Social Movements and Academics	Wits EPU: Salim Vally
	Paper presented at the Induction of the National Executive Committee, Treatment Action Campaign, Randburg	The Socio-Economic, Political and Education Context of the HIV/AIDS Pandemic	Wits EPU: Salim Vally



	Paper presented at the Gauteng Department of Education Colloquium, Braamfontein	Gauteng Schools- Sites of Social Justice	Wits EPU: Salim Vally
<b>Research Methodology</b>	Lecture Programme delivered to Education Students at Wits University	Selected issues in the Methodology of Participatory Action Research Studies: Reflections on the Education Rights Project and the Right to Basic Education Project	Wits EPU: Brian Ramadiro and Salim Vally
	Quarterly Review	Education Research for Social Justice: From Objectivity to Subjectivity	Wits EPU: Brian Ramadiro, Salim Vally, Shireen Motala and Mphela Motimele; CEPD: Samiera Zafar, Michael Gardiner and Xola Ngonini; CEREP: Cliff Malcolm

<p><b>Right to Basic Education- The Voices of Learners</b></p>	<p>Compilation of Learner Views</p>	<p>The views of Learners on issues such as School Governing Bodies, Gender and Violence, HIV/AIDS, Xenophobia and Discrimination, The Cost of Education, School Transport and Uniforms, Extra Curriculum Initiatives, Learner Representative Councils and Community-School Relationships, in Education Struggles After Apartheid, Khanya Journal</p>	<p>Wits EPU: Brian Ramadiro and Salim Vally (eds)</p>
<p><b>Case Studies</b></p>	<p>Research Report</p> <p>Research Report</p> <p>Research Report</p> <p>Research Report</p>	<p>Ft. Hare EPU Research Report on 6 Case Studies in the Eastern Cape.</p> <p>An Exploratory Study of Human Rights Education in Two Schools in Gauteng</p> <p>The Right to Basic Education in Durban Roodepoort Deep and Rondebult</p> <p>Survey of 1665 learners in Ekurhuleni and Soweto: Nutrition, Corporal Punishment, HIV/AIDS, Admission Policies, Pregnancy, School Fees and Attitudes to Schooling</p>	<p>Ft. Hare EPU: Symphorosa Rembe</p> <p>CEPD: Samiera Zafar, Andre Keet and Ben Richards</p> <p>Wits EPU: Brian Ramadiro and Salim Vally</p> <p>Wits EPU: Brian Ramadiro, David Jenkins, Salim Vally and a team of fifteen community researchers</p>

<p><b>Popular Booklets on the Right to Basic Education</b></p>	<p>Research and Background Literature Review to inform advocacy booklets on twelve issues.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. HIV/AIDS</li> <li>2. Sexual Violence</li> <li>3. Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants</li> <li>4. Language Rights</li> <li>5. Religion and Schools</li> <li>6. Disability</li> <li>7. School Governing Bodies</li> <li>8. The Cost of Schooling</li> <li>9. Admission Policy</li> <li>10. Adult Learners</li> <li>11. Corporal Punishment and Bullying</li> <li>12. Discrimination and Schooling</li> </ol>	<p>Wits EPU: Salim Vally and Brian Ramadiro (eds)</p>
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## Appendix B

### List of ERP Issue Papers and Authors.

1. **The Constitutionality of School Fees in Public Education.**

Daria Roithmayr - Visiting Professor of Law, University of Pretoria and University of Illinois College of Law. September, 2002.

2. **Infrastructure Provisioning in Schools and the Right to Basic Education.**

Russell Andrew Wildeman –IDASA. November, 2002.

3. **Transforming Farm Schools.**

Stuart Wilson – Research officer, ERP, Centre for Applied Legal Studies. September, 2002.

4. **Prohibiting the On-going Sexual Harassment of and Sexual Violence against Learners.**

Nikki Naylor, Women’s Legal Centre. September, 2002.

5. **‘The Time is Burning.’ The right of adults to basic education in South Africa.**

Peter Rule, Centre for Adult Education, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. December, 2002.

## Appendix C

### The ERP Reference Group established in 2003.

Adelzadeh, Asghar	United Nations Development Programme
Aichison, John	(ex) Head of the School of Education, Training and Development/Natal University
Bhamjee, Abeda	Wits Law Clinic
Blunden, Steven	Link Community Development
Brand, Danie	Centre for Human Rights/ University of Pretoria
Chetty, Mahendra	Legal Resources Centre
Gordon, Adele	Centre for Education Policy Development
Keet, Andre	(ex) South African Human Rights Commission
Khumalo, Bongani	Education Crisis Committee-Soweto
Kollapen, Jody	(ex) South African Human Rights Commission
Mabusela, Solly	South African Democratic Teachers Union
Moshao, Motari	Commission for Gender Equality
Motala, Enver	(ex) Deputy-General of Education (Gauteng)
Motala, Shirin	Alliance for Children's Entitlement to Social Security
Ndela, Chris	(ex) Anti - Discrimination Task Team – Pietermaritzburg
Pillay, Kameshini	Constitutional Litigation Unit/Legal Resources Centre
Roithamayr, Daria	University of Michigan
Seloane, Mandla	(ex) Human Sciences Research Council
Solomon, Marcus	Children's Movement/Children's Resource Centre
Tlou, Joyce	National Consortium for Refugee Affairs
Wilderman, Russel	Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa
Wolpe, Anna-Marie	(ex) Gender Equity Unit-Department of Education

## Appendix D

### List of organisations which participated in ERP Workshops.

(Compiled from ERP narrative reports 2002-2012).

**Eastern Cape-**Youth for Work and the Right to Work Campaigns; the Landless People's Movement; Lusikisiki Child Resources Centre; Mdantsane Youth Development Forum; Isanamva Residents Association; Umtata Child Abuse Resources Centre; National Cooperative Association of South Africa;

**Limpopo-**Nkuzi Development Association; Bathlabile Rural Development; Movement for Delivery; Jubilee 2000; Timbila Poetry Project; Centre for Positive Care; Somali Association of South Africa; Centre for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation; Migrant Community Board; COSATU.

**KwaZulu-Natal-**Abahlali base Mjondolo; Concerned Citizen's Forum; Wentworth Development Forum; Westcliff, Crossmore, Bayview and South Cross Residents and Flat Dwellers Associations; Ethekeweni Social Forum; Residence Associations in Mpumalanga, Ndwedwe, Umlazi, Kwamashu, Mount Moriah, Sydenham and Lamontville; SADTU; South Durban Community Environmental Alliance.

**Western Cape-** Western Cape Anti Eviction Campaign; Project for an Alternative Education in South Africa; Adult Learning Network; Community Network Forum; Youth for Work; Ogoni Solidarity Forum; Children's Movement; Khayelitsha Residents Association; SADTU; COSATU; Adult Learning Network; Popular Education Movement.

**Mpumalanga-**South African National Civic Organisation.

**North West:** Ikageng Community Crisis Committee.

**Gauteng**-Anti-Privatisation Forum; Bophelong Community Services Forum; Concerned Learners Committee-Sedibeng; Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee; Inner City Forum; Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee; Katlehong Concerned Residents; Small Farm Community Development Forum; Motswaledi Community Project; Learners Representative Forum; Working Class Community Coordinating Committee; Kanana Community Development Forum; Evaton Community Crisis Committee; Mandelaville Crisis Committee; Thembelihle Crisis Committee; Thembisa Concerned Residents Association; Tsakane Crisis Committee; Daveyton Residents Association; Daveyton Community Peace Committee; Coordinating Body for Refugee Communities; SADTU; National Association of School Governing Bodies; Tsebo Education Initiative/Vaal; Coordinating Body of Refugee Communities; Soweto Concerned Residents; COSATU.

## Appendix E

ERP/ ABET National Stakeholders

Meeting of 1 July 2003

List of Participants:

Aitschison, John - University of Natal Pietermaritzburg School of Education

Baatjes, Ivor - University of Natal Pietermaritzburg School of Education

Byrne, Debbie - Ditsela

Castle, Jane - Adult Education Unit at Wits

Danile, Vumile - Initiative for Participatory Democracy

Dean, Pat - Operation Upgrade

Dolopi, Nkosane - South African Democratic Teachers Union

French, Edward - Independent ABET Specialist

Gardiner, Michael - EPU

Hamilton, Sheri - Ditsela

Hargreaves, Samantha - National Land Committee

Hunter, Farrell - Adult Learning Network (ALN)

MacFarlane, David – Mail and Guardian

Mathe, Khulekane - Thembalethu

Miller, Andrew - Project Literacy

Mokonyana, Johannes - Tecrasajco

Mthimkulu, Sonto - Youth for Work

Ngobeni, Dingane - South African Democratic Teachers Union

van Niekerk, Jonathan - Adult Education Unit at Wits

Noe, Jacob - Adult Education Unit at Wits

Ramadiro, Brian - ERP/ Wits-EPU

Rule, Peter- University of Natal Pietermaritzburg School of Education

Thebola, Angelina - Landless Peoples Movement (LPM)

Thumbadoo, Beulah - ERP/ Scribe



## Appendix F

### ERP-Rondebult Snapshot Survey Questionnaire on Transport

Parent/ Guardian Details:

Name & Surname:

Address:

Tel:

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- Employed
- Unemployed
- Total number of dependants

Other source of income:

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Total average household income per month:

Children's Details:

Name and Surname	Age	School and Grade	Transport Per Month	School Fee per year	School Uniforms per year	School Books per year

Have you ever been denied a bus ride to school because of non-payment of bus fares?\_\_\_

How often has this happened?\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do your children travel to school if you cannot pay the bus fare?\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What is the longest period your children stayed away from school because of non-payment of bus fares?\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G

### **ERP- Refugees and Migrants Project: Focus Groups, Interview Guide and Workshop Activity.**

#### **Focus group discussion for Migrant Communities**

**1 April 2005**

**Venue: B 244-Wits School of Education**

Re: Rights of migrants to access basic education in the inner city.

- a) What does the word migrant mean to you?
- b) What type of rights do you think you have in South Africa?
- c) Do you think you have a right to go to school in South Africa?
- d) Are there any problems that you are experiencing in accessing schooling in the inner city? Are you having problems with language, transport, your feeder zone, school fees, uniform, and housing?
- e) How do you feel about these problems/
- f) Do you have any success stories to share with us?
- g) Has there been a situation where you feel afraid to go to school to ask for admission?
- h) Do you have any additional information that you want to share with us?

#### **Interview guide for focus group (host community)**

**4 June 2005**

Re: Education rights of migrants in the inner city of Johannesburg.

- a) Wars, fear of ethnic, religiously motivated persecutions and different forms of repression cause people to leave their countries in search of safety and protection. In South Africa we have laws that allow hosting of such people. What do you think of this
- b) South Africa has been in similar situation where people left the country because of political repression and apartheid laws. These people were

accommodated in different countries in Africa and abroad. In future, if the same situation happens in South Africa, do you think that people should be allowed to stay in other countries?

- c) Let's assume that most countries have limited resources; what types of services do you think such people will need?
- d) What services should be provided to refugees? Do you think that they have any rights?
- e) What do you imagine are some of the problems that make it difficult for refugees to go to schools in Johannesburg?
- f) How do you think these problems can be solved and by whom?
- g) Crime is often associated with refugees as perpetrators. What do you think about this view?
- h) Do you have any additional information you may want to share with us?

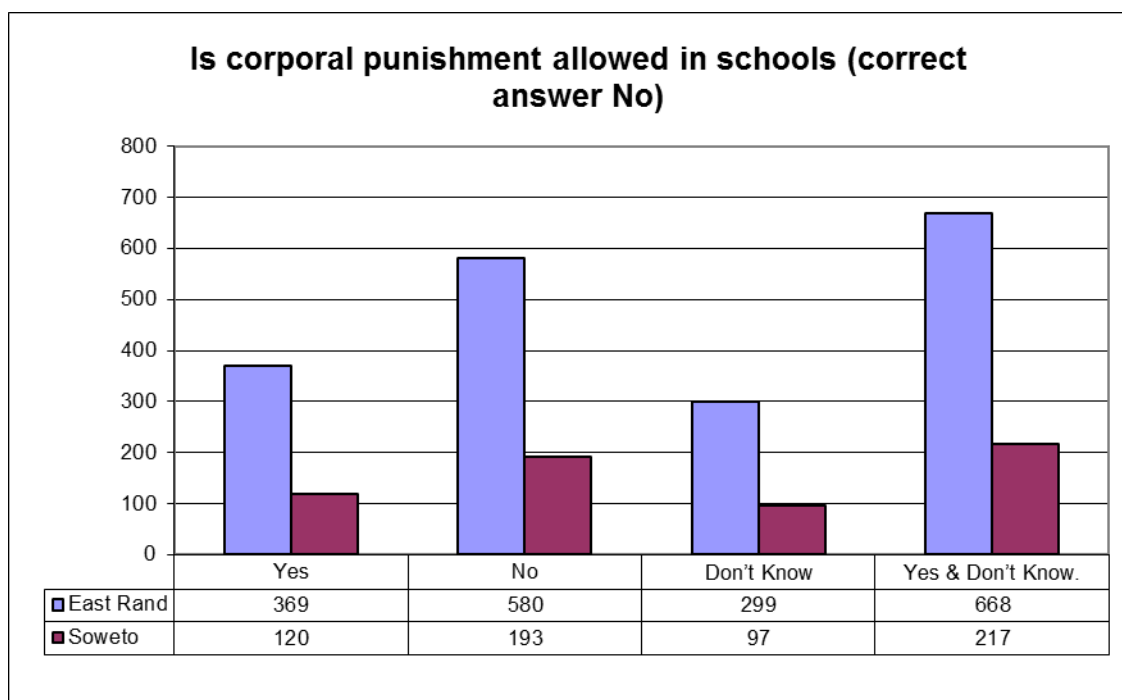
**Participatory workshop activity.**

Participants break into groups of six (maximum); each group must have a scribe as well as someone to report later. Participants then have to discuss and answer the following questions:

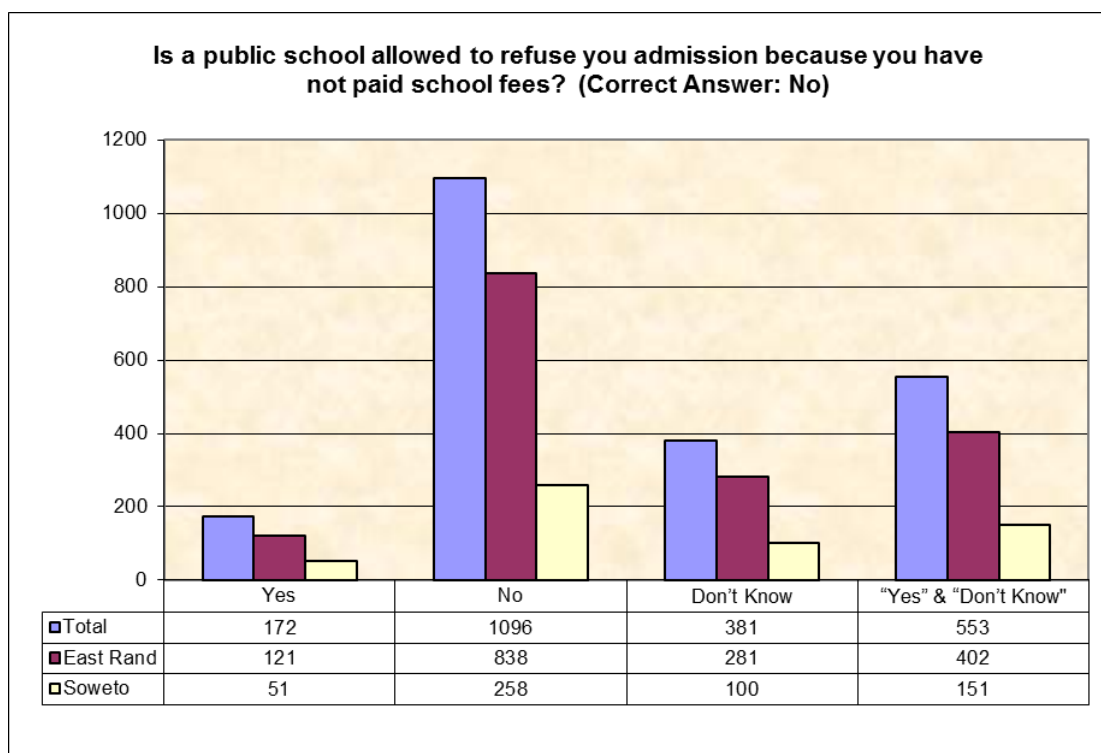
- a) Do you think migrant learners have the right to access schooling in the inner city? Explain your answer.
- b) What is the nature of barriers/problems (if there are any) preventing migrant learners from exercising their right to access schooling in the inner city of Johannesburg? Name each problem and explain it in detail.
- c) What other problems can you think of? These may relate to issues such as age, language, unemployment, textbooks etc. Explain in detail.
- d) How is your school/organisation/community dealing with these problems? Alternatively, how have these problems been resolved in the past? Have there been any success stories?
- e) Explain how you think the rest of these problems/ barriers could be solved in the future?
- f) Are there any other issues that you may like to share with us?

## Appendix H

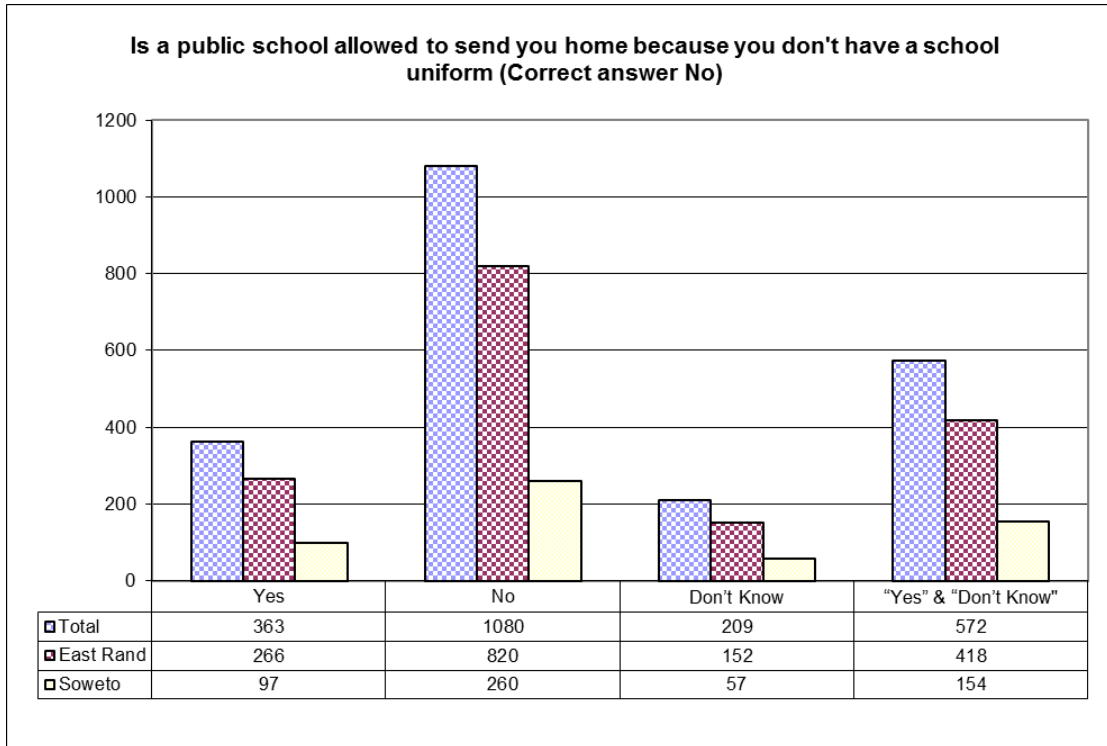
### Key Findings on the Understanding of Education Rights



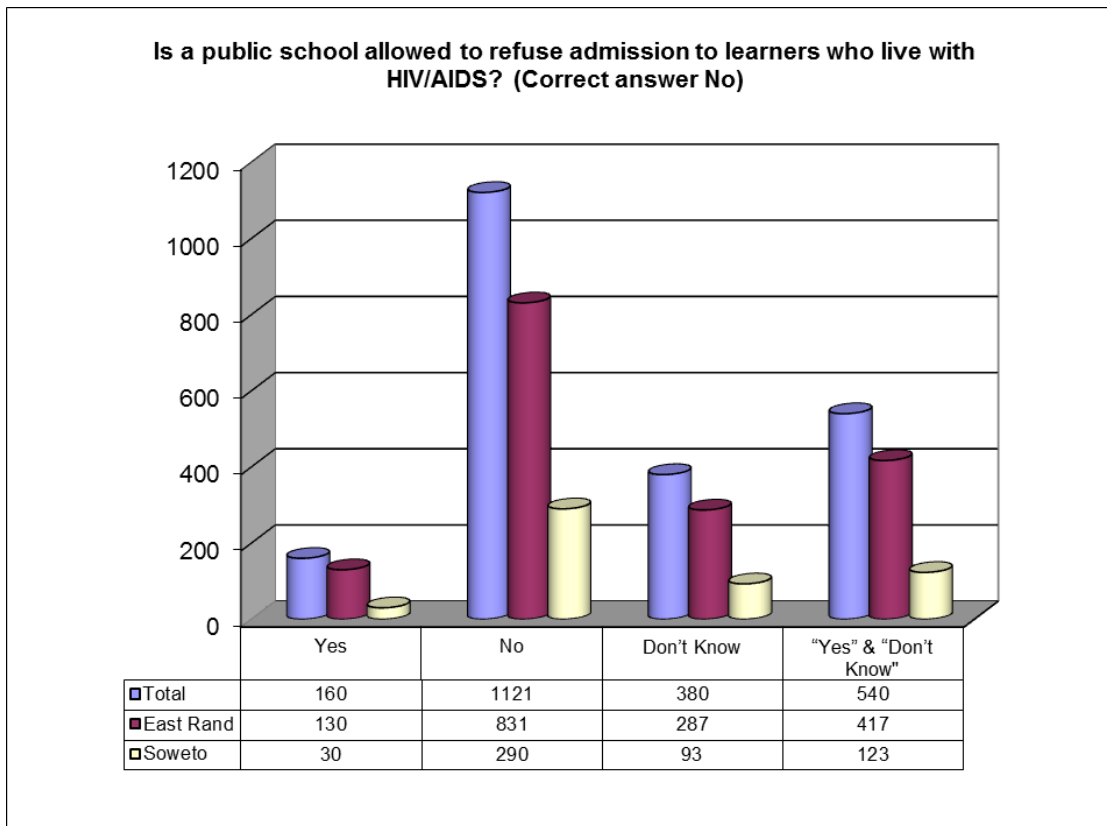
**Graph 1: Understanding of Corporal Punishment Policies.**



**Graph 2: Understanding of Admission Policies and School Fees.**

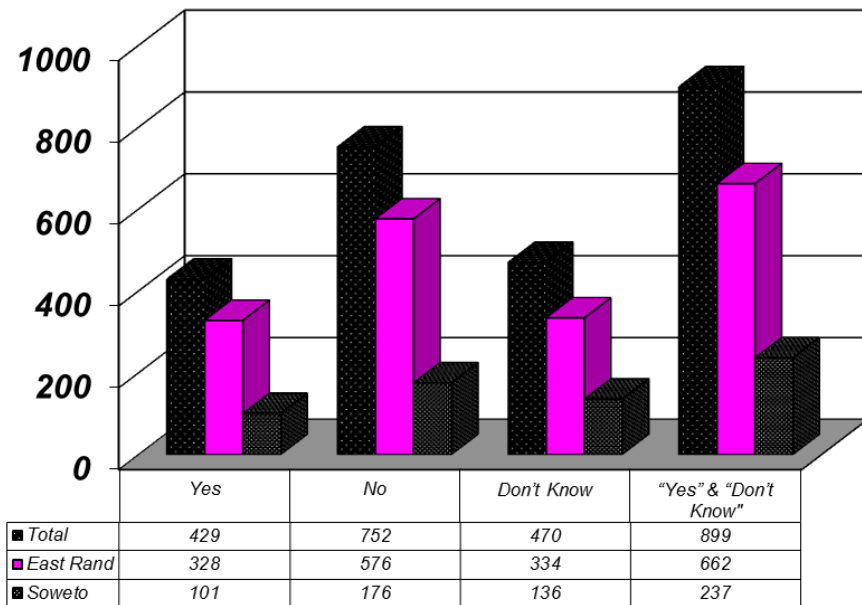


**Graph 3: Understanding of School Uniforms Policy**



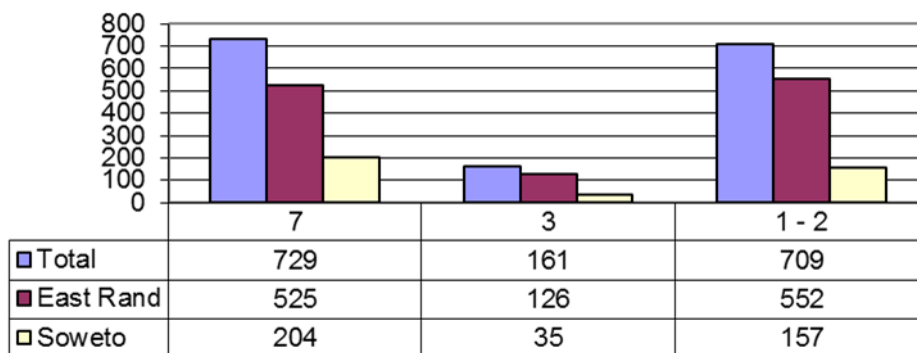
**Graph 4: Understanding of HIV/AIDS School Policy.**

Is the public school allowed to refuse permission to a learner who is pregnant  
(Correct answer No)



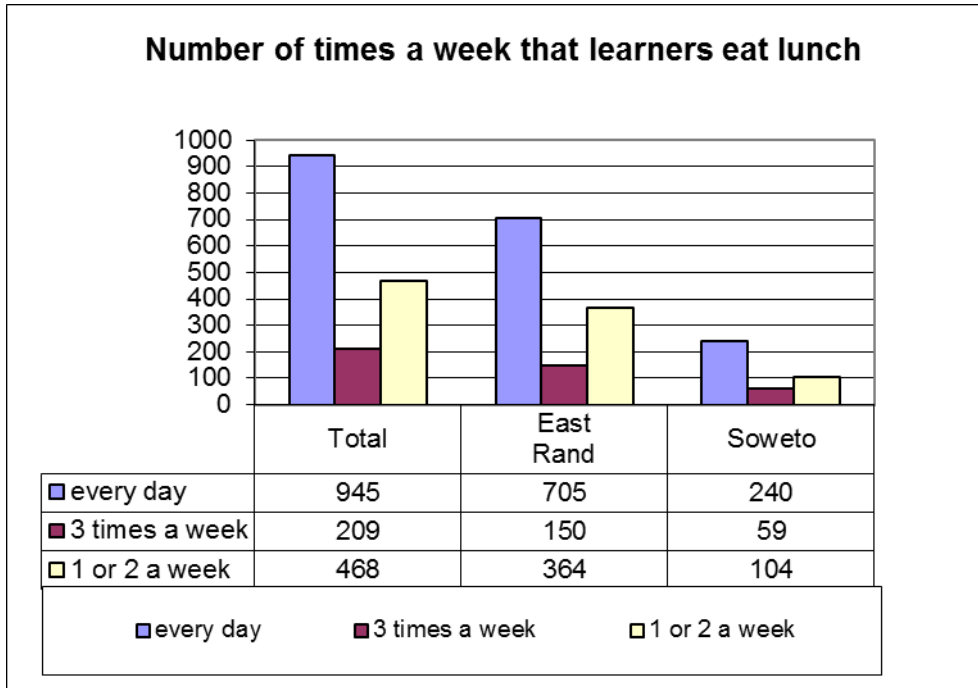
Graph 5: Understanding of Learner Pregnancy Policy

### Nutrition in the East Rand and Soweto

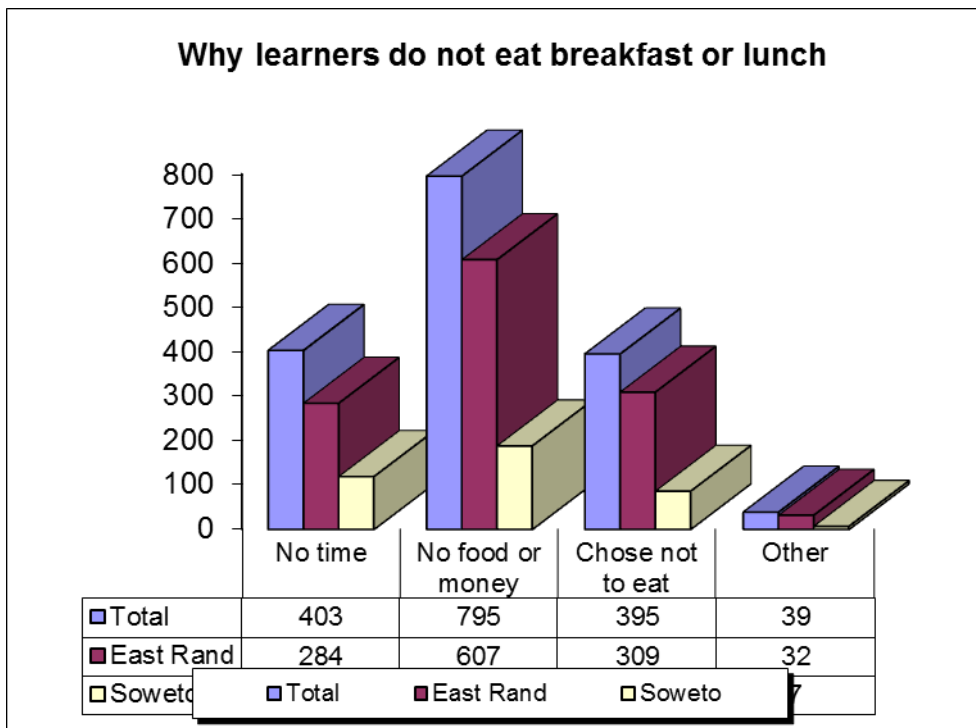


Number of days in a week that you do not have breakfast

Graph 6a: School Nutrition in Soweto and Ekurhuleni



**Graph 6b: School Nutrition in Soweto and Ekurhuleni**



**Graph 6c: School Nutrition in Soweto and Ekurhuleni**



## Appendix I

### **Sites, target groups and partners of ERP's Education Rights of Refugees and Migrants' Project.**

**Gauteng:** Central Methodist Mission (Albert Street and Pritchard Street Schools); Yeoville (Sacred Heart School); Refugee communities and social movements in Alexandra Township; Soweto and Orange Farm; the Somali community in Mayfair.

**Partners:** Anti-Privatisation Forum's affiliates in Alexandra Township, Orange Farm and Soweto; Central Methodist Mission; Campaign Against Xenophobia; Coordinating Body for Refugee Communities; Forced Migration Studies Programme; Jesuit Refugee Service; Khanya College; Lawyers for Human Rights; Medecins Sans Frontieres; Papillion Foundation; Save the Children; The Suit Case Project; Somali Community Structures in Mayfair; Zimbabwe Torture Victims Project.

**Stakeholders:** Department of Education officials (circuit, district and provincial levels); Department of Welfare and Social Development; Teacher Unions; School Governing Bodies and Principals; and migrant learners, teachers and parents.

**Limpopo:** Polokwane, Thohoyando, Musina and villages in Venda.

**Partners:** Center for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation, University of Venda; School of Education, University of Venda; Journey of Hope Programme; Centre for Positive Care; South African Youth Voices Network; Save the Children; Medecins Sans Frontieres.

**Stakeholders:** As above.

**Western Cape:** Cape Town; Masiphumelele; Gugulethu; Khayelitsha and De Doorns.

**Partners:** TAC; PASSOP; Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign; Ogoni Solidarity Forum; Social Justice Coalition.

**Stakeholders:** As above and including SAHRC and the UNHCR.