# Utilising the Social Justice Approach to Student Support in Higher Education Institutions in South Africa

**Rakgadi Phatlane**

*University of Pretoria, South Africa*

## Abstract

South Africa witnessed a significant escalation of the number of destitute students in postschool institutions after the 'Fees must Fall' student uprisings and the pronunciation of 'Free Education' by the then president. Adopting a social justice theory, within a social constructivist paradigm and qualitative research approach, a phenomenological research design was utilised to analyse conversational interview data from 24 purposefully sampled students from an urban university. The purpose of the study was to explore the lived educational and psychosocial experiences of the participants of the support received from the institution to support them which possibly contributed towards their access and success. Subsequently, the study found that relevant, tailor-made support mechanisms at the beginning of the first year and continuation of support throughout the study years, were core to their success on their on-boarding process at first year and important to their development of skills and human capital; which both led to the completion of their qualifications. They had hope to become responsible adults who would be active participants in the country's economy. The study recommends that institutions should deliberately involve the students in their planning stage to create tailor-made support mechanisms and interventions for the students. Further, these education interventions should be robustly be utilised to enhance the display of seriousness of university management about student access and success, quality education, eradication of hunger amongst their students which indirectly would lead to possible economic sustainability and prosperity of the students as                                          future                                          adults.

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