



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PSK ASSOCIATION SINCE THE CLOSURE OF THE SCHOOL IN 1986

By Tilman Friedrich, presented at the alumni reunion at the Sports Klub Windhoek on Saturday 7th of March 2015

Dear PSK Old Students,

when Jochen Kutzner approached me to contribute on this day, I thought that many of you would be interested in how the PSK and all of its assets have been going since the school closed in 1986, a time when I served as a board member from 1987 until the dissolution of the club in 2004.

I grew up in Karibib and attended school there from Sub A to Standard 8, from 1962 to 1971. When I left school for the last time, I silently said to myself – never Karibib again. The system was just too authoritarian and one lived constantly under pressure. In contrast, I felt like DHPS afterwards was like a two-year vacation. How did I come to return to Karibib with this mindset? It happened because I borrowed money from my father and his condition was that I wouldn't have to pay it back if I became a member of the PSK and remained one. So, in around 1976, I became a member and honored that condition. When the PSK board decided in early 1986 to discontinue school operations, some board members resigned in protest and I was approached by Mr. Karlheinz Berens to make myself available for the annual general meeting in 1987. As the 'financial man', I was then assigned the role of treasurer, which I held until its dissolution.

The question was, of course, what we should do with the school and how it should continue, how we could cover the running costs in the first place, which were not insignificant with the many properties and

buildings, and we still had Mr. Kolb in service as caretaker. The weaving school was also still run by Mrs. Kolb at that time. So, we rented out some rooms in the hostel and the houses. We then sold the two buses for about N\$ 50,000, if I remember correctly.

In 2000, we held an auction at the school where we auctioned off all loose inventory and equipment, including the entire contents of the workshop. Musical instruments were loaned to the Swakopmund School Association, and some items and books were gifted to other schools with the condition that in the event of dissolution, these items should be passed on to another association with the same objectives. Because three of the board members were based in Windhoek, the board meetings were held in Karibib on Friday evenings at 8:00. For those of us living in Windhoek, this meant getting in the car after work once a month and driving to Karibib, then returning to Windhoek late at night.

The most obvious thing for us was, of course, to get the school up and running again, but after various discussions with various representatives of the German-speaking community, this turned out to be unrealistic. In the meantime, private schools of the German-speaking communities had been established in various towns with active German-speaking communities such as Omaruru, Swakopmund, Otjiwarongo, Otavi, and Grootfontein. There was no longer a need for a private school in Karibib.

With independence looming, we then had a discussion with the Department of Education for Whites, suggesting that the entire property of the PSK be exchanged with that of a German state school such as the German High School Swakopmund or the German High School Otjiwarongo, both of which still had active German parents. While this proposal was not immediately rejected, we were advised to first discuss it with the relevant schoolboards. Unfortunately, our discussions with them were completely unsuccessful.

In 1989, independence was imminent and the United Nations was set to observe the elections. They needed to station a larger contingent of personnel in Karibib and were desperately looking for accommodations. We were able to rent out a larger number of rooms and apartments for about 10 months, providing us with a secure income for the time being.

In the early 1990s, the Navachab Gold Mine was developed in Karibib. In order to attract qualified individuals to Karibib, the mine needed to offer a good school. Consequently, the mine approached us with a proposal to rent, and possibly even buy, the school. This opportunity suited us well, and we negotiated a rental agreement of N\$ 15,000 per month for the year 1995. Unfortunately, it turned out that the mine was hiding behind the board of a newly formed association which did not have enough funds to cover the rent and the numerous maintenance and repair projects. We initially agreed to allow them to continue with the work that needed to be done. Over the following years, they did not pay rent, but they did invest a lot to bring the buildings back to an acceptable condition. A trust was then formed in place of the association, and the PSK was asked to have two representatives on the Board of Trustees. Despite our initial concerns, we agreed to have myself and my brother Wulff represent the PSK on

the Board of Trustees from 2000 until the school was sold. This meant that we had to travel to Karibib once a month on a Saturday. The potential purchase of the school was occasionally discussed, with our asking price set at N\$ 2.1 million based on the book value. They did not want to pay that, ultimately they made us an offer of N\$ 1.6 million which we considered to be downright malicious. This worsened the relationship between the association now named KPS and the PSK to the point where we resigned from the Board of Trustees. The matter then ended up with the lawyers. The result was ultimately that we sold some plots separately to Hartmuth Fölscher and sold the rest to KPS for our N\$ 2.1 million. Now we had reached the point where the board of PSK decided to dissolve the association. But what should we do with the capital? According to the statutes, everything should be transferred to an association with the same goals. Should we donate it to an existing school association?

This did not seem sensible to us, so there was actually only the AGDS, our only school-wide umbrella organisation of 'German schools', through which we had already awarded scholarships to students in previous years who wanted to complete their teacher training. The board considered it important to see the capital being used as effectively and sustainably as possible in line with the objectives of the PSK. The greatest problem for the German-speaking community in terms of the education system was and still is the emigration of experienced and well-educated teachers to the private sector due to poor pay and the lack of a meaningful motivation mechanism in schools. One consequence of these grievances was that almost no school graduates were interested in becoming teachers anymore.

So we sat down with our ideas with the recently retired educator Mr. Dieter Esslinger to turn our ideas into a practical concept. This resulted in the project Lilie, which honors teachers during a formal annual gala evening who have made a particular effort for the education system and/or the German language in schools hosting German-speaking children. The ceremonial framework as well as an attractive cash prize are intended to motivate and inspire teachers and hopefully lead to more school graduates choosing teaching as a career. This project celebrated its 10th anniversary last year and is gaining increasing support from the German-speaking community and the business world. As a result, the PSK drew up a contract with the AGDS, primarily securing the continuation of the Lily project. In addition, the AGDS committed to supporting the German broadcaster NBC, continuing the PSK scholarship program, and ultimately sponsoring a possible alumni meeting with at least N\$ 50,000. This contract also states that the AGDS may use all capital gains after inflation adjustment and the mentioned subsidies for its purposes. This ensures in the long term that the PSK capital is used for the objectives of the PSK. By signing this contract, the PSK handed over capital of N\$ 7 million to the AGDS, which has since grown to over N\$ 9 million, even though 10 Lily gala evenings with about N\$ 200,000 per year have already been subsidised. It is worth mentioning that the Federal Republic of Germany demanded a payment of about N\$ 800,000 for the deletion of their mortgage on the property where they financially supported the construction of the hall, which was also paid from the assets of the PSK. The PSK has since been officially dissolved and deregistered as a corporation by the Registrar of Companies.

N\$ 2.1 million on the books. The loan from the Federal Republic stood at N\$ 106,000, while liquid assets and fixed assets amounted to N\$ 90,000. The association had 112 members at that time. It is remarkable that from the net assets of the association of only N\$ 0.4 million, when offsetting the Federal Republic's claim of N\$ 0.8 million, an estate worth around N\$ 7 million could be passed on in 2004! Despite the fact that in the years when the school was provided to the current school sponsor, not a single cent of rent was collected. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the individuals who, over the years since the school's closure, volunteered for the rather thankless task of managing the assets of the PSK until a meaningful solution could be found and the PSK's legacy could be passed on in line with the PSK's objectives.

In 1986, the board included Erich Traupe as chairman, Karlheinz Berens as vice chairman, Volker Rodenwold as secretary, G Hoth, Franz Wittreich, Siegfried Teetz and Ludwig Feddersen. Over the years, the board was then joined by the ladies Ruth Meyer, Ingrid Grabowsky, Amei Diener, Dietlind Dietterle, Gitta Pretorius, and the gentlemen Guido Harck, Tilman Friedrich, Wulff Friedrich, Helmut von Malzahn, Joachim Henckert, Rainer Ritter, Hartmuth Fölscher, Georg Hinterholzer and Reiner Jagau.

I hope that with this overview of the development of the PSK association since the closure of the school in 1986, I have answered questions that some may have already had. The PSK has definitely not only made a significant contribution to the interests of the German-speaking community and its preservation in Namibia during its active time, but it has also left a legacy that will continue to benefit these objectives for the foreseeable future. All former Karibibers can rightly be proud of this. What our fathers worked hard for, with determination, tears, and sweat, has certainly been invested for the benefit of their children and grandchildren!

Thank you for your attention.

