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## PRIORITY STUDY AREAS UNDER THE ANC EDUCATION PROGRAMME - DISCUSSION PAPER

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### 1. Education - A definition

It may seem odd that a discussion on priority areas of study under the ANC Education programme should be pre-empted with a discussion regarding how education is to be defined. Yet there is a very good reason for this method of approach. Before there can be consensus regarding what education is and what it is for, it is well nigh impossible to agree how to prioritise areas of study within the ANC Education Programme.

It is important to point out that there is no general consensus among educationists as to what education is or how education is to be defined. This being so educationists invariably resort to producing their own views regarding what they think education is. It is crucial to understand this as it is essential to avoid regarding the views of any educationists as final. Consistent with what I have said thus far, I shall now attempt my own explanation of what education is.

The first point I want to make is that Education is a process involving imparting and receiving knowledge. There is always the dual relation between the educator or teacher and the taught or the recipient of the education or knowledge. Knowledge being understood as the cultivation of skills, know how or expertise in the different branches of human understanding. It is essential to grasp from the outset that the skill, expertise or know-how that are transmitted by the educator to the student are regarded as desirable and worthwhile because of their usefulness or utility for society. Modern Society does not teach alchemy or witchcraft because they are not thought of as performing any useful purpose to society. This point, which may seem pedantic is of utmost importance. For many generations man has been bedeviled by intellectual cohorts making the claim that there is such a thing as knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Although this myth has been hard to destroy and has survived for far too long it is nevertheless an intellectual fraud that no self-respecting revolutionary movement should allow itself to be hoodwinked by it. The position is fairly simple; education is the cultivation of skills, expertise and know-how among the young in preparation for

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their leading useful lives in the life of the community. The type of education chosen by each society is that thought to be useful to the needs of that society. Education is not value-free. Science which has for centuries claimed to be a value-free study has suppressed the crucial truth about it - which is that it is undertaken as a study because it has been found to be useful to man. It has contributed tremendously to improving the quality of life of man on this planet. Man does not just seek to understand natural laws and how they work, but, more importantly, how these can be put to the service of man - that is bestowing a value on science. To quote from Keorapetse Kgositse, every piece of knowledge 'finally affirms, proposes or opposes certain values'.

## 2. Priority study areas under the ANC Education Programme

The recognition of the fact that education is regarded as having value because of its usefulness to society, compels us to examine possible priority study areas under the ANC Education Programme in the context of the ANC basic policy document - The Freedom Charter. The ANC man-power training programme must be seen to relate directly to the envisaged revolutionary government take-over in South Africa. It would be most unfortunate if the ANC were to attain victory in South Africa and be unable to carry out an effective economic takeover of the South African Economy because of lack of suitably trained manpower.

The Freedom Charter makes it quite clear where our priorities in education training should be. These must be perceived as follows:

A. Massive training programme for Engineers: Mining Engineers, civil engineers, electrical engineers, computer engineers and all other related engineering skills.

We cannot hope to effectively take over the mining industries in South Africa as recommended by the Freedom Charter in the third clause of its provisions and avoid the responsibility of training people in the most relevant fields and specialities.



**B. Massive training programme for industrialists and economists:**

Economists Analytical and descriptive, Mathematical Economists, Monetary Economists, Industry and Trade specialists, International Trade and Development specialists, Accounting and Finance specialists, Government specialists, sociologists, statisticians, computing specialists, international relations experts, industrial relations specialists and other related disciplines connected with the effective running of commerce and industry.

This is a duty imposed upon us by the Freedom Charter when it further declares at its third clause that 'the mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole.

**C. Massive Training programme for Agricultural Scientists.**

Agricultural Scientists, Agricultural economists, soil scientists specialists in Geography and geology and all areas of study that would be consistent with the effective take over of the land. As the Freedom Charter says, 'The land shall be shared among those who work it'. How can this part of our programme be implemented if we know nothing about land management, production, soil analysis and crop cultivation. This area deserves serious attention if we are to have a nation capable of feeding itself.

**D. Massive Training Programmes for Medical Personnel:**

Medical doctors, Medical technicians, radiographers, medical nurses (at all levels), bio-chemists, chemists, laboratory technicians, physiotherapists, specialists for the mentally ill, eye specialists, ear specialists, nose specialists, dentists, brain surgeons, micro-biologists and all other technicians related to medical science.

It is imperative that our students be sponsored for training in these fields if the provision of the Freedom Charter requiring that in an independent South Africa.

"A preventive health scheme shall be run by the state;

Free medical care and hospitalisation shall be provided for all, with special care for mothers and young children'.  
and also that

'the aged, the orphans, the disabled and the sick shall be cared for by the state'.



The four areas for high prioritising as areas of study indicated above do not purport to represent an exhaustive list. Obviously other areas of priority will be identified. All that is my main concern is that the ANC start seriously paying attention to this question. Whilst there is nothing wrong in students choosing to study what they prefer, it is imperative that, as long as their studies are under ANC sponsorship, they exercise their choice within the eventual needs of our liberation effort.

It should be emphasised that this whole issue of educational training should be treated as deserving urgent consideration and decision. At the present time the ANC enjoys generous support throughout the international community whilst we still remain a liberation movement. And it is on this basis that our students receive sponsorship for their studies all over the world. As soon as we receive independence in South Africa all this will no longer be possible to the same degree. As an independent Government we will be required to finance the education of our own students. It is only prudent to act urgently and take advantage of our present favourable circumstances.

Paper Prepared by M.S. Choabi  
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