

Chapter Five

Building a counter-hegemonic bloc

The activities organised after the first practical encounter between Swedish and exiled Namibian educators in 1983 were directed towards improving the schooling situation for the many Namibian children in exile. At that time there were no immediate signs of a changed political situation. A free Namibia only existed as a distant hope and a political promise. The long-term aim to provide experiences amongst Namibian educators that could form a basis for future educational considerations was a far-fetched dream that suddenly came true. In that sense, the different activities and developments taking place during the years immediately before and after independence became part of an overlapping transition period and the basis of a counter-hegemonic bloc.

In a state of conflict

To understand the contextual situation for the first meeting between Swedish and Namibian educators in 1983 it is necessary to give a general overview of the military situation in this part of Africa. SWAPO as a liberation movement was internationally recognised by the United Nations (UN) and most countries in the world, except for South Africa and its few allies, as the true representative of the Namibian people. The liberation war was fought mainly from SWAPO bases in Southern Angola. The South African army had its nearest bases around Ondangwa in the so called war zone in Northern Namibia, constituting the whole of Ovamboland, i.e. most of the present educational regions of Ondangwa West and East. Important South African military bases were also placed in Rundu, at the Omega Base along the Northern Namibian border, and at the far end of the Caprivi strip outside Katima Mulilo. The whole of Northern Namibia was at this time an area heavily influenced by

occupying military troops, conflict and military manoeuvres. The People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) and the South African Defence Force/South West Africa Defence Force (SADF/SWADF) were the main contestants in the war related to the territory of Namibia. This war was heavily influenced by the military conflict in Angola between the government troops in the People's Armed Forces of the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) and the rebels in the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).¹ These conflicts had schematically at least four fronts. A more or less conventional warfare was carried out in Southern Angola between FAPLA supported by Cuban troops and the Eastern Bloc on the one side and UNITA/SADF supported by USA on the other side. Guerrilla warfare was carried out between FAPLA and UNITA in the whole of Angola. Another guerilla warfare situation existed in Owamboland between PLAN and SADF/SWADF during the rainy seasons. A kind of urban terrorist warfare through bombs and other types of isolated attacks on representatives and sympathisers of the liberation movements took place in what was called the Frontline States and beyond.² Additionally, the major liberation movement of South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) co-operated with the Angolan government and SWAPO in Angola and ANC's military wing, Umkonto we Siswe, had bases in Angola. And lastly, as always in situations of war, the civilian people especially in Northern Namibia and Angola suffered from the constant threats of intimidation from the SADF/SWADF, especially the branch called Kovoet (the crowbar), and UNITA forces.

¹ PLAN = SWAPO's military wing; SWADF = the Namibian wing of the SADF with Black Namibian forces and White South African commanders.

² The frontline states were Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

An educational alternative is moulded in exile

In the beginning of May, 1978, the largest civilian camp for Namibians in exile at Kassinga in Southern Angola was attacked by the SADF.³ This attack killed many Namibians and SWAPO decided to move its main site for civilians in exile to a place further away from the Namibian border. The Angolan government allocated an area 300 km East of the Angolan capital Luanda for this purpose. This area was an old coffee plantation in the Angolan mountains and was given the official name *Namibia Health and Education Centre, Kwanza-Sul*, and became known as Kwanza. The centre in Kwanza covered several kilometres with a number of sub-camps of which one was known as *Education*. Here you found the school that from the beginning was a few wooden barracks, while most classes were held in tents or in the open air. Later on a large number of prefabricated classrooms were built with donations from the Nordic countries. It was the Swedish buildings that originally created the reason for the qualitative support to teacher education.

Based on discussions between Sida and SWAPO in 1982-1983 it was agreed that a greater involvement by Sweden for the qualitative improvements at basic education level should commence with a consultancy study comprising in-service teacher education, curriculum development, and teaching materials. The consultancy report suggested a pilot in-service programme with four stages including three periods of 4-5 weeks each at the centre and a study visit to Sweden.⁴ A general theoretical background was produced before the pilot project started.⁵ This document outlined the justifications for the chosen approach. The

³ Ya Nangolo, M. and Sellström, T. (1995) *Kassinga: A Story Untold*. Windhoek: Namibia Book Development Council.

⁴ Dahlström, L. (1983) op. cit.

⁵ Dahlström, L. (1984:a) On In-service Teacher Training. General Theoretical Background to a Pilot Project. Paper submitted to Sida, Stockholm. Umeå: Department of Education.

project was called *In-service Teacher Training: A Pilot Project at Namibia Education Centre, Kwanza-Sul*, and each stage was reported separately.⁶

The reports showed that the pilot project was organised to integrate teaching methods, classroom organisation and the production of teaching material through a practical model. This model included seminar sessions with teachers in the afternoon, classroom applications and observations the following day, follow ups, further seminars and production workshops. Issues that were attended to were related to the principles of the chosen educational approach in the project, presented through the following slogans:

- Start with what each child knows, its vocabulary and ideas.
- Language must be based on and used in everyday life and a part of all subjects at school.
- Language must communicate something to someone, it must produce items which have a purpose.
- Democratic ways of working must be encouraged through co-operation in groups.⁷

⁶ Dahlström, L. and Russell, T. (1984) *In-service Teacher Training: A Pilot Project at Namibia Education Centre, Kwanza-Sul, Stage One*. Umeå: Department of Education; Engvall, M. and Janson, G. (1984) *In-service Teacher Training: A Pilot Project at Namibia Education Centre, Kwanza-Sul, Stage Two*. Umeå: Department of Education; Dahlström, L. (1984:b) *In-service Teacher Training: A Pilot Project at Namibia Education Centre, Kwanza-Sul, Stage Three – The Study Visit*. Umeå: Department of Education; and Dahlström, L., Engvall, M. and Janson, G. (1985) *In-service Teacher Training: A Pilot Project at Namibia Education Centre, Kwanza-Sul, Stage Four – Workshop, Evaluation, Conclusions and Recommendations*. Umeå: Department of Education.

It should be noted here (with reference to Cohen op. cit.) that all written documentation produced during the period 1983 - 1989 concerning the co-operation with the liberation movement SWAPO was classified as confidential information by the Swedish government. The working periods at the centre in Angola were also carried out under a kind of military rule and civil state of emergency. This was in addition to the general restrictions on movements enforced on all foreign personnel operating in Angola, being it in the capital Luanda or elsewhere, due to the state of war.

⁷ Dahlström and Russell op. cit. p. 4.

There was an emphasis on lower grades and language learning. Every opportunity was also taken to inform and involve others. For that reason newsletters to the community at the centre was produced. Teachers were also invited to workshops when their colleagues, i.e. participants in the pilot project, introduced and demonstrated self-made teaching material. In short, it was an attempt to introduce an alternative to the only way of education that the teachers knew from the ritualised coulisse-school, namely to learn some alien knowledge by heart and to prove that learning through tests.

The evaluation of the pilot project pointed both to the potential and the difficulty with a participatory approach. The intention was to demonstrate a participatory approach in a situation which was by and large heavily influenced by autocratic experiences from the past and top down practices transferred from the military order in the liberation movement, and justified by the war. The confusion that the clash between different perspectives created, was seen as an eye-opener for all involved. It was also recognised as a stage in a distancing from one perspective and advancement towards another, a process which was anticipated also in the future transformation after Namibia's independence.⁸

After the initial pilot project SWAPO suggested that the support should be developed into a full-time programme for the training of primary school teachers and the *Integrated Teacher Training Programme* (ITTP) was born. The first ITTP Curriculum was finalised by a joint team of educators from SWAPO and Umeå University, during some intensive working sessions in Luanda in early 1986, and became the steering document for the work up until 1989.⁹ One of the major differences between the ITTP and other programmes that trained teachers for SWAPO, including the programme at the United Nations Institute for

⁸ Dahlström, Engvall and Janson op. cit.

⁹ South West Africa People's Organisation and Umeå University (1986) *Integrated Teacher Education Programme, ITTP, Curriculum, 1986 – 1989*. Umeå: Department of Education.

Namibia (UNIN) in Lusaka, Zambia, was that half of the programme was carried out at the education centre in Kwanza, as an adapted type of school-based model for teacher education.¹⁰

The main reason for this model was to avoid the individual as well as professional alienation expected if the whole programme had been organised in Sweden or elsewhere away from a Namibian situation or with very little contact with the situation for which the programme was organised. The situation in Kwanza was not truly Namibian, but at least organised by the Namibians themselves in a surrounding where they had their homes in exile and therefore as close as you could get to a real Namibian situation. It can be added that Kwanza did not live up to the standard cliché picture of refugee camps in Africa. It developed into a well-organised community of around 10 - 15.000 Namibians in spite of the war going on around the defended area. The closeness to this situation facilitated the continuous fine-tuning of the programme and could at the same time improve the conditions for the learners at the school in Kwanza. The ethos of integration also called for a close relation between the programme and its practical base.

The booklets about the ITTP produced for the Lusaka Conference (see below) gave an overview of the programme, its intentions and some ideas for the future.¹¹ The slogans presented in the pilot project had been developed into guiding principles for the ITTP related to student-centredness and democracy, integration and function, production, and reflective and inductive methods.¹²

The first group of ITTP students graduated in June 1989. A second group of students had been selected to the programme already in 1988 and a preparatory course was carried out in Kwanza, before anyone knew

¹⁰ See Table 5, Appendix 3.

¹¹ Dahlström, L. (1989) *The Integrated Teacher Training Programme (ITTP) 1986-1989*, Booklet 1-3. Project Document. Umeå: Department of Education.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 1-4.

officially that independence was just around the corner and would change the conditions dramatically.

An important event took place in Lusaka, Zambia, in September 1989 as part of the preparations for independence, organised by SWAPO and UNIN. The *International Conference on Teacher Education for Namibia* became the first official meeting place for SWAPO educators from exile and inside Namibia, representatives from international donor organisations and donor supported projects, and a cross-section of representatives from institutions and government offices inside Namibia. The Lusaka conference, as it became known, was organised around reports from fact-finding missions inside Namibia carried out by international scholars, officially operating under the UN flag, and reports from different international support programmes for teacher education. The most significant presentations for the development of teacher education after independence were the ones by Callewaert & Kallos and Dahlström & Janson.¹³ The working group on teacher education curriculum discussed a number of important issues and made some significant recommendations that became central to the post-independence reform efforts. These recommendations dealt with a unified programme and certification; entry requirements that did not only considered previous formal academic schooling; a curriculum as a guiding framework; a learner-centred approach as a unifying element in the curriculum, and a broad-based assessment policy.¹⁴ A suggestion for an alternative and innovative visionary approach to teacher education was included in the report about the ITTP, as a de-centralised model for teacher education with a strong school-based perspective beyond the traditional dichotomy between pre-service and in-service teacher education.¹⁵

¹³ South West Africa People's Organisation and United Nations Institute for Namibia (1989) *International Conference on Teacher Education for Namibia*. Volume 1, pp. 23-70, 154-161.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* Volume 2. pp. 22-26.

¹⁵ Dahlström (1989) *op. cit.* pp. 82-88.

The first bricks on Namibian ground

Another important phase in the co-operation between Swedish and Namibian educators was the continuation of the ITTP after independence in northern Namibia during the period 1990 - 1992. A second group of student teachers had already been selected and prepared before independence. SWAPO and Sida decided that the ITTP should continue until a national teacher education reform started. For that reason the selection procedures were finalised inside Namibia and preparations were done to start the training of a new group of students in the beginning of 1990, based on a revised curriculum. The training took place in Sweden and Namibia.¹⁶

The periods in Sweden were used for integrated subject studies geared towards the teaching and learning of school subjects and general pedagogy. The periods in Northern Namibia were organised around the main course in the programme called Schoolwork, which took 57 out of the total 120 weeks. The revised course programme for the ITTP reflected parts of the visionary approach outlined in the report prepared for the Lusaka Conference. While in Namibia during the whole of 1991 (and the second part of 1992) the ITTP operated from the Ongwediva Teacher Resource Centre (OTRC), together with five primary schools in the area close to Ongwediva in 1991 and a few additional upper primary schools in the region during the second part of 1992. Students were accommodated in the hostels at Ongwediva College of Education (OCE) and worked at the schools throughout 1991. Teacher educators visited the schools regularly to the extent that the common excitements related to school visits by teacher educators were eliminated and rather developed to opportunities

¹⁶ SWAPO and Umeå University (1990) Integrated Teacher Education Programme, ITTP, Curriculum, 1990 – 1992. Umeå: Department of Education. The ITTP continued with a revised curriculum, but with a similar organisation, where one part of the studies was carried out at Umeå University in Sweden and the other part now in northern Namibia replacing the school in Kwanza, Angola. See also Table 6, Appendix 3.

for mutual exchange of experiences and ideas. Students and teacher educators met in the afternoons in the ITTP-room at the OTRC for discussions about the school-based work, seminars and theme studies, the production of teaching and learning materials, individual discussions related to the students' reflective diaries, and preparations for future work.¹⁷ An in-service programme was developed for teachers in the schools where the students worked. These teachers were invited to the OTRC on Wednesday mornings for their own development while the ITTP students were responsible for their classes. The teachers were also encouraged to join the afternoon activities at the OTRC, which some of them did frequently while others came sporadically mainly due to transport problems. The ITTP students were also involved in school development projects for the building of classrooms, organising school gardens, and arranging school libraries with financial support from schools and solidarity activities in Sweden.

The productive principle had the effect that many programme activities ended up in material meant for the use by others.¹⁸ Texts produced for educational purposes as part of the training were on many occasions further developed for broader purposes. For example, the ITTP produced the teachers' magazine *The Frontline Teacher* that was printed in 5000 copies and distributed to schools in co-operation with the Namibia National Teachers Union (NANTU). Each issue was based on material produced as part of the training and student teachers and teacher educators took turns in being members of the editorial committee. Other examples are the booklets *Stories from the Struggle* and *Wipe your face and get ready for school*.¹⁹

¹⁷ The theme studies included subject studies directly related to the subjects taught in the schools.

¹⁸ This was a conscious attempt to break the common tradition in schooling that students' production is only for the teacher's eyes and the red pen.

¹⁹ Integrated Teacher Training Programme, ITTP (1991) op. cit.; Teacher Education Reform Project (1992:a) op. cit.

Activities in one course often generated activities in another course especially in connection with the productive activities as results of previous studies or as a conscious way to integrate. One example is related to the booklet *Stories from the Struggle* mentioned above that was based on work in the Social Studies, School and Society, and Language courses. The booklet contains a collection of stories describing the experiences of the student teachers. The production was organised as an integrated part of the studies on the Namibian history, the role of education in society, and English language studies based on methods like process writing and a language experience approach. Another example is related to the professional and school-based studies. The relation between children's self-image and self-confidence and the communication patterns in the classroom was attended to in the School and Society course. These studies had an impact on the students' reflective diaries during the Schoolwork as classroom communication was included as an area of inquiry. The reflective diaries were analysed as part of the course Teaching and Learning and related to theories of education, which later on contributed to the production of a manuscript called *The ITTP Handbook in Teaching and Learning*. In addition students' individual school projects were published and became a resource used for in-service training in northern Namibia.²⁰ There were also many products produced and used more locally like different types of readers for lower primary in English and the local language (Oshiwambo).

The ITTP was externally evaluated in 1992, i.e. during its last year of existence. The aim of the evaluation was to focus on how to incorporate the students and the teaching methods on a larger scale into the teacher education reform in Namibia. The terms of reference referred to an interest expressed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) in Namibia to incorporate the ITTP graduates into the on-going in-service

²⁰ These school projects were early examples of practitioner inquiry that later became an important part of the national teacher education programme.

programme. This evaluation was carried out both in Sweden and during working periods in Namibia.²¹

Underpinning the whole curriculum is the School Based Practice. This integrates all subjects and is allotted 50% of the time of the course. Each student is closely supervised by the members of the [teaching] team, and also works in tandem with one other student in the class, representing a commitment to team teaching.²²

Goodwin & Rubin made the following comment in their concluding remarks on the ITTP.

It is clear that this programme has produced confident, professional and committed teachers, capable of adapting to most Namibian school situations. The candidates have shown qualities of leadership, both in schools where they were placed during practice and at the conference at the end of the course. Materials produced by the candidates and the team can be of value in the new training program, as a resource and as inspiration for teachers of the future. The confidence of the Ministry of Education and Culture in the ITTP is reflected in the philosophy of the new BETD course. The ITTP has been a creative course, producing proactive, creative and bold teachers.²³

Support was also given to the preparations for the national reform in parallel with the ITTP. It was in connection with these activities that support from Umeå University started to be organised under a different label, the *Teacher Education Reform Project (TERP)*. Based on the initial visionary ideas presented in the report for the Lusaka Conference, further ideas were continuously presented to encourage an innovative approach

²¹ Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency, Sida (1992) Terms of Reference for the evaluation of the ITTP. Stockholm: Education Division.

²² Goodwin, C.M. and Rubin, S. (1993) Evaluation of the Integrated Teacher Training Programme - a Sida supported programme for training Namibian teachers. Windhoek: Report prepared for the Education Division, Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency. p. 5.

²³ Goodwin and Rubin op. cit. p. 28.

towards the national teacher education reform. For that purpose a document was produced which outlined some unorthodox ideas about the development of both in-service and pre-service teacher education.²⁴ Visits to the northern colleges were carried out to start the dialogue with teacher educators about new ideas in teacher education.²⁵ A comprehensive consultant report about teacher education was produced by a group of scholars closely related to the project. This report made an outline of a future nationally integrated system for pre-service and in-service teacher education.²⁶ An outline of a philosophy of education was produced within the project to encourage a discussion about different philosophies of education with the aim to clarify the philosophy chosen under the concept learner-centred education.²⁷ An overview of teacher training programmes in Namibia was produced as another background document.²⁸ Comments were given to the suggested institute for innovative education.²⁹ A seminar was arranged for selected teacher educators from the three northern colleges to familiarise them with parts of the new

²⁴ Dahlström, L. and Shinyemba, D. (1990) The Integrated Teacher Training Programme in the Namibian Context - possibilities for the future. Umeå: TERP Document.

²⁵ Dahlström, L. (1991) First visits to teacher training colleges in Katima Mulilo, Rundu, and Ongwediva. Umeå: TERP Document.

²⁶ Andersson, I., Callewaert, S. and Kallós, D. (1991) Teacher Education Reform For Namibia. Department of Education, Umeå University and Department of Education, University of Copenhagen. Stockholm: Sida.

²⁷ Callewaert, S. and Kallós, D. (1992) Outline of a philosophy of education. Umeå: TERP Document.

²⁸ Frykholm, C-U. (1992:a) Teacher Training Programmes in Namibia - An Overview. Windhoek: TERP Document.

²⁹ This was what later became the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED). See Angula, N. (1990:a) The Institute for Education Development. Windhoek: Ministerial Memorandum, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports; Callewaert, S., Dahlström, L. and Kallós, D. (1990) An outline of a possible project for innovative teacher training and educational research and development in an independent Namibia. Umeå and Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen and University of Umeå; Dahlström, L. and Kallós, D. (1990) Comments on the Report To The Interim Steering Committee Of The National Institute For Education Development On Site Appraisal. Umeå: Department of Education.

philosophy under the heading *Interactive Teaching and Learning*.³⁰ A study tour was organised for a cross-sectional group of Namibian educators to look into the state of teacher education in the Southern African region. The study tour included visits to Botswana, Lesotho and Zimbabwe and discussions with educators involved in the preparations for a new South Africa.³¹ Project staff also participated in a number of seminars and meetings during the initialisation stage preceding the national reforms. At *The First National Consultative Conference on Basic Education Reform* in April 1991 (The Etosha Conference), the ITTP was introduced and displayed as the only non-USAID funded programme. This was the first occasion for the USAID-sponsored approaches in the field of education to meet the practices and ideas supported by Umeå University and the ITTP. The ITTP staff participated on request from the Minister of Education and Culture, after some hesitation from the American organisers.

The workshop *Perspectives on Teacher Education: Pre-service and In-service* in May 1991, was organised by the ministry to introduce a discussion about future reforms in teacher education mainly based on the suggestions on pre-service education in the report by Andersson, Callewaert & Kallos. It was at this workshop that one of the most prominent representatives of the previous establishment, still employed by the government, expressed the view that the Namibian education system needed improvement and not change. It was also noted that the NEC and NHEC interim programmes, which were introduced at the colleges in the beginning of 1991, were based on initiatives in 1989 at the former Academy as a preventing attempt to keep an upper hand on teacher education even after independence. The conclusion from the workshop regarding the pre-service programme as suggested in the

³⁰ Dahlström, L. (1992) *Discussing Teaching and Learning. Reflections after a Seminar on Interactive Teaching and Learning*. Umeå: TERP Document.

³¹ Frykholm, C-U. (1992:b) *Teacher Training in Southern Africa*. Umeå: TERP Document.

Andersson et. al. report was that the recommendations were broadly accepted. However, there was a general feeling amongst some of the Namibian actors sympathetic to the reforms that the conservative members of the administration decided to be rather passive and non-participatory during the workshop to be able to act more freely in the future.³²

Further on, advisers working with the national reform were recruited to the project. The first full-time adviser was recruited to the project in November 1991. He was a Namibian educator from a local NGO, who became responsible for the support to in-service activities. The first Swedish full-time adviser started his work for the project in January 1992 and from the second part of 1992 there were two permanent staff members working as advisers on teacher education at the still embryonic NIED. These advisers participated in meetings and activities organised by the Task Force for In-service Teacher Education, the Project Implementation Unit (PIU), and the Curriculum Co-ordination Group (CCG). The PIU was an example of a by-pass construction created at this time with a direct reporting responsibility to the Minister. This by-pass was caused by the dysfunction of important parts of the administration and to avoid blockages of the reform processes. This was related to the introductory note by the Minister of Education at the Etosha Conference that expressed the concern over the fact that only 5% of the ministry's administration was operative.³³

The Minister of Education decided in November 1991 that a new national programme for pre-service teacher education should be introduced at the four colleges of education in the beginning of 1993. The reform process started when the guidelines for the production of the steering

³² Callewaert, S. and Dahlström, L. (1991) *Läroarbildning i Namibia, Rapport från ett Konsultuppdrag, 25 maj - 1 juni, 1991* (Teacher Education in Namibia. A report from a Consultancy, 25 May - 1 June, 1991). Umeå: TERP Document.

³³ Snyder, C.W. (ed) (1991) *Consultation on Change: Proceedings of the Etosha Conference*. Tallahassee: Florida State University.

documents were ready in April 1992. A Task Force for Pre-service Teacher Education was established and the CCG, the executive working group of this Task Force, was assigned to be in charge of the development of steering documents for the *Basic Education Teacher Diploma* (BETD). The 8th draft version of the Broad Curriculum for the BETD was ready in mid 1992 after several revisions, meetings with different groups and workshops at the colleges of education.

The production of subject syllabuses also started in 1992. Nine panels were organised and a convenor was appointed by the CCG to each panel. Individual TERP staff members were involved in some of the panels, like the one for Languages and the panel for Education Theory and Practice, and the whole project team worked as a reference group to the CCG. However, it is worth noting that these panels were heavily over-represented by educators from the Windhoek area. Only one convenor was from outside this central area and she was a foreign educator working at OCE.³⁴

This situation reflected the urgency in the preparations for the teacher education reform that did not allow for much delay because of infra-structural and communication problems, as well as the lack of funds to bring people together from all parts of the country at this time.³⁵ Even with this heavy bias towards the involvement of Windhoek-based educators in the top level, it was estimated that more than 500 Namibian educators participated nation-wide in the preparations.³⁶

With the BETD Namibia got a national three-year pre-service programme for teachers in Grade 1-10. The most important characteristics of the BETD were its emphasis on the professional aspects of the

³⁴ See Appendix 4.

³⁵ Budget allocations for curriculum seminars through TERP were only included from the beginning of 1993 when the national reform started its official implementation at the colleges.

³⁶ Dahlström, L. (1995) Teacher Education for Independent Namibia: from the liberation struggle to a national agenda. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, Vol. 21, No. 3. 273-288.

preparation of teachers, school-based studies, and broad assessment policies. This was in line with what the ITTP had tried to accomplish and therefore also a continuation of the same philosophy of education, as identified by scholars like Cohen and Swarts.

Since the [ITTP] programme focused on improving the professional quality of a small number of teachers from Kwanza-Sul, its contribution to the overall teacher output was not great. Nevertheless, it provided a model for an alternative form of teacher training in independent Namibia.³⁷

Many of the innovative ideas and principles underpinning the ITTP were incorporated into the design of the reformed teacher education programme for basic education.³⁸

This also meant that the BETD was in sharp contrast to the previous policies in Namibia, especially the way the previous dispensation looked at education in general and the acquisition of knowledge through a rigid examination system. Therefore, the BETD challenged the fundamentals of education as perceived by the strong conservative forces in Namibia and became the most important ideological battleground for educational practice and thought during the years ahead.

The curriculum for a university course for teacher educators was also developed and started in 1992. The aim of this course was to introduce teacher educators to curriculum development and the philosophy of the new teacher education programme. This course was later on developed into a post-graduate Higher Diploma course and a Master's course for teacher educators in Namibia with acclaimed international acknowledgement. This acknowledgement is exemplified here with a quote from Walker, who at that time worked in South Africa, and who dedicated her article *Subaltern Professionals: acting in pursuit of social justice* to the staff of TERP in Namibia, and all Namibian teacher educators and teachers. She pointed to the "shift from authoritarian

³⁷ Cohen op. cit. p. 243.

³⁸ Swarts (1998) op. cit. p. 38.

approaches and externally imposed expert knowledge, to a democratic pedagogy and knowledge creation in teacher research communities" as a way for teacher educators "to find their voices as producers of knowledge about education".³⁹

The above has shown that activities involving project staff employed by Umeå University changed extensively during 1990-92. This period was a prolonged transformation of the project activities from a small innovative teacher education programme to a more extensive support project to the national reform of teacher education. This transformation was reflected in the Plans of Operation for this period that included three operative subheadings. The *Integrated Teacher Training Programme* included the training of 20 teachers for primary education integrated with in-service activities for teachers and institutional development at a small number of schools in the area around Oshakati in northern Namibia, and the development of educational material. The activities under *Teacher Education Reform Development* included visits to colleges, introductory seminars and meetings together with teacher educators, and other preparations at the colleges. The *Support to NIED*, mainly performed by the in-service and pre-service advisers, the project co-ordinator, and short-term consultants, were related to the development of infrastructure and steering documents for the new teacher education programme. During this period the project organised by Umeå University that had been officially known as the ITTP since 1986 changed its name to reflect the new duties and became at the end of this transition period known as the *Teacher Education Reform Project*, TERP.

³⁹ Walker, M. (1996:b) Subaltern Professionals: acting in pursuit of social justice. *Educational Action Research*, 4:3. Triangle Journals. 407-425. pp. 421-422.

Annotation: national teacher education reform in the making

The co-operation between Swedish and Namibian educators that was carried out during this transition period mainly through the ITTP turned out to be a small scale modelling of the national teacher education reform to come. Already at its initial stage at the education centre in exile this co-operation started to act as a counter force against the prevailing educational practices. The team of Swedish educators, Namibian colleagues, and student teachers developed a kind of organic and collective intellectualism.⁴⁰

This intellectualism developed further and was strengthened when the work was moved to Namibia after independence, by the fact that more people were confronted with the practices e.g. through the co-operation with schools, local authorities, colleges of education, teachers' unions and communities. The organic and collective intellectualism was operationalised internally through the pedagogy and externally through the material produced and distributed to schools, the training of teachers, and local development projects at schools. These activities were carried out within a strong political framework in support of the new government policy. The activities were based on what was recognised as a preferential right of interpretation earned through the historical co-operation with the liberation movement in exile and the practical encounters in what had been the previous war zone. These practices were characterised as the beginning of something new and a strong hope for the future. This hope

⁴⁰ The concept *counterpart* is almost inevitable in development co-operation. Donor agencies demand automatically that counterparts need to be identified as a means of creating sustainability. This demand is often an expression of a technocratic view that is based on a simplistic transfer perspective. The assumption is that when a foreign professional works hand in hand with a national a transfer of knowledge and skills from one person to another will take place. The ITTP tried to avoid the concept counterpart to describe the relationships that developed between the project staff and Namibian colleagues. Namibian educators worked all along together with ITTP staff in a mutual learning process and all contributed to the new situation.

included emancipatory and liberating practices within a radical democratic framework that aimed at a restructuring beyond the classroom door as an expansion of a counter-hegemonic force.

It became clear already at this stage that there were at least as many fronts unfolding for the intellectual war of position as the military fronts during the liberation struggle. The first front represented the engineers of the previous policies who due to the reconciliation policy remained in strategically important positions.⁴¹ The second front was the clique of foreign academics at the University of Namibia (UNAM) who after independence saw their comprehensive preferential right of interpretation eroded. The third front was the conservative Namibians who saw their own position as the proof of the excellence of a strongly selective system of education. The fourth front was the contradictory interpretations of the new policy and the technocratic representations amongst donor projects that were allowed to make their imprints in the system. These forces were at times strategically co-ordinated as communities of interests but usually they operated as independent forces with specific party interests. As one of the Namibian educators involved in the reform expressed it:

We had to fight many battles, but I think that had to be expected in this scenario.⁴²

⁴¹ For an early analysis of post-apartheid curriculum reform and its South African linkages, see Jansen, J. D. (1995) Understanding social transition through the lens of curriculum policy: Namibia/South Africa. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 3, 245 – 261.

⁴² Interview F1.

This war of position was staged on an arena that was influenced by the current international trends in teacher education. These trends also contributed to the landscape of the reform and the positioning of the reform policy. These influences are attended to in chapter six.