

PATHWAYS

"PATHWAYS TO FREE EDUCATION: FROM PAMPHLETS TO ACTION" IS AN EDUCATIONAL CONTENT DESIGNED TO FURTHER AND DEEPEN DEBATE ON THE POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS FOR THE "FREE EDUCATION" MOVEMENT. THIS PAMPHLET HAS BEEN DEVELOPED AS A NON-PARTISAN RESOURCE THAT IS OPEN TO BE PRINTED, DOWNLOADED AND USED BY ANYONE AND EVERYONE BUT DESIGNED WITH THE INTENTION OF ENGAGING STUDENTS, WORKERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS AT LARGE.

TO

FREE EDUCATION

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ON BLACKNESS
BY NTEBALENG MORAKE

I LICKED MY THICK BROWN LIPS AND I TASTED LIKE POST-COLONIAL COLONIAL SOUTH AFRICA.

MY THICK BROWN LIPS TASTED LIKE CENTURIES OF DEFEAT.

OF DISPOSSESSION.

OF LAND GRABS.

OF POVERTY.

OF NOTHINGNESS.

I TASTED LIKE BLACKNESS.

NO ONE TOLD ME BLACKNESS HAD A TASTE, BUT WHEN MY TONGUE
DANCED WITH IT, IT WAS BITTER!

IT TASTED OF THE TEARS OF MY PEOPLE WHEN SETTLERS CAME AND
OCCUPIED THEIR LAND, LEAVING THEM IN SHAMBLES AND DOG LIKE
HOUSES BUILT ON TOP OF EACH OTHER AND INDIGNITY.

BLACKNESS IN MY TONGUE TASTED LIKE THE SWEAT OF BLACK WOM-
XN FORCED INTO SPACES OF OTHERNESS- RAISING WHITE BABIES
WHO WILL GROW UP TO CLAIM THAT THE VERY HANDS THAT RAISED
THEM ARE BARBARIC AND DISGUSTING.

BLACKNESS IN MY TONGUE TASTED LIKE BEING DEAD, BUT STILL
KISSED BY THE SUN.

BEING ALIVE BUT NOT LIVING.

SUFFOCATING BUT STILL WAKING UP.

BLACKNESS IN MY TONGUE TASTED LIKE WAR.

IT TASTED LIKE BEING IN A CAGE, PULLING THE BARS, SCREAMING
FOR RECOGNITION- BUT YOUR VOICE FALLS TO THE FLOOR AND EV-
ERYONE STEPS ON IT.

IT TASTED LIKE FEES MUST FALL ON THE DAY OF PARLIAMENT WHEN
UNIFORMED BLACKS WHO THREW STONES IN 76' NOW THREW US
WITH STUN GRENADES FOR A PROMISE THEY MADE, AN EDUCATION,
A NECESSITY.

IT TASTED LIKE THE SALARY OF AN OUTSOURCED WORKER. ASINA
MALI KODWA SIYA SEBENZA.

IT TASTED LIKE MARIKANA.

LIKE SHARPEVILLE.

IN MY TONGUE BLACKNESS TASTED LIKE INVISIBILITY.

EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO FREE EDUCATION

- Songo Tinise, Equal Education Equalizer

My name is Songo Tinise and I am currently doing grade 10 at Thandokhulu High School. My place of residence is Phillipi.

I, personally, think the concept of free education should apply everywhere. When I say “everywhere” I include tertiaries as well. Varsities are very expensive. They are so expensive that some parents even have to take out a loan in order to afford the fees. No wonder we have an increasing number of people in debt; education fees play an enormous role in this debt.

When it comes to education fees, things like transportation; school uniforms; stationery- including textbooks; lunch money (since not all schools have feeding-schemes and if they do the food there isn't always desirable or nutritious); school fundraisings and school fees all need to be considered.

Imagine what a major deduction it will be if school fees didn't exist. A major deduction that would make an enormous difference in terms of the debt our parents get into and, only to find, that it's because of the fees they have to pay for their children to get quality education.

“Everyone has the right to free education”

This right has been declared over-and-over again- so many times that I've even run out of count. Reflecting on this concept and placing it in comparison to the actions of our government in this country-regarding education: I would conclude that it doesn't apply fully. When we talk about education, firstly, we should include primary, high school (secondary) and tertiary levels. Now, we can't say “there is free education” in our country when not all of these levels of education aren't paying, specifically tertiary institutions.

Funnily enough, you can go anywhere in South Africa and you won't find any university that doesn't require any fees, but we still claim that education is free in our country. The free education we have is not complete

ALL
POWER
TO THE
PEOPLE



Graphic: Rabia Omar

UCT Left Students forum on Free Education

By UCT LSF

The South African political breakthrough liberated the country into the global casino economy. Our local economy was integrated into the global neo-liberalism introduced in the 1980s and 1990s. This took the form of structural adjustments as pioneered by the International Monetary Fund. During apartheid the Bantu education system was set up and black pupils had to consume inferior education because of their race. Today education is structured along class lines and the continued consequences of apartheid dispossession along racial lines. The knot between race and class defines the quality of our education.

WHY FREE EDUCATION THEN? To us education means social need more than economic need, but the capitalist system is not concerned with our social needs. That is why most capitalist states do not have a budget for education to help with our natural desire to learn about our world. Their concern is about education to produce a workforce for capitalist accumulation.

Under capitalism education plays the role of reproducing the class structure in society. This is clear in South Africa. If you come from a poor black family, still burdened by the legacy of apartheid, you will probably go to a school that has few resources and it will be hard for you to get a good education. This means you will get a working-class job. But if you are wealthy you can go to a school that will make sure you get a middle-class or ruling class job and position in society. So education reinforces class and racial oppression. This is especially true when education, like it is in South Africa, is so underfunded by our government. Quality free education can change this.

The ANC government made a promise in the Freedom Charter, to give us free education, but this has not happened. Along with free education, Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment were redistributive policy measures meant to correct inequalities. The historical legacy of apartheid education has meant that few black people have been able to effectively respond to these governmental policy choices. School drop-out statistics from foundation to senior phase under apartheid education attest to this fact; from the 1962 intake, out of the pupils enrolled for grade one, only 1.6% went through to grade twelve by 1974. In the light of these statistics, black people have not been able to benefit from the current redistributive policies.

CAN OUR GOVERNMENT AFFORD THIS FREE EDUCATION? We have the resources for free education. Other third world countries who shared a similar historical positionality with us have been able to make noble reforms, particularly in Latin America. What countries like Brazil and Venezuela simply did was to take advantage of economic resources where they have a monopoly and used them for their national interests. Chavez used the sale of oil for education. Our country is sitting with almost 90% of the world's platinum reserves. *All president Zuma has to do is to say, "Platinum for education"* and begin to take ownership of that commodity for free education to be realised. There is no way that this noble objective can be realised without tempering with current economic patterns.

Pathways to Free Education: Pamphlet towards action

Rethinking (Free) Education

-Nehna Singh, University of the Wesern Cape

I think of free education as freedom from the idea that education only takes place within schools and universities. The practical in education is that we must be able to “change things so that other things become socially possible”¹ (Said). In order to understand this idea we need to rethink the way in which we value knowledge and skills. We need to think about how we can get food and water to everyone but not just stop at thinking, we then need to teach those who need food and water how to plant crops and build pipes. I am suggesting that free education is something that is not limited by government or business agendas, but rather, education that allows us to imagine creating the lives we want to live.

However, the responsibility for money towards education often shifts to the government or, if you are (un)lucky, the corporate sector. When these sectors become sponsors for education they then have the power to impose their demands on education sectors, which can then limit academic freedom. Education therefore becomes less about knowledge and skills and more about maintaining economic and political agendas. The relationship between power and knowledge is something we must consider carefully. We cannot limit our access to education to those who have power and privilege.

An education in the schools and universities is just one way of receiving knowledge. There are so many other ways to teach and learn. A free education is about thinking beyond the schools and into the communities so that everybody can make the changes they want to see and feel. The Community Arts Project (CAP) for example, is one instance of a practical approach to education in South Africa. It is thus important that, “each community of academics, intellectuals and students must wrestle with the problem of what academic freedom in [this] society at [this] time actually is and should be” (Said).

1 Edward Said pg. 220

I want an education that is free from being thought of as only inside schools and universities. Free education is knowledge that makes real change because it is free from the institutional boundaries.

Although I learn and teach in the university, the place that I make real change in is my community. Free education is about reaching the broader communities not only the few people that make it to school.

Nehna Daya Singh

Works Cited Said, Edward. "Academic Freedom in a democratic South Africa." Interview with Edward W Said. John Higgins. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2014.

The Probability of a Free Education

By Wilton Schereka -
University of the Western
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That populist politics has taken a hold of the narrative around free public services, such as education, is self evident in the South African context. Each of the top three political parties, in its own way, expounds on ideas of how it will bring this freedom to existence. One political party in particular is even going so far as to promise sweeping land reform policies.

I remain sceptical of these types of promises for a few reasons. One of those is the sheer mass of administration it would take to assess and work through claims. How far back does one go in redressing these issues?

On education, though, it must be noted that the possibility of a free and accessible education is possible. Governmental expenditure fails to make a dent in our budget. Alongside that is the nature of rampant corruption, with suspended teachers who are still getting paid for no work, principals who are still there beyond retirement age, and many other instances of mismanagement. There is also the strange event of budgetary expenses coming in way below what was made available, even though the situation is dire in places like the Eastern Cape. 195

With all that said, the narrative around free education has mostly been centred around the university. I am not suggesting that we should not be having that conversation, what I am suggesting, as a friend of mine Tarryn De Kock keeps arguing, is that the conversation should first be about primary and secondary education. At university level, it is my firm belief that a combination of more government expenditure and the French model where well off students pay more than poor students. It is plausible then that tertiary education could become more accessible. Of course, the population of well off students will be upset with this, but to them I posit the notion of addressing your privilege. One only has to look so far as the UCT parking bays to note the sheer amount of privilege at play at some of these institutions. But, and I must stress this: all of this is futile without a functioning and financially liberated primary and secondary school system.



Photography: Nishal Robb

Digging in: Financing Higher Education

By Dominic Brown, AIDC

In South Africa we do not face constraints of money. Where there is political will money can be found. Take for example, the financing of hosting the world cup. The government had no problem financing stadiums and other infrastructure that are nothing more than white elephants.

In the first instance money for free education should be obtained by taxing the rich. It is a complete myth that the rich and middle classes are over-taxed. Since 1996 when the neoliberal GEAR macro-economic policy was implemented government set a conservative ceiling of tax to GDP of 25%, whereas this could easily be lifted to 33% as is the case in many so-called developing countries. This alone could liberate billions of additional funds to meet demands for financing free higher education, a national health insurance, scheme and creating decent work for the millions of unemployed.

The largest domestic savings pool in the country is the R1.8 trillion Public Investment Corporation (PIC), owned by the government. A prescribed asset of 10% dedicated to government projects such as free education would release R180 billion per annum.

A mere 10% tax on Idle corporate bank deposits – corporate bank deposits presently not reinvested – will free up another R150 billion per annum.

A tiny tax on financial speculation of 0,25% alone can release R75 billion per annum and would have the additional merit of slowing down the speculative frenzy that destabilises our economy.

Furthermore, from recent reports released by the United Nation Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), indicates that billions of dollars leaves South Africa's illegally every year due to the accountancy tricks of commodity exports. From the

UNCTAD study, platinum and silver were under invoiced by \$2.3 billion between 2006-2014 and, in fact, a further \$2.3 billion between 2000-2005.

Underinvoicing within SA's gold sector is even more staggering. Total misinvoicing of gold exports to South Africa's leading trading partners was \$113.6 billion over the 15-year period - the UNCTAD report characterises this as nothing less than gold smuggling.

At an average exchange rate over this period of R9 per dollar, this corresponds to over R1 trillion - 1 trillion Rand pays for free tertiary education for at least the next generation. By stopping just this smuggling by people seen as the 'great and good' amongst us, free education becomes entirely affordable.

All this money can and should be used to finance tertiary education as well as meet the development needs of a society through a state driven development of renewable energy infrastructure and a mass housing and public transport project. Combatting the financial shadow government (credit rating agencies) and challenging their hegemonic power. These development policies, together with control over speculative capital flows are the means by which we can progress into a more human society.

So free education is possible but what does free education mean if we live in shacks on empty stomachs. Even if we get into these institutions we are often bound to fail because our basic needs are not met. Importantly we do not only want to be able to access these spaces (like universities) but we also want to deconstruct the power relations in these spaces and in doing so reclaiming these spaces, breaking down the walls of the ivory tower.

Adapted from: Fees Commission submission - Education, the State and Class Inequality: The case for Free Highern Education in South Africa

By Enver Motala, Salim Vally, Rasigan Maharajh, Leigh-Ann Naidoo, Zolisa Marawu, Mondli Hlatshwayo

What can be done?

We set out several proposals that could be considered. We are fully aware that fee free higher education *by itself* cannot resolve the contradictions wrought on society by corporate global capitalism and its social consequences. We regard these proposals however as important both symbolically and in practice because they provide an alternative framework for thinking about the role of education in society and give content to a set of 'transitional' demands which can widen access to higher education especially for working class and rural communities. To that extent they could be useful for prizing open the possibilities for achieving the broader social goals envisaged here and push back the dominant neo-liberal approaches to policy and practice.

1. No student who meets the requirements for admission to a university course should be excluded for financial reasons, students be funded for the costs of study which should cover registration and other fees, accommodation, costs of meals and accommodation, travel and books. Universities should receive a subsidy per student from public funds.
2. A determined state could reasonably rethink (for instance) the structure of personal taxation which could be levied for the top 10% of income earners in the country. As Piketty (2015) observed in his recent Mandela memorial lecture, the share of total income going to the top 10% of income earners in South Africa is between 60% and 65% of total income. This income bracket could generate a substantial increase in available public revenue.¹ An approach which concentrates on the structural aspects of inequality and uses tax revenues for the purpose is preferable to the idea of a differentiated approach to the 'rich' and 'poor.' It supports the idea that those identified with the top 'net-worth', pay for their children's education through taxation, and the distribution of public funds, rather than through an individually-based 'wealthy user pays' model. Contrary to the dominant view, user-pays mechanisms are consistent with market-led approaches to the commod-

¹ For instance, in supporting this sort of extension to progressive taxation, Joseph Stiglitz (2015) has suggested, in his latest book, that a five per cent increase to the tax rate of the top one per cent of earners in the US would raise as much as \$1.5 trillion over 10 years.

ification of education. They do not equalise the costs of education between rich and poor and are in fact punitive for the poor. The view that the rich can afford to pay fees obfuscates the larger issue of transforming social relations. The approach we suggest is also a more democratic model of public interest and public funding than individual philanthropy or subsidy. We do not here set out the more detailed arguments around approaches to taxation but would refer in this regard to the ideas set out by Forslund (2015) and Rudin (2015).² The further implication of this approach is that all students are regarded as beneficiaries of public funding, and participants in a system prioritising the public good. As such, students should be expected to contribute to society when leaving university – possibly through community service and by working in public institutions after graduation. In effect equal participation in the benefits of public funding by virtue of citizenship would support the creation of socially cohesive attitudes amongst students. Such an alternative approach to that seeking to differentiate between ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ students would have consequences for far reaching structural and systemic change.

3. The government needs to increase the funding by at least an aggregate amount equal to the ratio achieved in OECD countries to address the issue of the chronic underfunding of the higher education system. In 2011, South Africa’s state budget for universities as a percentage of GDP was 0.75% (DHET 2012g), which is more or less in line with Africa as a whole (0.78%). When compared to OECD countries (1.21%) and the rest of the world (0.84%), South Africa lags behind in this regard.
4. Consideration must be given to the difference between a ‘progressive realisation’ of the goal of free higher education ‘for all’, relative to a deliberate or ‘gradualist’ approaches. In the first case, as we have seen from the number of legal cases on this issue, too much reliance is placed on the untrammelled judgements of political decision-makers alone. As opposed to this (in what might be called a more deliberate (even if gradualist) approach, a determination is made about the exact time frame for the achievement of fee-free education ‘for all’ together with the relevant milestones to be achieved for that purpose. In other words, such an approach will ensure a set of binding covenants about the achievement of free education ‘for all’, the effective mechanisms by which this would be achieved and the process for

2 For Forslund (2015) “To further increase revenue the Treasury could reintroduce the 45% tax bracket for incomes above R1 million. It would yield R5-6 billion (based on the 2014 Tax Statistics). An important point must however be made about our millionaires. In 2013, there were about 4,200 individuals registered for an income of R5 million or more. Their average income (3,337 tax forms assessed) was R9.5 million, and the tax they paid was R3.7 million per person. Cap Gemini’s “New World Wealth” 2014 report estimates that there are about 48, 800 High Net Worth Individuals (HNWI) in South Africa. A HNWI has an income of more than R7 million, or R70 million in accumulated wealth. If only 10, 000 of these HNWIs paid income tax like the 3,337 income millionaires did in 2013, instead of hiding outside the tax system, this would yield an additional R37 billion in tax revenue.”

its monitoring. Here the approach adopted in Article 13 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is instructive. Article 13.2 recognises not only the availability of free education in the primary education but also that

Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education; (c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education.³

5. Although the relevant section refers to ‘progressive introduction’ it speaks of a free education that is ‘accessible to all’. In any event, the idea of ‘progressive’ should be interpreted more meaningfully as we have suggested – and not left up to individual policy decision-makers without reference to a deliberate approach.
6. Dedicated research must be undertaken about costs of quality public education and especially to facilitate and open debate This should be used to show what democratic choices could be made informing fiscal and other policy decisions about providing education and other public goods; a well as the potential sources of such funding – including through a system of wealth taxes but not limited to it. Such research could examine these issues comparatively.
7. In order to place the right to free education ‘for all’ in its proper social context serious consideration should be given to the idea of responsible ‘public service and citizen work’ by the recipients of its benefits. This could, if applied consistently, create greater social consciousness about the important relationship between knowledge and society and esp its role in resolving some of the intractable social and environmental issues facing all societies. Such a ‘fellowship’ would not only develop forms of social solidarity but develop a new consciousness beyond the narrow and largely self-interested limits imposed by the requirements of the formal job market.

We do not pretend that these goals are achievable ‘tomorrow.’ The approach adopted towards the stated goals – democratically and socially driven – would be based on a process to get there and be dependent on both the social and political agency required. Especially important would be the avoidance of choices left to ‘experts,’ ‘advisors’ ‘consultants’ and the agents of global institutions alone. Indeed, the failure to reckon openly with the extraordinary power and dominance of global corporate interests in shaping both

the agenda for public education and the values which these foster and reproduce, would result inevitably in a continuation of social inequality, oppressive relations and catastrophic environmental effects. A wider socially engaged exploration of the alternatives to the present fiscal and selective affirmation approach is essential. In this the perspectives of those most affected by the policy choices related to higher education as a public good must be properly engaged. This would call for colloquia, dialogues, workshops and debates at

From reflections to action from #PatriarchyMustFall

By Naledi Mbaba

When we first started having these conversations around #Feesmustfall it was quite obvious that it was about more than fees, it was about creating a more comfortable and inclusive varsity experience for the black child. #Feesmustfall was a demand to have more accessible learning spaces for black people, queer people, trans people and black women and the best way to go about this would be to do away with fees. However, there have been some very important questions and concerns raised around how we ought to go about funding fees. The money the government gives tertiary institutions is already not enough and our universities are heavily underfunded by the state hence the ridiculously high fees. Universities have been able to find alternative ways to make up for the government's shortfall by encouraging alumni and other donations, but clearly even that is not enough, because so many of us still cannot afford to pay the already subsidised fees. There's no denying that finding money to fund university fees will not be easy, but it is still very possible. When looking for viable ways to fund the falling of fees we need to consider who has always had access to these spaces of learning and from what we can see today it has always been white men - with the more recent inclusion of white women. For decades white people have been able to afford to pay these high fees, because the history of this country allowed them to be in financially better positions at the expense of black people. Allowing black people to co-exist in the same universities as white people did not change that and it is the black students who need fees to fall the most. This means that taxing the historically advantaged would be the best and fairest way to go about funding tertiary education. This would mean that all white graduates would get taxed for benefitting from a system that was built on the back of black people. This money would then go into funding tertiary education. We know that fees will not fall overnight, but hopefully years of taxing white graduates and the white middle to upper class will be enough to make up for the government's short fall. A question of leadership will always arise once we start talking protests and it is indeed a valid one. It has now become knowledge that male led movements have a tendency to oppress and make the lives of the people they are leading difficult. They do this by allowing men to be violent and allow rape culture to divide the people. A way to combat the oppression of women, queer and trans people by the men of the movement would be to have them lead the movement. This way spaces and environment that make them feel safer will be created and the chances of internal conflict and oppression will be mitigated. This is very important if we are serious about having successful protest action. A movement where people do not have to compromise parts of themselves is a movement that is most likely to reach its final goal with the least casualties. This is where voices like #PatriarchyMustFall come in.

Interview with Nkululeko April, Sophumelela Secondary School (Equal Education Equaliser)

Interviewed by Brian Kamanzi



Graphic: Rabia Omar

Brian: Do you support “Free Education for all” or “Free Education for the poor” and why?

Nkululeko: I believe in Free education for all since the country is facing many problems we need to stand together as one and fight for it and by education we can win the war on poverty, teenage pregnancy and other major issues facing the country. Free education for all can change the way people see each other, the time of apartheid has passed, we need to stand together whether we are poor or wealthy.

B: What should be done to practically achieve this objective?

N: Violence won’t change the situation, we as students need to prove our government wrong by studying hard and ensuring we score high marks that will bring any government money scheme. We need to stand and understand the culture of education, by violence we make things worse, we need to come in peace and show respect for our education. We can stand together by organising peaceful strikes that will lead to the department of education and demand answers on what we are facing.

B: How can the tertiary education struggles connect with the basic education struggle?

N: Since high school is the start of education it is most important, it is where you start to learn and money should not make you stop. Universities and high schools may face similar challenges, its only right that university students join forces and fight for free education for all because in high school you are only given basic education, proper education is at varsity. You can be good in high school but if you don’t have the funds the university is not for you. Universities and high schools should come together and fight for free education for all.

Interview with Wandisa Pakisi, Oscar Mpetha High School, Nyanga (Equal Education Equaliser)

Interviewed by Brian Kamanzi

Brian: Do you support “Free Education for all” or “Free Education for the poor” and why?

Wandisa: I do believe in free education for the poor because if all people and even those who can afford to pay the school fees can get free education then it would be like the rich are taking the food out of the poor’s mouth because they are able to pay the fees.

B: What should be done to practically achieve this objective?

W: The things that people or students should do to achieve these things that they want include things like school boycotts and pickets and marches to the government and place their demands. What they must also do is to engage communities in the march because these negative factors do not only affect the students but also the parents and teachers. They need to demand a meeting with the people in charge, for example MEC Debbie Schafer in our protest. They must also give time to implement on these problems and take action.

B: How can the tertiary education protests connect with the basic education struggle?

W: We can connect via social networks to raise awareness to other high school students who also struggle with these things and march to government together with varsity students, high school learners, members of Equal Education and other organisations in protest in a big peaceful march. We must also call on the media so that we get recognition and attention from the government and the country as a whole.

Conversations on Free Education from Open Stellenbosch

By Rabia Omar, Crocky Modiri, Danai Nyagani

Rabs: Free education for all or free education for those who cannot afford it?

Crocky: It definitely makes sense that those who can afford to pay should pay. It is more about making university accessible.

Rabs: Yeah I agree. For those who can pay, they should pay – because otherwise the rich will stay rich, and that doesn't solve anything.

Crocky: Yeah exactly! What will then happen is that the next step into acceptance into university is your marks - the rich can send their kids to better schools, extra lessons, that kind of stuff, and they can benefit unduly from free education.

Rabs: Which is why I think we also need to have a more balanced view of the student. It requires a hell of a lot more admin work, but taking into account their access to things like well equipped and well stocked libraries and science facilities that aid a student's learning are important, their dis/ability, and the general background and upbringing of the student. Another problem is the NBTs – they are one of the earlier steps of university exclusion. You are expected to write them, but if you don't have access to transportation to the nearest centre, or the money for the application free then you're screwed.

Crocky: I mean the whole application and selection process only benefits a certain type

of student – for instance the schools that some of the university scouts go to are only in certain areas. A lot of the information about courses and the universities are found online...application information, etc. And not everyone has access to the internet or a computer.

Danai: It doesn't really change anything if you only have free education. University policies are still messed up and inefficient for those who don't have equal access to universities. Which is why we also can't have free education for all, the kid from Hilton, for example, won't have to pay fees, and their school prepares them for university, versus a kid from Kayamandi – who won't have to pay fees and their school might not prepare them in the same way.

Rabs: Yeah, totally. One way I think we can get the money to get free education is taxing the rich more heavily. What do you think?

Crocky: Yeah, definitely – even in South Africa, because of our history, wealth is heavily unequally distributed. So taxing the rich, really does seem logical and should be considered.

Danai: The people that were rich before the end of Apartheid are still rich now, and the people that were poor are still poor. Nothing significant has change. By taxing the rich, it closes the gap and it gives the poor an opportunity to gain the riches.

Crocky: Which goes back to how they always say the way we can shorten the gap between the rich and the poor is education. But if that education is only accessible to the rich, then it is a cycle of poverty.

University of Cape Town law student Nombuso Mathibela spoke with former NEHAWU shop steward, Nozizwe Beya, about Free Education

-Transcription by Sakhi Dlala

Nombuso: Singayifumana njani imfundo yasimahla, ngoobani ekumele bayihlawulele, futhi bazakuyihlawula njani, ukusukela kwizikolo ezisezantsi ukuyotsho edyunivesithi?

Nozi: Ngokwam ukubona, kaloku urhulumente, nguye ekumele adlale indima ebalulekileyo, ngoba ikwanguye owasithembisa ngemfundo yasimahla, kufuneka ayenze lon- to yenzeke bangpheleli ekuthetheni qha. Kwaye nabantu abaneemali zabo abanok- wazi ukuncedisa, nathi singabazali ukuba ikhona into ethi masikhuphe imali ingephi siyazi ukuba ikhona ingxowa esiyaziyo ukuba isuka kubazali, umzekelo apha edyunivesithi siyazi indima eniyenzile, ukuba bekusithiwa abazali banayo indima ethile ekuncidiseni kwingxowa mali yebafundi. Ikakhulu ke kumele ibengaba bantu banemali, uqala phezulu.

La-tax urhulumente ayikhuphayo, iyaphi? Mayike iyeke ubheka eNkandla, mayize ngapha yenze lento yabantwana besikolongoba uba bathi imfundo ibalulekile, mayibaluleke bebonakalisa ukuba bayafaka kwingxowa mali yemfundo singurhulumente, kun- gamane kusithiwa imfundo ibalulekile, ibaluleka njani imfundo abantwana ben- genamali? Thina singabazali sibe singakwazi ukubabhatalela, imali ibe ikhona pha kubo iyile yenza into esingayaziyongoko ke urhu- lumente kufuneka abe ngowokuqala ukuba ahlenga-hlengise iimali zakhe. I-tax yakhe makayijonge uba ibheka ngaphi na, i-tax kumele iya kwiimfundo,

Nombuso; Uthini ngabahlohli (lecturers) abarhola imali eninzi apha e-UCT?

Nozi: Ngabo ebekumela ukuba bafaka imali engxoweni, wonke umntu, nongaphandle apha kwi-UCT, naba baqhayisa ngoba ba- phuma apha e-UCT mabeze bazogalela imali apha engxoweni, njengalamfo kwi Media24 wayeke wasibiza phaya, wathi ulinde uba ezizinto mazenzeke naye makenze, masi- bone ingxowa yakhe isiza, makaze nengx- owa yakhe sibone esithi 'nam ndiyafaka naku' kwaye man akunobakho bunzima xa sinoqala apha ngaphakathi kubaseben- zi kubekho ingxowa yabasebenzi, ngoba kaloku abasebenzi, u 'enkosi' wabo uphi. Bathe abanye apha kum, banako ukuncedisa abantwana besikolo xa kunobakho into ethi masincedise ngemali, xa lifikile ke elothu- ba kuzomele bancedise apha abantwana besikolo kuba abantwana kumele benemali yesikolo. , ngoko ke ndiyakhuthaza nabazali bancedise, ewe ndiyayazi ukuba incinci imali yile sisayifunayo kodwa andithethi umrho- lo wonke, losenti siyifakayo izakuncedisa kuloomali ifakwe ngaba bazizityebi bazofaka kangangoko sinako.

Nombuso: Uyayiqonda ukuba ukufika kweemfundo yasimahla asizokuyifumana kwangoku, sizakuthabatha amanyathelo ngaamnyathelo ukuze sifikelele kuyo, kukho abathi abafundi abahlwempuzeke kakhulu bayifumane kuqala, ize igqibele ngabanye abakwaziyo ukuzihlawulela apha e-UCT, kodwa kumele iqale kwabo bangakwaziyo ukuzihlawulela, uyavumelana nalonto?

Nozi: Ewe ndiyavuma ngoba kaloku thina singabanye abazali, abantwana bethu abak- wazi ukuza edyunivesithi ngoba jkaloku asik- wazi ukubhatala, abanye bethu abafumani nalo NSFAS na kakade, ufumanise ukuba kufuneka unceme le yakho isenti umbha- talele ngayo umntwana, axhomekeke ngayo yonke into, ngok ke kumele iqale pha phan-

tsi, ezazithembiso urhulumente wayethe uzakuzenza zonke izinto kufuneka baqale apha kuthi, ngoba bayayazi ukuba bakhona abantu abahluphekayo, bangabukeli into yoba ibengabo abaxhamlayo, silibaleke.

Urhulumente makaqale ngaba bethu abantwana, hayi abezityebi abaphezulu abahleli benayo imali, naba abantwana begcwele ezitalatweni ngoba asinayo imali, kanti uba ebenokhangela aqokelele aba bantwana baphandle ngoba bakhona abantwana abahlala phandle ngoba bengakwazi ukuhlawulela imfundo, akuba abafuni ukufuna, abakwazi ufunda bengenamali yeemfunoo, ngoko ke lonto yokuqokelela abantwana basiwe kwi-shelters ethile kodwa banganikwa mfundo kulo shelter, mabayoqokelelwa kwezo-shelter kuthiwe nasi isikolo, sizakunihlawulela, imali mayiqale apha, kwababantwana baphantsi, nokuba izovela kubani na, mayiqale kubantu abahluphekileyo.

Nombuso: Ucinga ntoni na nge NSFAS

Nozi: Kuba ndingayzai ivelaphi, ivelaphi kuqala, isuka kurhulumente, isuka....

Nombuso:..isuka kurhulumente kodwa ay-incedi wonke umntu

Nozi: inceda bani otheni, kufuneke ube u-*qualifya* kwinto ethile uzube uyayifumana?

Nombuso: Ewe

Nozi: Yile nto kengoku, ndithi bethu abantwana bethu abanga *qualifayiy*o kwezi zinto zifunwayo, lonto ithetha ukuba abakazuyifumana imfundo, yile nto ndithi kuemele aqale kwaba bantwana, ababonele ukuba nokuba umntwana wam akafikanga edyunivesithi kodwa akhuphe imali, iqale kulamntwana

ohluphekileyo nokuba umntwana uqale ekholejini amkhuphele imali, siyibone nyani uba uyakhathal urhulumente ngabantwana, bagcwele abantwana apha phandle, abanye bahleli nje bepase oo-10kodwa abakwazi ukuya ndawo ngoba urhulumente uthi vuka uzenzele, ndizovuka ndenze ngantoni, ngoba ndifuna uya esikolwini, andinayo imali, umzali akanayo imali, ndizovuka ndenze ngantoni? Ngoba nokuba ndingathengisa amagwinya nam izakuthatha ixesha into yokuba lomntwana ayofikelela kulandawo afuna ukuya kuyo, ngoko ke imali ezobekwa, kuthiwe: 'lengxowa yeya bantwana' ngoba zininzi iingxowa apha eSouth Africa, kukho nezizinto kukho nezi zinto oMandela nton' nton', kukho iingxowa ezihleliyo apha, ooGwede Mantashe banezabo, zenza ntoni phi? Ngabantu abahleli phaya ePalamente abatyebileyo, mzehle ezamali zize apha ezanste, singaqhayiselwa ngombane, nabo bafundiswa ngabazali babo.



Graphic: Rabia Omar

Brian Kamanzi interviewed Sindisa Garreth Monakali, a Facilitator at Cape Town based NGO Free Education

Brian: Do you support “Free Education for all” or “Free Education for the poor” and why?

Sindisa: I do believe in Free education for the poor, basically more especially blacks living in townships and rural areas. Giving free education for the poor will decolonise the apartheid hangover and also it is part of giving back to the poor because education is now a loan instead of being a right. I believe in free education for the poor because to us education is not a bonus as it is for the privileged homes and families where it is the ticket for success.

B; What should be done to practically achieve this objective?

S: The practical steps that we can take to achieve free education for the poor is to mobilise organisations from different stakeholders also parents, teachers, principals, doctors everyone who wants to be a part of this struggle should march together and also shut down the country as a whole. Because sitting in boardrooms is not working anymore. As a poor and black nation we should rally together for free education. We must do “teach ins” every week and liberate our minds so that we can march/strike as one and stop



Photography: Leila Khan

Continued imperialist plunder as an obstacle to free education

- Shaheed Mohammed

[EDITORS' NOTE: This article suggests that access to education in South Africa is dependent on the unequal relationship between South Africa's economy and imperialist global capitalism. Without solving the question of socio-economic plunder and inequality, we will not get free education.]

The UN Conference on Trade (UNCTAD) just published a report in July on **invoice fraud** by mining monopolies in Africa, including SA specifically. They reported that virtually all the gold between 2000 and 2014 left the country unreported. This amounted to **\$113,6 bn or (R1,7 trillion)**. Also guilty of fraud were the platinum, iron ore and silver mines. UNCTAD estimates \$50bn leaves Africa every year through illegal trade. This amounts to over **\$700 bn** over the past 14 years (about R10,5 trillion!). Here was the funds for free education, free health-care, housing to all, etc; this is separate from the reported profits. Yet we find that the government does not lift a finger to tackle the imperialist mining companies but pursues poor students for not repaying NSFAS loans, while others are excluded for financial reasons.

According to the 2016 Budget Review, the tax income from company profits in 1998/9 was R108 bn. This increased to R561 bn in 2014/15. In 1993 company tax was 48%. The ANC government reduced this to 28%. Thus in 1998/9 the profits of companies (after tax was deducted) was about R280 bn, this rose to R1.4 trillion in 2014/15. In 1998 the exchange rate was R5/dollar, it is about three times higher in 2016 - R15/dollar. Thus in 1998, the profits (after tax) was about $R280 \times 3 = R840$ bn in 2016 Rand:Dollar terms. Based on this it would be a reasonable to estimate average company profits after tax over the past 22 years at approximately R1 trillion per year.

This gives us profits of R22 trillion which the monopoly capitalists earned, after tax! This estimate does not even consider the depreciation of the dollar over the past 22 years, which means that the R22 trillion is an under-estimate. And, remember this is just the reported profits of monopoly capital. (Their real profits are much higher).

The philosophy of the reduction of company tax was to make companies richer so they would invest more and create more jobs. However, most of the R22 trillion was just taken offshore by imperialism capitalism. Just R2 trillion could have provided decent houses for all and free education and much else. Just R11 trillion, would more than have provided free education, free, quality health, decent housing and met all the needs of the masses, still leaving R11 trillion in profits.

Education, Skills And Imperialism

According to the 1996 Census, 12,6 million out of 34,2 million were attending an education institution. By 2016 the numbers had grown to 17,2 million, out of 49,5 million (Community Household Survey, CS 2016). Thus the proportion attending an education institution has dropped from 37,4% in 1996 to 34,7% in 2016.

Nationally, the number of private school learners has increased from 800 000 in 2001 (Census, 2001) to 1,5 million by 2016. This is roughly the same increase as in the Western Cape, where the number of private school learners grew from 69 700 to 142 000 over the same period. Thus both the ANC and DA governments are following the same pattern of privatization of schools instead of building up quality free, public schooling.

Although the number of people without any education has dropped from 3,7 million to 2,2 million, the proportion of the population over the age of 5 who have primary or no education has increased from 40% to 50%, from 1996 to 2016. In 1996 about 13,7 million had primary or no education. In 2016 a massive 24,7 million have only primary or no education.

The number of graduates with Bachelor degrees have increased from 400 000 to about 1,2 million. This is an increase from 1,1 % of the population having degrees in 1996 to 2,4% by 2016, which is still very low.

Thus the education system mirrors the structure of the SA economy, namely that it is still based largely on cheap, unskilled and semi-skilled labour. This is a direct consequence of imperialism capitalism still maintaining SA and the rest of Africa as a place for plunder of raw, unprocessed raw materials and agricultural goods. Africa continues to subsidize the profits in the imperialist centres.

The resolution of the education question lies in the decisive ending of imperialist capitalist plunder of SA and Africa.

Brian Kamanzi spoke to Sinovuyo Maddo of Northlink College, Belhar Campus about Free Education

Brian: Do you support “Free Education for all” or “Free Education for the poor” and why?

Sinovuyo: Free education for all because anyone has/have financial problems and education is expensive. We all want to learn/study but the problem s fees are expensive and bursaries are hard to get you have to meet the minimum points to get it. So free education for all is best.

B: What should be done to practically achieve this objective?

S: We should write a letter where we state our views, because the protest didn't exactly work, some of the students were denied their bursaries from NSFAS but they are poor. If we write a letter and explain how we feel as students and maybe they will understand were we came from, because protests were violent and damaging for varsity equipment.

B: How can the university education protests connect with the technical colleges struggle?

S: Us as the colleges, we are facing the same problem as the university fees but the college problem is more about the transport allowance, we might get free education and no transport allowance. The struggle is real for both of us (colleges and univiersities), earlier this year we protested for transport allowances and NSFAS only gave us R400 but our bus ticket is R420 plus taxi fare but NSFAS says free education for all college students. I feel they should drop the fees because they are too much.

***Simon Rakei
spoke to
Nazeema
Samuels, a
member of
NUMSA about
Free Education***

Students must realise that their fight is not just their fight. When we had meetings with students in terms of the RMF, FME, and Left student movements, they were quite clear that it's their revolution. We said: "that's fine it's your revolution." My view was that you need assistance but you also don't want assistance. I know they were clear. From the time of Numsa and the United Front they were quite clear. But they saw it as a political organisation. Whether it's a lack of, I don't know how to say it... a shortfall of connection... they are very militant and clear. But you cannot discard

those that have been there already, those who have the know-how. We aren't saying we know everything, but when it comes to guidance or how to guide them they didn't want it. We understand that they want to follow their own thing, do their own thing.

It was very hard to get through to them - to be guided by other organisations that understand the struggle, that understand how to protest. And the only way here in South Africa is if you are not in isolation.

The gap between the university and community is too wide, the bridge must be shortened and the spaces infiltrated. You must have discussions but they can't be continuous. Things must happen. Get all the schools, have a mini-summit with all the high schools where you discuss issues like fees and conditions and how to get fees to

fall, and come up with resolutions. Whether it's protest march or picket, stay-away or teachers strikes, you need to come down and put the pressure.

The struggle is a continuous thing so it mustn't lose momentum. There comes a time when we need to go out in the streets protesting. Those things must happen. But it also comes down to continuous work - you need to integrate into the community. Your next targets as students for me is your high schools. The matric students now will be the first year students.

My view is that those students can't just be militant and active for 3-4 months and then very quiet, it cannot be like that. You have to be out there! It's a continuous engagement with the community and civil society, with labour, with unions, with whomever you feel can be part of your campaigns and struggle.

Lessons from Ghana: Free Secondary School education

Free secondary education was the foremost issue in the last general elections in Ghana in 2012. The ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) which styles itself as social democratic went into the elections insisting that free secondary education was impossible. The opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) - a party that aligns itself with property-owning democracy - put forward a proposal for free Senior High School (SHS). The importance of free education at the senior secondary level is explained by the fact that secondary education is a formative site and indicator of social differentiation and class reproduction. Rich parents send their children to the handful elite SHSs, the bulk of which are located in and around Cape Coast, the site of the earliest encounters with European colonialists and missionaries. The southern location of these elite schools and the colonial policy of relegating the northern half of the country to the provision of labour for the plantations and mines in the South (akin to the Apartheid migrant labour system), accelerated and continue to reproduce regional inequalities and differential social and educational outcomes between the North and the South. In the absence of educational opportunities, many young girls migrate to the South in order to make a living as head porters and domestic workers, susceptible to abuse by state officials, employers and men.

For many poor families, secondary education is perceived as a gateway into tertiary education and therefore an exit out of squalor. Given the rising inequality in Ghana, which is counterfactually spoken about as a star in the 'Africa rising' narrative of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), many working and poor families cannot afford to pay the rising costs of education.

Decreasing state support for education enables schools to charge exorbitant fees for everything - from laboratory practical to examination. For poor families rigged out of education by fees, free education is a necessity. A raging debate centres on financing. The obvious source of funding for free secondary education is higher taxes for the corporations in the mining and the free zones enclaves that pay next to nothing in taxes.

Opposition to free education comes, most loudly, from rabid free marketers who recycle tired slogans like "Our taxes are going to be wasted", and a shaky argument that free education takes away the 'natural' right of parents to cater for their children. Underpinning this is the refusal to recognize society's responsibility for the upbringing of its younger ones. Moreover, it generalizes the experience of elite families who proudly pay high fees as a status symbol in preparation for their children's destined elite inheritance. The many poor families are unable to afford such a dream or its actuality.

From the rhetoric of impossibility, the ruling NDC has been forced by the demands of ordinary people to concede a "gradual" introduction of free SHS, of course with the 2016 elections in sight.

What the Ghanaian experience tells us is that free education is far from impossible. It is affordable if we are able to mobilize and pressurize the state to prioritize ordinary people over corporations and corruption. From where did the Ghanaian state source the funds to announce gradual free education? How did Zuma come by the funds to declare a zero percent increase last year? The answer is straightforward: resources will be made available if we make our struggles unavoidable.

- Faisal Garba

Interviewer:
Brian Kamanzi

Interview with Patricia Bevie, former NEHAWU UCT chairperson

1. Ondersteun U die beweging vir gratis opvoeding, of stem U saam met die regering se posisie oor opvoeding vir die werkersklas?

Onderwys en die geleentheid vir kwalifikasie is vir almal en moet oop wees vir almal. Studente met minder bevoegte verledes moet dieselfde hanteer word as bevoegtes mense as dit by onderwys kom. Die geleenthede moet dieselfde wees vir almal. Studente kan nie gesien wees as arm of minder bevoeg nie, want dit onderdruk gelykheid vir almal. Die huidige situasie wat geleentheid skep vir minder bevoegtes sit hulle onmiddelik apart van die ryk studente en bring etiket van onderskeid. Dit plaas ook jong mense in skuld voor hulle begin geld verdien. Dit is die land se verantwoordelikheid om bevordering aan almal oop te stel end it kan vergoed word met belasting resensie. Belasting op rykdom moe dringend ingestel word.

2. As U advies aan die studente and werkers wat die stryd vir gratis opvoeding meer algemeen sou kan gee, wat sou dit wees?

As ons net vir armes vry onderwys aanbied dan sal ons nie diskriminasie uitwis nie. Diskriminasie is die orde van die dag tussen rasse en klasse en dit is ons verantwoordelikheid om dit te verwerp. Studente en werkers moet saam werk want die student vandag is werkers van more. Werkers wat verantwoordelikheid het van familie onderhoud is nie in 'n posisie om optogte so vrylik te handhaaf nie, alhoewel optogte die enigste manier van kommunikasie is in die dispensie van demokrasie om die boodskap van ongelykheid en apartheid te elimineer. Studente moet hulle bekend maak met die arbeid wette en saam prober werk om werkers te beskerm.

3. Wat dink U is die rol van werkers en die werkersklas meer algemeen in die beweging vir gratis opvoeding?

Dit is die verantwoordelikheid van al die werkers om bydrae te maak en saam te staan vir sterker mag om n verandering aan te bring. Die onenigheid en spasie tussen ryk en arm moet nouer gemaak word. Strenger toepassing moet geplaas word op opname van werkers na hulle aftree ouderdom. Strenger maat reels moet inplek gesit word vir werknemers wat dit toepas. UCT is n voorbeeld van 'n werknemwer wat n groot aantal werkers het ouer as 65 en dit nie in akademies poste nie. Die werkloosheid van jongmense kan verminder as meer bejaardes van pensioen kry ook nog werk.

Free Education lessons from Brazil

by Assoc. Prof Marcelo Rosa University of Brazilia, Brazil

EDITOR'S NOTE- This article gives a brief overview of Brazil's education system and the government's approach to free education and access at different levels.

The present constitution (from 1988) predicts that no less the 12.5% of the federal government tax income revenues must be used in the development and maintenance of education. The same document states that the government must provide equality in the school access and permanence and the gratuity of all public education in official institutions, since this is the only way through which the equal access would become a reality. In the constitution we can also find clauses establishing that the free and compulsory basic and secondary education is a public right, especially for those between 4 and 17 years of age and for those who are older but did not have proper access while under these age cohorts.

In Brazil the educational sector is shared between public and private institutions and only public institutions (federal, provincial and municipal) are mandatorily free of any charge. For the basic and high school levels the provinces and municipalities must provide free education for everyone applying for a place in a public institution. For the higher education there is no minimum requirement and the State is only responsible to assure free education in its own institutions. Rich and upper middle class Brazilians (mostly white) would normally pay for private basic and secondary education in order to maintain their status quo and isolation, but later applying for the public and free universities (110 institutions in all provinces). Among 15 best-ranked universities in Brazil there is not a single private university.

In order to get access to public and free universities the students must be approved in an exam. In the last decade a new national exam was established and most of the public universities are now part of the system. In 2015 a total of 205,5 thousand free new places in public universities were offered using the exam. To guarantee equal access to the higher education new laws were passed in the last decade to assure that at least 50% of places must be filled by students coming from public schools, indigenous and black citizens. Half of this percentage (25% of the total amount) must be filled by students coming from families with lower incomes (maximum of 1.5 minimum wage per capita/monthly). According to the last national census 57% of Brazilians self declared themselves as black and indigenous, meaning that at least 57% of the public school students being accepted in free universities must be black and indigenous.

...thoughts...

Where are we now?
Trapped within the walls and columns
that rise beyond our homes to the heavens

Who have we become
that we lobotomize our children's minds
with the insipid cacophony of fines;
locked in the grind
that swells the mind,
like a swine
that cleans the sty
and eats a pie
who dreams a sky

What have we become,
when our language
is near extinction?
A clear distinction
Is my depiction

I, with my tiny wings, flew across two
oceans
with dreams of studying in the West,
where we are told, the best schools reside
Where the price of my education in their
ancient halls
could build new homes for 10 families
To think I aspired to learn in a prestigious
palace
among students who idolized Nelson
Mandela
and exoticized but misunderstood my
culture

Meanwhile my friends and peers,
Like soldiers, standing firmly in their
demands
for a curriculum that spoke to them;
for an education they could afford
Barricading the halls with their bodies
below the columns,
decked in red berets and the Black, Gold
and Green

and flaunting their wings in the cage of
their dreams
Sleeping in secret corners
between bookshelves devouring
labyrinths of knowledge
emaciated carcasses limply salivating
the food of fiefdom
disguised as wisdom

"Liberal" institutes beckon
so that I grace their walls –
impenetrable and daunting-
my being paralyzed by the
weight of the unknown.
The weight of a black hole-
Of grinding debt
with no end in sight

But I would not become another statistic
Who would I be?
If the voices of my peers
Were rumbling like bulls
And the ancestors were no longer
muted beneath the soil-
They were calling!
And so was my soil.
I wanted to carry the spirit of the lark,
And sing my song back home
With the youth of South Africa
who echoed Biko, Fanon and Sankara

Yes, we are forced to swallow
An education we cannot afford
Lest we forget those before us
Who fought, as we do
To be seen and heard
as storytellers and musicians,
traders and healers

The cage came with our dreams,
And with those dreams
We can make the cage disappear
-Sankara Sky

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