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12. PROJECTS

12.1 ARCHIVES

As has been noted, one of the initial objectives of the Batlagae Trust was to facilitate the return of educational archival material belonging to the liberation movements from abroad, and to arrange for its safe return to South Africa and its placement at Fort Hare University. The Batlagae Trust was instrumental in coordinating the return of a container of educational archives from Tanzania in September 1992. With the help of FINNIDA, the Batlagae Trust has arranged to fund an archivist to work at the University where the material must be unpacked, catalogued and indexed. Plans are also underway to establish a museum in addition to the archives centre at Fort Hare University. The Batlagae Trust will also be involved in a major research project on educational institutions set up by the liberation movements in exile and the documentation of some of their experiences.

12.2 YEOVILLE COMMUNITY EDUCATION PROJECT

The partnership between government and private institutions in realising the Yeoville Community Education Project is a pioneering venture which will set an important precedent for future educational provision in the country.

12.2.1 YEOVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

In August 1992, the Batlagae Trustees decided to remove a number of students from several street academies where their working environment was proving intolerable and the standard of their education unsatisfactory. In order to constructively address the problem of where to place these students, the Batlagae Trust, in close collaboration with several education institutions in Johannesburg (in particular Sacred Heart College, a leading and independent primary and secondary school), consulted with the state, with the support of the local community, in order to establish a much needed local primary school in Yeoville, an inner city area of Johannesburg. The proposal was approved and official permission given for the establishment of the school.

The Yeoville Community School will be a state-aided, community pre-primary and primary school of about 400 to 450 Students. It will be largely self-financing because teachers' salaries will be paid for by the state and a substantial proportion of the running costs will be covered by the fees which the local children will be required to pay. (Batlagae Trust bursars will continue to be subsidised.) Subsidisation of the school by the state will not jeopardize the autonomy of the school in any way. The school will aim to meet the urgent educational and social needs of returned political

exile children as well as those of the local black community.

A working group has already been established and operating for some time as an interim decision making body responsible for staff appointments, student assessments, selections and enrolments, as well as general administrative procedures. The working group will be replaced by an elected community structure early in 1993.

12.2.2 THE YEOVILLE EDUCATIONAL POLYCLINIC

An integral part of the Yeoville Community School's design will be the establishment of an educational polyclinic to provide vital academic and social support to students. The concept of the educational polyclinic is a unique one and forms part of a broader programme of community outreach envisaged by the Yeoville Community Education Project.

The educational polyclinic will be centrally located and will function as an autonomous, though integral clinic, providing vital social and educational services to the students from both the community school and surrounding local schools.

There is a significant need for the polyclinic and the services (assessment, psychological counselling and remedial assistance) and expertise that it will make accessible. This was confirmed by a taskforce of educational experts who visited Tanzania in 1991 to perform a situation analysis before the repatriation of exiles began on a mass scale. The task force was unanimous in its prediction that it would be vital for the returning exile children to receive extensive counselling support if they were to overcome the psychological and educational difficulties that would inevitably accompany their re-integration into South African schools and society.

The staff of the educational polyclinic will initially include a Director (who is also a social worker), a psychologist, two remedial teachers, a bursaries officer, a secretary and a copy typist. At a later stage the staffing could be expanded to include an additional psychologist, speech therapist and occupational therapist. Services will include counselling, educational remediation, psychometric testing, social and health issues, speech therapy and whatever related services may be needed. Where necessary, the services of outside professionals will be commissioned and paid for on a part-time basis.

Many schools in the city are "opening" their doors to the more talented black students, but continue to exclude the majority of the black population. These schools have already signalled their urgent need for assistance in social integration and education issues. The Yeoville Community Educational Polyclinic aims to develop a profile of expertise in these areas, and will generally assist in the desegregation process in other Johannesburg schools.

In summary, the Yeoville Education Project offers a unique opportunity to meet the urgent academic and social needs of both returned exile children as well as inner city community children. In meeting these needs, available physical facilities will be maximised and the considerable experience and expertise which has been built up in integrated education will be drawn together. Once the school has been established, it will be able to support itself in terms of government subsidies and fees and has an excellent chance of offering high quality education and a supportive environment to students at a minimal cost to the community. The school and its network will serve as a model for other inner City schools in South Africa. The educational polyclinic will not only provide the returnee and local students with vital remedial and counselling support, but will also make these and related services accessible to the community, thereby fulfilling the broader community outreach programme envisaged.

12.3 EDITH HIND SCHOOL

Consultations took place with the Department of National Education with a view to the Batlagae Trust starting a technical secondary school on the premises of the Edith Hind school which closed in 1991 due to the declining enrolment of white students. The Batlagae Trust considers these premises to be a potentially useful facility for both returned exiles and local youth in the Johannesburg area.

12.4 COUNSELLING PROJECT

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, it became very clear that it was necessary to establish a counselling and advisory programme to help students and their parents overcome some of the very considerable emotional and psychological traumas induced by the re-integration process, and also to provide them with practical advice on a range of matters. It was also very clear, that the counselling and advisory programme would have to be very comprehensive and extensive in nature and would have to be established on a national level - a daunting task to accomplish.

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