



SOUTHERN AFRICA FREEDOM THROUGH EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Promoting Freedom through Academic Understanding

200 Eshleman Hall U.C. Berkeley Berkeley CA 94720

The Southern African Freedom Through Education Foundation was established to provide scholarship assistance to South African and Namibian students wishing to pursue post-secondary degrees at colleges and universities in Northern California. SAFTE participants include religious, student, community, and anti-apartheid leaders, as well as university and college administrators and faculty. SAFTE has received seed funding from the University of California at Berkeley administration, and includes Dr. Allan Boesak on its Board of Trustees.

The attached information outlines the rationale for establishing SAFTE, as well as its aims and objectives. Inquiries may be addressed to the following individuals, at the address indicated on the letterhead:

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Problem Statement - D R A F T

Apartheid and Education

The white minority government imposes an educational system on the majority black populations in South Africa and Namibia which--as a matter of stated policy--is designed to reinforce and perpetuate white domination by preparing black children for economically and politically subordinate positions.

When the Afrikaners, through the Nationalist Party, came to power in 1948, they began to legalize the apartheid system. H.F. Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs (who later became Prime Minister) stated their education policy in 1953: "Native education. . . should accord with the policy of the state. . . There is no place for [the Native] in the European community above certain forms of labor." The legislation which codified South Africa's de facto educational system was the Bantu Education Act of 1953. Designed to make it impossible for the black child to compete on equal terms with the white child, it has very successfully denied the black population the opportunity to advance in the professional and technical sectors. Today we are seeing the results of this system.

The quality of public education offered to blacks is extremely poor, both in absolute terms and relative to that provided whites in South Africa and Namibia. The 1984 per capita expenditure for white children was R1654; for black children it was R234.45. There is a 1:40.7 teacher/child ratio in black schools; a 1:18.9 ratio in white schools. Teachers in black schools are undertrained, underpaid and overworked.

Blacks are largely denied the opportunity to pursue degrees in technical, scientific and managerial fields. A quota system is used to allow limited numbers into the professions which serve blacks--mid-level teachers, nurses and social workers. An even smaller number are allowed to train in the high level professions which serve blacks--lawyers, doctors, professors. There are almost five times more blacks than whites in South Africa, yet there are 200,000 white university graduates, and only 5400 black university graduates. This paucity of educational opportunities has led to the existing and future deficiency in mid and high level black personnel ~~who will be crucial~~ if majority rule is to be an actuality.

Black Demands for an Equitable Education System

Blacks have long protested their inferior education. Those that could afford it sent their children to private--primarily religious--primary and secondary schools. A limited number trained overseas. (It must be noted that while primary and secondary education is free to whites, blacks must pay public school fees, for uniforms and for books.) Resistance to Bantu Education reached a major turning point in 1976 when the Soweto Student Rebellion catalyzed uprisings throughout the country. The government responded ruthlessly.

The widescale protests against apartheid over the last two years have often been dominated by students. Student boycotts are so commonplace, and the resistance so strong, that the government now uses military troops to occupy the schools that remain open. Over 26,000 people have been arrested since August 1984; 40% of these are students under the age of 18. Most of the major black student organizations have been banned.

So important is education to the black population, that students, teachers and parents formed the National Education Crisis Committee in 1985 in defiance of the government. It has developed--through widespread discussions--an alternative People's Curriculum for all phases of education. The government has targeted for arrest anyone seen using it. To prevent its use and to prevent the rise of student leaders, the military forces occupying the schools issue ID documents to students and teachers--only those with such badges are allowed into the schools; others are detained in the prisons.

Students as Refugees and Exiles

Since 1976, large numbers of students have chosen or have been forced to flee South Africa and Namibia rather than live with the constant threat of imprisonment and harrassment. Most of these have wanted to continue their education while living in exile. But the reality is that a great number carry no legal documents (the government controls who gets passports) and few are likely to have secondary school transcripts. These students live in refugee camps and are often isolated from the people in the Frontline States in which they have sought refuge.

Although the Frontline States have willingly offered support to refugees from South Africa and Namibia, these countries are victimized by South Africa's military and economic de-stabilization activities against them. They are also faced with their own educational and development problems and must concentrate on their own citizens. Thus the vast majority of black students living in exile in the Frontline States are unlikely to have the opportunity to pursue the training necessary in a post-apartheid South Africa and Namibia.

In recognition of the difficulties inherent in adequately educating a sufficient number of black students within South Africa, Namibia or the Frontline States, many nations have provided scholarship assistance to these students for a number of years. The U.S., however, has greatly lagged in this effort. A relatively small number of black South Africans and Namibians have been able to get the coveted scholarships. The educational resources in the U.S. can and should be made more broadly available to potential black students who lack the financial and legal resources to directly attend U.S. educational institutions.

While many people throughout the U.S. have been involved in anti-apartheid activities, especially at college and university campuses, the means of direct support to South Africans and Namibians struggling to dismantle apartheid have often been limited. The Southern Africa Freedom Through Education (SAFTE) offers an important channel for U.S. people to concretely demonstrate their support for the changes necessary to assure the dismantlement of apartheid and an accompanying democratic future (as defined by the people themselves) in South Africa and Namibia.

S.A.F.T.E. FUND

Challenges, Aims and Objectives

Having been formed in response to the Black educational crisis in Southern Africa, the central challenge facing SAFTE--as a California-based organization--is that it remain sensitive and responsive to the stated concerns and needs of the Black population in Southern Africa.

SAFTE's aims and objectives follow directly from our analysis of the many problems facing Namibians and South Africans, particularly those who are refugees and those who must live in exile.

SAFTE intends to work closely with U.N. agencies, private voluntary organizations, concerned governments, South African and Namibian community and student organizations, the South African and Namibian liberation movements, local colleges and universities, and committed individuals in pursuit of the following aims.

- SAFTE shall focus primarily on helping to expand the pool of Black South Africans and Namibians capable of filling the technical and managerial positions which will become available in an independent Namibia and a majority-ruled South Africa.
- By enabling Southern African refugees and exiles to receive training, SAFTE will provide some relief to the Frontline States (the neighboring countries surrounding South Africa). SAFTE seeks to complement the existing efforts of educational assistance undertaken by these countries which, by necessity, host the large Namibian and South African refugee populations.
- SAFTE shall, whenever appropriate, highlight the links between racism within the U.S. and Southern Africa. As a community-based organization, SAFTE will help combat the lingering effects of racial inequality in the U.S. by working with local educational assistance organizations.

To achieve these broad aims, SAFTE is emphasizing four objectives.

1. Establish an autonomous, non-governmental, self-sustaining scholarship and endowment fund.
2. Develop an Educational Support Program. SAFTE scholarship holders will be eligible to participate in either program component:
 - a. An alternative Vocational, Science and Management Training Program. This is a specially designed community college to university bridge incorporating tutorial and remedial instruction to prepare scholarship holders who may be deficient in certain skills (e.g., math or English).

- b. Professional Skills Development and Advanced Science Engineering Program. This program will target those fields from which Black South Africans and Namibians have been excluded in order to build up the middle and high level skilled personnel base.
3. Build a supportive social environment for SAFTE scholarship holders. Among the most pressing needs of Southern African refugees and exiles are assistance programs which include peer and professional counseling. SAFTE intends to combat the common feelings of loneliness and isolation of students by recruiting volunteers from among the Southern African exile community to act as counselors. SAFTE also intends to prevent the social and psychological isolation SAFTE scholarship holders may feel by introducing them to the community support base available to them.
4. Use community outreach to publicize the needs for improved educational opportunities in Southern Africa as well as the United States.

Means

We will establish the scholarship and endowment fund by using SAFTE's broad community base. We will concentrate on:

- Philanthropic and corporate foundation grants.
- Special events which will interlink with local educational organizations to produce concerts, benefit dinners, and other such feasible common activities.
- A drive to obtain individual memberships as well as organizational and corporate sponsors.

An on-going administrative structure will be established. It will use:

- paid staff (initially an Administrative Coordinator and Fundraiser).
- Board of Trustees with three components: ex-officio committee, advisory committee and governing committee.
- Volunteers to serve on committees and do outreach.
- Formal Liason Committee with responsibility for obtaining tuition waivers and entrance into community college/university bridge programs.
- Scholarship Committee with responsibility for outreach to potential students (within the U.S. and Southern Africa) as well as scholarship recipient recommendations.

A support network for scholarship holders will be created using conventional and novel approaches.

- Peer and professional counseling services.
- Direct "adoptions" by churches and community organizations.
- Interim adjustment activities with anti-apartheid activists and local Southern Africa community.
- Legal assistance (e.g., obtaining refugee status, student credentials, and meeting INS requirements).
- Housing and insurance assistance.
- Establishment of a SAFTE house as a hub for scholarship holders.

We will enlarge our community base. Currently SAFTE participants include religious, student, community, and anti-apartheid leaders, as well as university and college administrators and faculty. To broaden this base, we will:

- Link with school districts through classroom visits and concerts.
- Link with the religious community through our Martyr Memorial project and special church services and itineration of speakers.
- Link with the anti-apartheid movement in its many manifestations.
- Liason with community groups addressing similar educational problems and racial issues through educational forums and joint activities. Currently a Concert is being planned for Black History Month 1988 which will benefit SAFTE and the Richmond and Oakland school districts.