

## Chapter Seven

### **Situational conditions for a war of position**

The politics of separate development came to an official end at independence in 1990. However, mental engravings and physical conditions moulded by hundred years of colonialism persisted when the Minister of Education in November 1991 announced that a new national programme should be started at the four colleges of education in January 1993.

The discourses about education for all, learner-centred education and other conceptions representing the counter-hegemonic efforts took stage. These conceptions landed in mental and physical conditions marked by the colonial times. The ambition to create a counter-hegemonic teacher education system for all, independent from ethnicity and the previous diverging experiences, complicated the reform process. This became obvious when the institutional conditions for the four colleges were considered and when the newly established national institute responsible for the staging of the reform entered the arena. The timing of the reform process became another complicating factor, especially in relation to the false reform that took place by the introduction of interim programmes. Namibia was also overwhelmed with a range of funding and technical assistance agencies that entered the country and contributed to the war of position. These conditions became important in the struggle between the different forces on the ground over the preferential right of interpretation, especially in relation to the official power centre of the reform process, the Curriculum Co-ordinating Group. These scene-setting conditions are addressed in the following.

### **Institutional conditions**

The four colleges of education were not in any way in a comparable situation at the outset. The major difference was the one existing between the privileged college for whites in the capital Windhoek and the three neglected and ethnically isolated colleges for blacks in the Northern parts of the country. One of the few benefits for the northern colleges was that the reform and the envisaged changes in teacher education was politically and in all other ways recognised as being on their side, while the opposite was the case for the college in Windhoek.

*Windhoek College of Education* (WCE) was situated at the outskirts of the capital Windhoek close to a white suburb area symbolically named Academia. The college campus embraced all possible facilities, including "a magnificent hall, a well equipped library and media centre (including an audio and TV studio), a fully equipped arts centre (including a drama studio, musical equipment, ceramic ovens etc.), all kinds of sports facilities (including an Olympic sized swimming pool), well equipped science laboratories, workshops for wood work and metal work" as well as dormitories with single and double rooms for students.<sup>1</sup> The whole college was of modern design with shaded foot-paths above the traffic passages between buildings and lecture halls. There were only around 120 fulltime students, with some 30 from South Africa, studying at WCE in 1989. The college was spaced to accommodate between 800 - 1000 students and had around 50 educational staff.<sup>2</sup> WCE offered full-time and part-time courses for white students and only started as late as 1989 to offer courses for students from all ethnic groups. Courses at WCE were delivered under the auspices of Rand Afrikaans University in South Africa. A visitor could feel the strong internal spirit of ethnic supremacy and well organised, sometimes over-organised, professional conduct under

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<sup>1</sup> Frykholm, C-U. (1997) *National Evaluation of the Basic Education Teacher Diploma: Broad Curriculum Issues*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Okahandja: NIED. p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Callewaert and Kallós op. cit.

the leadership of the Rector, an honourable professor. WCE was merged with the former Khomasdal College for coloureds one month after independence and received 17 new educators. The college remained at its impressive and luxurious campus until the end of 1994, when the University of Namibia (UNAM) took over the college campus. It was then moved to the less prestigious site of a former technical school at the opposite side of town, close to the traditionally black residential areas. The move was for many teacher educators at WCE a traumatic experience, as the new situation called for the recognition of a different reality. As one teacher educator expressed it:

I never realised how important that building was for the teacher educators at that time. I never realised the psychological effects of working and living in a beautiful surrounding and a wonderful nature. It created an ivory tower problem. We were so physically removed from everything that we did not realise what was happening around us.<sup>3</sup>

Of the three northern colleges *Caprivi College of Education (CCE)* was the most remote from Windhoek, placed in Katima Mulilo at the end of the Caprivi Strip, some 1200 kilometres away from the capital. This remoteness had both its benefits and problems. The distance to the centre of power in Windhoek created room for regional initiatives. There was a regional, but constrained, preference for the English language. Such preferences were before independence associated with the liberation struggle and therefore not fully encouraged by the regime. Nevertheless, the Department of National Education introduced English in 1983 as part of the false de-colonialisation. English was supposed to be the language of

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Swarts P. and Dahlström, L. (2001) *Color Me Black, Color Me White: Teacher Education in the Aftermath of the Apartheid Era – In Search of a Critical Multicultural Perspective among a Complexity of Contradictions*. In Grant, C.A. and Lei J.L. (eds) *Global Constructions of Multicultural Education: Theories and Reality*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers. 291-316. p. 308.

instruction in upper primary. Instructions to teachers followed the style of the following example:

All teaching should be done through the medium of English, irrespective of the pupils' or the teacher's ability to use the language. Translation should be only the very last resort. If mother tongue is used, pupils are led to believe that one need not know any English. It also leads to mental laziness and a 'mixing' of the languages.<sup>4</sup>

The remoteness created the possibility for Caprivians to entertain their historical and cultural contacts, influences, and possibilities through the closeness to Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana. Negatively, the region was neglected also because of remoteness and teacher education operated as an integrated part of a secondary school, thus leaving both student teachers and teacher educators at the mercy of a strict secondary boarding school mentality. This had the effect that student teachers had to comply with rules for secondary school students and teacher educators were employed on the same conditions as secondary school teachers.<sup>5</sup> During the first visit by TERP staff to the college in October 1991 meetings were held with staff members and first year students. A strong interest for new ideas was shown. At the same time a narrow and traditional view on teacher education was demonstrated. This view mirrored the perspectives put forward by representatives of the previous dispensation in Windhoek. The main worry amongst teacher educators and students alike was related to the assessment and examination procedures and the students' lack of

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<sup>4</sup> Venter, G.S. (1983) Teaching English. Owambo. Volume 1, No. 1. An inset newsletter. The Inservice Training Centre. Owambo.

<sup>5</sup> It was this situation at Caprivi college and the similar situations at the other northern colleges and the overall secondary school mentality permeating the activities that coined the saying that the northern colleges were nothing but glorified secondary schools. See Angula, N. (1993) Teaching Profession and the Professional Autonomy of the Teaching Profession: The Role of Teacher Training Colleges. National Induction Seminar for Teacher Educators. Seminar Report. Windhoek: MEC. 3 - 7.

subject knowledge. In 1990 the college employed seven teacher educators.<sup>6</sup>

*Rundu College of Education* (RCE), situated in Rundu close to the Angolan border and 700 km away from Windhoek, was at the outset more or less in the same physical situation as its 'twin' college in Katima Mulilo. RCE was the smallest college in the country and situated at a secondary school, but with one big difference from CCE. It was run by a group of white teacher educators. This emphasised even further the patronising situation at the college with student teachers treated as secondary school students. The ethnic conflicts that raged this college long after independence could be traced back to this initial situation. The ethnic conflicts remained until a new leadership was installed at the end of the 1990s. At the outset, the staff members were rather satisfied with the interim programme of the false reform even though the acting rector expressed his concern over the subject Teaching Science (i.e. pedagogy).<sup>7</sup> He even referred to the training of medical doctors, which is 90 % practical, as he said, and that guided practice should be emphasised in teacher education. As in the other colleges, activities stopped at midday, and the college was deserted in the afternoon. The staff at RCE agreed with what teacher educators at CCE mentioned, that a new teacher education programme must start from a new perspective, even though experiences from the interim programme could, according to them, be adapted and integrated. RCE had six teacher educators on the establishment in 1990.<sup>8</sup>

The third and largest college in the North was situated 700 km Northwest of Windhoek along the main tarred road between the commercial centre Oshakati and the administrative centre Ondangwa in what was previously called Owamboland, or the war zone, with the

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<sup>6</sup> Dahlström (1991) op. cit.

<sup>7</sup> The interim programmes are attended to under the heading 'Timing and internal positions', p. 143 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Dahlström (1991) op. cit.

highest population density in the country. It was called *Ongwediva College of Education* (OCE) and was an institution only for teacher education. Inside the fence there was also a Teacher Resource Centre (TRC), dormitories for student teachers, and staff houses. There was also a primary school at the campus called Control School, whose name symbolised the prevailing pedagogic perspective. OCE looked impressive at a distance, with the large hall decorated with what was supposed to be traditional African patterns. At a closer look, many of the college buildings were dysfunctional. The hall was a large empty room with a terrible acoustics, the sewage system was constantly flooding because of under-dimensioned pipes, and electrical wires ended in the ceiling. The hostel facilities for students were built like military barracks with 16 beds in each room, and lecture halls and classrooms were lacking any supportive technology beyond worn blackboards, tables, and chairs. As with the other colleges in the north, OCE had a library that was totally inadequate for a teacher education institute. With the presence of an acting rector recruited to the college in 1991 there were some positive indications of improvements and proactive ideas for the professionalisation of the college. OCE had 36 teacher educators working at the college in 1990. The self-esteem of these teacher educators was very low, except for the group of Filipinos working at the college, who at an early stage constituted a force of its own in the struggle over influence and power.<sup>9</sup> The black teacher educators had great hopes for the future, even though it would mean that many had to leave their "comfort zones".<sup>10</sup>

The pedagogical perspective that prevailed at all colleges was on a general level influenced by the technocratic, behavioural and rationalist orientations.<sup>11</sup> Collections of study guides were usually the material basis for this orientation. The study guides often consisted of a collection of shorter texts that treated isolated educational phenomena at a very

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<sup>9</sup> Based on field observation by the author in 1990 - 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Swarts (ed) op. cit. p. 33.

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter Six.

artificial level (half a page of this, followed by half a page of that). This content was then learnt by heart by the students and became the basis for tests and examinations that usually asked them to reproduce selected parts of the texts.

The most important institution for the education reforms in Namibia was the *National Institute for Educational Development* (NIED). This institute was purposefully created after independence to lead the reform efforts in the country. The initial conceptions of NIED were based on the notions of professional autonomy from the administrative bureaucracy and to encourage initiative, creativity and innovation through a modus operandi of participatory interaction.<sup>12</sup>

The National Institute for Educational Development (NIED) was planned and established as a nerve center for educational reform, innovation, experimentation, research, and development. Its main functions are

- Curriculum development
- Teacher education development
- Language research and development
- Education media development
- Higher-level human resource development for education.<sup>13</sup>

After its establishment, NIED soon became a controversial institution for the education establishment in Namibia, especially for representatives from the former leadership still serving the system. For them, NIED symbolised the attempts to dismantle not only the previous power system but also the belief system it was built on. NIED became the main co-operative institution for the many foreign projects operating in the education sector. The conservative forces soon turned this co-operation into a criticised alliance between the institute and alien foreign influences. NIED also became a threat to the hegemonic power of UNAM, which

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<sup>12</sup> Government of the Republic of Namibia (1990:b) Report and Motivation for the National Institute for Education Development. Windhoek.

<sup>13</sup> Angula, N. (1999) Education for All: The Namibian Experience. In Zeichner and Dahlström (eds) op. cit. 8 – 28. p. 24.

previously had the sole preferential right of interpretation in the country over teacher education for the black majority. NIED became involved in educational research and human resource development for education e.g. through the joint offering of Master's courses for educational staff. This involvement generated challenges from other parts of the education system that kept the leadership at NIED on the alert.

There were also internal factors that challenged the institute in its expected operations. Some of these factors emanated from the combined effects from the reconciliation policy and the rationalisation of the administration. NIED was from the beginning perceived as a professionally autonomous institution directly responsible to the political level of the ministry.<sup>14</sup> However, until today it has remained a directorate within the ministry. Some of the external consultants involved in the conceptualisation of NIED perceived it as a rather small organisation with a group of highly qualified staff in the field of research and development.<sup>15</sup> The establishment in the rationalisation document confirmed that this innovative conception of the institute had been stifled already at that time through a traditional hierarchical and administrative order.

The scarcity of well-qualified Namibian educators had two main effects on NIED. First, the establishment was at places filled with individuals without the necessary experience and capacity for their expected innovative work, as a result of the rationalisation. This situation moulded the institute's activities further down the familiar bureaucracy lane. Secondly, foreign projects and individual advisers got privileged positions, as there were either no Namibians available or Namibians who became strongly dependent on foreign advice. In certain cases it was even perceived that it was the foreign experts who took the lead in the reform

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<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Education and Culture (1993:b) *Rationalization of the Structure of the Ministry of Education and Culture*. Windhoek: Ministry of Education and Culture. p. 29.

<sup>15</sup> Callewaert, S., Dahlström, L. and Kallós, D. (1990) op. cit.

process, beyond what some external observers of the situation saw as appropriate.<sup>16</sup> Callewaert also noted at a later stage that some of the initiatives had to come from outside.

The fact that expatriates were available was not only the expression of a huge amount of foreign aid invested, but also of the fact that the inspiration had to come from elsewhere than from the bearers of the previously established system, if things were going to change.<sup>17</sup>

This was also the pragmatic view of the Minister. Namibians who participated in the reform process have expressed in retrospect that there was a need for some external forces that could stir the stagnant water.

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.<sup>18</sup>

At the end of the inquiry period the four colleges of education in Namibia were still placed in the towns of Windhoek, Katima-Mulilo, Rundu, and Ongwediva. The college in Windhoek was well established in the premises they moved to in 1994 and had a functioning campus, but still with some needs for improvements. Teacher educators from the pre-independence period were still working at WCE, but under a new leadership. The colleges in Katima-Mulilo and Rundu operated from new premises built with government loans from the African Development Bank and OCE had been upgraded in many ways, but was still operating from its old buildings. The number of teacher educators, especially at the three northern colleges, had increased significantly and was more equally

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<sup>16</sup> Callewaert (1995) op. cit.

<sup>17</sup> Callewaert, S. (1996) *The National Institute for Educational Development Revisited*. Okahandja: TERP Document. p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Interview F1, 2001.

distributed between the colleges after eight years of reform efforts.<sup>19</sup> The redistribution of staff signified also a redistribution of power. Teacher educators from the previously neglected colleges in the north expressed more often a different stand from their previously privileged colleagues in Windhoek. This situation could also be seen as a more balanced power distribution at a discursive level in the light of a war of position over the preferential right of interpretation. Observations at two of the colleges revealed that the physical situation in the classrooms was still very poor in the beginning of 2001. The classroom situation did not in any way reflect a place where creative work and thought took place. Rows of worn out desks and chairs, at times placed in groups and circles without an apparent function, were the only physical prompts besides the blackboard and the personal material that the student carried with them. The classroom processes showed some differences between the Education Theory and Practice (ETP) lessons and the Mathematics lessons. Students were more active during the ETP lessons, while the students during the Mathematics lessons only reacted to specific instructions from the teacher educators.<sup>20</sup>

After the initial years at the ministerial headquarters in Windhoek, NIED moved in 1995 to a new, purpose-built campus in Okahandja, 70 km outside Windhoek. The initial lack of appropriate staff improved and NIED became more able to carry out its many functions. Its operations were still influenced by administrative and bureaucratic organisation, mentality, and function and had a strong bias towards control functions of the education system through its general moderation duties.<sup>21</sup> However, NIED's research capacity developed in the originally intended direction

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<sup>19</sup> See Appendix 5.

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>21</sup> NIED's original function as the provider of procedures of assessment, examination and evaluation never materialised as intended. A separate directorate for examination was established at an early stage. This signified the continued overemphasis on examinations rather than educational aspects in the whole system and contributed also to the war of position in the reform process.

and started to collect empirical classroom data that could be used for the further critical fine-tuning of the reform conceptualisations, even though under constrained conditions due to the lack of staff engaged in such work. As one informant put it in 2001:

Even institutions like NIED which was supposed to be the brain of promoting educational effectiveness has somehow become just a bureaucracy.<sup>22</sup>

In 1998 NIED had a total of 33 Namibian educational staff and 17 foreign advisors operating from the site in Okahandja.<sup>23</sup> It is notable that one third of the staff at NIED were advisers. The advisers were mainly male and were also over-represented in the division for professional development, i.e. where the teacher education reform was conceptualised.

### **Timing and internal positions**

There was a general feeling amongst the people involved with the teacher education reform, Namibian educators as well as foreign advisers, that the time frame for the preparations was far too short. In actual fact, only eight months were available to prepare for the new programme, as the guidelines for the production of steering documents were distributed in April 1992 and the new programme was to start in January 1993. A rational response to this situation was that many of the people involved, especially at ministerial level, including the Minister himself, saw the situation as a *national piloting* of the programme that would call for continuous modification and fine-tuning. The short time frame for the preparation put extra strain on the expected participatory approach.

A second issue was that the introduction of the BETD programme took place two years after the introduction of the interim courses the *National Education Certificate* (NEC) and the *National Higher Education*

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<sup>22</sup> Interview M0.

<sup>23</sup> Based on the NIED Contact List dated 8 January 1998. See Appendix 5.

*Certificate* (NHEC). Both courses were based on a rationale developed by the Academy before independence.<sup>24</sup> The NEC was a three year course for students with a Standard 8 (Grade 10) academic background and the NHEC was a two year programme for Standard 10 (Grade 12) graduates. The last intake of students for the pre-independence two-year Education Certificate Primary (ECP) course designed for black students at the northern colleges took place at the beginning of 1990. This had the consequence that teacher educators at the northern colleges who had students in ECP up until the end of 1992, started with the interim courses in 1991 and 1992 and were running the NEC and NHEC courses up until the end of 1994 and 1993 respectively. While the ECP, NEC and NHEC programmes followed a similar rationale, the introduction of the BETD in the beginning of 1993 called for a different organisation of activities that further complicated the operations at college level through the parallel running of programmes based on contradictory philosophies of education.

It was only from the beginning of 1995 that all previous programmes were phased out and that activities at the colleges could be fully adapted to the new philosophy of learner-centred education. An outsider could claim that teacher educators could under this transition period rationalise their behaviour in such a way that they would adapt their teaching style to the new approaches, with the consequence that also the old programmes would benefit from learner-centred education. However, the interim programmes were still run under the control of the Academy and therefore indirectly affected by the institutional and scholastic war of position between the Academy/UNAM and the new ministry. Mayumbelo and Nyambe noted the differences between the NEC and NHEC programmes as compared with the BETD, when they stated that the former were deficient in many ways and were coached

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<sup>24</sup> The Academy was the forerunner of the University of Namibia (UNAM) that was established after independence.

within a traditional positivist approach.<sup>25</sup> The consequence was that teacher educators tried to follow two different philosophies in parallel. This had constraining effects on the newly introduced philosophy of learner-centred education. Adaptations of learner-centred education to the prevailing practices took place rather than the opposite.

The timing for implementation of the newly adopted programme was somehow questionable. Information was shared within a short time and there was hardly enough time to digest it, i.e. to find what it all meant. The programme required a lot of material resources like reference books, equipment and other support materials for student exploration and support. Class space in some colleges was non-existent and some of the teacher educators found it difficult to catch up.<sup>26</sup>

A third issue was related to the physical conditions, ethnical division and professional status at the colleges of education inherited from the previous dispensation and their combined effects on power relations. Many black teacher educators at the northern colleges had a positive relationship to the post-colonial reform efforts as a matter of professional, social and political liberation from the white minority rule. However, the physical conditions at these colleges expressed a different discourse with discouraging effects. A related issue was the underestimation of their own capacity that many black teacher educators showed, while a corresponding overestimation was recognised amongst many of the whites. There was also an open hostility against the BETD programme, especially but not exclusively from white teacher educators at WCE. The first report from the national evaluation of the BETD based on data collected in 1994 reported that BETD students claimed that almost half of the teacher educators at WCE "talk bad about the BETD".<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Mayumbelo, C. and Nyambe, J. (1999) *Critical Inquiry into Preservice Teacher Education*. In Zeichner and Dahlström (eds) op. cit. 64 - 81.

<sup>26</sup> Swarts (ed) op. cit. pp. 37 - 38.

<sup>27</sup> Frykholm (1997) op. cit., p. 110.

The social and attitudinal dispositions created by the previous apartheid legacy did also affect the way teacher educators related to each other when they were supposed to work together. At occasions this led to both patronising and submissive behaviour at the beginning of the reform process. Last but not least, NIED was often perceived with scepticism as an unfamiliar newcomer on the reform arena, not only from the former rulers and their allies. Teacher educators, who were sympathetic to the reform were caught between the dilemma of an inevitably nationally directed reform and a desirable democratic decentralisation. In institutions under development and with everything else in flux, teacher educators often expressed negative attitudes towards NIED not least because of its close relation to international advisers.

### **External support and intervention**

Namibia became a new market for international financial and technical assistance agencies in 1990. The many international and national organisations that had supported the liberation movements through the years since the 1960s continued to assist in building a new Namibian society. In addition, there were new players like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The education sector was overwhelmed with support projects and foreign staff who were seen as and acted as experts, no matter their official titles as advisers or volunteers. The number of support projects operating in the area of pre-service teacher education alone during the inquiry period was most of the time around seven.

The *Teacher Education Reform Project* (TERP) from Umeå University was the main foreign actor in the area of pre-service teacher education. TERP placed between 2-5 Reform Facilitators at colleges and two Advisers and a Project Co-ordinator at NIED. The recruitment of staff for the posts was done internationally based on the idea that it was more important to recruit individuals with relevant experiences and

conceptions about teacher education than finding educators from Sweden for the posts. A related reason was to avoid a too strong Swedish educational bias.<sup>28</sup>

The *Reform Facilitators* had responsibility for the support to the development of the BETD programme at the college where they were stationed. They also had an overall responsibility for areas of their own speciality at all colleges and in staff development courses. The *Advisers* at NIED were responsible for supporting the national reform of teacher education, meaning that they assisted NIED in the development of steering documents and national and inter-college seminars. The *Project Co-ordinator* had overall responsibility for the project and its activities. The project also supported the overall co-ordination of educational activities through representation on different committees including the CCG.<sup>29</sup> The Plans of Operation for TERP during the period 1993 - 1998 had three main areas. These were curriculum and programme support, staff development, and infrastructure support.<sup>30</sup>

The report from the critical self-evaluation of teacher education development and support in Namibia carried out during 1999 and parts of 2000 looked specifically at the support from TERP.<sup>31</sup> In a way, it was

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<sup>28</sup> See Appendix 6.

<sup>29</sup> In addition to the CCG, TERP was represented on the steering committees of the Namibian Languages Competency Project (NLCP) at UNAM, the Village School Project (VSP) organised by the Nyae-Nyae Community, and the Enviroteach Project at the Desert Research Foundation (DRF). These projects were financially supported by Sida with funds for the NLCP and VSP Projects channelled through TERP during initial periods. Other committees with TERP representation was the Task Force for Teacher Education, The Project Implementation Unit (PIU), and the Task Force on 10 Year In-service Teacher Training, 1996 - 1998.

<sup>30</sup> See Appendix 7.

<sup>31</sup> Swarts (ed) op. cit. A previous evaluation of TERP was reported by Marope, M. and Noonan, R. (1995) Evaluation of Teacher Education Reform Project (TERP) in Namibia. Stockholm: InterScience Research Corporation. The Critical Self-evaluation report also referred to the Marope and Noonan evaluation. The Marope and Noonan report sparked off concern amongst people involved in teacher education in Namibia which meant that the second and final evaluation of TERP was carried out as a critical

inevitable that the support generated disappointments, short comings, and frustrations. It took place during a relatively extended period of six years in a state of contextual flux and with activities that included a total of 40 individuals employed in the project with 22 as long-term educational advisers/facilitators, 15 as short-term educational advisers, and 3 as administrative staff.<sup>32</sup> The short-comings expressed in the critical self-evaluation report were related to professional tasks that were not accomplished according to plans, and internal and external conflict.<sup>33</sup> However, the critical self-evaluation report concluded that the achievements and challenges related to TERP had to be looked at in context.

The achievements and challenges experienced by the TERP project from 1992 - 1998 cannot be viewed in isolation from the contextual factors impacting on the educational system. Similarly, they cannot be evaluated in isolation from NIED and the Colleges, since the activities were integrated and interwoven into those of NIED and the colleges. They should rather be viewed as part of the on-going process of educational reform and renewal and therefore the TERP successes and/or failures are to an extent the successes/failures of the educational system. This, above all, is the greatest achievement of the project: that because its activities were so integrated into those of its host institutions, they contributed effectively to institutional and professional capacity building as well as ensuring sustainability. The broader goals of the support, which are the broad goals of the reform, have been achieved, i.e. increased access, more equity, democratic participation, empowerment and capacity building.<sup>34</sup>

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self-evaluation. For further readings on the comments to the Marope and Noonan report see Teacher Education Reform Project (1995) To Readers of Evaluation of Teacher Education Reform Project (TERP) in Namibia: Final Report. Okahandja: TERP Project Document. See also pp. 229 – 230 in this thesis.

<sup>32</sup> Calculated from project staff records.

<sup>33</sup> See Swarts (ed) op. cit. pp. 59 - 76. See also pp. 232 – 233 in this thesis.

<sup>34</sup> Swarts (ed) op. cit. p. 76.

As mentioned previously, a number of other donor projects were involved in teacher education. The most important was the Education Reform Adviser (ERA) Project. It placed a single *Reform Adviser* at NIED and was funded by Norway through the Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS). This adviser entered the Namibian scene with experiences from curriculum development for a junior secondary education school established by SWAPO in exile and started his work within Namibia with the same mandate, i.e. curriculum development at junior secondary level. However, the adviser soon became involved in teacher education, first as the deputy chair of the Task Force for Teacher Education, and soon after that as the chairperson of the CCG. As the chairperson of the CCG he got a central position in the teacher education reform, and was deeply involved with the reform until the end of his contract in mid 1997. At times this Adviser also saw it as his duties to allocate work to individual staff members of TERP, with the expected complication, frustration, and conflict such behaviour from an external adviser generated. The work of this adviser was externally evaluated at the end of his contract period. The evaluation report painted a malicious picture of the adviser as a person, rather than a balanced assessment of his professional contributions. A staff member of the Faculty of Education at UNAM headed the evaluation team. Therefore, instead of being an evaluation, this report became a party petition in the power conflicts between, in this case, a single foreign adviser to NIED and an equally foreign, but African, scholar at UNAM. This report symbolically represented the more general war of position over the preferential right of interpretation in the Namibian teacher education reform.<sup>35</sup>

Another important foreign project was the *English Language Teacher Development Project* (ELTDP) funded by the British Overseas Development Authority (ODA) and, later on, the Department for

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<sup>35</sup> Njabili, A., Ulrich, L., Nangolo, J., Neels, B. (1997) The Evaluation of the Education Reform Advisor (ERA) Project. Draft Report.

International Development (DfID). ELTDP placed English facilitators at the colleges and played more or less the same role as TERP, but with a focus on English language teaching. This was at times expanded to other areas as well with occasional overlapping activity areas between ELTDP and TERP with attached co-operations as well as conflicts. In addition to TERP and ELTDP, which offered continuous support to the colleges through their respective facilitators, there were other projects that specialised in certain subject areas and worked with the colleges on a different basis. The *Enviroteach*, a Sida funded project, produced educational materials in the area of environmental education. This material was introduced to the colleges through workshops. The *Life Science* project was funded by Denmark through Ibis, a Danish NGO, and supported the promotion of Life Science, Agriculture, and Biology. They organised workshops for teacher educators and donated material to the colleges. During a period of time this project also had an adviser working from NIED, who was involved in the overall development of teacher education as a member of the CCG. The *In-service Training and Assistance for Namibian Teachers* (INSTANT), financed by the European Community, operated in the area of Physical Science and directed most of its work towards teachers in schools, but donated material to the colleges. *Florida State University* (FSU), financed by the USA, employed an adviser attached to NIED during the initial years of the reform process. This adviser was also a member of the CCG. Many individual project members beyond TERP and ELTDP were also involved at different times in the development of the BETD Broad Curriculum and Subject Syllabi. Additionally, there were volunteers from different organisations working as teacher educators, especially at the three northern colleges, who became involved in different ways in the reform conceptualisations.

In summary, a number of foreign actors operated directly with the teacher education reform in Namibia. There was an attempt to co-ordinate all these actors by NIED through the CCG or other means, like project steering committees. There were many reasons for a limited success in

these efforts. Bureaucratic rulings related to steering committees is something different from human agency and a practical logic of operations. Many projects preferred to operate physically from headquarters outside NIED based on the reason that they considered themselves as independent entities. There was a common feeling not only amongst foreign projects but also amongst different parts of the ministerial headquarters that NIED attempted to extend its power and influence beyond what others thought was within its jurisdiction. At instances this meant that ad hoc alliances were created between foreign donor projects that were in Namibia to assist in the reform and parts of the administration outside NIED. NIED was a new Namibian player on this arena and represented the new visions that projects were supposed to support. NIED's legitimate role expanded the war of position as it created a threat to both the perceived independence of foreign projects and to the status quo. Many projects were also hesitant in working closer together with NIED due to the broad influence of the Reform Adviser on NIED's operations and policies.<sup>36</sup> It is however notable that TERP operated from the NIED premises from an early stage and by that faced both the benefits and problems connected to this position.

Co-ordination of what their staff considered as independent projects was also something that did not allow itself to happen, simply because of the common differences in the operational logic of donor-driven activities and national reforms. Donor projects are normally short-lived, product-oriented, and limited in scope. National reforms are long-lived, process-oriented, and broad in scope. This contradiction is part of the complexity of reform and development co-operation that will not disappear even with the newly refurbished sector support approach.

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<sup>36</sup> This influence went beyond teacher education reform. For example, the Reform Adviser was an adviser to the Director at NIED, he was also a member of the NIED management team and instrumental in the development of the Broad Curriculum for Basic Education.

Reforms are often thought of as input-output processes very much in line with traditional views on development co-operation activities. However, change processes cannot be looked at from an input-output perspective, but as a process that goes through different layers of interpretations before it hits the classroom. As Callewaert has expressed it:

At every "passage" there is a gap allowing for distortion. In other words, history is not a project but a relatively unpredictable evolution, where things do not happen at will.<sup>37</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the teacher education reform could be characterised as a national and full-scale piloting. The reform process was affected by this piloting. There was a constant need to readdress issues within a cyclic process that included conceptualisations, practice, re-conceptualisations, and changed practice. Namibian teacher educators as well as foreign advisers who represented the institutional memory of the reform process through their long-term involvement were aware of the need for such a process and tried to avoid disruptions. When new players appeared on the arena in the shape of new project staff or newly recruited teacher educators without the needed understanding of the cyclic process a destabilisation was often the result through *passages of distortion*. It was often the Curriculum Development Group (CCG) that had the duty to put the cyclic process back on track when it was derailed. However, there were no other corrective measures available when passages of distortion emanated from the CCG itself.

### **The Curriculum Co-ordinating Group**

The *Curriculum Co-ordinating Group* (CCG) played an important role in the teacher education reform process. The CCG was originally established as the working committee of the Task Force for Pre-service Teacher Education. The terms of reference for the Task Force included:

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<sup>37</sup> Callewaert (1999) op. cit. p. 238.

- to constitute a Curriculum Co-ordinating Group to work out a broad curriculum, defining objectives, scope, content, methodology, time-frame and required resources to implement the new pre-service teacher training programme for Basic Education (Grades 1-10).
- to oversee the work of the Curriculum Co-ordinating Group.
- to approve the new teacher training programme for Basic Education, including entry requirements, curriculum, syllabi, assessment, evaluation, organisation, facilities, feasibilities etc.<sup>38</sup>

The Task Force was formally chaired by the Minister and had the authority to decide on policy issues in the field of teacher education. The Task Force met once or twice a year and had a broad Namibian representation and co-opted members from different donor projects.<sup>39</sup>

As time went on NIED, where the CCG was housed, became more and more established as the driving force of the reform. The Task Force ceased to exist as a place for policy decisions, while its working committee continued to function.<sup>40</sup> As a consequence the CCG became the only remaining professional body on national level dealing with issues related to the development of teacher education and the sole official body for policy interpretations of teacher education. In reality, the CCG became the place where all important decisions concerning teacher education reform were identified and, later, approved by the Minister. The reverse also happened. The chairperson of the CCG prepared internal

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<sup>38</sup> Terms of Reference for the Task Force for Pre-service Teacher Education Reform, undated Internal Memo/Submission on a letterhead from the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC).

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix 8.

<sup>40</sup> The Task Force was never officially dismantled in the sense that it was made public knowledge that its functions had ceased to exist and that the CCG by that became a working group operating without a structural reporting line. In 1997 there was a suggestion put forward by NIED to create a system with a Standing Advisory Professional Committee on Teacher Education as a body that the CCG should be answerable to. This suggestion was not supported by UNAM and was never materialised during the period of this inquiry.

memos that were approved by the Minister before discussions and decisions were taken in the CCG. In this way, the official final approval rested with the Minister, while preparations of all major decisions and operative guidelines concerning teacher education was carried out by the CCG.

Terms of reference were outlined in connection with the restructuring of the CCG in mid 1997. These were based on what the co-ordinating group in actual fact had done previously. According to the final draft terms of reference the new CCG was to co-ordinate curriculum development, professional development, implementation, and quality assurance for all programmes for teachers and other professional staff. The CCG should also identify needs for research, materials and professional development for these groups, and to develop policy frameworks and broad curricula for teacher education.<sup>41</sup>

The comprehensive duties of the CCG would not have called for any larger concerns if not for the fact that it had from the beginning been strongly influenced by foreign advisers, including staff from TERP. From the very start the CCG was chaired by the foreign Reform Adviser. It was only in 1997 that the CCG got a Namibian chairperson. There is a need for a broader recapitulation to understand the reasoning as well as the factual conditions that created such a situation that has also been indicated previously in the text.

There were comparably few positions available for new recruitment beyond the highest political level when the previous parallel administrations were amalgamated into a new national and overstaffed administrative system after independence. A consequence of the reconciliation policy was that all civil servants had the right to remain on duty. The rationalisation of the government structures that took place in parallel to the build up of NIED did on the whole create a reallocation of civil servants within the system instead of creating new space for

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<sup>41</sup> NIED (1997) Draft document on structures for teacher education.

recruitment.<sup>42</sup> There was reason to believe that many of the civil servants, who had been in the system for quite some time, were unfit to act as the organic intellectuals for the new ideas. Previous ideological engravings, even in cases where there might have been an expressed and sometimes opportunistic will to participate, had a strong hold on the common sense about teacher education. This was not a simple black and white issue. It was obvious that the engineers and bearers of the previous system, i.e. whites from that system, were not able or even expected to do as Münchhausen and lift themselves by their hair to reach the other side and become organic parts of the policy formulations. At the best they could become functioning technocrats to start with. It was less obvious that blacks in managerial positions from the same system also suffered from ideological engravings affecting their professional common sense. These engravings were often described as being parts of the colonial hangover in the colloquial discourse.

When NIED was created as the professional wing of the ministry, with the expectation that it would lead the national reform efforts, there were very few Namibian educators who had both the necessary professional and political capital to lead and direct the national reform at this level. The few possible candidates, especially those coming back from exile, had already been recruited for other posts in the system. When rationalisation started NIED became a place for redundant surplus labour within the re-organised administration. Very few if any of the professional staff that ended up at NIED, especially in the division responsible for teacher education, had the experiences or mindset needed to be instrumental in an innovative national reform. This was confirmed by the fact that none of the educators who were placed in this division as an effect of the rationalisation remained for long. In most cases they accepted a golden handshake or a transfer back to the central administration.

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<sup>42</sup> Ministry of Education and Culture (1993:b) op. cit.

These were some of the important conditions within which foreign projects and their advisers operated during the first years of the reform process. For example, it took until 1995 before a Namibian education officer for pre-service teacher education took office at NIED. If anything was going to happen along innovative lines it had to be initiated from outside. However, the prominent positioning of foreign advisers did also create problems as these advisers often became the target for anti-reform campaigns and their work fed the debate about alien influence through development co-operation.

The CCG became the most important reform body in the absence of a functional committee on the political level. During 1993 - 1996 two Namibian officials and seven external advisers sat on the CCG.<sup>43</sup> The two Namibian officials were the only Namibians involved with teacher education reform at NIED and the ministry at this time. One of them became later the Director of NIED and the other became responsible for the BETD in-service programme. The seven advisers represented five different support projects financed by NORAD, DANIDA, USAID, UNDP, and Sida.<sup>44</sup> Most of the time TERP was represented by its two advisers at NIED and the project co-ordinator. An official change took place in 1997 that confirmed what had happened earlier on a continuous basis, namely, that the CCG successively became a committee with mainly Namibian representation and with the NIED Chief Education Officer for Professional and Resources Development as its chairperson.<sup>45</sup> This move also coincided with the departure from Namibia of the Reform Adviser and de facto chair of the CCG.

The most significant representation on the new CCG was the one from the colleges of education as each college retained one seat. Another

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<sup>43</sup> See Table 11, Appendix 8.

<sup>44</sup> NORAD = Norwegian Assistance and Development ; DANIDA = Danish International Development Assistance; USAID = United States Agency for International Development; UNDP = United Nations Development Programme.

<sup>45</sup> See Table 12, Appendix 8.

important marker was the seat for the Faculty of Education that, however, was very seldom utilised beyond the first couple of meetings. Individual foreign advisers were after September 1997 co-opted as members with observer status, while some still influenced the CCG indirectly through their mandate to assist in other ways.<sup>46</sup>

The CCG became continuously more and more established and recognised as an important factor in the reform process. However, it was still a committee that provoked concerns at the beginning of 2001, during interviews. Some concerns were about the role of the CCG at the beginning of the reform.

The first documents were developed largely by the CCG although others were consulted. If one is really very honest it was more like consultation after the fact. Certain decisions were taken. We went out to find out - can you subscribe - and we did get a mandate to go ahead.<sup>47</sup>

Other concerns dealt with the image of the CCG by other institutions and external members of the education community in Namibia.

They [the CCG members] are not even as a group respected by the university. The university sometimes never turns up. A lot of time the representation from Higher Education is not there.... Nobody thinks that the CCG is that important that if they ask you something you better jump and see to it that things get done.<sup>48</sup>

A serious matter was the feeling of a lack of direction and philosophical guidance that developed after the reconstruction of the CCG in 1997.

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<sup>46</sup> The report from the Critical Self-Evaluation (CSE) of Teacher Education and Support [Swarts (ed) op. cit.] indicates how conflict entered the reform arena also through competitive situations created by the operation of different projects. It is worth noting in this respect that the CSE report totally avoided the most significant conflict created by the power position of the Reform Adviser, the chairperson of the CCG until 1997.

<sup>47</sup> Interview F1, 2001.

<sup>48</sup> Interview F2, 2001

What I see with the CCG is that it has lost its philosophical basis. People have been left unguided.<sup>49</sup>

The changed representation in the CCG also had positive effects on the situation.

From the beginning I didn't understand the role of the CCG. Things are brought down to the people now and this means that we can see the role of the CCG.<sup>50</sup>

A conclusion concerning the CCG is that it took five years of transition from a situation heavily dependent on external advisers to reach a situation where there were proper Namibian representations from all major stakeholders in teacher education. A question still to be addressed is whether the length of this transition period could have been shortened? Was the way the CCG operated and the lack of respect that others showed it, an expression of the exercising of power and a consequence of the war of position? Another concern relates to the terms of reference of the CCG as they were outlined in the draft document in 1997. It was understandable that the CCG would have a prominent role in policy development, curriculum development, implementation, and control, at the beginning of the reform process. It was the only body capable of taking a lead in this process. However, it could be questioned whether the CCG should have remained in this prominent role even after five years of reform? This questioning is based on the fact that a college network for curriculum work was developed under the CCG to cater for a more decentralised development process. Nevertheless, the question remains whether the college network corresponded to the ambitions of the colleges to become more independent professional bodies or was it a symbolic restructuring of the teacher education sector related to the power over the BETD programme?

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<sup>49</sup> Interview M2, 2001.

<sup>50</sup> Interview F3, 2001.

The question of *real* and *symbolic power* is crucial in a situation where a war of position is waged. A tentative conclusion is that the CCG lost its philosophical basis along the road and as a consequence also its real power. This was replaced with a symbolic power as a committee with an important administrative position but philosophically a toothless tiger.<sup>51</sup>

It should be mentioned here that the Presidential Commission on Education, Culture and Training recommended in 1999 that a Council of Higher Education be established with a sub-committee responsible for the co-ordination of teacher education. The CCG will be administratively placed under this Council of Higher Education, if the suggestion is approved.<sup>52</sup>

### **The Basic Education Teacher Diploma - an overview**

This overview is a description of the main organisational structures of the programme within which alterations and changes took place since the first drafts in 1992-93. The *Basic Education Teacher Diploma* (BETD) is the national programme for preparation of teachers for Grades 1 - 10. The pre-service programme is offered at the four colleges of education in Namibia.<sup>53</sup> These colleges are responsible to the *Ministry of Higher Education, Vocational Training, Science and Technology* (MHEVTST). The MHEVTST was created in 1995 when the *Ministry of Education and*

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<sup>51</sup> The toothless tiger refers to a response from TERP staff when discussions were fierce in 1993 about the site for the new innovative institution, NIED. It was argued at that time *that NIED could become a toothless tiger forever locked up in Okahandja Zoo*, provided it was placed outside the spheres of power in Windhoek. The place allocated to the NIED campus was close to a previous zoo park.

<sup>52</sup> Government of the Republic of Namibia (1999) op. cit.

<sup>53</sup> There is also an in-service version of the BETD, organised from NIED in co-operation with colleges and Teacher Resource Centres in the country. This study is limited to the pre-service programme at the colleges and will only attend to the in-service version when appropriate. TERP was involved in the development of the in-service programme foremost through the financing of the material that was produced along a practice-based inquiry approach.

*Culture* (MEC) was divided into two ministries, MHEVTST and the *Ministry of Basic Education and Culture* (MBEC). NIED remained a division of the MBEC, even after 1995. National responsibility for the development of teacher education programmes for basic education also remained with NIED after 1995 in spite of the creation of the two educational ministries.

The BETD is a three-year programme. The academic entrance requirement is grade 12 education with 5 good International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) passes including English and the subject/s students select for their specialisation, or the equivalent. The equivalent is usually a lower academic background (grade 10 or 11 passes) combined with teaching experience. Since the number of applicants for the programme has increased annually beyond the places available, the colleges prefer to select applicants with the best academic qualifications. This has created a situation where all student teachers at the colleges, except for a few, have grade 12 passes. The BETD is one of the few possibilities for Grade 12 leavers in the northern parts of the country to become diploma graduates and to obtain employment without being forced to leave their region.

The number of student teachers entering the pre-service programme on the equivalent clause, 10 % in 1994, decreased each year in parallel to the increasing number of applicants.<sup>54</sup> Already in 1995 there was a total of 7552 applicants for the 542 places available and this number increased in 1996 to more than 8000 for 630 places.<sup>55</sup> An analysis of the situation in 1998 shows that there were more than 10.000 applicants to the 709 places available.<sup>56</sup> At that time there were more than 15 applicants for each place or, expressed differently, fewer than 7 % of all applicants became BETD students.

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<sup>54</sup> Frykholm (1997) op. cit.

<sup>55</sup> Dahlström, L. (1996) *Teacher Education for a Non-Racist Society*. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, New York.

<sup>56</sup> See Table 14, Appendix 9.

Admitted students received a scholarship covering the three years of study. One effect of the scholarship was that students were bonded for three years after graduation to work for the government within the educational system. However, the scholarship system was recently changed to a loan system. The future will tell us whether this will change the behaviour of BETD graduates. Some questions for the future are as follows: Will BETD graduates start their teaching career in rural schools after graduation? Will BETD graduates opt for further studies and verify some of the tentative worries that many BETD students look at their studies as a first step in a different career that will bring them closer to the air-conditioned offices in the modernised sectors of society?

As mentioned above, a small number of the admitted students come to the colleges with previous teaching experiences. The majority come directly from secondary school with a view on the teacher profession based on an apprenticeship of observation from secondary school. The structure of the BETD was designed to respond to this situation. The purpose was to introduce students to a broader perspective on their future occupation through the *foundation studies*.<sup>57</sup>

Therefore, there has always been a period of foundation studies for all students and another period of *specialisation studies* related to subjects and phase levels. Education Theory and Practice (ETP) and other *core subjects*, like English Communication Skills (ECS), has been taught to all students throughout the three years of study.<sup>58</sup> School-based Studies (SBS) have since the start been carried out during three weeks in the first

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<sup>57</sup> Foundation studies should not be confused with Fundamental Pedagogics in the previous policies that has also been called the South African model of behaviourism. See van Harmelen, U. (1997) Education Theory 2. Part One: Where have we come from? Unpublished study material. Grahamstown: Department of Education, Rhodes University.

<sup>58</sup> ECS has at times not been taught as a separate subject to students specialising in languages.

year, six weeks in the second year and a full term in the third year.<sup>59</sup> This adds up to around 20 % of the total study time in the programme. Much time before and after the SBS periods are allocated to matters like data collections, lesson preparations, following up of collected data, report writing and portfolio issues. These activities expand the time used for SBS considerably.

One of the aims with the BETD programme is to create a broad qualification for teachers in Namibia. Each graduate receives the same type of diploma that makes the holder officially qualified to teach at two phases in basic education (lower primary and upper primary *or* upper primary and junior secondary) and with a specialisation in one of these three phases. All BETD graduates receive the same salary, which is a major break with the prevailing common sense that the higher up in the system you teach the higher is your salary.<sup>60</sup>

The official and national documents that describe and direct the BETD programme are the Broad Curriculum and the Subject Syllabi. The Broad Curriculum gives a general overview of the BETD.<sup>61</sup> Its main headings address a rationale, admission requirements, aims, professional competencies, the structure of the programme, school-based studies, approaches and methods in teacher education, assessment, and evaluation.

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<sup>59</sup> The studies at the colleges follow a three terms system, similar to basic education with 12 - 13 weeks in each term with the following approximate division on the annual calendar. Term 1: End of January to end of April; Term 2: Mid May to late August; Term 3: Mid September to early December.

<sup>60</sup> Once you have been employed as a teacher the most significant way to increase your salary is to go for further studies. For example, a Bachelor of Education or a Master's degree will increase the salary of a BETD graduate working in lower primary as well as junior secondary. The problem with this policy is that it will accelerate the drive for formal qualifications and increase the already constrained salary bill for the government. One respondent raised the following question in 2001: "If many teachers over time decide to become [degree] graduates, can the system afford to pay them as primary school teachers?" (M0).

<sup>61</sup> MHEVTST and MBEC op.cit. The officially approved version was signed by the two Ministers of Education in March 1998. All previous versions since 1992 were draft versions that were used as guiding document for the colleges.

There are a total of 21 Subject Syllabi in the BETD organised according to the general structure of the programme as core subjects, foundation subjects, and specialisation subjects.<sup>62</sup>

**Annotation: situational conditions for a counter-hegemonic reform**

The situational conditions for a war of position over teacher education were at the outset characterised by contradictions. The four colleges of education were originally to be found in different ideological milieus. One came from the ivory tower clime where a specific form of hegemonic excellence had been developed. The others came from the ‘coulisse world’ where education and schooling, at the best, was a matter of learning texts by heart.

NIED was created as a centre of innovative thinking symbolically placed in Okahandja between the majority of the people in the north and central administration in Windhoek. However, NIED operated often as a contested extension of the administration with an innovative mandate that was not fully utilised.

The political pressure on the new government called for an early action after independence. Interim programmes became the answer to this pressure that created a temporal false reform while preparing for the envisaged reform. The interim programmes added to the contradiction as they counteracted the enthusiasm for change. They also became an excuse for later disengagement in the reform process. Some of the enthusiasm for reform and change had already disappeared when the BETD programme was introduced as a national piloting in 1993. Others had used the situation to collect arguments for an opposition both to the way the BETD was introduced and to the programme itself.

Independence also meant that a new group of players appeared on the Namibian arena. Before independence Namibia had been an isolated

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<sup>62</sup> Subject syllabi are listed in Table 14, Appendix 9.

spot on the educational map that in principle only related to its masters in South Africa. After independence Namibia entered an era when the international community of financial and technical assistance agencies flooded the country. Projects financed by Denmark, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States, as well as European Community and UNDP/Unesco started to operate in the area of teacher education.

The entrance of the international donor community created a new situation for many Namibians. The broad policy framework created by documents like *Toward Education for All* allowed for the utilisation of the degrees of freedom by donor projects to forward their preferential right of interpretation on the reform arena. The multiple interpretations that appeared through donor projects broke with the previous situation. The dogmatic influences during the colonial period that stalled any attempt to break the patterns of the ritualised coulisse-school were replaced by multiplicity within a broad policy framework and the flux that the national piloting of the reform created.

This was the situation at the beginning of the reform process. From here on a war of position over the preferential right of interpretation was staged on the main levels of the reform process. These levels included the formulation of steering documents, the development of practical characteristics, and the creation of local agency for reform and change. The third part of this thesis attends to the struggle at these levels of the reform process.