

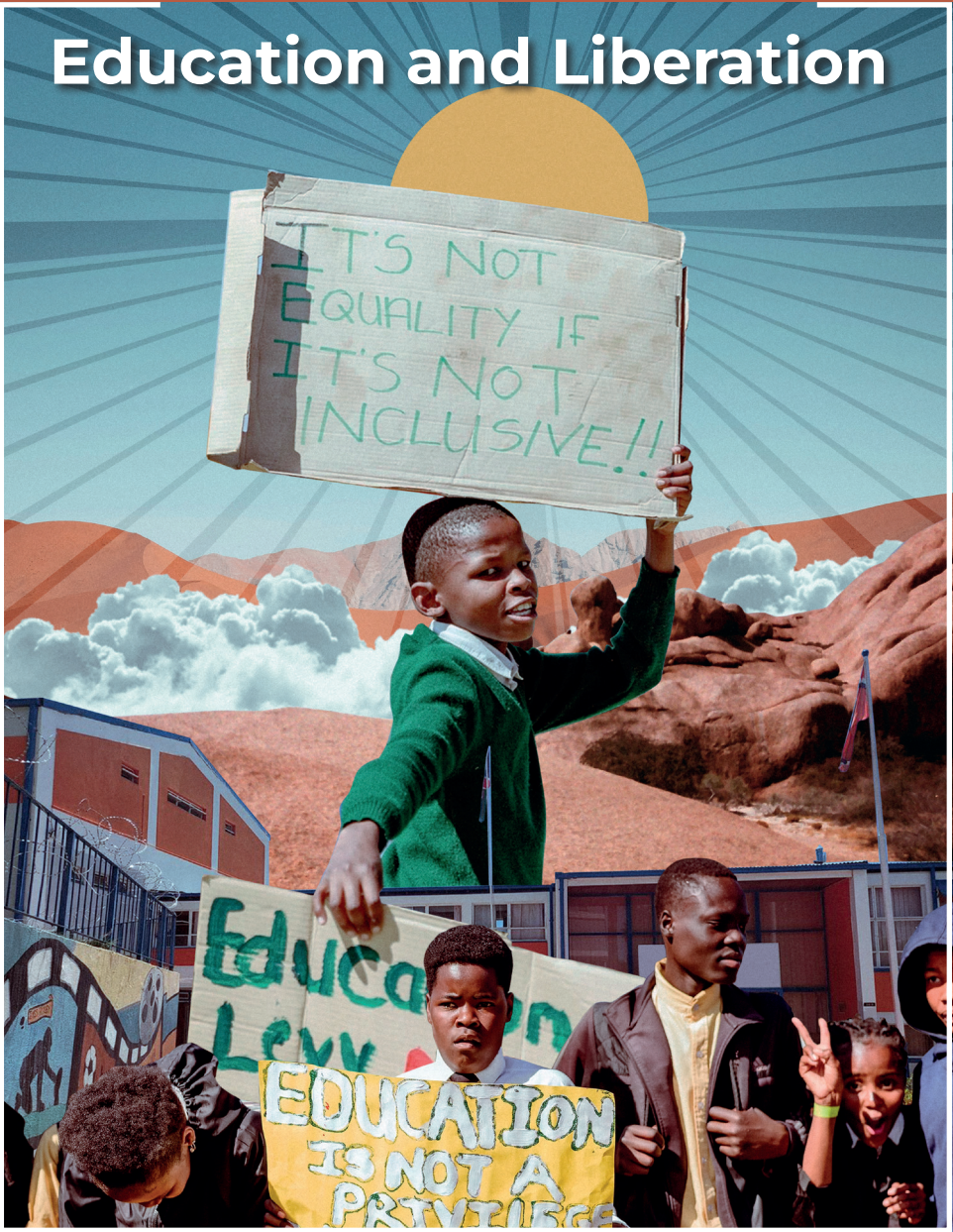
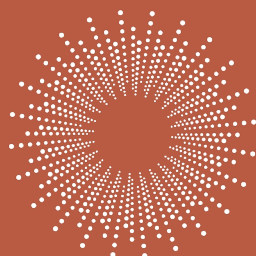


Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	4
Acronyms and Initialisms	5
Editorial: Education and Liberation	7
The Quest for Education for Liberation: The Case of the Namibia National Students Organisation	20
<i>Ndumba J. Kamwanyah</i>	
A Case Study of Radical Pedagogy in Practice: The South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED) and Regional Liberation Networks (1959–1994)	26
<i>Tammy-Lee Lakay</i>	
Challenges that Outsmart the Transformation Agenda: An Analysis of Why Certain Challenges Persist in the Namibian Education System Despite Several Reforms.....	43
<i>John Nyambe, Marius Kudumo, & Ellison Tjirera</i>	
Social Justice and Education in Namibia: From Theory to Practice	69
<i>Lucy Edwards-Jauch</i>	
Education for All? Unpacking Social Justice and Grassroots Policy Implementation: A Case Study of the Otjituu Settlement	97
<i>Tjipura Tjipura</i>	
Beyond Colonialities: Leveraging Ubuntu for Transformative Higher Education in Namibia.....	105
<i>Bruno Venditto & Adalbertus Kamanzi</i>	
Epistemic Destruction and Indigenous Knowledge Loss During the OvaHerero/Nama Genocide (1904–1908): A Case study of OvaHerero Epistemicide	137
<i>Kahuhu Alphons Koruhama & Joyce Muzengua</i>	

Epistemological Access at the Institutions of Teacher Education.....	148
<i>Fares Amweenye, Sakaria M. Iipinge & Elizabeth Ngololo</i>	
The Relevance of Theological Education in Contemporary Namibia: A Contextual Analysis of the United Lutheran Theological Seminary–Paulinum..	173
<i>Emma N. Nangolo</i>	
Critical Pedagogies in Anti-Colonial Cultural Work: Oudano as Praxis.....	198
<i>Nashilongweshipwe Mushaandja</i>	
Decolonising Early Childhood Development in Informal Settlements: A Case Study of New Elementary Namibia and the Implementation of the Sixth National Development Plan	218
<i>Kevin Wessels</i>	
A Case Study of Parenting a Neurodivergent Child Juxtaposed against the Provisions of the Sector Policy on Inclusive Education in Namibia.....	229
<i>Immaculate Mogotsi & Christel Menette</i>	
Case Study: Bridging the Gender Gap in Education in Zambezi Region, Namibia.....	256
<i>Phiona Nandu</i>	
Political Worker Education in Namibia: The Case of the Labour Diploma Course.....	262
<i>Herbert Jauch</i>	
Dissecting the Subsidised Funding Model in Namibia 2026: Free Registration and the Question of Sustainable Access to Higher Education	269
<i>Benhard Kavau</i>	
Contributing towards Social Justice in Namibia? The Activist School of the Economic and Social Justice Trust.....	274
<i>Herbert Jauch & Nafimane Hamukoshi</i>	
Review of the Namibia State of Skills Demand and Supply Report.....	281
<i>Christophina Ndahambelela Ainima</i>	

Participants in action during a residential activist school. Source: Herbert Jauch

struggles for political and economic liberation.

After independence, several organisations continued to campaign and sought to influence policies of the democratically elected government. Besides the membership-based organisations mentioned above, several new NGOs emerged and worked broadly on developmental issues, such as service delivery, exclusion, and many other social and environmental matters. Many of these NGOs joined NANGOF (the Namibian NGO Forum), which operated as their umbrella body and gave voice to them on broader national and developmental issues.

However, the wide variety of NGOs and their differing orientations and focus areas, as well as their dependency on external donor funds, often presented formidable challenges in terms of advocating for a coherent socioeconomic and political agenda. This challenge was made worse by a developing general apathy based on the expectation that the government would solve Namibia's developmental challenges, and that there was no longer a need for active participation by citizens. Furthermore, at times the Namibian government responded with hostility when criticised, which undermined efforts to further develop an active citizenry.

This case study presents the experiences of the Economic and

Social Justice Trust (ESJT), which in 2018 established the EJST Activist School, mainly for younger people, to encourage and promote activism related to issues of social and economic justice.

Background

Around 2015, Namibia was officially classified as an upper middle-income country, which led to a host of donor organisations turning their backs on the country. As a result, projects undertaken by a variety of NGOs and even by membership-based organisations like trade unions and churches ran out of funds, and were either severely scaled down or closed altogether. Accompanied by general political apathy, this meant that the critical debates of the early years of independence almost disappeared and were replaced by a widespread sense of helplessness regarding the shaping of a new, socially just society.

The ESJT had been formed in 2012 by a group of activists to support and promote struggles for social and economic justice. It operated then without staff, had hardly any infrastructure or funding, and relied on the time and energy invested by its trustees and volunteers—a state of affairs that persists. The ESJT identified the urgent need to build a new layer of younger activists who can create new forms of organisations or join

existing ones to shape the making of a new society based on the principles of economic and social justice.

In March 2018, during the launch of a book on democratic developmental states in southern Africa, various young people in the audience indicated their interest in such discussions and asked the ESJT trustees to consider an initiative that would provide ongoing engagement. The Trust then decided to set up an activist school, in the main for young people who have a general interest in political, economic and social issues, and who want to become agents of change in the years to come. They were drawn from the ranks of students, trade unions, NGOs and community activists based on their shared interest in making a difference.

The early days of the ESJT Activist School

In 2018–19, the activist school commenced activities, organising monthly events in Windhoek which took place on Saturdays and catered for 25–30 aspiring activists. Guided by a group of resource persons and facilitators, the participants explored a variety of socioeconomic and political issues and debated possible action to effect change. The topics covered included inequality, unemployment and poverty; decent housing as a human right; the struggle for a living

wage; climate justice and the ecological crisis; the political economy; social protection; and gender justice.

The sessions consisted of lectures and discussions, film screenings, engagement with community-based organisations, amongst others. Importantly, the shape and contents of the programme were decided upon to a significant extent by the participants themselves, so that the school became an example of participatory democracy. It explored new forms of teaching and learning and did not rely exclusively on the traditional forms of lectures and reading. The school was a work in progress, and aimed at creating a critical consciousness amongst participants, and a desire to actively pursue the achievement of social and economic justice.

The ESJT merely played a facilitatory role by assisting with logistical arrangements, suggesting possible topics, identifying resource persons, and developing a course reader. The Namibia office of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) provided support for these events, including venue hire, catering and transportation.

The shift towards a residential course

One challenge experienced with the monthly events was that not all

participants attended the sessions regularly. Another was that potential participants from the regions could not attend due to the costs of travelling. In 2023, the ESJT therefore decided to change the format into a five-day residential course. This was successfully piloted in Okahandja and Windhoek, and drew participants from all over Namibia.

During 2023 and 2024, the residential course focused mostly on Namibia's political economy. Its specific objectives were to increase participants' understanding of inequality and poverty, both locally and globally; to understand how Namibia's economy

functions, and why unemployment is so high, especially amongst the youth; to analyse Namibia's system of governance, democratic rights and the economy; and to explore what can be done by activists.

The course covered topics such as the historical background of colonialism, capitalism, socialism and Pan-Africanism, as well as inequality and poverty in Namibia today. It critically explored democratic rights and institutions and examined examples of concrete forms of activism, such as the protests against the proposed construction of new parliament buildings, and the #Shutitalldown



Creative work during an activist school. Source: Herbert Jauch

movement. Creative sessions focussing on teambuilding and employing arts for activism were a central part of the programme, as were evening sessions consisting of film screenings, storytelling around the fire, and “talent shows”.

In 2025, following the launch of the 4th edition of the Namibian Journal of Social Justice, which dealt with extractivism and climate change, the ESJT Activist School was amended to focus on these topics.

Results

The ESJT Activist School has created an important space for critical engagement on Namibia’s socioeconomic and political challenges at a time when public debate has declined. It has brought together young people from different backgrounds and strengthened their understanding of inequality, unemployment, governance, the political economy, and more recently, extractivism and climate justice.

The participatory format has proved to be effective. Participants are not passive recipients of knowledge, but actively participate in shaped discussions, engage in creative sessions, and link theory to lived realities. The shift to a five-day residential format has significantly deepened engagement, improved attendance, and enabled

participation from across the country. It has also strengthened solidarity and networking among the participants.

Sustainability remains a major challenge. The school operates without staff, stable funding, or infrastructure, and relies heavily on voluntary commitment and limited external support. The initial monthly sessions faced irregular attendance, and although the residential format has improved consistency, it requires greater financial and logistical resources. The long-term impact of the ESJT Activist School with respect to increased social justice activism is difficult to measure, or predict.

Several important lessons have emerged from the experience thus far:

- 1. Political education remains essential.**

There is a clear hunger among young people for critical discussion about Namibia’s development path. Structured spaces for analysis and debate are urgently needed.

- 2. Participatory learning is more effective than traditional lectures.**

When participants co-create the programme, engage creatively, and relate theory to lived experience, learning becomes

transformational rather than abstract.

3. Residential formats deepen impact.

Immersive learning environments foster stronger relationships amongst the participants, strengthen collective identity, and sustain reflection on the issues discussed.

4. Intergenerational dialogue matters.

The involvement of experienced activists alongside younger participants strengthens continuity between past struggles and current challenges.

5. Flexibility is crucial.

The school must remain responsive to changing socio-economic realities, whether related to the political economy, climate change, extractivism, or new forms of activism.

The Future of the ESJT Activist School

Looking ahead, the activist school intends to consolidate the residential course as its primary format, broaden participation from all the regions, and strengthen networks among alumni to sustain activism beyond

the programme itself. It also seeks to deepen engagement with issues such as climate justice, extractivism and alternative development strategies, while encouraging participants to initiate practical interventions within their own communities. At the same time, efforts will be made to secure modest and sustainable funding without compromising the school's independence.

In order to build on the work done in past schools, it will be useful to introduce advanced follow-up modules for participants, to publish reflections and research emerging from the programme, and to build stronger connections between activism, academic inquiry, and policy engagement.

In a context marked by persistent inequality, high youth unemployment, ecological pressures, and growing political disillusionment, spaces that nurture critical consciousness and collective agency are urgently needed. While the ESJT Activist School does not claim to provide definitive solutions, it represents a modest, yet meaningful contribution towards rebuilding an engaged and socially conscious group of activists who are committed to economic and social justice.

Conclusion

The experiences of the activist school demonstrate that political

education remains both relevant and necessary in Namibia. By creating spaces for dialogue, critical analysis and creative engagement, the initiative contributes to renewing traditions of active citizenship that were central to the country's liberation struggle. Its impact may not always be immediately measurable, but its value lies in cultivating informed, reflective and courageous individuals and groups who are capable of shaping future struggles for justice. In this sense, the activist school is not an end in itself, but part of an ongoing process of building a more democratic, equitable and socially just Namibia.