

## **The Educational Landscapes of the Zonnebloem Estate**

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Zonnebloem Estate's intended use for education was written into a trust that dates back to 1860 when the Anglican Church purchased the 150-acres old winery at the foot of Table Mountain for a native school. Sons and daughters of chiefs from the hinterlands – Basutoland, Zululand, Northern & Southern Rhodesia, Tanganyika – were brought to Zonnebloem College in the Cape of Good Hope (South Africa) for English language instruction, as well as Christian and industrial education. By 1913, Zonnebloem became predominantly a teacher's training institution for the mixed-race – in Apartheid language, the "Colored," Muslim population. Today the grounds of the former college continues to be a site of education, accommodating a high school and two primary schools established in the early 1990s by the NEST (Native English Speaking Teacher) program, the Children's Art Centre, and three NGOs.

While the literature has focused on the Apartheid state and its governmental policies and regulatory practices to explain race politics during South Africa's most transitive period, an examination of Zonnebloem's different educational landscapes throughout its history addresses key issues on the contributive factors of education and space in the process that shaped the political landscape, from the nineteenth century to today. From 1860 to 1900, Zonnebloem functioned as a site for transforming black Africans, so that they would return to the hinterlands with the Empire. The spatial arrangements and buildings – the classrooms, dining hall, residences, chapel, workshops, and the everyday activities, including speaking the Queen's language, training in the trades, dressing in European clothes, living closely to the British-style parliament buildings and botanic gardens, materially supported the educative process. Another aspect of the geopolitics in dealing with the native question was the influence of philanthropic organizations, namely the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which exerted cultural influence on the colonies from the metropole. When Zonnebloem became a training school for Colored teachers, from the end of the century to the 1980s, the site served as an active social space amidst the neighboring re-zoned, all-Whites areas under the Group Area Act of the Apartheid government. Today, the educational facilities are serving many students who travel far to Zonnebloem for a better quality education than families can find in the black townships.

The complex educational landscapes of Zonnebloem reflect the equally complex political and racial landscapes of South Africa. The physical and social spaces attest to the lived experiences of those whose lives they have shaped.