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11. THE MANDELA LEGACY

Examined through the Shaping of Teacher and Teacher Education Policy in the Immediate Post-Apartheid South Africa Period (1994–1999)

INTRODUCTION

The late Nelson Mandela is regarded as a unique example of universal humaneness in the late 20th and early 21st century. He is endeared as an important political and historical figure whose legacy represents a beacon of hope in a deeply fragile, violent, and fragmented global world. For many individuals, organisations, and national governments, this legacy has become the moral compass to follow for durable and just solutions to complex conflicts.

Understandably in South Africa, approaching his legacy in this way is difficult as there is sparse literature and limited personal writing about Nelson Mandela's contribution to education. It is this that we explore in this contribution. We look at how Mandela's life examples and policy contributions provide instructional insights into educational policy change after 1994, paying particular attention to issues related to teaching and teachers in that period.

Nelson Mandela presided over the first post-democratic Cabinet of South Africa and it was during this tenure that a variety of post-apartheid education policies and decisions were taken. It was also during this time that critical knotty disputes emerged regarding how best to put teachers into schools where they were needed most, with a focus on quality education and how to make learning meaningful and relevant. It was further under Mandela's presidency and through the policies of his newly formed government that complex and contradictory decisions were taken on how to achieve equity alongside quality education and education access focused on equitable outcomes. Many of these contradictory policies continue to encumber current South African education policy. In the chapter we thus focus specifically on the unsuccessful post-apartheid teacher rationalisation and redeployment policies that have hindered successive government attempts to ensure that the best teachers are provided to those who need them most.

We begin with reflections on Mandela's personal education journey and his education philosophy. This is followed by a discussion of the key education policy of teacher rationalisation and rightsizing during his tenure as the first president of a newly democratic government (1994–1999). We conclude by drawing out some key

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aspects of education and teachers as a way of reflecting on Mandela's life, and his work as the first state president of the new South Africa.

MANDELA, EDUCATION, TEACHERS, AND POLITICS

There is little doubt that Nelson Mandela understood the enormous importance of teachers for the development of a fully democratic South Africa. From his youngest days as a schoolboy in Qunu, where Ms. Mdingane first gave him the Christian name Nelson, to his final years as benefactor of the Nelson Mandela Children's Foundation where he supported, among others, teacher development, Mandela understood the value of good teachers and the need to support them. This was based on the understanding that all those who achieve are invariably indebted to the work of one or other industrious teacher, and that on-going professional development and investment in learning is not only important for the individual growth of teachers but also crucial to the effectiveness of their teaching.

Equally, Mandela regarded the pursuit of education as fundamental to the worldview of all learners. In *Long Walk to Freedom*, he noted that for him education was more than "the great engine of personal development". Rather, it was through education that "the daughter of a peasant [in South Africa] can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation" (Mandela, 1995:166). For Mandela, education was the "most powerful weapon that could be used to change the world" (Mandela, 1995:166) – not only the lives of individuals, but of whole societies.

In the period preceding 1994, education within the anti-apartheid struggle was viewed as a fundamentally moral and political activity, and teachers were expected to stand on the side of social justice in performing their professional practice (Kallaway, 2002). This was not easy and for many conscientious teachers, teaching became a slow-burn activity where they were expected to light small candles in the minds of learners in the course of their lifelong educational journey. Approaching education as a form of personal growth and the bringing together of individual learning trajectories that were staggered and punctuated, teaching was about creating the coherent pedagogic activities that made learning meaningful and valuable, and about how to assist learners to recognise the different learning moments over their educational lifespans that connected them to others (and to learn from them).

It is this kind of teaching approach that had also influenced Mandela's formal learning, as he notes in *Long Walk to Freedom*:

> I had no epiphany, no singular revelation, no moment of truth, but a steady accumulation of a thousand slights, a thousand indignities and a thousand unremembered moments produced in me an anger, a rebelliousness, a desire to fight the system that imprisoned my people. (Mandela, 1995:95)

Mandela vividly describes this evolutionary experience as one where hope, humanity, morality, and pragmatism slowly took form and shape within both his

thinking and his everyday practice. Three life moments and educational journeys especially capture this.

Firstly, in acknowledging the value of teachers to his development, Mandela emphasised in *Long Walk to Freedom* that teaching is not always a benign force for good, but rather a journey of political socialisation. For example, his attitude to Ms. Mdingane giving him an English name was that it was part of the customary British bias of the education system that assumed that British ideas, British culture, and British institutions were automatically superior: “I looked on the white man not as an oppressor but as a benefactor. For me there was no such thing as African culture” (Mandela, 1995:30).

Mandela noted, however, that as he moved on to university and was exposed to the poetry and writings of Mqhayi and Matthews, he began to question his assumptions about ‘the black man’s role in a white man’s world’ (Mandela, 1995:12). This led to an initial immersion in a form of nationalism that he hoped would liberate African communities. This educational journey continued as his struggles within the anti-apartheid movement gained momentum and as he worked with a range of different individuals, as well as when he came into contact with a different range of people and ideas on Robben Island when he was incarcerated. In this respect, Mandela realised the importance of both knowing one’s history and acknowledging its inter-relatedness with those of others. For him, education was a double-edged sword that could oppress as much as it liberated, free as much as it ensnared, and thus the value of teachers invariably lay in where they stood on matters of social justice.

A second life moment was when, as a young adult, his guardian arranged his marriage. Rather than abide by his guardian’s arrangement, young Mandela instead ran away to Johannesburg and enrolled for and completed his Bachelor of Arts degree through correspondence at the University of South Africa. He subsequently convinced his elder that his yearning to ‘make a difference’ was important to him and that he should be allowed to study further. He went on to study law at the University of Witwatersrand, a degree that was interrupted by his involvement in the ANC. Although he did not complete his LLB (which he only attained in 1989), he completed enough within his apprenticeship to open a legal practice in Johannesburg with his friend Oliver Tambo. These were the years that his real education took place, where he worked within and with the different communities of South Africa, and took what he had learned at university and in meetings and practised it within his various engagements with them. For Mandela, education did not simply have utilitarian value. It provided him with forms of knowledge and thinking that developed his own self-awareness, as well as his responsibility to others.

A third life moment was his teaching and learning experiences at Robben Island in the 1960s. In providing legal advice to prisoners and prison staff, Mandela’s love for education and its emancipatory effects led to Robben Island quickly becoming known as the Nelson Mandela University. Learning there was about deep discussions and debates and forms of abstract thinking, dialogue, and deliberation that became the lifeblood and sanity of both prisoners and prison staff. The experiences at Robben

Island were a reminder to Mandela that while resources mattered in education, good teaching and learning could take place in any context. Learning took place despite a lack of resources and in conditions of deep impoverishment and imprisonment.

Indeed, for Nelson Mandela it was in finding himself over his educational lifespan that he came to find others, to learn from them, and to develop ways of thinking that ultimately shaped how he addressed his term of presidency after 1994. Through his personal educational experiences he found that he could influence a great number of people around him. A compatriot Felix Balfour (Moore, 2013) described his interaction with him on Robben Island as follows: "As a lost youth generation that were bitter about what was happening, he both changed us and guided us."

It is this policy approach to education and teaching after 1994, one that sought to move beyond just meeting learning attainment measures, that most illustrates how Mandela addressed his term of presidency. With a firm focus on social justice, teaching and teachers were seen as more than simply drilling in the 3Rs or developing pedagogies for the poor as prescribed by many policy pundits.

Where Mandela's presidency struggled was how to position these approaches alongside a focus on the importance of examination results as a gateway to future progress. As such, policy intentions and policy implementation did not easily connect. In the next section we analyse policies on teacher rationalisation and rightsizing initiated after 1994, that were geared towards educational change but which struggled to achieve the intended aims.

MANDELA AS THE FIRST LEADER OF TEACHER TRANSFORMATION IN POST- APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

In presiding over the first Cabinet charged with the task of South Africa's reconstruction and development, Nelson Mandela set in motion a number of educational policies after 1994 aimed at bringing about fundamental change. Sayed et al. (2013, 2015) identify more than 170 policy texts generated between 1994 and 2012.

Arguably, the first post-apartheid period under President Mandela was the most significant because it required the creation of legislation and frameworks to redress the legacy of the historic colonial and oppressive apartheid system, and to transform a deeply unequal education system. In that respect, the most noteworthy of policy texts during Mandela's tenure was perhaps the White Paper on Education and Training (NDoE, 1995), which focused on transforming the education and training system, redressing educational inequalities, and promoting equity in the distribution of resources and democratic governance.

As part of the above processes teacher redeployment and rationalisation was touted as one of the more ambitious attempts at educational change at that time. It is a process that has received substantially less attention than other dramatic changes, such as outcomes-based education (OBE), and offers important insights into some of the complex contradictions that characterised educational change in that period.

The Policy

Notably, the state undertook to rationalise and rightsize the deployment and recruitment of teachers in the period 1994 to 1999 as part of an overall process of reframing the system of teacher governance in South Africa. This included rationalising, redeploying, and redistributing teachers within the system (the main focus on this chapter), while at the same time rightsizing teacher remuneration so that it no longer reflected racial and gender inequities, and restructuring the teacher education system in ways that incorporated teacher colleges into the higher education system.

The focus on reframing the system of teacher governance emanated partly from findings and recommendations in the National Teacher Audit of 1995, which highlighted fragmentation in the provision of teacher education, with a mismatch between teacher supply and demand (on the basis of race and ethnicity) and high numbers of unqualified teachers in the system. One of the main findings of the audit at that time was that teacher supply and utilisation policies remained predicated on premises and assumptions that were racially and ethnically based (Hofmeyr & Hall, 1996).

As such, the teacher rationalisation programme sought to achieve even-handedness in the system through a more equitable distribution of teachers across different schools and provinces. Teachers that were unwilling to move to other schools were able to apply for voluntary severance packages (VSPs), for which a targeted cost of around R600 million was allocated (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). Crouch and Perry (2003:480) describe the process in the following way:

> The rationalization plan was to be phased in over a maximum of five years, effective as of 1 April 1995. As a first step, the national teacher: pupil ratio of 40:1 for primary schools and 35:1 for secondary schools was set. It was agreed that rationalization would proceed in two stages: The first would be a limited-period where Voluntary Severance Packages (VSPs) were offered. It was decided that teachers who wanted to opt out of the system rather than accept redeployment, would be paid out by government. However, those who took this option would never again be able to work in the public service. Also, VSPs were not a right. It was agreed that the government would retain the power to approve or reject applications for VSPs. Teachers with critical skills like Mathematics would not be given the option of a VSP. The second and preferred stage would be the redeployment of teachers – compulsorily if necessary.

The success of this approach to teacher governance depended on certain stipulated conditions pertaining to service adjustment packages being met, amended pupil-teacher ratios being instituted, and redeployment and voluntary severance packages (VSPs) arranged in ways that would facilitate the premature retirement of teachers that were seen as surplus at some schools. Thus, it needed the steady introduction

of a policy of redeployment and rationalisation by the Department of Education with firm support from the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) and teacher unions (Chisholm, 2004a; Vally & Tleane, 2001:184). At the heart of the process was a belief that rationalisation would create spaces for other teachers.

In the end however, most commentators agreed that while there was an urgent need for this approach to 'teacher equality' in schools, the timing of the process and the chosen courses of action for change were problematic. Vally and Tleane (2001:186) were of the view that "in some cases the blanket approach to redeployment actually undermined the intended beneficiaries, that is, historically disadvantaged communities and schools." Furthermore, in "white communities (particularly) the policy was seen as a means of getting rid of the best teachers to the detriment of the system as a whole" (Vally & Tleane, 2001:185).

Moreover, the policy also fared quite poorly in terms of its aims and attached costs. This pertained both to the large number of VSPs applied for, as well as the slow movement of redeployed teachers. Statistics supplied by a South African Institute of Race Relations Report (1998:520) noted that:

> By April 1997, more than 19 000 teachers had applied for voluntary severance packages, with close to 16 000 teachers granted packages at a total cost of R1.05 billion to the government. Also, although some 24 000 redeployment opportunities had been gazetted, no information was available on the number of redeployments that had taken place. While at least 5 000 teachers had been redeployed according to the Department's estimates, up to 10 000 still needed to be redeployed, especially into posts that had been provisionally filled by temporary teachers (Personal communication with Mr Duncan Hindle, Department of Education, 12 January 1998).

To add to this, as observed by the South African Institute of Race Relations (1998:524), the policy proved very costly:

> Mr Ihron Rensburg, the Deputy Director General of education, stated in June 1997 that the delay in implementing the teacher redeployment policy was costing the state R47 million a month as salaries were being paid to temporary teachers in posts reserved for redeployed teachers and to excess teachers awaiting redeployment.

At some point, in fact as early as January 1998, provincial departments of education had to take the decision to shelve the appointment of temporary teachers, as their budgets at the time would no longer allow them to employ such teachers even on a part-time basis. This led to as many as 43 000 teachers being affected, prompting the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) to challenge a system that they had initially sanctioned. Their key concern was that teachers that had been employed by the state for many years regardless of their qualifications were now suddenly out of jobs because the state could not square its developmental goals with proper financial backing.

Policy Consequences

By all accounts, the rationalisation and redeployment policy did not unfold as planned, with several unintended and perhaps unanticipated consequences.

Firstly, it was not anticipated that such a large number of teachers would take VSPs, leading to massive overspending by the provinces. With 16 000 VSPs approved in 1997, the estimated cost at a very early stage was already almost double its targeted budget of R600 million. It was estimated that "rightsizing cost provincial education departments almost R47 million a month, with salaries in some provinces consuming as much as 90% of the total education budget – leaving little money for other items such as textbooks" (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1998:585).

The key problem was that a number of mistaken assumptions were made about how teachers behave and respond to policy imperatives. For instance, the policy assumed that teachers would understand and support the rationale to adjust learner-teacher ratios in the context of increasing budget costs, especially given the need for salary parity of all teachers. The reality, however, was that the idea of redeployment for many teachers was simply unpalatable, with many being deeply uncomfortable with moving across school boundaries that under apartheid had been circumscribed by race. Crucially, the policy for many teachers was very unclear and had not been fully explained, so teachers were never sure about what they were actually agreeing to.

Secondly, the policy unsurprisingly split teacher unions along clear racial lines (Whittle, 2008), provoking widespread protests and leading to unions threatening national strike action. It also led to many teachers, bearing the emotional scars of teaching under apartheid, reacting bitterly by either taking the VSPs or by claiming to be unable or unwilling to carry out their expected duties (Chudnovsky, 1998).

Thirdly, teachers taking VSPs were generally those with higher qualifications, skills and experience (Jansen & Taylor, 2003). The policy thus led to the loss of large numbers of senior and experienced teachers or principals, who also had invariably worked in the most disadvantaged areas. Given that the buy-outs were geared to be more attractive to those within the education system, many teachers in disadvantaged areas could not pass up the incentives that were being provided (Chudnovsky, 1998). To add to this, the redeployment policy further made it easier for teachers to be reallocated to schools with more diverse curricula, or schools with established mathematics, science, and technology programmes which in most cases were former white schools. It meant that redeployed teachers rarely got sent to schools in disadvantaged areas (OECD, 2008), where they were needed more.

Fourthly, an unanticipated consequence of the policy was that several permanent changes emerged with regard to the character, distribution, and supply of teachers in South Africa. In the period between 1999 and 2004 the rationalisation policy contributed to a steady decline and stagnation in the number of employed teachers, which was worsened by a decline in the number of young teachers entering the system. While the latter was admittedly mainly tied to the merging and closure of

teacher colleges and to the spatial and 'racially determined' challenges tied to them, the decline in initial teacher education (ITE) enrolments from 71 000 to as little as 10 000 in the period 1994 to 2000 created serious challenges for the restructured system.

Fifthly, one of the key goals of the new teacher governance system was to rightsize the education sector in ways that improved salaries and working conditions for educators. Thus black teachers that had attained four years of post-secondary education experienced very real pay increases in the region of 25% in the mid-1990s (Gustafsson & Patel, 2008). The challenge however was that the sharp increase in the unit cost per teacher post-1994 generated considerable constraints for the public education system, making it considerably more challenging to maintain learner-teacher ratios (Gustafsson & Patel, 2008). The equity-guided rightsizing intervention thus stretched the system of teacher governance to its limits.

Sixthly, the most obvious blind spot of the rationalisation and rightsizing policy was that it failed to recognise how other policies, such as the South African Schools Act of 1996, would undermine its implementation with regard to teachers. A case in point was when Grove Primary School, on behalf of 40 former Model C schools in the Western Cape, instituted a court appeal in June 1997 that challenged the government's redeployment policy (Vally & Tleane, 2001:190–191), claiming "its right to free and efficient administration" (Motala, 1997). Grove Primary School argued that its governing body had the legal power to employ whomsoever was best suited to the job – as per the powers conferred upon governing bodies in terms of the South African Schools Act of 1996 – and that the ELRC resolutions unlawfully restricted their powers. The state argued in court that rationalisation was constitutional, that redeployment was a key component of this imperative, and that School Governing Bodies could be legally compelled to employ teachers from redeployment lists (as noted in the ELRC manual).

The subsequent ruling by the Cape High Court, in favour of Grove Primary School, that the teacher redeployment programme as applied in the Western Cape was null and void and were beyond the powers of the National Ministry of Education, meant that the Western Cape Education MEC was thereafter able to open up the official Department lists of vacant posts to all teachers. While a settlement was later reached (in November 1997) where it was agreed that public schools would be allowed to reject unsuitable teachers from the lists and to advertise posts if no suitable redeployed teachers were available, many were deeply concerned about its repercussions for the rationalisation programme.

Indeed, this concern led to the state circumventing the Grove High Court ruling in December 1997 by passing the Education Laws Amendment Act. In essence it enabled the National Minister to

> determine requirements for the appointment, transfer, and promotion of all educators, and provide a process to enable public schools to make recommendations for the appointment, transfer, and promotion of educators

as a result of the operational requirements of the employer. (Vally & Tleane, 2001:191)

With regard to the rationalisation and redeployment programme however, what the Grove Primary School case most illustrated was how a progressively minded policy such as SASA, in seeking to give a variety of powers to schools, could be applied in ways that undermined state efforts to rightsize. More worryingly, it showed how policy could be used to fuel middle-class aggrandisement and further create and maintain privileged enclaves (Sayed, 2016, forthcoming).

Finally, the behaviour and capacity of key actors was not adequately taken into account. There was a failure to anticipate that teachers – especially those from well-resourced schools – would not voluntarily move to schools that were inadequately resourced. This meant that under-resourced schools had to often employ temporary teachers that were not as skilled or committed as was required (Chisholm, 2004b).

A further challenge was that the emerging system did not foresee that many school principals would not have the necessary professional expertise nor the skill and diplomacy to oversee processes of selecting teachers to be redeployed, leaving many teachers deeply demotivated, isolated and feeling victimised. Principals also struggled with the protracted waiting periods attached to redeployment, often having to deal with absurd situations where two teachers were appointed to the same post at their schools.

In the text above we tried to show how a well-intentioned policy meant to rationalise and rightsize the composition of the teaching corps in South Africa, even with strong political will and a clear commitment to transformation, struggled to gain traction in schools and thereby unseat deep-seated inequities. Beyond salary adjustment the policy ultimately failed to achieve its main intended goals of transforming the teaching force. As such the 'progressive' redeployment policies came to be overtaken by the greater need to "rationalise aggregate numbers of educator personnel in the system as a whole". This, according to Motala and Singh (2001:5), was tied to serious deficiencies in policy reform implementation thinking at that time.

In the next section, we ask what this means for the Mandela legacy, which by all accounts sought to generate processes that were purposeful, humane, and transformative.

COULD THE MANDELA EDUCATION AND TEACHER LEGACY HAVE RESULTED IN RADICAL TRANSFORMATION?

The Mandela legacy should not only be understood according to the personal vision and humanity of a truly great person. It should also be analysed, as this chapter argues, by the actions of the new government that came into being in 1994, headed by a state president who had spent his entire life struggling to overcome colonialism and apartheid in a deeply divided and unequal society. In this respect, there are five

aspects that bear mentioning in relation to on-going efforts to transform the teaching force and teaching in South Africa, efforts that ought to be ensuring equitable quality and lifelong education for all.

One, achieving policy goals requires more than vision and intention. It needs more than policies in the form of White Papers, legislation, acts, and guidance notes. Instead, it requires the charting of clear and decisive overarching transformation pathways, especially for education. The transformation path in education after 1994 should have ensured that there was an active strategy of redistribution from the rich to the poor, and from the privileged to the marginalised. This strategy should have created the basis of recognition and representation that laid the foundation for just and durable reconciliation. In its place, without an active strategy that sought to eradicate inequity in society, a pathway was pursued that prioritised symbols of a new society – such as the new flag or a victorious rugby team – as symbols of reconciliation, important as these were and are.

In education, for instance, it required a strategy for teachers that paid due attention to how teacher identity had been historically shaped by patterns of division, racism, and inequity, identities that were often impervious to calls to act in the interests of the common good. As the rationalisation and rightsizing policy subsequently demonstrated, teachers could in fact act in quite retrogressive and self-interested ways. What this policy revealed is that policies that simply expect teachers to behave differently are likely to fail if they don't address the deep-seated structural investments that teachers have in systems of privilege, and the extent to which their senses of identity and belonging are raced, classed and gendered.

Two, there is a need when generating new policy to fully understand the work of teachers in historical, political, and sociological ways. This discourages the development of teacher policies that simplistically follow global and other national prescriptions such as scripted pedagogies, the establishment of systems of teacher incentives, teacher accountability, teacher licensing, performance-related pay, and teacher contracts. While such prescriptions may offer politically appealing policy sound-bytes, what they do not always provide is a clear sense of what is feasible in different contexts.

Indeed, while there is little doubt that teachers in South Africa are often as much part of the problem as they are part of the solution, simplistic, quick fix education prescriptions will not shift the bifurcated and unequal two-nation education system. It is really only when teachers and teaching are addressed as part of a set of systemic reforms that seek to overcome the growing fragmentation of the public education, that teachers will be able to play meaningful roles in education transformation.

Three, transformation is significantly more difficult when accompanied by a flurry of new and different policies, acts, and structures. As mentioned earlier in the text, Mandela's tenure as State President was marked by a flurry of green and white papers that sought to effect change in a number of key areas in education. These included the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act in 1995, the South African Schools Act (SASA) and National Education Policy Act (NEPA) in 1996,

the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and Higher Education Act in 1997, and the Further Education and Training (FET) Act and Employment of Educators Act in 1998.

During Mandela's tenure the education system also witnessed the emergence of a variety of new structures, role players, and authoritative bodies that had attached to them commissions and task teams that had legislative authority grounded in the interim Constitution. These included statutory and non-statutory councils such as the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and the South African Council for Educators (SACE). The goal of all the above frameworks was to lay the basis for an education system that would overcome the previously fragmented and racially and ethnically divided education system. Indeed, the common refrain for all of the different policies and structures was that transformation would be achieved in and through education, and that it was through teachers that the creation of a new society and critical civic-minded citizens would be accomplished.

Yet, the vexing question remains why these policies and structures did not effect equity and redress in and through education? A variety of authors have offered explanations, some noting that it was simply an exercise in symbolic policy making (Jansen, 2002), that it was due to a lack of capacity (Sayed & Kanjee, 2013), or that the macro-transformation path lacked an overarching and clear conceptualisation of inequality (Sayed et al., 2015). But what these explanations don't clarify is why, notwithstanding significant political will and support, the new government did not act decisively in instituting a narrow and specific range of interventions that unbundled the system of privilege that characterised the apartheid education system.

Part of the answer, in reappraising Mandela's legacy in education, is that the new government was overly underpinned by a leader-driven vision that prioritised reconciliation over redistribution and privileged deracialisation at the expense of eroding class-based inequities. Indeed, the new government's approach was to first formalise forms of recognition and representation within policy and within systemic structures before engaging with issues of redistribution or reconciliation. This was best captured by the formulation of a South African crest that was committed to unity in diversity and that symbolically envisioned a new society rooted in benign multiculturalism in which the 'other' was reified and protected. It is argued it was this policy approach that hindered education transformation in South Africa, and that laid the basis for the emergence of a largely self-interested deracialised middle class in South Africa that currently seems disinterested in transformation.

Four, one of the more telling aspects of Mandela's legacy in government is how different progressive policies contradicted each other, putting a brake on radical transformation approaches. For example, two progressive education policy intentions were pursued after 1994, the one to increase participation and commitment through the devolution of school authority (Sayed, 2016), and the other to centrally rationalise and redeploy teachers. The problem is that the two approaches often nullified each other in important instances, as some school governing bodies could use the powers

accorded to them by the South African Schools Act (SASA) to thwart efforts to alter the previous character and composition of the teaching force at their schools. Equity as an overriding concern should have trumped other policy intentions, but this was not the case as the two policies pulled in quite different directions. This is perhaps the most revealing fault line of the first democratically elected government, namely its inability or unwillingness to take a firm interventionist stance in the interests of achieving acceptable margins of equity. Duncan Hindle, a key SADTU leader and previous Deputy-Director-General and subsequently Director-General of the Department of Education (becoming the Department of Basic Education in 2009), later noted that:

> Our most valuable resource, also our most expensive, is the one we have least control over in terms of deployment and utilisation. This has been perhaps the biggest impediment to the achievement of greater quality: teaching skills have remained locked up within a few institutions across our country. The best trained, most qualified and experienced teachers are inevitably attracted to the best-resourced schools, where facilities are abundant and there are layers of support. The ability of schools to choose their teachers, and of teachers to choose their schools, has seriously detracted from the pursuit of equity, and must be reviewed. No large organisation gives employees the choice of which branch office they will work at, even though there may be some attempt to accommodate wishes if possible. But the interests of the organisation must supersede those of the employee in the final decision! (Hindle in Sayed et al., 2013:532)

Five, the development of multiple policies needs to always directly engage with educational realities. In the case of South Africa, extensive policy activity after 1994 invariably did not recognise the extent of change required within the educational system and instead placed unrealistic demands on teachers in struggling schools. It also meant for example that a policy such as outcomes based education (OBE), which depended on all teachers being willing to pursue a new approach and to develop new skills and abilities to do so, struggled to gain proper traction. This was both because many divisions of the past had not been resolved, and the past and prior experiences and training of teachers working in disadvantaged schools had not been taken into account. Had the long reach of the past into the new future been recognised, a more targeted and focused education policy agenda (with focused interventions) might have more effectively realised the key goal of equity and redress.

Reading Mandela as a teacher and reading parts of his biography as important teaching moments, and then reappraising his contribution to education in relation to his tenureship over the first democratic government, reveals a complex picture of ambitious policy intentions rubbing up against debilitating historical legacies. It highlights how multiple policy intentions and goals, can easily generate contradictory and unintended tensions, hindering successful policy implementation. It reveals

that when tackling deep-seated privilege and inequality it is enormously difficult to pinpoint a singular policy silver bullet, or radical transformative strategy, 'for the long march to transformation'.

Moreover, while getting the better teachers into schools that need them most may be a difficult and complex process, it remains the most important transformational imperative if learning in the most challenged schools is to be meaningful for learners, and if education is to re-ignite in them the spirited, imaginative, creative, and boundless thirst for knowledge and understanding that was envisaged by Nelson Mandela through his lifetime.

Tackling privilege in education in South Africa requires proactive redistribution strategies to open the doors of learning and teaching for all, not only for those that are rich and able. Only when this kind of transformative thinking happens in education will South African policies finally speak to Nelson Mandela's iconic status as a moral compass to those working towards durable and just solutions in societies seeking to tackle deep-seated historic and structural inequities.

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