

## Chapter Ten

### **Shaping institutional agency**

The reform in teacher education called for a comprehensive strategy. The third seam of a counter-hegemonic reform – institutional agency - attempted to tack together the institutions involved in the reform, especially the colleges, with the rest of the reform patterns. The building of institutional agency was aiming at staff development to upgrade the knowledge and experiences of teacher educators. Institutional agency was also envisaged through technical support for institutional building combined with local assistance in the form of college-based facilitation. Lastly, an institutional agency was hoped for by strengthening the tertiary image of the colleges through the modelling of participatory evaluation activities. These were some of the important beacons for the way towards institutional agency.

#### **Staff development for empowerment**

Relevant staff development for black teacher educators was more or less non-existent before independence. The three northern colleges were by and large sources for patronisation by the Academy and were looked upon with disdain by their white counterparts in Windhoek. It was because of this marginalisation that the new leadership in education at an early stage realised that staff development had to be integrated in the reform process as a parallel development for teacher educators at the northern colleges. The teacher educators sitting in the ivory tower in Windhoek also needed staff development albeit for different reasons. Therefore, staff development was encouraged and took place in many different ways.

Many individual teacher educators attended distance in-service academic courses offered by universities in South Africa and UNAM. This was a phenomena that took place also amongst the majority of

teachers in schools as a response to the new situation after independence when formal qualification as opposed to ethnicity became the standard for salary increments and upward social movement. With a few exceptions these courses were not geared towards the post-independence educational value system as expressed in the broad reform policy in Namibia, but towards the traditional approach of theory-into-practice with remaining traits of the transferred version of Anglo-Saxon empiricism.<sup>1</sup> In spite of these shortcomings many of the courses contributed to the academic subject knowledge of teacher educators and to their possibilities of retaining their positions and a higher salary. However, the two most influential activities were organised in other ways. These were informal and formal staff development activities organised by NIED and support projects as joint ventures that subsequently encouraged local initiatives and the strengthening of local institutional capacity beyond individual ambitions.

#### Informal staff development through seminars and workshops

The many seminars and workshops that were organised as an integrated part of the reform process, mostly with external support from donor projects like TERP and ELTDP, became a major source for informal staff development. These activities were organised on national, regional, and local levels and became occasions for development work on specific aspects of the teacher education reform as well as places for debate and consolidation. The majority of these activities were directly related to the development of the steering documents for the BETD programme attended to above, but were organised also to accomplish other things.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In 2000 one of the in-service teacher education courses offered in Namibia by a South African university was evaluated by the Namibian authorities and found totally invalid as a teacher education course to the dismay of thousands of Namibian school teachers who had paid heavy fees to get an accredited professional training.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter Eight.

In principle, the reform process went through two overlapping phases.<sup>3</sup> The first phase was the *national agenda* through the phasing in of the BETD programme during 1993 - 1995. The second phase was the *decentralisation* that started with the appraisal process after 1996. Both phases put participation high on the agenda, but for different reasons.

The *national agenda* had as its objective to create a wholeness among the previously ethnic and separated colleges. The participatory aspects were geared towards a national reform agenda. National and centralised seminars and related activities became the hallmark for this cycle. The content of these seminars was more than often prepared and introduced by staff from NIED, including project staff from TERP. The positive effects of this cycle was that it started and created a national agenda for teacher education reform that was supported by the overwhelming majority of teacher educators. Criticism against the activities during this phase was in most cases geared towards the felt lack of democratic involvement by the college staff and the related feeling that everything was directed by a small group of Namibians and foreigners. This was true, as a reflection of the necessity of creating a national agenda.

In view of the prevailing mindset, which had been there as a result of background and training, brainwashing and the isolation, I think it would have been impossible for Namibians totally on their own to have done what we have been trying to achieve through the reform. We had dissatisfaction with the previous system and we talked about it and we thought of alternative ways but we had not been exposed enough to other ways of thinking and to look at things critically was not at all encouraged. We were in minority and sidelined.<sup>4</sup>

The *decentralisation* cycle coincided with the start of the appraisal process that was organised with a different type of involvement from the colleges. Previously there had been seminars with centralised inputs on

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<sup>3</sup> For a related analysis see Dahlström (2000:a) op. cit.. This issue has also been attended to above in Chapter Eight from a different perspective.

<sup>4</sup> Interview F1, 2001.

broad issues of teacher education reform. These were replaced with workshops, still administratively organised from the centre, but based on preparations made at the colleges, and on sessions when groups of teacher educators worked on issues related to their own areas of responsibilities at the colleges. It was also during this phase that the college network for curriculum development was established. The overwhelming positive effect of this phase was the fact that college staff developed a broader feeling of ownership of the programme. Criticism during this phase was usually related to the workload of teacher educators to act in their normal role and at the same time develop the steering documents for their own work. This sometimes led to the call for external curriculum experts to do the job even by foreign teacher educators working at the colleges. Another criticism, in retrospect, was that calls for changes during decentralisation that were not in line with official policy affected the development process as the centrally positioned guardians of the policy were weakened.<sup>5</sup>

From a staff development perspective the two phases could also be seen as two periods of on the job training starting with a period of introductions to the components of teacher education and a second period involving hands on curriculum development for teacher education. These were two aspects of teacher education reform that the majority of teacher educators in Namibia never had been involved in previously as subaltern implementers of instructions from elsewhere. Some of the recent worries expressed by Namibian educators about the lack of understanding of the new policy by newly recruited teacher educators can be related to this massive involvement of the teaching staff at the colleges during the two phases described here.<sup>6</sup> Such massive involvement by teacher educators in shaping important conditions for their own work created an understanding and dedication to the new policy that could not be matched by a few days of introduction that newly recruited teacher educators received after these

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<sup>5</sup> Interview M2, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Data collected during interviews in 2001.

phases. These fears were among the reasons for calls from teacher educators that the formal staff development courses organised with support from TERP should continue.<sup>7</sup>

#### Formal staff development for teacher educators

Namibia is no exception to the general rule that senior secondary teachers are a recruitment base for teacher educators, even when it comes to the education of teachers for basic education. The way teacher education developed after independence in Namibia made this part of what still seemed to be the global educational common sense even more questionable as teacher education for basic education was separated from the university as a matter of policy. Very little thought was given to the fact that future teacher educators continued to be recruited from university classrooms that were not considered appropriate for the training of basic education teachers.

The overall aim with the courses organised by NIED in co-operation with TERP and Umeå University was to challenge this common sense. Therefore, these courses were designed to respond to the underlying policy considerations of the teacher education reform for basic education and to introduce its participants to some of the pedagogical consequences of this policy.

The first course started in September 1992 and was based on a course curriculum approved by the Department of Education, Umeå University, Sweden, as a 20 credits course at B-level according to the Swedish academic system.<sup>8</sup> This course was preceded by baseline study visits to the colleges in 1991 followed by a seminar for a group of teacher educators and regional officers from the northern regions in November,

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<sup>7</sup> Dahlström, L. (2001) *Course Appraisal and Recommendations. The post-graduate Higher Diploma and Master's Degree courses for teacher education, 1999 - 2000.* Umeå: Department of Education.

<sup>8</sup> *Teacher Education Reform Project (1992:b) Curriculum, Academic B-level Course Programme in Education, 20 p. for Teacher Trainers in Namibia. Approved 1992-04-13.* Umeå: Department of Education.

1991.<sup>9</sup> This course became known as the *B-level course* but its official name was *Academic B-level Course Programme in Education, 20 p., for Teacher Educators in Namibia*.

The programme is a one year part time academic course conducted in Namibia by the University of Umeå, Sweden. It is organised in three intensive training periods (modules) of 2-3 weeks full time face-to-face studies each, with two periods of self studies, development work and independent research tasks.<sup>10</sup>

The content of this course was organised under broad headings related to the reform: Educational reform, Teaching methods and learning processes, and Management, assessment, evaluation and research. Already at this stage course participants were asked to carry out research projects related to their own professional practice. This had the twofold ambition to give teacher educators experience of what later became known as critical practitioner inquiry and to improve the practice of teacher education at the colleges. The first course intake was followed by two more in 1993-94 and 1994-95 with a total of forty-two participants going through the three course occasions.

In 1996 the B-level course was developed into a 40 credit *Higher Diploma* course including extended modular contents and a 20 credits research project following a critical practitioner inquiry mode of research. A *Master's Degree* course along the same lines was introduced in the beginning of 1999 and run in parallel with the second Higher Diploma course in 1999 - 2000.<sup>11</sup> The Master's degree course concluded the course package geared towards teacher education and created a way for teacher

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<sup>9</sup> Dahlström (1991) op. cit.; Dahlström (1992) op. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Teacher Education Reform Project (1994:b) Curriculum, Education for Teacher Educators (20 p) Academic B-level course in Education for Teacher Educators in Namibia. Approved 1994-05-19. Umeå: Department of Education.

<sup>11</sup> Department of Education (1998:a) Revised Curriculum, Higher Diploma in Teacher Education for Practitioners. Umeå University; Department of Education (1998:b) Curriculum - Master's Degree in Teacher Education. Umeå University.

educators with mainly previous subjects studies at university level to go through a course programme designed in line with the post-independence education policy.

All courses followed the same layout with intensive face-to-face study periods (institutes) three times a year, usually during the vacation periods, with periods for course assignments and inquiry in between supported through individual face-to-face or distance tutoring through fax and e-mail.

A position paper outlined the underlying educational assumptions of the courses, as developed through the years. Some of the central assumptions were:

- Two types of educational knowledge, practical and theoretical, are recognised. Each of these types of educational knowledge is a form of knowledge in its own right and contributes something important to the development of education. Conventional academic programmes view practical knowledge only as an application of academic knowledge and not as a form of knowledge in its own right. Hence the importance of a dual emphasis on reflective practice and theoretical content.
- Educators want to believe that schooling and curriculum are only about scientific truth to be learned by all. In order to cope with schooling in a realistic way, educators have to integrate into their perspective the fact that knowledge is a social construction and that a constant struggle ensues concerning which knowledge is legitimate and who are the legitimate learners. Hence the importance of a curriculum theory looking at the curriculum as a social construction.
- The basic problem of schools in Africa tends to be that the previous teaching was a system of delivery that did not take into account either a critically thinking teacher or student, or previous experiences and learning of the student out of school. Hence the importance of a

pedagogy which includes critical and experiential perspectives on education.

- Tertiary education has to take a drastic turn and a lead in inventing a new humane way for schooling out of the confrontation between tradition and modernism. This new way shall acknowledge collective solidarity and the social construction of meaning as a foundation for a just society. It shall involve community and bring back to community the knowledge that tertiary education generates through a more accessible knowledge base and by that also demystify tertiary education as a place for alien knowledge production for an elite.<sup>12</sup>

Howard, a TERP employed adviser at NIED, accompanied a selection of B-level reports published by NIED with a description of the course and some of the background to the inquiry reports. Howard noted that "research as reflection on experience is a consciousness raising activity which enables one to see differently; to see through different lenses all that we have come to take for granted"<sup>13</sup>. Howard elaborated further on the inquiry approach chosen in Namibia and concluded that it was more of a critical inquiry than an introspection on one's practice as it encouraged the posing of questions to understand the immediate situation within a broader socio-cultural context.<sup>14</sup>

Zeichner and a group of course participants published an article about the same course. They conclude that within the supportive political context created by the goals of the education reforms the course participants "conducted research which uncovered gaps between the rhetoric and the reality of the reforms, shed new light on the complexities and meaning of implementing the general reform principles in real schools and colleges under less than ideal conditions, and contributed concrete

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<sup>12</sup> After Dahlström (ed) (1998) op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Howard. L. (1995) Introduction. In NIED, Summaries of Action Research Reports from the Postgraduate B-level Teacher Education Programme in Namibia. 2 - 11. p. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

ideas about how to address some of the problems" in areas selected by the course participants themselves.<sup>15</sup> Zeichner et al confirmed some of the official ambitions with this staff development when they said that the course was a vehicle that help teacher educators to assume and model the same active roles in the learning process that they want their own students to achieve. Equally important was that the model of research applied in these courses would over time decrease reliance on external expertise and contribute to the demystification of expertise and lessening of hierarchy. The approach was also an example of a democratic view of the educational research enterprise that rejected the idea that research is solely for an exclusive elite group of researchers who disseminate findings to educators throughout the country.

Walker, who at that time was a scholar working in South Africa, participated in one of the Higher Diploma Institutes in Namibia and referred to that experience as one out of three examples of practitioner research studies.

These are examples of subaltern professional work embodying local struggles which recuperate a language of practical hope, which pay attention to politically situated perspectives and which raise issues around the democratic construction of professional and other knowledge about our society.<sup>16</sup>

In their search for an updating of promising practices in teacher education in the third world Craig, Kraft and du Plessis included the Basic Education Teacher Diploma (BETD) and the support through TERP as one of the case studies. The staff development courses for teacher educators were identified as one of "the more important and innovative ways of providing development assistance to teacher education".<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Zeichner, K., Amukushu, A., Katonyala, M., Shilamba, P. (1998) Critical Practitioner Inquiry and the Transformation of Teacher Education in Namibia. *Educational Action Research*. Volume 6, No. 2. 183 – 203. p. 196.

<sup>16</sup> Walker (1996:b) op. cit. p. 407.

<sup>17</sup> Craig, Kraft and du Plessis, op. cit. p. 37.

A recent appraisal of the Higher Diploma and Master's Degree Courses also included data on the participating Namibian educators in the three B-level, Higher Diploma, and Master courses during the period 1992 - 2000.<sup>18</sup> The total number of Namibian teacher educators serving at the four colleges of education were 132 in 1998 and did not go through any dramatic changes until the end of 2000. Fourteen teacher educators attended two of the courses and eleven left the colleges after they had gone through the B-level course. Fifty-three (53) teacher educators or 40 percent of the staff at the colleges went through the courses that were specially designed for teacher education in Namibia if calculated on the 1998 data.

It is worth noting that three of the other participants, who at the time of their attendance in the Higher Diploma course worked as Support Teachers at SBS schools, were subsequently recruited to the colleges of education as teacher educators.

In their appraisal the course participants were asked to give their opinions about the aims of the course. The overwhelming majority of students said that the courses definitely supported the policy of learner-centred education. Many related this to their research projects but also to other parts of the courses.

We have been exposed to the theory of learner-centred education by the provision of a number of relevant and updated literature. Most of the topics dealt with are in line with learner-centred education. We have been participating in the various lessons and we have been trying new methods that are supporting a learner-centred philosophy. We have been dealing with our study independently.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Dahlström (2001) op. cit. This appraisal report was based on the course participants' and the tutors' appraisals of the courses during 1999 - 2000.

<sup>19</sup> Dahlström (2001) op. cit. p. 10.

Some students expressed their concern over the lack of modelling of learner-centred lessons as they experienced that there were many different perceptions of learner-centred education.

The positive influences on their practices were in many cases related to their critical practitioner inquiries into their own practice. The course participants thought that the courses improved their reflective skills, critical thinking, and self-confidence that also had a positive impact on their practices and beyond.

As an educator I have been empowered to be critical on issues not only related to the classroom situation but also to those which are outside the classroom situation.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the most common constraints related to workload there was also an individual worry expressed about the closeness between the inquiries and the inquirers' own practices as an inhibiting factor for drawing proper conclusions.

All participants thought that the courses contributed to the *strengthening of teacher education* in Namibia beyond individual capacity building by improving the status of the colleges as institutions of higher learning. There were many calls that the courses should continue and not only for teacher educators as the opinion was expressed that many people in influential positions remained uninformed of these new thoughts. The revisiting and analyses of Namibian policy documents played an important role in the Namibianisation of the course work as expressed by one participant.

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<sup>20</sup> Dahlström (2001) op. cit. p. 11.

The major achievements in this course in what I call the Namibia teacher education are the evaluation of ministerial papers, the use of Namibian articles and Namibian literature to back up my studies, and at the same time the revisiting of certain policy documents to see if evaluated in group discussions people are going in the right direction.<sup>21</sup>

Some of the course participants noted that there are already a number of publications available in Namibia that are seen as examples of an emerging *knowledge base of education* geared towards the Namibian situation and based on Namibian inputs and experiences. Some of these are the periodical journal *Reform Forum* with 2 - 3 issues published per year by NIED<sup>22</sup>; *Critical Inquiry and Action research in the BETD* - a collection of reports from BETD III students 1997 published in 1998<sup>23</sup>; and *Namibian Educators Research Their Own Practice* containing a selection of reports from the 1996 - 1997 Higher Diploma course and published in 2000.<sup>24</sup> There were fears that the continuation of building such a knowledge base might be hampered in the future. Serious efforts needed to be made by people in influential positions in the basic and teacher education sectors to safeguard funds and other resources to edit, reproduce and publish genuine Namibian educational material for a broader audience.

Support to colleges is needed to regularly publish reports of this nature. Libraries should be full of the reports for students and other lecturers to use in their own analysis.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Dahlström (2001) op. cit. p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> The Reform Forum was started on an initiative from TERP.

<sup>23</sup> National Institute for Educational Development (1998) *Critical Inquiry and Action Research in the BETD*. Okahandja: NIED.

<sup>24</sup> Dahlström, L. (ed) (2000) *Namibian Educators Research Their Own Practice – Critical Practitioner Inquiry in Namibia*. Windhoek: Gamsberg Macmillan.

<sup>25</sup> Dahlström (2001) op. cit. p. 12.

The list of reports from the latest Higher Diploma and Master's courses shows the relevance of the inquiries to the prevailing reform efforts and the need for making the reports more widely accessible.<sup>26</sup>

The critical practitioner inquiry approach used in the staff development courses developed skills in systematic inquiries and relevant research that never happened previously at this level in Namibia. Educational research was demystified and the language and tools of power that goes with scholarly work were made available to teachers and teacher educators. It was through a combined effort to marry the two types of practical and theoretical educational knowledge that critical practitioner inquiry developed as a basis for a new type of empowering educational knowledge for practitioners.

In his graduation remarks to the Higher Diploma Graduation in 1997, the Minister of Education referred to the development of professional knowledge amongst teachers and teacher educators. He said that this might well rest on our understanding of how best to combine decades of formal knowledge with the personal and practical knowledge that teachers develop themselves. He concluded his address with the following words:

I believe that the Higher Diploma Course in Teacher Education has given its recipients deep insight and understanding of this problem...This will build up your capacity as custodians of values of professionalism. I believe you will apply your professional knowledge to the development of teacher education and the production of new teachers for the new educational paradigm in Namibia.<sup>27</sup>

Zeichner, who talked on behalf of the tutors at the same occasion, concluded by saying that,

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<sup>26</sup> See Table 21 and Table 22, Appendix 16.

<sup>27</sup> Angula, N. (1997) Graduation remarks to the Higher Diploma Graduation in December 1997. Windhoek: MHEVTST. p. 7.

For many years, I have supported practitioner inquiry by teachers and teacher educators in my own and in several other countries. The practitioner inquiry that I have seen here in Namibia since 1994 is truly impressive and is among the best work that I have seen anywhere in the world.<sup>28</sup>

The tutors' composite appraisal of the 1999 - 2000 courses pointed to the different epistemological assumptions that the courses have operated with. They emphasised the course participants' accomplishments in respect of the quality of critical practitioner inquiry comparable to work at internationally acknowledged institutions for higher education. They also acknowledged the possibilities these courses will create for the continued development of a Namibian knowledge base of education.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to the TERP supported activities addressed above, other donor financed formal staff development programmes were carried out with Canadian and British support. Nine Namibian teacher educators received Diplomas in Education or MEd degrees through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)-supported programme at University of Alberta and the University of Botswana. A number of teacher educators enrolled for B.Phil.Ed and MEd courses with the emphasis on English at the university of Exeter in England with the assistance of the ELTDP.

#### An emerging trend of institutionally based staff development

Throughout colleges organised local workshops and seminars in a number of areas as part of their efforts to develop a culture of internal staff development. Many of these workshops and seminars were organised as a response to local needs and not as part of a strategic plan for staff development. Strategic plans for staff development emerged later in line with college mission statements like the following one from OCE.

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<sup>28</sup> Zeichner, K. (1997) Address at the Higher Diploma Graduation Ceremony, December, 1997. Okahandja: NIED.

<sup>29</sup> Dahlström (2001) op. cit.

We will, furthermore, endeavour to promote the growth and development of Ongwediva College into an institution which encourages innovation and applied research and is actively involved with the local, national and global learning communities.<sup>30</sup>

Nyambe and Griffiths, who respectively worked as Vice-Rector and Reform Facilitator (TERP) at OCE, addressed among other things the development of a staff development programme at college level as part of an effort to deconstruct educational dependency.<sup>31</sup> They described how the fortnight staff development session was restructured in 1998 to model a learner-centred approach and how this initiative developed into a structured institutional plan for staff development at the college for the rest of the year. Ever since then staff development at OCE culminates at the end of each year in the annual *OCE Education Conference* for the regional education community. During these conferences papers produced by college staff are reported and discussed. These conferences are also followed and reported by the media, which further supports the efforts to develop the colleges into acknowledged institutions of higher education.

### **Towards a tertiary institutional position**

The three northern colleges of education went through impressive institutional development after independence. The physical development was most obvious at the colleges in Rundu and Katima Mulilo. In the beginning of the 1990s these two colleges were physically part of secondary schools and in many respects treated like secondary schools. At that time the college library at Rundu College of Education consisted of a running-metre of old encyclopaedias in the Afrikaans language. These two colleges got new campuses build with a government loan from the

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<sup>30</sup> Ongwediva College of Education (1999) op. cit. p. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Nyambe, J. and Griffiths, J. (1998) Deconstructing educational dependency: Insights from a Namibian college of teacher education. Paper presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> WCCES, Cape Town, South Africa.

African Development Bank. The exterior of Ongwediva College of Education did not change much after the beginning of the 1990s, even though a continuous physical upgrading took place. Windhoek College of Education started more or less on a new footing after its move from the previous campus to Khomasdal and improved its physical infrastructure continuously after that. However important as they are, physical infrastructures per se are no guarantee for other developments but should be looked upon as one of the many facilitating preconditions.

It is necessary at this point to recapitulate some of the most important contextual features for teacher education in Namibia to fully understand both the constraining and facilitating forces in the attempts to develop the colleges into tertiary institutions in a proper sense. Historically there were no attempts to create independent institutional development, especially at the northern colleges, prior to the reform.<sup>32</sup> The most important contextual feature was that the colleges of education were officially removed away from the jurisdiction of the university contrary to the development at many other places both in the Southern African region and elsewhere. This disengagement was not unique, as some opponents wanted to claim. With no tradition of institutional development and a split with the university there were very little initial potential for institutional development available. This situation did not improve when the only ministry of education was split into two ministries in the beginning of 1995, with the result that the colleges were left in between. In a commentary on the split of the ministry one of the respondents said: “The colleagues who were brought to general education did not have the full understanding of what we were trying to do...but many of the things that should have been done were left unfinished”.<sup>33</sup> In

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<sup>32</sup> Windhoek College of Education (WCE) as the former college for white students with the Rand Afrikaans University in South Africa as its guardian was a different case all together and had developed a unique and askew kind of excellence based on segregated policies of the previous regime.

<sup>33</sup> Interview, MO.

their programme development activities the colleges remained attached to NIED of MBEC and in their administrative functions they became attached to the new MHEVTST. The Faculty of Education at the university continued to oppose itself to both the BETD programme delivered by the colleges and to the fact that the colleges did not fall under its academic and professional control. However, the university faculty participated in the annual moderation of the BETD programme and the signing of the diploma for the graduates.

Another important contextual feature was that the northern colleges were not properly staffed at the outset. The tradition had been that both South African soldiers and their spouses were involved in teacher education with the effect that the end of colonialism also meant the end of white soldiers as teachers in the college classrooms and an urgent need for new teacher educators. Years after independence visitors to OCE could still be reminded of the previous period through the gun-rack in the staff room.<sup>34</sup> The neglect of the northern colleges in many instances developed a kind of a *laissez faire* tradition amongst many black teacher educators that could well match the negative effects of the ideological displacement that many white teacher educators at WCE experienced when the reform started. Both situations contributed to the constraints at the colleges.

While most contextual factors created obstacles for the reform, there were also some facilitating factors. For example, there were groups of teacher educators who actively acknowledged the new political leadership and the new educational and philosophical underpinnings of the teacher education reform through their actions and serious commitments to the reform efforts. Another facilitating factor was the priorities that the government made towards education. It was against these contextual factors that institutional development became an important imprint in the teacher education reform.

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<sup>34</sup> Nyambe and Griffiths *op. cit.*

The creation of Education Development Units (EDUs) at the colleges was outlined by Andersson, Callewaert and Kallos in 1991.<sup>35</sup> The EDU was suggested as a pedagogical centre responsible for ETP, SBS, and the staff development for teacher educators and support teachers. It was also suggested that the EDUs should be directly responsible to NIED. All did not develop according to these suggestions. The EDU became an important concept and a symbol for the new efforts especially in the early stages of the reform. The EDU became the home base for the Reform Facilitators employed by TERP and the outreach of NIED before more formalised connections were established between NIED and the colleges. The EDU also housed a reference library for teacher educators, copy machines, fax machines, computers, email facilities, and other material needed at the colleges. It was also through the EDUs that local staff development of both teacher educators and support teachers initially were organised.

The operation of the EDU was initially strongly linked to the work of the Reform Facilitators and identified as the place from where much of the new developments were initiated. In that sense the Reform Facilitators took a prominent role in the reform.<sup>36</sup> The guidance, assistance, and backup carried out by the Reform Facilitators were in many instances directed towards the college management. This contributed significantly to the institutional and organisational development on local levels that did not always result in grand reports but more as continuous and organic changes. This had effects on the way staff meetings were held, the reorganisations of committee structures, and local staff development activities. The support to college management was recognised as an important strategy to avoid the development of competitive power centres at the colleges.

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<sup>35</sup> Andersson, Callewaert and Kallós op. cit.

<sup>36</sup> Marope and Noonan op. cit.; Craig, Kraft and du Plessis op. cit.; Swarts, (ed) op. cit.

Through the years the EDUs developed in different directions when the Reform Facilitators became more involved in national activities and started to be withdrawn in 1997. In this sense the development of the EDUs also reflected the development cultures of the colleges. The EDU at OCE remained a meeting place and a resource centre for teacher educators. When the new colleges were built at RCE and CCE there was even a specific building created for the EDU, but the full potential of this building as a centre for education development was never realised. The EDUs at these two colleges became a combination of offices for teacher educators and a room for small group meetings with some technical backup. The EDU at WCE totally disappeared as a functional entity and was replaced with a computer room and a room for formal staff meetings. Symbolically these developments represented the collective development culture at OCE, the more individualistic cultures at RCE and CCE, and the technical or even hegemonic culture at WCE. A serious attempt to develop the EDUs in line with the initial intentions was never made. Formal posts attached to the EDU were never developed within the college structures.

You remember the intention with the EDUs that were staffed with expatriates. There were no replacements when the expatriates left. The colleges might have reverted to the old way of doing things in the sense that there was no professional arm to promote a certain ethos and to give orientation when a new teacher came in. The EDU was never mainstreamed and it was a critical unit as it was the one that was going to give the orientation to the programmes.<sup>37</sup>

Under the support theme *Organisation and Management for Educational Development* an attempt was made by TERP to support the institutional development of the colleges on a broader and national level. A general Strategy Document was developed that included a suggested process on

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<sup>37</sup> Interview 2001, M0.

how to develop a college development plan.<sup>38</sup> This process was set off in 1996 and resulted in a base line study partnership report the same year.<sup>39</sup> This report included suggested guidelines for internal college evaluations that would lead to a college development workshop with the ultimate goal to establish a college development plan. The envisaged development did not take place beyond the distribution of the report to the colleges together with a letter from NIED in March 1997. The reasons for the disruption of this national attention on institutional development were related both to the situation at the colleges and the phasing out of project staff in TERP. However, further institutional development at individual college level, like the one at OCE, was based on the work leading to the base line partnership report.<sup>40</sup>

It was not until the beginning of 1998 that this thread was taken up again at another end through a request from NIED that TERP should give further support to the development of a college manual.

The work on the college manual was organised with involvement of the MHEVTST, college management, and NIED. It was decided in a Rector's Meeting at the MHEVTST that the college manual should not be restricted to rules and regulations but also include references to the philosophical policy framework and development prospects of the colleges. The manual was assembled as an indexed filing system and handed over to NIED and the ministry at the end of 2000 for them to finalise what was left to do on the manual. There was a concern that many documents included in the manual were still in draft form. That could create uncertainties about responsibilities and rights in relation to decisions and duties in the future. It was therefore suggested that formal

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<sup>38</sup> Teacher Education Reform Project (1996:b) Organisational and Management Development at the Colleges of Education: Strategy Document. Okahandja: TERP Project Document.

<sup>39</sup> Lindskog, E. and Worrall, P. (1996) Organisational and Management Development at the Namibian Colleges of Teacher Education: A Base Line Study Partnership Report. Okahandja: NIED and TERP.

<sup>40</sup> Nyambe and Griffiths op. cit.

decisions had to be taken on these draft documents if the manual was going to play the expected role as a document that gave a proper framework not only for college development but also for the operations of the colleges in a broad sense.

In summary, the attempt to develop the colleges toward a tertiary institutional ethos was hampered by contextual factors. After the split of the ministry of education in 1995 the colleges found themselves serving two masters with differing tasks and following a different logic. NIED was officially concerned with the software, i.e. the BETD programme and related issues. MHEVTST was geared towards the hardware, i.e. physical infrastructure, staffing, and management. At times these responsibilities overlapped with the result that staff at the two institutions communicated opposing conceptualisations and understandings to the colleges. For example, while staff at NIED supported the colleges in their view that SBS was an important part of the programme and should be kept at the present level, staff at MHEVTST expressed the view that the SBS should be shortened due to financial reasons. The MHEVTST staff also supported the view that the assessment system in the programme should be more examination oriented, while NIED representatives maintained the view that the weighting between examinations and other assessment procedures should remain. Uncertainties over the procedures to formulate job descriptions for college staff left colleges and the production of the college manual in a state of limbo. The EDU played initially an important role as the place symbolising the new ideas in teacher education. The different ways in which the EDUs developed over time was a result of the war of position in the sense that it represented different degrees of influence from the counter-hegemonic reform process.

### **The preferential right of interpretation through evaluation**

The discourse about the teacher education reform was centred around concepts like democratic participation, learner-centred education, equity,

etc.. These concepts and the rhetoric around them could be seen as a post-independence outgrowth of the liberation agenda into the area of education that for long had been a central battleground for the ideological struggle over the minds of the people. During the liberation struggle education was loaded with political overtones that was carried over to the post-independence reforms as educational policy incentives.<sup>41</sup>

The formalisation of education reform and the strong influences from international donor agencies after independence brought in a specific tradition of educational evaluation. This tradition relied on the view that evaluation was to be carried out by outsiders to guarantee scientific objectivity, and to be applied by following an input-output model. This type of evaluation was seen as a necessity, especially in relation to donor financed development projects.<sup>42</sup>

The maintenance of participatory and empowering principles in the reform agenda created another contested imprint, when it was acknowledged that these aspects also had to enter the field of evaluation. Contradictory ideas and practices of evaluation appeared on the reform arena that represented different generations of evaluation, to use the language of Guba and Lincoln.<sup>43</sup> This situation will be exemplified with different evaluation exercises.

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<sup>41</sup> In retrospect, the engagement by staff from Umeå University in the educational endeavours of a liberation movement was in some cases an effort to combine the official role of educators with that of political activists. However, the role of 'political activism through education' changed after independence. Since 1993, this role became, to some extent, locked into bureaucratic structures of official administration and lost by that its partisan power.

<sup>42</sup> See Kann, who addressed some of the issues related to evaluation perceptions in connection with the CSE exercise and Franke, who elaborated on evaluation models in a presentation at MEC, Windhoek. Kann, U, (2000) Comments and reflections by a peer evaluator. In Swarts (ed) op.cit. 68 – 79; Franke, S. (1995) Educational Evaluation - A Strategy for Quality Development. *Reform Forum*, No. 2. 28 - 32.

<sup>43</sup> Guba, E.G. and Lincoln, Y.S. (1989) *Fourth Generation Evaluation*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

To start with an example is given of the type of evaluations that was a common feature in connection with donor financed activities. This example is drawn from an *external evaluation* of TERP carried out by two evaluators during three weeks in March 1995.<sup>44</sup> This evaluation was preceded by discussions between NIED and Sida representatives around the set up of the evaluation. NIED expressed the view that the review, as NIED preferred to call it as the time framework set up by Sida - three weeks - was considered too narrow for an evaluation, had to rely on three prominent features. First, the review team had to be composed by one internal and one external person, both with a broad knowledge of the situation in Namibia. Secondly, the involvement of the review team should be such that the internal Namibian representative should gain new knowledge and skills about making reviews of donor projects as an example of competency development. Thirdly, there should be a Namibian reference group continuously involved in the review to give inputs and to validate findings on a regular basis.<sup>45</sup> However, these concerns were never considered and the evaluation did as a consequence turn into something totally different.

It became a typical example of an external fly-in-fly-out expert evaluation that stirred up a lot of concerns and worries about the role of evaluation and evaluators. A letter addressed to the Councillor at the Swedish Embassy, Windhoek, from the Acting Director at NIED indicated that NIED was far from satisfied with the evaluation report and its lack of profound balance and that issues and matters were not placed in context.<sup>46</sup> The staff of TERP added a sixteen-pages commentary under the following main headings: (1) Carriers of (contradictory) educational perspectives,

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<sup>44</sup> Marope and Noonan op. cit.

<sup>45</sup> Correspondence between NIED and the Embassy of Sweden, Windhoek, dated 5 and 17 October, 1994.

<sup>46</sup> Swarts, P. (1995) Comment of the Final Report: Evaluation of Teacher Education Reform Project (TERP) in Namibia. Letter addressed to the Councillor at the Swedish Embassy, Windhoek, dated 12 June 1995.

(2) The format of evaluation reports, (3) The use of language for specific purposes, (4) A lesson of distortion through omissions and disregard of context, and (5) Evidence of contradiction and irrelevancies.<sup>47</sup> This evaluation had marginal effects on the reform process beyond the efforts to avoid similar evaluations in the future.

The annual *monitoring* and *moderation* exercises had a different evaluative character as compared to the above even though traditional in many respects. The monitoring and moderation followed what Franke calls a product-oriented evaluation aiming at the control of quality, with some traits of process-oriented structures.<sup>48</sup>

There were three monitoring exercises carried out by the members of the CCG during 1993 - 1994. The monitoring exercises were guided by the aims and objectives of the BETD and carried out through classroom observations both at colleges and partnership schools, interviews with student teachers and teacher educators, and discussions with different groups at the colleges and regional offices. The broad aim with the monitoring was to collect data that reflected the implementation of the BETD programme as a continuous assessment of the reform process. During 1993 the monitoring teams looked at attitudes towards the reform, curriculum and subject area syllabi, school-based studies, assessment and promotion, and the colleges' future planning. In 1994 the focus was on flexible timetabling, school-based studies, and assessment.<sup>49</sup>

The first group of BETD student teachers finished their studies at the end of 1995. The monitoring of the BETD was then replaced with a moderation exercise. The moderation was carried out through inspection-oriented approaches by a moderation team that visited the colleges twice a

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<sup>47</sup> Teacher Education Reform Project (1995) op. cit.

<sup>48</sup> Franke op. cit.

<sup>49</sup> This information is gathered from the composite report of the monitoring in October 1993 and team reports from the monitoring in mid-October 1994. Ministry of Education and Culture (1994:d) Monitoring of the Implementation of the BETD at the Colleges of Education. Windhoek: Ministry of Education and Culture.

year to look into the performances of students in their last year of studies. The formal focus of the moderation was, according to the guidelines and the terms of reference, to review the process, procedures and quality of the final summative assessment of students' achievement and, by that, to certify the final grading and determine whether the colleges had applied equal standards.<sup>50</sup> The external moderation team was composed by representatives from UNAM and NIED and supplemented with representatives from an international consortium of universities.<sup>51</sup>

The moderation reports from 1995 - 1998 showed that even these exercises were affected by the different generations of evaluation by involving the teacher educators more systematically and the expressed ambition that the moderation should in the future also include peer evaluations carried out between the colleges.

In contrast to the above, the *National Evaluation* of the BETD programme, was process-oriented and included participatory and empowering traits. The national evaluation was an integrated part of the support from TERP and collected data from the colleges during the period 1994 - 1996. The national evaluation was an ambitious exercise including extensive and intensive data collections carried out by TERP staff in co-operation with NIED and the colleges. It included a staff development component through the college evaluation groups, composed by teacher educators and Reform Facilitators at each college. These groups participated in the constructions of instruments, were responsible for the local organisation of evaluation activities, and participated in the collections and analysis of data. The plan was to involve NIED staff in all activities generated within the national evaluation, but that never materialised as intended. The participation of research officers at NIED was restricted to marginal involvement during 1994 and some involvement

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<sup>50</sup> Ministry of Basic Education and Culture (1998) Report - Moderation of BETD III 1997. Okahandja: NIED; and MHEVTST and MBEC (1998:a) op. cit.

<sup>51</sup> The Consortium of international universities included the University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Copenhagen, and Umeå University during 1995 - 1998.

in the data analyses and report writing related to teacher educators' journals in 1996. The national evaluation produced a number of reports that were distributed to the colleges and to NIED for their considerations in the continuous development of the programme.<sup>52</sup>

The national evaluation was organised such that the data collections had different focuses, as indicated in the titles of the reports. Thus, the evaluation focused successively on broad curriculum, subject area, and professional issues and by that tried to follow the logic of the programme expressed through broad policy issues, the actual teaching and learning process during the programme, and the graduated students' performance as teachers in schools.

The *Critical Self-Evaluation* of teacher education and support was another attempt to break new ground in evaluation. The terms of reference expressed a critical view on the tradition in donor driven evaluation exercises.

There is a strong tendency that such evaluations become routine exercises carried out by a small group of international experts with preconceived ideological perspectives, which are important contextual factors, but seldom considered,...it is also true that alternative models have seldom been allowed to develop mainly because of the subjectivity-objectivity dichotomy inherited from a conservative academic paradigm, the expert syndrome which goes with it, and a simplistic quantification perspective usually limited to a focus on pre-ordinate objectives, decisions, or effects.<sup>53</sup>

The critical self-evaluation was carried out by a group of educators from the colleges of education, NIED, and TERP, who had participated in the reform process from the start. Two peer evaluators were recruited based on the criteria that they were knowledgeable about the reform but had not participated in it and that they were available in Namibia. A plan for the

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<sup>52</sup> See Appendix 17.

<sup>53</sup> Swarts (ed) op. cit. Appendix 1. p. 1.

critical self-evaluation was drawn up in a series of meetings with the full evaluation team before the data collection started. The data collection period ended with a Stakeholders' Seminar in June 1999, when the preliminary results were discussed and further data was collected from the participants of the seminar.<sup>54</sup> The stakeholders' seminar assembled a cross-section of representatives from the two ministries of education, regional education offices, teachers' and students' unions, student teachers' representatives, teacher educators, school principals, and teachers graduated from the BETD. It is notable that the Critical Self-evaluation also included a commissioned desktop appraisal of the BETD steering documents that was carried out by a group of South African scholars.<sup>55</sup> The findings of the Critical Self-Evaluation were reported in 2000. That report concluded an exercise that created a different kind of experience and a different kind of view on evaluations.

In summary, the evaluation trade connected with international development projects has developed into a messy business with hegemonic traits. It has developed a strata of international evaluation experts and some with self-interests connected to consultant firms that bid for both evaluation and development contracts from donors. This can of course create doubtful loyalties. It is only at rare occasions you find evaluators who openly express their own frame of reference and educational preference as it will undoubtedly affect the objectivity and expert aura. Participatory and empowering principles are surely a threat to this mainstream evaluation practice that at a broader arena represents the struggle over the preferential right of interpretation. From the above it is evident that at least some successful attempts to move evaluation in a participatory direction with empowering traits were placed within the field of teacher education reform.

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<sup>54</sup> Swarts (ed) op. cit. Appendix 2.

<sup>55</sup> Van Harmelen, U. (ed) (1999) Desktop analysis of the Namibian Teacher Education syllabuses as related to the BETD Broad Curriculum. In Swarts (ed) op. cit.

**Annotation: forces at work at institutional level**

The counter-hegemonic efforts at institutional level became a prolonged war of position against the prevailing common sense about the teacher education reform. Even though significant impacts on a personal and individual level were accomplished mainly through staff development activities, there are doubts about the sustainable accomplishments at institutional level because of the still prevailing influences from the past.

The retrospective data that was collected through interviews in March 2001 confirms this scepticism. Four of the six respondents expressed their worries about the future. At institutional level a philosophical bleaching process was taking place and a parallel re-entering of old practices. This process emanated from the area of assessment but influenced the programme and the institutions on a much broader level. One significant problem was related to the induction of new teacher educators. As one respondent expressed it: “The induction of new teacher educators is not what it should be”<sup>56</sup>. Another respondent mentioned that the workshops they organise for their colleagues are not sufficient to understand e.g. what critical inquiry is all about. The expressed scepticism did not mean that the reform had failed. It was rather a sign of worry about the future war of position that might be staged on a less favourable ground.

We cannot expect fundamental change to take place in view of the relatively short time since the reform started. We also have to acknowledge the time and effort it took to create the first vulnerable traits of a basis for individual and institutional agency in pursuit of the human and social values of the reform policy.

Today, there are pockets of counter-hegemonic agency combined through human, programmatic, and institutional capacity. This agency needs to be nourished in the future. In view of the contemporary

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<sup>56</sup> Interview M2.

globalisation forces operating at all levels a sustained counter-hegemonic agency in education need strategic support on a global arena that can continue to build blocs of organic intellectualism. In the Namibian case this would encounter continued support to some of the strategically important imprints of reform that have been addressed in this part of the thesis.

The reform provoked a fierce war of position on the educational battleground in Namibia. International intellectuals and educators took part in this battle on both sides. The efforts in staff development, institutional support, and evaluation practices to strengthen the institutional agency were examples of such intellectualism attempting to move the position of the counter-hegemonic policy forward. The holistic analysis that follows from a retrospective viewpoint will hopefully generate a broader understanding of the forces that operated in the teacher education reform and also some hints of what can be expected in the field of teacher education in Namibia in the future.

