

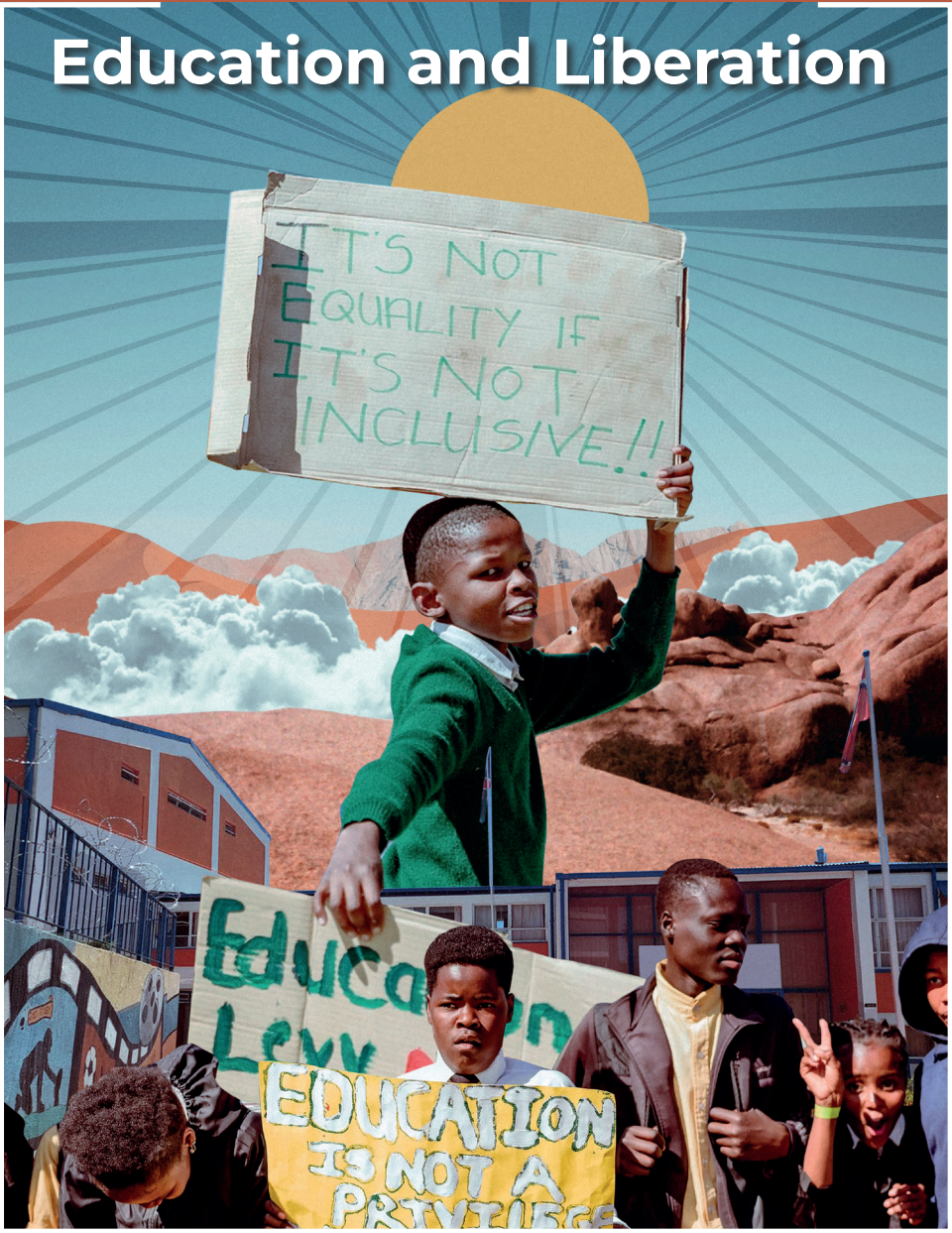
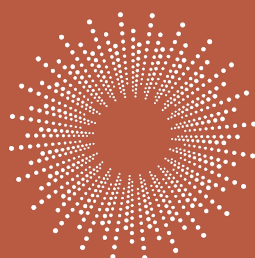


Table of Contents

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. Iipinga & 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>	

Social Justice and Education in Namibia: From Theory to Practice

Lucy Edwards-Jauch

Abstract:

This article applies a social justice lens to analyse Namibia's educational evolution from colonialism until the present. It identifies the key historical and structural factors that continue to confront postcolonial educational reform. The article traces the historical, structural and ideational factors that influenced Namibian educational philosophical and policy discourse. Through empirical data obtained from secondary sources and official statistics, it seeks to assess if the conditions for social justice education

have been attained, and whether the basic social justice principles of access, equity, inclusion, participation, and human rights are observed, theoretically and practically. The article also points to the factors that still hamper the implementation of equitable, quality "education for all", as set out in various global and Namibian policy instruments.

Keywords: education, social justice, distributive justice, relational justice, epistemological justice



Structural inequality undermines the attainment of quality education for all.

Source: Dirk Haarmann

Introduction

Education has been a crucial site of political contestation during Namibia's liberation struggle. Progressive student movements mobilised around the Freirean concept of "education for liberation". With the achievement of national liberation, educational policy discourse embraced aspects of social justice encapsulated in the emancipatory politics of the liberation struggle. The underlying social justice principles of access, equity, diversity, participation and human rights permeate post-independence educational policy discourse, giving rise to policies that represent a domestication of numerous international educational philosophies and policy instruments that were adapted to Namibian circumstances. Post-independence educational reform occurred while the historical colonial legacies and socioeconomic conditions persisted, making it challenging to translate the emancipatory ideals of the liberation struggle into practice.

The transformation of education in Namibia required an reversal of past injustices and an affirmation of the rights and entitlements previously denied to disenfranchised groups. Educational policy reforms had to be aligned to a new rights-based constitutional order that centres justice, human rights and democracy. A social justice lens is therefore needed to reflect on how far Namibia has

come in its quest to provide equitable, quality "education for all". Social justice implies three interrelated conditions to be present in the educational system, namely distributional justice, relational justice, and epistemological justice. To achieve these three conditions the educational system should comply with the five basic social justice principles of access, equity, diversity, participation and human rights.

At Independence, Namibia inherited 11 racially fragmented educational departments in which access and resources were based on racially established hierarchies. This occurred by design, as the racially fragmented educational system served the racialised labour hierarchy of racial capitalism that was introduced by the German colonial regime and further entrenched by the South African one.

This article traces the historical, structural and ideational factors that influenced Namibian educational philosophical and policy discourse. Through empirical data obtained from secondary sources, research reports and official statistics, the article seeks to identify the achievements and shortcomings in the process of translating basic social justice conditions and principles into practice. Upon review of the data, it became clear that the translation of theoretical and policy commitments into social justice

is complicated by historical legacies of racial oppression and the structural legacies of colonialism.

Namibia has made great strides in the provision of comprehensive, inclusive basic education. This is affirmed by the near universal access to primary education and a phenomenal increase in access to tertiary education. Its educational expenditure, both as a percentage of revenue and of gross domestic product surpasses global benchmarks. However, systemic and structural inequalities impact on education in fundamental ways, and the country therefore finds it difficult to achieve the key conditions of social justice, namely, distributional justice, relational justice, and epistemic justice.

Conceptual Framework

Social justice education

There is no unified social justice theory on education; instead, social justice theory eclectically draws on different theoretical influences, most notably Dewey's participatory, learner-centred experiential learning, Marxist correspondence principle and social reproduction theory, and Freire's critical pedagogy. It also draws on established international human rights norms and principles. At the very minimum, it commits to some key principles of social justice (Kent State University, 2020), namely:

- **access** to resources;
- **equity**, by addressing the systemic barriers to access and quality educational outcomes;
- **diversity**, by embracing differences and facilitating access to people from different cultural, linguistic, or socioeconomic groups, as well as people living with disabilities and those who experience different forms of discrimination;
- **participation**, by creating platforms and opportunities for students, parents and diverse communities to participate in educational policy making, and to ensure that their experiences are represented and reflected in educational content; and
- **human rights**, by advancing and protecting the rights of all those who participate in the educational process.

Liberal theorists' interpretations of social justice limit it to the legal right to equality of opportunity, irrespective of how structural inequalities undermine the substantive realisation of such a right. More radical interpretations of social justice seek to transform the structural inequalities that result in unequal access to quality education and unequal educational outcomes. To address these structural barriers, three interrelated aspects of social

justice need to be present. These are distributional justice, relational justice, and epistemic justice (Nesterova, 2023).

Distributive justice raises the question of how educational resources are distributed amongst various socioeconomic groups in society. In education, the choice is between equality (i.e., all getting the same amount) or equity (i.e., when inequalities and the need for a fairer distribution are recognised so that poorer groups get more to bridge the inequality gap) (Maiese, 2023).

Relational justice focuses on equity in the human relations between pedagogic actors. It refers to fair terms of cooperation between students and teachers that maintain dignity and affirms democracy and the self-esteem of all (Nesterova, 2023).

Epistemic justice refers to whose knowledge is privileged, as knowledge and power are co-implicated. What stands as knowledge reflects who holds power. Under colonialism, knowledge was generated to justify colonial subjugation and affirm racist narratives about European superiority. The colonised were constructed as sub-human, devoid of knowledge and culture. Alongside genocide, epistemicide and the systematic erasure of indigenous knowledge occurred. Epistemic justice recognises that

knowledge construction is not neutral, and that it is linked to various hierarchies of power. This has led to attempts to decolonise knowledge and to affirm the knowledge of diverse indigenous groups, including the knowledge and experiences of oppressed, marginalised and excluded groups. For epistemic justice to be realised, this diversity should be represented in curriculum content (Mungwini, 2018; Nesterova, 2023).

Methodology

The purpose of this research was to ascertain the extent to which education in Namibia meets the key conditions and principles of social justice. It reflects on the contextual factors, ideational resources and global educational policy discourses Namibia has drawn on in its own educational policy discourse and practice. The research methodology used was qualitative documentary analysis. This is an analysis of various documents pertaining to the topic under examination. These included international literature on educational philosophy, like the works of John Dewey and Paulo Freire; international educational policy instruments to which Namibia acceded; the Namibian constitution, laws, educational policies, and development policies; academic reports; journal articles, and newspaper articles. It involves the collection, examination and interpretation of

documents in order to understand meaning (Bowden, 2009). Secondary sources were the main sources of data collected, most notably official statistics, official reports, research reports, journal articles, books, and newspaper articles. The unit of analysis of the study was the Namibian educational system. Theoretical sampling was used to identify the elements relevant to education and social justice. Sampling was therefore theoretically driven (Neuman, 2011).

Contextual Factors that Influence Social Justice in Education

Colonial legacies

Christian missionary education was the genesis of formalised basic education in Namibia. Literacy was taught to facilitate the conversion to Christianity through Bible reading, while practical training in gardening and building skills supported the mission station's self-sufficiency. Missionaries were the first to introduce racially segregated and unequal education for whites, blacks and coloureds in Otjimbingwe and Rehoboth. Under German occupation, compulsory education was only introduced for children from white settler households (United Nations Institute for Namibia [UNIN], 1986; Katjavivi, 1988).

After South West Africa (as Namibia was then known) was placed under a

South African mandate in 1920, the initial concern was with education for whites, and white education was placed under the control of the South African Department of Education, while missionaries maintained control over African education. In 1923, missionaries pledged loyalty to South African policies. This was followed by the 1926 Education Proclamation that set an upper limit (Standard VI) for missionary education (Cohen, 1994). The first state-funded African school opened in Aminuis, south-east of Windhoek, in 1935; between 1920 and 1960, no state-funded schools were built in the northern parts of Namibia (Katjavivi, 1988).

Racial segregation and inequality were legally and systemically intensified after 1948 when South African apartheid educational policies were extended to Namibia. A series of commissions of enquiry reports (the Eiselen Commission (1951); the Van Zyl Commission (1958), and the Odendaal Commission (1962–63) provided the models for legislative changes entrenching apartheid education, starting with the Bantu Education Act of 1953, followed by the Education Ordinance 27 of 1962, and later the Representative Authorities Proclamation 8 of 1980 passed by the Administrator General (widely referred to as AG 8). These legislative changes brought all education (including missionary education) under state

control. There was also further fragmentation of education into a mixture of racially and ethnically stratified educational departments, in line with the apartheid state's Bantustan policies (Katjavivi, 1988; UNIN 1986; Cohen, 1994). At Independence, Namibian basic education was fragmented in 11 racially, ethnically and geographically segregated "representative" authorities for Rehoboth Basters; Bushmen; Caprivians; Coloureds; Damaras; Hereros; Kavangos; Namas; Ovambos; Tswanas and Whites (Cohen, 1994; Government of the Republic of Namibia [GRN], 1981).

Inequality and poverty

Against the background of the historical fragmentation, unequal access and racial segregation of education in Namibia, attaining justice in education is still severely constrained by broader structural economic factors. The most important of these are the inequality and poverty that have their roots in the colonial economy. They persist because Namibia has not decolonised its economy.

There is a circular relationship between poverty, inequality and educational outcomes. Poverty and inequality result in unequal access to education, and this reproduces inequalities and poor learning outcomes in education. The cycle starts

at birth. Ferguson et al. (2007) found that children born into poverty often lack the school readiness that would enable them to succeed academically and socially, as they suffer from cognitive disadvantages. In Namibia, Muine and Lemven (2023) show that the cycle of poverty, inequality and poor education are mutually reinforcing, and that outcomes go beyond mere access to educational opportunities. There is also a strong direct correlation between family wealth, access to higher education, and social mobility, with students from wealthier backgrounds having better chances of accessing quality higher education, completing their studies, and achieving upward social mobility (Braga et al., 2017).

Namibia is the second-most unequal country in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 59.1. Although urban inequality has narrowed, rural poverty has increased. The national level of income poverty stands at 27.9 %, and multidimensional poverty at 43%. Multidimensional poverty in Kavango West stands at 79.6%, Kavango East at 70.0%, and Kunene at 64.1%, are all much higher than the national average. Amongst Khoisan language speakers, multidimensional poverty stands at 93% (World Bank, 2025; United Nations Population Fund, 2021). The high levels of poverty combined with climate shocks and high food prices increase malnutrition and stunting,

which have negative effects on cognitive development. In Namibia, 29.5% of children under five are stunted (GRN, 2025a; Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, 2025).

Violence

Violence obstructs equal access to education and is often a function of discrimination and inequalities. Sociologist John Galtung (1969) identifies three intersecting forms of violence, namely structural violence, cultural violence, and direct violence. All of these are present in Namibia and impact on access, equity, human rights, diversity, and participation. Structural violence is the preventable harm caused when the social, economic and political structures in society prevent the realisation of full potential. Structural violence is a hallmark of unequal societies that distribute wealth and privilege to some, while excluding others on the basis of social class, skin colour, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or nationality, or other forms of discrimination that prevent some learners from reaching their potential. Structural violence normally precedes other forms of violence (Galtung, 1969, 1971).

Cultural violence refers to ideational resources used to justify and legitimise inequalities and exclusion, be it in the fields of religion, culture or language,

or in the media. It is also the elevation of some forms of knowledge and the devaluing of others (Galtung, 1990; Hathway, 2013).

Direct violence is the violence most commonly recognised as violence and most commonly referred to in discussions on violence in schools. It refers to physical and psychological violence perpetrated by identifiable individuals or groups (Galtung, 1969), and includes verbal abuse, physical assault, sexual assault, corporal punishment and other forms of abuse experienced in schools.

Underfunding

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has warned that chronic underfunding of education is a barrier against quality, inclusive and equitable education. Globally, there is an annual education funding gap of U\$97 billion. There are substantial inequalities in education expenditure between high-income and low-income countries. In the former, average per capita expenditure on education is US\$8,532, while in the latter, per capita expenditure is US\$55. Low-income countries are also fiscally constrained by high debt repayments of about 70% of gross domestic product (GDP). Underfunding in education entails huge opportunity costs due to high

drop-out and repetition rates, and skills deficits. Many low-income and lower middle-income countries are stuck in a debt trap where external debt grows faster than growth in GDP. They also spend more than 10% of annual budgets on mere debt servicing. This can mean that resources are diverted from education to debt servicing. The United Nations (UN) has proposed debt-for-education swaps, where creditors convert debt into investment in education (UNESCO Global Education Cooperation Mechanism, 2025).

In Namibia's 2024/25 budget, per capita expenditure on education is far below that of high-income countries, but four times the average for African countries, and the fourth-highest in Africa (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2024). In 2025, Namibia's educational expenditure was 23.4% of the national budget, and 8.9% of GDP. Both surpass global Sustainable Development Goal benchmarks of 20% of the national budget and 6% of GDP (Steenkamp, 2025a), while debt servicing accounted for N\$14.3 billion or 16.1% of revenue in the 2025–26 financial year ("Govt allocates N\$663 million", 2025). The allocation to education, though huge in Namibian terms, is still not sufficient to cover the spending gaps in the educational system, particularly for classroom shortages, dilapidated

infrastructure, educational materials, additional teaching staff, and disability-adjusted materials and infrastructure.

The Key Ideational Influences on Namibian Educational Policy Discourse and Practices

To understand how the post-independence educational policy discourse implicitly or explicitly draws on different theoretical frameworks and global educational instruments, one must briefly outline the most important theoretical traditions and policy instruments.

Marxism

Marxists like Bowles et al. (n.d.) argue that the education system essentially reproduces and legitimises inequalities in society. Their "correspondence principle" seeks to illuminate the direct relationship between education and economy. With reference to American society, they argue that the primary role of education in the economy is to reproduce an amenable and docile labour force within capitalist social relations of production. Schooling serves this overarching objective through its systems of social class reproduction and hierarchical streaming that reproduces a hierarchical division of labour. Schooling not only prepares individuals with the technical and cognitive skills to bend to the demands

of this economy, but also creates the ideational environment and systems of sanctions and rewards for conforming to this overarching objective. Schooling therefore serves the hierarchical division of labour that produces inequalities and stratifies society. This reproduction takes place when wealthier students with privileged access to quality education attain the knowledge and skills required for occupying the higher echelons of the labour hierarchy, with high concomitant income and status, and poor and working-class students with limited access to education occupy lower positions in the labour hierarchy.

Pragmatism and educational progressivism

Dewey's (1930/2001) educational philosophy is often referred to as progressivism, or experiential learning. Dewey's educational philosophy emerged as a response to widely used rote learning and memorisation of curriculum content. He understood education as a participatory, learner-centred, experiential, democratic pedagogic process. He saw the societal role of education as essential to the creation of a democratic citizenry, and for social harmony and social progress. He argued that pedagogic methods and subject matter are interlinked rather than distinct, and saw experiential learning as a cycle of active learning engagement followed up by passive reflection.

Critical theory

Critical pedagogy emerged out of a critique of oppressive societal conditions. Its primary concern is the development of critical consciousness in order to transform unjust exploitative and oppressive social, political and economic systems. Paulo Freire is undoubtedly the most influential critical pedagogy theorist. He viewed education as a democratic, reflexive process of dialogue to develop critical consciousness in oppressed groups so that they can act to overcome oppression (Nouri & Sajjadi, 2014). He wrote under conditions of extreme repression and military dictatorship in Brazil, and his primary focus was therefore a pedagogy that could liberate the oppressed. He based it on his own concrete experience with peasant education projects (Freire, 1970/2005; Takona, 2025).

Freire's emancipatory ideals are encapsulated the notion of education for liberation. It derives from his conviction that pedagogy is a democratic process of dialogue that should entail critical consciousness towards action. The emancipatory ideals should be informed by a democratic, humanistic, empowering and reflexive pedagogy in order to overcome dehumanisation. He referred to his pedagogy of the oppressed as a humanistic and libertarian development of the critical consciousness to confront oppression. Critical consciousness, to him, implied

a dialectical relationship between action and reflection, which he referred to as praxis (Freire, 1970/2005). He opposed the conventional banking system of education in which teachers are authoritative knowers, and students passive objects that need to be filled with deposits of information. Instead, he advocated a problem-posing process of dialogue in which knowledge construction is a co-creation of learners and educators (Giroux, 2025).

Utilitarianism

The English philosopher Herbert Spencer first applied utilitarian theory to education. He argued that education should primarily be geared towards direct and indirect self-preservation, and that the most important function of preservation is to secure livelihoods for the individual and the family. And secondly, that education should teach the discipline needed for the preservation of the family and society. As such, education should be rational, practical and vocational (Spencer, 1861).

From the 1980s, and advanced through dominant global institutions, neoliberalism became the dominant economic ideology. In support of neoliberalism, utilitarianism resurged strongly in educational policy discourse and curricula. Education consequently became driven by the needs of the

economy and the markets, and pedagogic subjects became economic units of production and consumption. With the neoliberal philosophy of the minimalist state, austerity budgets prevailed, with cuts in education, health and social welfare spending. This led to education not being purely a public good, as there was the widespread privatisation of educational provision. Knowledge was linked with and often limited to what was marketable (Panitsides, 2015; Giroux, 2014; Edeji, 2024).

At the level of education policy making and curriculum development, discourses of human capital formation and a knowledge-based economy were popularised. Educational expenditure was seen as an investment that should yield returns through increased productivity (World Bank, 2018). STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) were privileged over the liberal arts in education budgetary allocations, and there was an increased vocationalisation of higher education (Giroux, 2014). To exact greater efficiencies, curricula became increasingly globalised and standardised, with higher levels of accountability. This placed more onerous administrative burdens on teachers, as outcomes-based education and competency-based educational curricula specified universalistic educational outcomes, irrespective of historical, social and cultural contexts (Edeji, 2024).

Supporters of the human capital approach argue that it is crucial to economic growth, labour productivity and job creation, and that investment in education and training will lead to higher earnings that benefit both individuals and society (Becker, 1993; World Bank, 2024). Critics argued that it is oversimplistic and does not account for historical and structural differences and the social reproduction of status (Marginson, 2017). Others argued that it undermines equity and equality, as underfunding in public education, the commodification of education, and the proliferation of private education create inequalities in the quality of education provided to different groups in society (Melanson, 2023). Furthermore, they argued that it overloads teachers with constant assessments and reporting that divert time from actual teaching, leading to teacher dissatisfaction and attrition (Berlach, 2004; Melanson, 2023; Edeji, 2024).

The human capital approach to education has opened up wider access to higher education. This massification often serves to entrench inequalities, as public funding does not support this expansion, leading to vast differences in funding and educational outcomes between elite universities and others (Nyagope, 2024; Tepel et al., 2025), which could explain high graduate unemployment levels.

International Policy Instruments that Influenced Namibian Educational Policy Discourse

At a global level, there have been various attempts to apply different and often contradictory conceptual frameworks to educational policy making. At times, this involved the mere appropriation of the language of social justice without meaningfully transforming the social system that produces the structural barriers impeding the attainment of social justice. Therefore, despite progress in educational access and equity, gross global, regional and local inequalities remain firmly entrenched, and globally, 272 million children and adolescents are out of school, 75% of whom are in Africa (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2025). Educational rights are contained in many educational declarations (at least at a discursive level) and most capture the language of social justice. In the earlier declarations, one sees the lineages of Dewey's progressive educational philosophy and Freire's critical pedagogy. In the later declarations like the Sustainable Development Goals, the language of social justice is employed to pursue utilitarianism.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1989) is legally binding and was ratified by Namibia in 1990. It directs all states parties that are signatories to the Convention to implement legislation and administrative procedures that recognise the right to education (United Nations, 1989).

World Declaration on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs

The theme of “education for all” reverberates through this declaration, adopted in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 (UNESCO, 1990). It affirms the right of every person (children and adults) to basic education that includes both essential learning tools such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem-solving skills, and learning content such as the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for surviving, living and working in dignity. The declaration further calls for universalising equitable access to education, particularly for “poor; street and working children; rural and remote populations; nomads and migrant workers; indigenous peoples; ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities; refugees; those displaced by war; and people under occupation”, as well as for people living with disabilities (UNESCO, 1990).

Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education

International educational policy makers converged at Salamanca in Spain where they adopted the *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education* in 1994. This was done to celebrate diversity and to make education for all more effective. One of the basic principles adopted was that schools should be able to accommodate all children, regardless of physical, mental, intellectual, social, emotional or linguistic conditions, and to normalise difference. Another was that inclusive schools should provide extra support to accommodate children of different abilities with special needs (UNESCO, 1994).

Dakar Framework for Action

The *Dakar Framework for Action* was adopted by the World Education Forum in 2000 to reaffirm commitments and assess progress towards education for all. Given the huge gaps and lags identified at the preceding regional conference, governments were urged to increase resource allocations to education (UNESCO, 2000).

Incheon Declaration

The Incheon Declaration, which was adopted by the World Education Forum in 2015 at Incheon, Republic of Korea,

embraces many social justice principles in its policy agenda. The declaration expands upon the education for all agenda adopted by the Jomtien declaration (*World Declaration on Education for All*) and reaffirmed by the *Dakar Framework*. It calls for equitable and quality education that comprises at least one year's compulsory access to preschool; access to 12 years of free primary and secondary education, of which at least 9 years are compulsory; the elimination of all forms of exclusion, inequality, marginalisation and disparities in accessing quality educational opportunities to promote inclusion; gender equality in access to education; well trained, empowered, professionally qualified and motivated teachers who operate in well resourced, efficient, effective and well governed educational systems; the achievement of functional literacy, numeracy, problem solving, and analytical and interpersonal skills in adult education; and the recognition and accreditation of prior learning and lifelong learning pathways (World Bank, 2015).

UN Sustainable Development Goal 4: Quality Education

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as Agenda 2030, comprise 17 goals to be attained by 2030 for sustainable development. While the causes of underdevelopment are not illuminated, SDG 4 aspires

towards the achievement of inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities, setting targets to realise this aspiration by 2030 (UNESCO, n.d.). These targets are very similar to those set in the Incheon Declaration. The very concept of sustainable development has been critiqued for its contradictory logic. On the one hand it calls for sustainable development, and on the other it calls for economic growth and expansion that will most likely exacerbate climate collapse (Swain, 2017).

Namibian educational policies in support of social justice

Namibia has committed itself to social justice in education through the domestication of a number of international instruments. Vision 2030, which is the fundamental guide for Namibia's postcolonial development, identified the following vision for education by 2030: unified and adequate education infrastructure in all regions; access to lifelong learning; senior secondary education for at least 80% of learners; access to tertiary education for at least 75% of school leavers; a large but unspecified number of multipurpose learning centres with internet access; well qualified teaching staff at all levels; a curriculum focus on science and technology; basic education that focuses on literacy and numeracy; and properly functioning research,

development and early education components (GRN, 2004). Vision 2030 shows a combination of commitments to social justice through equal access and utilitarian objective through skills formation that serves the economy.

Namibia's *Sixth National Development Plan* (NDP6) contains a similar commitment to social justice and utilitarian skills formation for economic development (GRN, 2025b). It advocates for equitable access to early childhood development, primary education, secondary education, vocational training, higher education and life-long learning. NDP6 also repeats policy commitments to equitable resource distribution at all levels of education to ensure that the goal of accessible, equitable, inclusive quality education is indeed realised in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (GRN, 2025b).

The policy commitment to social justice is further advanced in its call for education for all (GRN, 2002). The commitment to provide equitable, inclusive, quality education for all is reinforced by a number of policy documents, particularly the *National Policy on Disability*, the *National Policy Options for Educationally Marginalised Children*, the *Education Sector Policy for the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy*, and the *Sector Policy on Inclusive Education* (GRN, 2008,

2013). Learner-centred education was introduced to promote access, equity, quality and democracy in education (Potokri & Mwelitondola, 2022). The *Sector Policy on Inclusive Education* calls for the end of segregation and exclusion on the basis of academic performance, gender, race, culture, religion, lifestyle, health conditions or disability. The policy points to discrimination, remote geographical locations, and discriminatory policies as being barriers to inclusive education. It further identifies groups of learners whose access to equitable, inclusive and quality education is at risk, including children of farmworkers; children in remote areas; children from informal settlements; children of refugees; children living in extreme poverty; child labourers; children who head households; over-aged children; children with learning difficulties; learner-parents; children with disabilities; and orphans and vulnerable children (GRN, 2013). The Basic Education Act (3 of 2020) sets out to promote free, equitable, inclusive and quality education and lifelong learning for all. It also requires the government to ensure the mobilisation of resources to effectively implement the national policy on inclusive education (*Basic Education Act 3 of 2020*, 2020).

The overall education policy discourse implicitly carries the lineages of various theoretical paradigms. One can discern the central themes from

Dewey's progressivism, in which education is viewed as a means to promote democracy and critical thinking skills. Namibia's policy commitments to learner-centredness also resonate with his view of participatory, experiential learning. The policy on inclusive education recognises the structural elements of inequality central to Freire's critical pedagogy. The commitment to education that supports Namibia's economic growth and development objectives speaks to elements of utilitarianism. Repeated references to overcoming inequalities, discrimination and exclusion also speak to the Marxist view of education as not just serving the labour market needs of capital. Namibia's eclectic embrace of disparate theories speaks to the socioeconomic realities confronting the country as it tries to combine utility with democracy, inclusion, human rights, diversity, and social justice.

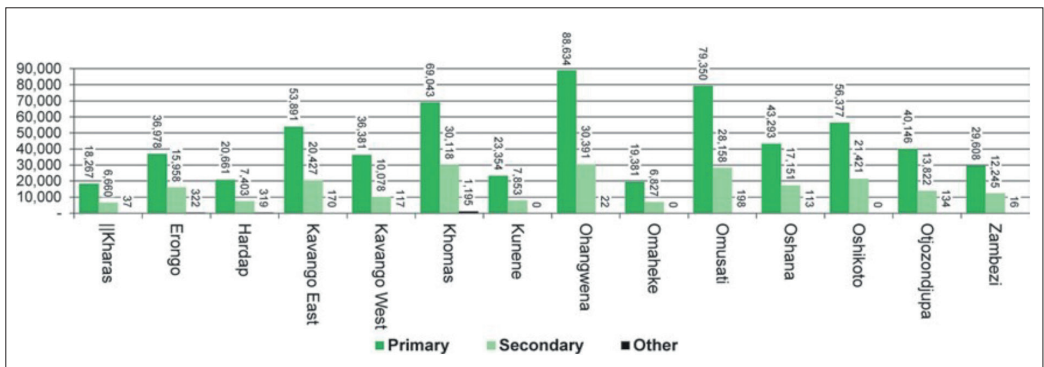
Translation of Policy Discourse into Practice

Access

Namibia has made great progress in widening access to education. With the introduction of universal primary education in 2013 and universal secondary education in 2016, Namibia instituted free basic education for all. In 2023, there were 846,519 learners and 33,622 teachers. Between 2017 and 2023, the number of schools increased from 1,848 to 2,004 (GRN, 2024b). Namibia is on the verge of achieving universal education access at primary school level, with a 2025 enrolment rate of 97.8% (Hembapu, 2025).

Despite compulsory education provisions, there is a sharp decrease in school enrolment figures after the age of 15 years, despite the constitution (in article 20) requiring that children

Figure 1 *Increase in enrolment by region*



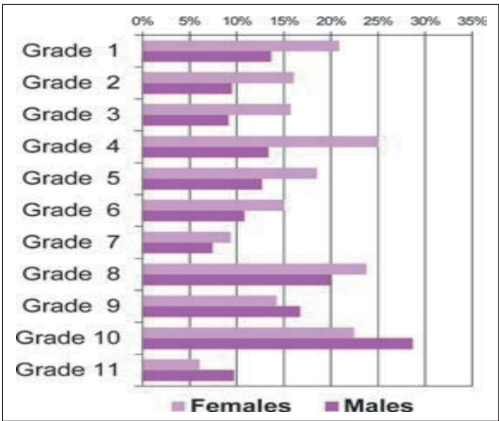
Source: GRN (2024b, p. 10)

should remain in school until 16 years of age (GRN, 2016). Only 24.8% of Namibians have completed secondary education, and 11,8 % have completed tertiary education (GRN 2024a). High enrolment rates are countered by low school survival rates (UNICEF, 2024). There is a sharp decrease in enrolment from grade 10 to grade 11, as grade 10 is an exit point and many do not quality to proceed to the Advanced Subsidiary level (GRN, 2024b).

Ipinge and Serote (2024) found that school dropouts are linked to high levels of poverty, as parents and guardians cannot afford school uniforms, textbooks and stationery.

The growth in enrolment has increased the need for increased infrastructure expenditure, for example on classrooms, hostels, libraries, materials and equipment, but budg-

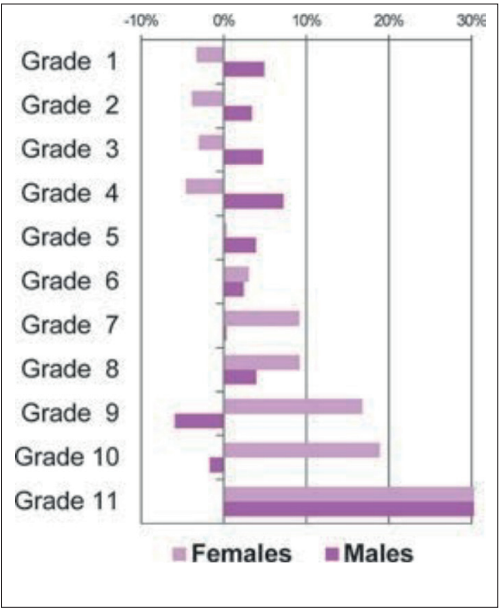
Figure 2 School enrolment



Source: GRN (2024b, p. 41)

etary allocations have not increased accordingly.

Figure 3 Dropout rates



Promotion rates are higher for girls than for boys. After grade 9, a higher percentage of boys than girls leave school. In the Kavango West and Kunene regions, dropouts for girls are typically caused by high levels of pregnancy, poverty, hunger, and weak parental involvement. The inability of poor families to afford basic necessities and school supplies forces children to leave school in order to take on caregiving and income generating roles (Ndalikokule, 2025; Kangumine, 2025). Despite investments in education, overcrowding and the need to hold afternoon classes persist (GRN,

2024b). The Minister of Education has conceded that there is a shortage of classrooms (Hivelu, 2025).

Tertiary education expansion has driven greater access to higher education. Between 2019 and 2023, the number students enrolled at tertiary education institutions increased from 13,000 to 80,226. Women constituted almost two-thirds of enrolled students (for every 100 male students, there were 182 female students) (National Council for Higher Education, 2023). Since 2026, the government has introduced subsidised (tuition fee-free) higher education. Priority will be given to skills-based education in line with needs of a knowledge-based

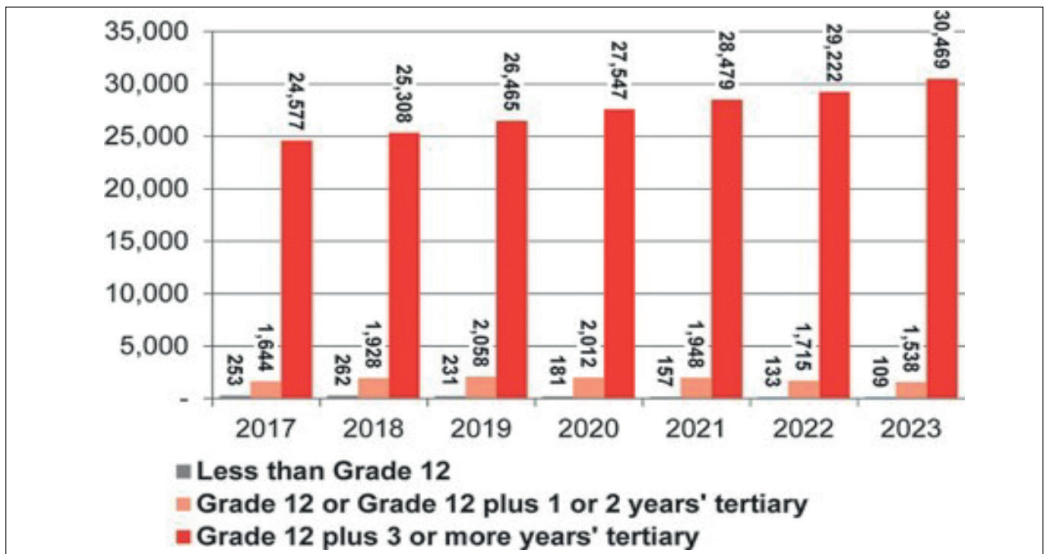
economy and the needs of key sectors of the economy (Albertz, 2025).

Expansion in access to tertiary education has had an impact on teacher qualifications, as shown in Figure 4 below.

Equity

Regions with high levels of multi-dimensional poverty, in particular Kavango East and Kavango West, get less educational financial support than those with lower levels of poverty. Regions with greater classroom gaps, like Ohangwena, Omusati, Kavango East and Kavango West, do not get larger shares of the education development budget to help overcome the colonial

Figure 4 *Teacher qualifications*



Source: GRN (2024b, p. 62)

legacies of infrastructural deficits in these regions. The budget's indifference to the state of household and regional inequalities reinforces and deepens inequalities. This is reflected in per capita expenditure, where resources allocated to children from wealthy households are equal to expenditure on children from poor and extremely poor households. This privileges equality over equity. The education ministry has introduced a school grant policy to address inequalities in resource distributions. The grant policy was hailed as a pro-poor strategy to facilitate equitable allocation. Disbursement would take into account certain equity criteria, like special learning needs and remoteness of the school location (Nashuuta, 2025).

The law directs the Namibian government to ensure that the policy on inclusive education is applied at all schools, and thus to ensure that the necessary tools, facilities and resources are available to implement the policy. As such, there should be a separate budget vote to fund education for learners with disabilities (*Basic Education Act 3 of 2020*, 2020). Despite this, there is still significant underfunding, as the available schools and facilities do not match the needs. Poor budget execution rates, particularly on the development budget, also curtails educational infrastructure expansion. In many schools, there is a lack of both

hardware and software information and communication technologies. Between 2019 and 2023, the number of computer laboratories at schools decreased from 601 to 485 (UNICEF, 2024).

Inequalities in the distribution of educational resources, learning materials, educational facilities and well trained teachers produce unequal educational outcomes, and therefore unequal life prospects. In their study in informal settlements in Namibia, Ipinge and Seroto (2024) found that the lack of teaching and learning aids, textbooks and stationery, together with overcrowding and the lack or dilapidated state of educational infrastructure, produced poor educational outcomes. They also found poor educational outcomes where there are high levels of poverty. Namibian children from poor families find it difficult to pursue higher education, for besides tuition fees, books, supplies and transportation costs must be covered.

Differential access to quality education also has a geographic dimension, as poor children in rural areas are also more likely to experience unequal access to quality education (Muine & Lemven, 2023). Poor sanitation has led to the suspension of classes in Rundu (Muyamba, 2025). Regions with poor infrastructure and adverse weather events emanating

from climate change have also seen disruptions in education, as has occurred in the Kunene, Omusati, Oshana, Ohangwena and Zambezi regions (Ndeyanale et al., 2025).

Learning poverty is still commonplace. A national assessment showed that there were pockets of excellence, but overall, only 32% of learners achieved the minimum 40% pass rate in numeracy, and only 5% scored over 75%. Furthermore, 82% did not achieve the expected competence in counting, and 62% struggled to compare numbers. In literacy, only 28% of learners met the pass rate of 40%, and only 3% scored 75% or higher. Only 20% of learners could demonstrate higher-order skills in reading. Among visually impaired learners, less than 10% reached the required levels of literacy and numeracy. Learners in rural areas experienced greater learning disadvantages and lower access to structured learning interventions (Steenkamp, 2025b).

Participation and human rights

Educational governance makes provision for democratically elected school boards to promote parental involvement and co-governance at schools. The law gives them wide-ranging powers with regard to rules, recruitment, administration and

oversight over school infrastructure. All groups represented in the school community also have representation on the school boards, and they include teachers, learners, parents, non-teaching staff, and others with expertise. To give effect to learner participation in school governance, schools must create spaces, platforms and an environment that allow for meaningful participation. The law also requires schools to capacitate learners for such meaningful participation through the core curriculum, and extracurricular activities that impart the democratic values of accountability, transparency, participation and leadership (*Basic Education Act 3 of 2020*, 2020).

Serious attempts have been made by the government to introduce relational justice in schools. The *Basic Education Act* and various policies support basic human rights and participation. There are very specific prohibitions on discrimination, as well as prohibitions on physical and mental violence against learners (*Basic Education Act 3 of 2020*, 2020). Despite these prohibitions, the Namibia National Safe Schools Framework report acknowledges that violence in schools is an impediment to the provision of quality education. The report identifies groups that are vulnerable to violence in schools. They include children with disabilities and children from marginalised backgrounds. The statistics cited show

very high levels of violence in schools, with 45.4 % of girls and 47.9% of boys aged 13–15 years experiencing bullying, and 19% of learners reporting being forced to have sex at school, 22% being verbally abused, 17% being threatened with harm, 72% receiving corporal punishment, and 30% experiencing sexual harassment. The report sees schools as microcosms of broader society that reflect more widespread power relationships, discriminatory practices and violence (GRN, 2018).

Diversity

Articles 10 and 20 of the Namibian Constitution support education for all. Gender mainstreaming policies and policies on disability foreground Namibia's commitment to inclusive education, and "education for all", irrespective of race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religion, sex or creed. Neither the constitution nor the policies make any mention of sexual orientation and diverse gender identities. Article 18 of the Constitution protects cultural diversity, while Article 21 protects freedom of conscience and academic freedom (GRN, 2016). Despite progressive legal and policy provisions, broader societal inequalities and discrimination persist. Reports of tribalism in the recruitment of teachers at schools have received a strong rebuke from authorities (De Klerk & Bento, 2025).

The *Basic Education Act* gives preference to mother tongue instruction at schools, based on the principle that, where reasonable and practical, every learner has the right to instruction in the language of their choice. This is further based on the premise that education should foster a culture of democracy and diversity, and promote languages that have been discriminated against in the past. The Act also makes provision for the use of sign language in schools. Despite attempts to promote indigenous languages and save them from extinction, few teachers are willing to pursue qualifications in indigenous language teaching. Parents also mainly prefer English as the medium of instruction, to align with the language skills values and demands of labour markets ("Indigenous languages," 2025).

Policy documents do not address the need for epistemological justice through the incorporation of localised indigenous knowledge into formal curricula in order to validate all knowledge forms, and are silent on the need to move away from the notion that only Western knowledge is valid. Apart from a few isolated initiatives, for example, to integrate indigenous knowledge into ethnomathematics (Shimwandi et al., 2024), there is no evidence of the widespread application of indigenous knowledge in Namibian educational curricula.

Conclusions

Namibia's relatively high levels of expenditure on education confirms a commitment to the central role of education in the country's development agenda. Educational expenditure as a percentage of revenue and of GDP exceed global benchmarks. Nevertheless, there is significant underfunding relative to the amounts needed to ensure quality education for all, as outlined in Namibia's SDG 4 commitments.

Namibia's educational policy discourse draws on diverse and at times contradictory theoretical and philosophical discourses. It eclectically combines multiple policy objectives of equity and efficiency. Namibia also has many programmes that promote the objective of social justice, like school feeding schemes, humanitarian support to marginalised groups, and learning support programmes for disadvantaged learners. The *Basic Education Act* and policies relating to inclusive education promote broader access to education for all. Although access has increased across educational levels, there are still low completion and attainment rates. These may be linked to broader social justice concerns beyond the educational system itself. Broader structural level inequalities, for example high levels of stunting, malnourishment and poverty, impact on

teaching and learning, and affect cognitive development. Without broader structural transformation, it may be more difficult for the educational system to ameliorate and compensate for structural-level inequalities.

There are three conditions for social justice that education in Namibia fails to meet. Firstly, there is a lack of distributional justice. Educational budgets and resource allocations privilege equality over equity, and consequently, regions that colonial, apartheid and Bantustan policies neglected the most are still disadvantaged, because budgetary allocations lack the fairness to overcome these deficits. In addition, the most important foundations of education, namely early childhood development and preschool learning, are grossly underfunded, despite their being the areas of education that will benefit most learners and improve educational outcomes at all levels of education. The misalignment of budgets with social justice objectives also leads to high levels of inefficiency. The opportunity costs of misalignment are great because of high repetition and dropout rates, and skills deficits.

Secondly, educational policies allow for relational justice, with parental participation in educational governance. The lack of internalisation of human rights still leads to grievous assaults on relational justice, for example discrimi-

nation against learners who come from poor, marginalised groups, bullying, assaults, and corporal punishment.

Thirdly, educational curricula have not been decolonised. Policy documents do not speak to epistemic justice; policies do not speak to the integration of indigenous knowledge into curricula to overcome their ethnographic biases.

References

Albertz, E. (2026, June 5). Free education will focus on skills before books – Steenkamp. *The Namibian*, (p. 5). <https://www.namibian.com.na/free-education-will-focus-on-skills-before-books-steenkamp/>

Basic Education Act 3 of 2020. (2020). <https://www.lac.org.na/laws/annoSTAT/Basic%20Education%20Act%203%20of%202020.pdf>

Becker, G. (1993). *Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis with special reference to education*. University of Chicago Press.

Berlach, R. G. (2004, November/December). *Outcomes-based education & the death of knowledge* [Conference paper]. Annual Conference of The Australian Association for Research in Education, Melbourne, Australia. <https://www.aare.edu.au/data/publications/2004/ber04768.pdf>

Bowden, G. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27–40. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240807798_Document_Analysis_as_a_Qualitative_Research_Method/link/59d807d0a6fdcc2aad065377/download?_tp=eyJjb250ZXh0I-jp7ImZpcnN0UGFnZSI6InB1YmXPY-2F0aW9uIiwicGFnZSI6InB1YmXPY-2F0aW9uIn19

Bowles, S., Gintis, H., & Meyer, P. (n.d.). *The long shadow of work: Education, the family, and the reproduction of the social division of labor*. <https://library.fes.de/libalt/journals/swetsfulltext/10590667.pdf>

Braga, B., McKernan, S., Ratcliffe, C., & Baum, S. (2017). *Wealth inequality is a barrier to education and social mobility*. Urban Institute. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/89976/wealth_and_education_4.pdf

Cohen, C. (1994). *Administering education in Namibia: The colonial period to the present*. Namibia Scientific Society.

De Klerk, E., & Bento, I. (2025, March 6). Education recruitment marred by tribalism claims. *New Era*, (p. 3). <https://neweralive.na/education-recruitments-marred-by-tribalism-claims/>

Dewey, J. (1930/2001). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education* (Penn State Electronic Classics Series Publication). Pennsylvania State University. <https://nsee.memberclicks.net/assets/docs/KnowledgeCenter/BuildingExpEduc/BooksReports/10.%20democracy%20and%20education%20by%20dewey.pdf>

Edeji, O. (2024). Neo-liberalism, human capital theory and the right to education: Economic interpretation of the purpose of education. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 9, 100734. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2023.100734>

Ferguson, H., Bovaird, S., & Mueller, M. (2007). The impact of poverty on educational outcomes for children. *Paediatr Child Health*, 12(8), 701–706. DOI: 10.1093/pch/12.8.701

Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th Anniversary edition) (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). Continuum. (1970). [https://files.libcom.org/files/Paulo%20Freire,%20Myra%20Bergman%20Ramos,%20Donaldo%20Macedo%20-%20Pedagogy%20of%20the%20Oppressed,%2030th%20Anniversary%20Edition%20\(2000,%20Bloomsbury%20Academic\).pdf](https://files.libcom.org/files/Paulo%20Freire,%20Myra%20Bergman%20Ramos,%20Donaldo%20Macedo%20-%20Pedagogy%20of%20the%20Oppressed,%2030th%20Anniversary%20Edition%20(2000,%20Bloomsbury%20Academic).pdf)

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167–191. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/422690>

Galtung, J. (1971). A structural theory of imperialism. *Journal of Peace Research*, 8(2), 81–117. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/002234337100800201>

Galtung, J. (1990). Cultural violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(3), 291–305. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343390027003005>

Giroux, H. (2014). *Neoliberalism's war on democracy*. Academia. https://www.academia.edu/34923771/Giroux_H_A_2014_Neoliberalisms_War_on_Democracy_29_pp?auto=download&email_work_card=download-paper

Giroux, H. (2025). *Paulo Freire's legacy and critical pedagogy in dark times*. <https://www.developmenteducationreview.com/sites/default/files/article-pdfs/Giroux%20Viewpoint%20Issue%2040.pdf>

Govt allocates N\$663 million for free tertiary education rollout in 2026. (2026, October 21). *The Brief*, 1001, 1–3. <https://epaper.thebrief24.com/2025/October%202025/The-Brief-21-October-2025.pdf>

Hathaway, W. (2013). *Varieties of violence: Structural, cultural and direct*. Transcend Media Services. <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2013/10/varieties-of-violence-structural-cultural-and-direct/>

Hembapu, O. (2025, October 3). Namibia on verge of universal education target ...97,8% of children access primary schooling. *New Era* (p. 3). <https://neweralive.na/namibia-on-verge-of-universal-education-target-978-of-children-access-primary-schooling>

Hiveluh, F. (2025, April 4). Steenkamp to tackle teacher, classroom shortages head-on. *The Namibian* (p. 3).

Indigenous languages could save unemployed teachers [Editorial]. (2025, June 6). *New Era* (p. 11). <https://neweralive.na/editorial-indigenous-languages-could-save-unemployed-teachers/>

Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. (2025, October 13). *Namibia: IPC acute food insecurity analysis, July 2025 - June 2026*. <https://reliefweb.int/report/namibia/namibia-acute-food-insecurity-analysis-july-2025-june-2026-published-13-october-2025> https://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Namibia_Acute_Food_Insecurity_Jul2025_Jun2026_Report.pdf

Ipinge, K. & Seroto, J. (2024). *The influence of ecological systems on primary school learner performance in informal settlements in Namibia*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241247933>

Kangumine, V. (2025, January 16). Drugs, alcohol blamed for Kunene's struggling schools. *The Namibian* (p.

1). <https://www.namibian.com.na/drugs-alcohol-blamed-for-kunenes-struggling-schools/>

Katjavivi, P. (1988). *A history of resistance in Namibia*. James Currey.

Kent State University. (2020). *The five principles of social justice*. <https://sfpirg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Five-Principles-of-Social-Justice.pdf>

Panitsides, E. (2015). Towards 'utilitarian' adult education perspectives? A critical review of the European Union's adult education policy. In M. Milana, & T. Nesbit, *Global perspectives on adult education and learning policy*, pp. 207–220. Springer Nature Link. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137388254_15

Potokri, O. and Mwelitondola, J. (2022). Learner centred education in the teaching of grade 11 biology in Ohakafiya circuit schools of Namibia. *International Journal of Social Science Research and Review*, 5(3). <https://doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v5i4.212>

Maiese, M. (2020). *Distributive justice*. Beyond Intractability. https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/distributive_justice

Marginson, S. (2017). Limitations of human capital theory. *Studies in Higher Education*, 44(2), 287–301. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2017.1359823>

Melanson, C. C. (2023). A clash of interests: Neoliberalism in education. *One World in Dialogue*, 7(1), 4–8. <https://ssc.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/OneWorldInDialogue/2023%20V7N1/A%20Clash%20of%20Interests%20Neoliberalism%20in%20Education.pdf>

Muine, S. and Lemven, W. (2023). *Returns to education and wage inequality in Namibia: A gendered analysis* [WIDER Working Paper, No. 2023/112]. Econstor. <https://hdl.handle.net/10419/283808>

Mungwini, P. (2018). *The question of epistemic justice: Polemics, contestations and dialogue*. Scielo South Africa. https://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1561-40182018000100003

Muyamba, J. (2025, January 30). Poor sanitation suspends Rundu schools. *New Era* (p. 5). <https://neweralive.na/poor-sanitation-suspends-rundu-schools/>

Nashuuta, L. (2025, March 13). School grant policy to address inequality. *New Era* (p. 5). <https://neweralive.na/school-grant-policy-to-address-inequality/>

National Council for Higher Education. (2023). *2023 Namibia higher education statistical yearbook*. http://www.nche.org.na/sites/default/files/documents/nhesy_2023__0.pdf

Ndalikokule, P. (2025, October 11). School drop-outs besiege Kavango West. *New Era* (p. 1). <https://neweralive.na/school-dropouts-besiege-kavango-west/>

Ndeyanale, E., Shinana, A., & Kooper, L. (2025, April 8). Floods: 8500 pupils stranded. *The Namibian* (p. 1). <https://www.namibian.com.na/floods-8-500-pupils-stranded/>

Nesterova, Y. (2023) Towards social justice and inclusion in education systems. In G. A. Postiglione, C. J. Johnstone, & W. R. Teter (Eds.), *Handbook of education policy* (pp. 301–313) (Series: Elgar handbooks in education). Edward Elgar Publishing. ISBN 9781800375055

Neuman, L. (2011). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Pearson Education Inc.

Nouri, A., & Sajjad, S. (2014) Emancipatory pedagogy in practice: Aims, principles and curriculum orientation. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy*, 5(2), 76–87. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266822166_Emanicipatory_Pedagogy_in_Practice_Aims_Principles_and_Curriculum_Orientation

Nyagope, T. (2024). Massification at higher education institutions: Challenges associated with teaching large classes and how it impacts on the quality of teaching and learning in South Africa. *International Journal*

of *Environmental Sustainability and Social Science*, 5(1), 209–220. <https://doi.org/10.38142/ijesss.v5i1.852>

Panitsides, E. (2015). Towards ‘utilitarian’ adult education perspectives? A critical review of the European Union’s adult education policy. In M. Milana, & T. Nesbit (Eds.), *Global perspectives on adult education and learning policy* (Palgrave Studies in Global Citizenship Education and Democracy), 207–220. Palgrave Macmillan. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137388254_15

Republic of Namibia. (2002). *Education for all (EFA): National plan of action: 2002–2015*. Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture. https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/namibia_efa_npa.pdf

Republic of Namibia. (2004). *Vision 2030: Policy framework for long-term national development*. Office of the President. https://www.npc.gov.na/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/vision_2030.pdf

Republic of Namibia. (2008). *Education sector policy for the prevention and management of learner pregnancy*. Ministry of Education. <https://www.npc.gov.na/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Education-Sector-policy-for-the-Prevention-and-Management-of-Learner-Pregnancy.pdf>

Republic of Namibia. (2013). *Sector policy on inclusive education*. Ministry of Education. <https://www.npc.gov.na/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Sector-policy-on-Inclusive-Education-2013.pdf>

Republic of Namibia. (2016). *The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia*. <https://www.lac.org.na/laws/annoSTAT/Namibian%20Constitution.pdf>

Republic of Namibia. (2018). *Namibia’s National Safe Schools Framework: Part A: Introduction and overview*. Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture / UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/namibia/media/911/file/NSSF%20introduction%20and%20overview.pdf>

Republic of Namibia. (2024a). *Namibia 2023 population and housing census main report*. Namibia Statistics Agency. <https://nsa.org.na/document/2023-population-and-housing-census-main-report/>

Republic of Namibia. (2024b). *Education Management Information System (EMIS): Education statistics 2023*. Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. <https://www.meiysac.gov.na/index.php/dep/dep-fa/dir-pad/emis>

Republic of Namibia. (2025a). *2024 Namibia national SMART survey*. Ministry of Health and Social Services. <https://www.unicef.org/namibia/media/2036/file/NAMIBIA%20SMART%20FINAL%20PRINT.pdf>

Republic of Namibia. (2025b). *Namibia's Sixth National Development Plan (NDP6): Fostering economic growth, inclusiveness and resilience for sustainable development 2025/26 to 2029/30* (Policy document). National Planning Commission. https://www.npc.gov.na/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/NDP6-Policy-Document_compressed.pdf

Shimwandi, R. N., Ngololo, E. N., & Kanandjebo, L. N. (2024). Indigenous knowledge content & mathematics curriculum: Some evidence from a Namibian perspective. *Jumuga Journal of Education, Oral Studies, and Human Sciences*, 7(2), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.35544/jjeoshs.v7i2.93>

Spencer, H. (1820). *Education: Intellectual, moral, and physical*. D. Appleton. <https://archive.org/details/spencereducation00spen/page/n5/mode/2up>

Steenkamp, S. (2025a). *Budget motivation statement: Vote 40: Education*. Ministry of Education, Innovation, Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture. <https://www.parliament.na/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Vote-40-Education.pdf>

Steenkamp, S. (2025b) *Ministerial statement on learning poverty*. https://www.parliament.na/wpcontent/uploads/2025/07/Ministerial_Statement_made_by_the_Minister_of_Education_Innovation.pdf

Swain, R. B. (2017). Critical Analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals. In W. L. Filho (Ed.), *Handbook of sustainability science and research* (pp. 341–355). Springer International Publishing. DOI:10.1007/978-3-319-63007-6_20

Takona, J. (2025). Transformative education: Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed and its contemporary resonance. *Journal of Global Education and Research*, 9(1), 87–107. <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/jger/vol9/iss1/6/>

Tepe1, K., Verchier, Y., & Yetongnon, K. (2025). The challenges of massification in higher education in developing countries. *International Journal of Science, Technology and Society*, 13(2), 61–72. Science Publishing Group. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijsts.20251302.14>

UNESCO. (1994). *The Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education*. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Salamanca_Statement_1994.pdf

UNESCO. (2000). *Dakar framework for action: Education for all: Meeting our collective commitments*. https://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Dakar_Framework_for_Action_2000_en.pdf

UNESCO. (1990). *World declaration on education for all: Meeting basic learning needs*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000127583>

UNESCO. (n.d.). *SDG 4 indicators*. <https://www.education-progress.org/en/indicators>

UNESCO Global Education Cooperation Mechanism. (2025). *Converting debt for education*. https://www.unesco.org/sdg4education2030/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2025/11/EN_Fund%20Education%20Converting%20Debt%20for%20Education.pdf?hub=129041

UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2025) *World education statistics 2025*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000396754>

UNICEF. (2024). *Namibia budget brief 2024/25: Optimising finance toward the AU year of education commitments*. <https://www.unicef.org/namibia/reports/namibia-budget-brief-education-202425>

United Nations. (1989). *Convention on the rights of the child*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

United Nations Institute for Namibia. (1986). *Namibia: Perspectives for national reconstruction and development*. ISBN / ISSN 0091688515

United Nations Population Fund. (2021). *43 percent of Namibia's population live in multidimensional poverty, MPI reveals*. <https://namibia.unfpa.org/en/news/43-percent-namibias-population-live-multidimensional-poverty-mpi-reveals>

World Bank. (2015). *Incheon Declaration: Education 2030: Towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all*. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/167341467987876458/pdf/101711-WP-Box393265B-PUBLIC-incheon-declarationADD-ALL-LANGUAGES.pdf>

World Bank. (2018). *Human capital: A project for the world*. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/793421540087227031/pdf/Human-Capital-A-Project-for-the-World.pdf>

World Bank. (2024). *Human capital for more jobs: Connecting people to work and creating entrepreneurs*. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/6896f749b92b55373c3f6e-a8719e7319-0140012025/original/Jobs.pdf>

World Bank. (2025). *Namibia poverty and equity brief: October 2025*. (World Bank Brief No. 200715). <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/099246304222513204#:~:text=Namibia%20experienced%20significant%20welfare%20improvements,working%20age%20population>