Education for life in Africa

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Anneke Breedveld and Jan Jansen (eds.)

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Preface

This book is the outcome of an international conference held at the University of Applied Sciences (HHS), The Hague, on 19 and 20 May 2017. The theme of the conference is the same as the title of the book: *Education for life in Africa.* The conference was organised, in collaboration with The University of Applied Sciences (HHS), The Hague and Nuffic (the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education), as an activity of the Nederlandse Vereniging voor Afrika Studies (NVAS, The Netherlands Association for Africa Studies) to celebrate, among other things, the 20th anniversary of the transition from an academic Working Group to an Association with members from all parts of society. The aim of this conference was to provide a forum for stakeholders of education in Africa: students, researchers, practitioners, teachers, policy makers, sponsors, and consumers, to exchange ideas about how to attain and sustain quality at all levels of education in Africa, from basic to tertiary level, from academic to technical and vocational training, and also in informal and non-formal education.

The theme of Education was proposed by Anneke Breedveld, Chair of the Organising Committee. It was partly inspired by the Sustainable Development Goal 4 ("Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"), and the conference was to reflect on the opportunities for addressing educational goals and practices in Africa. The authors in the book have discussed various aspects of education from different parts of the continent: from teacher training in Eritrea to indigenous content in curricula in South Africa via language and literacy practices in Senegal and Ghana to non-formal vocational training in Nigeria to informal schools in Kenya. General issues of enrolment and of language use in education spanning the whole continent are debated. I commend the authors for sharing their perspectives and experiences.

I am very grateful to the organising committee: Jos Walenkamp (The University of Applied Sciences, The Hague) Beer Schröder (Nuffic), Jan Jansen (NVAS), and Anneke Breedveld (NVAS) for all the work they did to put up a stimulating conference.

We are extremely grateful to Jos Walenkamp for his generous financial support. Our thanks also go to Nuffic for assistance and for facilitating two panels at the conference. We thank as well the African Studies Centre Leiden, for their constant support of NVAS activities and for publishing this volume on Education in Africa in their series of Open Access publications.

We cannot adequately thank Talud for their immense financial support. Talud believes in a holistic education of young people, not only the training of the intellect, but also their social and emotional well-being. They did not hesitate to magnanimously support a conference reflecting on the training and education of African youth for life. We are grateful.

It is my hope that this book will serve as a spring board for continued reflection of "the what," "the how," and "the which" of quality education for life in Africa. In my view, what is needed is an emancipatory education – a system of education that breaks away from inappropriate modes and practices of education and adopts and integrates African-grown methods and knowledge systems not in place of, but as complementary to the forms of education adopted from outside Africa.

Felix K. Ameka, President NVAS
Leiden, November 2018

Editors' Introduction – Towards Quality Education for All

Anneke Breedveld and Jan Jansen[1]

Introduction

Globally, the goal of education in the developing world has moved from "Education for All," which was one of the Millenium Goals of the United Nations, to focus on "Quality Education" as Sustainable Development Goal 4, formulated by the same United Nations. As the number of children going to school all over the world increased and the expected results of the reduction of extreme poverty and hunger materialised, governments and NGOs alike soon realised that the term "education" covers a wide range of activities and ways of schooling, not all of which contribute equally and in all circumstances to the continuing development goals of any particular country or region. Sustainable development can be attained only when individuals and groups have the tools and can adapt to local circumstances. Education should provide learners with those tools and only education that does provide them and prepares its learners for their futures can be called "quality education." Rethinking the various ways in which "education" can be put to use strategically for long term gain therefore assumes the utmost importance. The focus must then turn to the quality of education, where sustainable and good education is understood to be education that prepares its participants for both social and professional life by equipping them with appropriate knowledge and skills. Hence the title of this volume: Education *for Life* in Africa.

To celebrate its 20th anniversary the Netherlands Association for African Studies (NVAS) in collaboration with The Hague University of Applied Sciences (THUAS) and The Netherlands University Foundation for International Cooperation (NUFFIC) organised a two-day conference on the theme of "Education for Life in Africa" (19-20 May 2017). The result was a wonderful patchwork of informative papers, showcasing the wide diversity of the educational field in Africa.

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1 We are grateful to Felix Ameka and Caroline Angenent for their suggestions. All misunderstandings and mistakes are of course the responsability of the authors.

Enrolment, Employment, and the Goals of Education

The relationship between enrolment and employment is discussed by Walenkamp, Pfeiffer, and Van Pinxteren. Their contributions emphasise that education should ultimately lead to employment for its students. Good education should enable job opportunities within administrative as well as manual occupations and not only be restricted to the urbanised regions of countries. And good technical and vocational training (TVET) should provide students with skills that can be of direct practical use in the community. There are political forces at play that hamper the improvement of education as described by Van Pinxteren. Pfeifer describes ICT-training in Nairobi, which leads indeed to job opportunities but sometimes also the reproduction of previous wealth relationships. Jansen adds some critical notes showing that education projects might in the eyes of the receivers achieve goals that the donors had never thought of.

All agreed that good education is a pre-condition for an economically thriving Africa and as tax collection is the motor of a country's economy, ideally everybody should have some kind of employment that generates money. However, with a staggering 65% of young people in Sub-Saharan Africa unemployed, teaching institutions face a huge challenge to give students the skills needed by government, employers, small businesses – and the community. **Walenkamp** credits the millennium goals for the considerable drop in the percentage of extremely poor and undernourished people in the world. However, he also expresses concern, because the absolute number of poor people is still rising, especially in Africa where world poverty seems to be becoming concentrated. Walenkamp sees a role in the cooperation of higher education institutions in the North and South to improve the quality of Technical and Vocational Training and Education especially, which will contribute to a decrease in youth unemployment in Sub-Saharan Africa in the future.

Pfeifer investigated whether the informal computer training provided by Nairobits (*sic*) in Nairobi helps students find employment. A striking finding was that students immediately realise the economic opportunities their newly acquired skills provide, from downloading films onto cd's and selling them on, to designing post cards, calendars, and event cards or selling items on the internet. All participants provided similar examples of using their new knowledge and skills in business. Not surprisingly, Pfeifer found that students who had completed the three full courses at Nairobits had a greater chance of finding employment in ICT. Unfortunately, he also found a correlation between the availability of access to ICT hardware and success in completing the ICT-courses. Poverty and wealth are therefor reproduced,

as those wealthy enough to have access to computers benefit most from ICT education. Students who did not complete the courses often fell back on a previous form of self employment, such as cleaning shoes. Nevertheless, the students who followed only the first and second ICT courses even so saw social and psychological benefits even in their uncompleted education. They drew a better self image from the opportunity to contribute to their society, even if that was only informally, perhaps by teaching friends how to use a computer.

Moreover, being educated does not simply mean that one knows more; having been part of the educational system empowers a person in all fields of life. **Van Pinxteren** explains that elites suddenly have to search for means to consolidate their positions when more than 15% of the population has access to higher education, for the newly educated masses can effectively question the legitimacy of established elite power. Indeed, many of the holders of power still owe their position to their or their forebears' familiarity with the ways of the colonial powers, including proficiency in the colonial language. The habit among ruling families of sending their children abroad for further education, so that they can earn qualifications held in higher esteem than those awarded by local educational institutions fits that picture. (Such means of consolidating power are of course to be preferred to things like corruption and violence.)

The goals of development projects such as those for education might be quite different when viewed from the perspectives of western donors and local Africans. That becomes evident from **Jansen**'s descriptions of a number of private development projects (PDI). "Development" is a major goal of the PDIs, but what if the concept does not have the same meaning for all parties involved? Likewise perceptions of success and failure of such initiatives might differ**.** In south western Mali, projects are judged by their ability to reinforce social ties rather than by their financial revenue. Projects that do not strengthen ties of social support often leave the initiators socially isolated and don't lead to sustainable growth. An unexpected bonus is that a project that might be considered from a western perspective to have failed might still be considered a success from a local African perspective. Jansen also describes a number of literacy projects that had to be ended prematurely because they resulted in too much tension in the villages.

Language and Literacy

Although the role of language in education seems to be more "academic," it is crucial to the success of education programmes as many studies show that school results improve enormously when children learn in a multilingual learning environment. Even mastery of the former colonial language improves when that language is taught as a separate subject using the local language as the medium of instruction (see e.g. Skattum, this volume). The question therefore should rather be how to implement multilingual education rather than how to choose between local and global languages. Antintono and Nsoh describe the history of English and multilingual teaching in Ghana, Golovko describes the situation in Senegal and proposes a multilingual teaching method. Anderson describes the development of literacy in Northern Nigeria and Tamari describes teaching methods in Islamic schools in Gambia. Holten meanwhile offers an interesting case where language plays a role in the misunderstanding of the treatment of malnourishment in Mali.

Skattum gives an overview of language policies that have been pursued in various countries on the African continent, notably Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mali, Madagascar, Guinea, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, and Botswana. The overview includes the various ways local languages have been introduced into the curriculum. Although it is a sound teaching principle to proceed from the familiar to the new, the teaching of local languages continues to be hindered by many forces. Local African languages, even those as widespread as Swahili and Hausa, have a very low status and in many business environments their use is considered too informal, even impolite (cf. Pfeifer, this volume). Furthermore, the role of the former colonial language as the language of instruction in education is all too often taken for granted. Those languages therefore still play a major role in virtually all schools across Africa, despite ample research showing that mother-tongue education leads to better results in the learning of former colonial languages.

The fact that many elites in Africa owe their positions to their command of French, English or Portuguese hampers the insight that mother tongue education or at least multilingual education would empower the masses. Thus **Antintono** and **Nsoh** describe how Ghanaian politicians continuously hesitate between education completely in English and a curriculum that leaves more room for mother-tongue instruction in all school years, or at least the early ones. Here, the cost of local teaching materials certainly plays a role in decision making, although in the end the choice rests mainly on the idea that fluency in English provides more benefits to the population, such as

access to the global community and international trade markets; less profit is expected from profound knowledge of mother tongue.

Golovko describes how in Senegal French remains dominant in the education system, so that colonial interests and the Senegalese development agenda are still very much intertwined. Efforts by the government of Abou Diouf at the beginning of the 1980s to adapt the curriculum to daily life in Senegal were obstructed by the Structural Adjustment Programs of the International Monetary Fund. Golovko argues that the forces fighting multilingual education reflect the prolongation of power relations from the colonial era. Golovko then describes a project that aims to embrace multilingualism in the classroom. Pupils learn to apply the national alphabet to the different languages they speak. The big idea here is that all languages can be included in one literacy programme.

Anderson gives an overview of problems, resources, and training for literacy education in northern Nigeria where Islam is the dominant religion and Hausa the dominant language. She quotes from a speech by the Emir of Kano, who professes himself astounded by the fact that in many censuses people who can read and write – but "only" in Arabic – are considered illiterate. With 80% of children attending Islamic schools the percentage of illiterate people thus becomes unrealistically high. The Emir therefore wishes to promote mosques as centres of learning. In State schools, the official policy is to use the language of the immediate environment as the language of instruction during the first three years of primary school, but lack of materials, shortage of teachers, and insufficient training of them hamper the application of the policy. State school classes often contain more than one hundred pupils and many leave primary schools prematurely, thus forming a new group of illiterate Nigerians. Many Nigerians value the learning of English more than of their local languages, which children are naturally expected to pick up at home.

Proficiency in English is still considered a requirement for finding a well-paid job whereas often, local languages can only get someone an informal job. However, the North is a vast region with millions of inhabitants; this book and the modern media market in the north show that there is huge demand for Hausa literature and Hausa-language films. Anderson has participated in a number of teacher development programmes where she promoted the use of prior knowledge of things like folk stories for educational material in Hausa literacy classes. Despite the fact that local languages are associated with poverty and low status, Anderson considers the use of Hausa and other Nigerian languages in the classroom perfectly compatible with provision of good education.

Tamari describes the history of education in Gambia since 1965, with special focus on the history of Islamic education. Remarkable is that even the so-called Qur'anic memorisation schools are very much influenced by the English school system. Religious knowledge is supposed to be taught in all schools and addresses both Christianity and Islam. Similarly remarkable is the discovery that the emphasis on memorisation is a comparatively recent import from Saudi Arabia. It was brought to the Gambia in the latter part of the twentieth century by scholars from north eastern Africa who had earned degrees from Saudi Arabian universities and who started their own Madrasas.

Schools in the Gambia mostly use English, French, and Arabic as the medium of instruction. Attempts to introduce Gambian languages have received little support from conventional schools. However, in Madrasas all content is translated into local Gambian languages for the first six years. Many children learn additional Gambian languages from teachers and peers while attending Islamic schools and many of them progress to conventional schools where they frequently prove to be among the most able students.

Tamari's research defies a general prejudice that Islamic education does nothing more than enforce the memorisation of Arabic texts by pupils who are not required to understand what they are learning. On the contrary, Gambian languages are widely used for explanation of the texts, and the emphasis on memorisation is a recent development.

The quality of western-type health education can also profit from taking into account local medical knowledge and even moral discourse, as becomes apparent from a case-study from Mali described by **Holten**. From a western medical point of view, malnutrition is a result of not eating enough food of the right quality. However, when a health care programme decided to use a local term, *sede,* to refer to malnutrition, they overlooked the fact that *sede* mainly refers to the situation in which a woman has become pregnant again too soon, i.e. before the first child has had two years of breast feeding. That situation is considered shameful, so that use of the term *sede* turned malnutrition into a moral problem, to be addressed in terms of contraception rather than by providing good food to malnourished children. The abundance of information provided about good food did not therefore result in any less malnutrition. The shame associated with *sede* prevented women from seeking help, while malnutrition was not recognised as such when it occurred in situations unconnected with too-quickly successive pregnancies.

Learning Strategies and Outcomes

The way knowledge is taught and the content of the curriculum in African schools can be improved in various ways. Brons and Namirembe show that teaching methods investigating and taking into account pupils' prior knowledge can add considerably to the quality of their education. Ditmars describes the situation of the University of South Africa that tries to incorporate indigenous knowledge in its curriculum. Posti-Ahokas, Mariläinen and Westman describe a project in Eritrea where teachers are taught interactive and learner-centred teaching methods. Those are all learning strategies intended to improve teaching outcomes in different places in Africa.

Brons and **Namirembe** describe how the teaching of disabled pupils and students improves when it builds on the knowledge such students already have. New knowledge and novel approaches are more easily absorbed when they are put in a familiar context. These findings apply not only to the disabled learners, Brons and Namirembe observed, so it seems that adaptation of the standard curriculum to the needs of deaf students has led to a teaching method that is beneficial to other students too.

Ditmars investigates whether the quality of education might be improved by taking into consideration how students conceptualise, relate to, and value knowledge. According to Ditmars, higher education should include the transmission of both globally accepted academic knowledge and indigenous knowledge including the values, beliefs, and practices of local societies, which Ditmars believes is crucial to enable local ownership of and participation in education. She uses Hofstede's idea of cultural dimension to describe some of the aspects that could be used as starting points (Hofstede cited in Ditmars, this volume). She describes how at the University of South Africa (UNISA) culturally more appropriate collaborative learning techniques are being used to incorporate indigenous knowledge. Unfortunately, indigenous knowledge is often poorly documented, so there is still a long way to go. The fact that universities remain elitist, academic, and alienated has already resulted in social protest in the form of the "Rhodes Must Fall" movement, asking for "decolonisation" of the curriculum. UNISA is the only university providing comprehensive distance- and e-learning education in South Africa. It makes an effort to stimulate its teachers and students to explore indigenous knowledge systems. Ditmars describes how the skills of online tutors can follow the cultural dimensions of South Africa's society, thereby improving interaction with the students.

Posti-Ahokas, **Mariläinen** and **Westman** describe a project in Eritrea where primary school teachers are trained to implement "learner-centred and interactive paedagogics" (LCIP). The method is focused on learning by

example rather than theoretically, from books. It involves numerous simple teaching tools such as making a learning goal explicit, asking pupils what they want to learn, involving pupils in stock-taking of what they already know, dividing a learning task into simple steps, and so on. The authors evaluated the results of a Finnish-Eritrean education cooperation project of which the primary aim was to increase the number of qualified teachers. In Eritrea the low capacity of Higher Education institutions has meant that only 46% of teachers in primary schools and only 83% of teachers in secondary schools are qualified. The study shows that teachers who are themselves taught with learner-centred and interactive methods go on to apply such methods better than those who receive information on LCIP in a traditional top-down way: "Teachers tend to teach as they are taught."[2]

When questioned, trainee teachers name many problems preventing them from using LICP, and language is among the obstructions. In Eritrea the language of instruction changes from mother-tongue in grades 1-5 to English in Eritrean middle and high schools. Nevertheless, the project continued to teach teachers in a learner-centred and interactive way. The result was that teachers who underwent such training felt they had learnt new teaching methods to apply in their classrooms. The aim of the LCIP is learner empowerment, improved educational quality and improved status of the teaching profession, which has low status in Eritrea.

Vocational and Informal Training

The cry for more and better Technical and Vocational Training and Education (TVET) in Africa has been heard before and is still relevant. Youth unemployment is rising globally and the gap between education and employment should be narrowed everywhere. Fall suggests that knowledge and skills taught at TVET should be of more practical use and immediately applicable when students leave school, for example by including apprenticeships more often and earlier in the curriculum. Equally important are the many forms of informal education because in many parts of Africa large numbers of children do not attend formal education.[3] Mackenbrock describes informally organised schools in the slums of Kibera in Kenya and Adebisi pleads for the introduction of informal apprenticeships onto the curriculum of formal Technical and Vocational Training and Education.

Fall identifies the poor quality of Technical and Vocational Training and Education as the most urgent problem to be tackled to achieve education

2 Quoted from Vavrus, Thomas and Bartlett 2011: 32-33.

3 Cf. Breedveld 2006 for reasons why people reject formal education.

for life in Africa. She interviewed thirty-one students on the usefulness of their previous study to their current occupation. In the sample the mismatch between even TVET and the labour market is evident, because more than half the respondents took more than four months to find a job and more than a third could not find work related to their studies. Fall sees the introduction of at least one year of on-the-job training as part of the curriculum as an important solution for the mismatch between school and the labour market. She sees also an important role for employers in providing apprenticeships in the TVET. A combination of work and training significantly reduces adaptation time when entering employment.

Mackenbrock describes a case study of informal schools in Kibera, Kenya. Kibera is one of the largest slums in Africa and a large number of private schools have been established there by community members, especially groups of women. The schools respond to the immediate needs of the community and together teach basic skills to 81% of the students in Kibera. Despite the fact that public schools are free, the private schools are very popular and show ever-increasing enrolment figures. Parents perceive the private schools as providing better education, which is in fact confirmed by research.

As they began in response to a need for education that the community members themselves had noticed, the schools are easily able to mobilise the community to contribute to the school programme. The long term aim of everybody involved is to transform the living conditions of the whole community.

Certain practices of the community-based informal private schools, such as provision of food and payment of small school fees, are already being copied by formal schools in an effort to become more successful. Mackenbrock thinks that formal education could also profit from adopting other characteristics, like care for the surrounding community, and the way trained teachers transfer their knowledge to untrained teachers. With their vast numbers (400,000 in Nairobi and Mombasa alone), informal schools are an important factor providing education for many. The Kenyan government has recognised their importance and is setting up training programmes for the teachers; at the time of research only 1% of teachers in informal schools had received any proper training.

Adebisi makes an interesting case in describing apprenticeships to traditional crafts like weaving, dyeing cloth, food preparation (of plantain chips), and blacksmithing. He interviewed people who trained apprentices in such traditional occupations and suggests the apprenticeships should be promoted from their place as an informal education system within a clan or family lineage in Southwestern Nigeria to a broader non-formal education

system with access for students from outside the clan. The cloth dyeing tradition had already accepted trainees from outside it, partly too because the trainers wanted to protect their professional skills from extinction. Adebisi recommends that formal educational institutes should collaborate with clan-bound trainers to provide more opportunities for students of TVET to earn their livings from their future work.

Conclusion

It is entirely intentional that this volume ends with that plea for the inclusion of traditional apprenticeships in the formal educational system. The quality of education can be improved considerably when the already-gained knowledge and aspirations of its pupils and their local communities are better integrated into education programmes. All too often curricula are still derived from western models, while adaptation to local settings is a condition for the achievement of the sort of good quality education that will empower pupils and students to cope with life as it is now in Africa and improve it for the future. That adaptation should include the use of Africa's own languages. Before zealously promoting twenty-first century Western teaching skills in all African education systems, research should be done on approaches that are already in place at grass root level. That means too that in striving for good quality education for all, informal schools and Islamic schools – and especially traditional apprenticeships – must all be integrated into the formal education system as a whole.

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PART 1
Enrolment, Employment, and the Goals of Education

1

Education for Life in Africa

Jos H.C. Walenkamp

Abstract: In many aspects humankind is doing better than ever: poverty is at an all time low, both in relative and in absolute numbers, the middle class is growing rapidly, child mortality is decreasing and a growing number of infectious diseases is being eradicated. More people get more and better education than their parents. On the other hand, the rapid growth of both the world population and consumption is having increasingly worrying effects, such as climate change, environmental degradation, the exhaustion of natural resources and the risk of armed conflicts. The future of Sub-Saharan Africa is particularly worrying. Economic development cannot keep up with population growth: the absolute numbers of extremely poor are increasing. The demographic transition is entering its final phases, also in Africa, as the number of children per woman is going down. So, although the population will continue to rise, families are getting smaller, which means a demographic dividend: more time, money, food, education, and medical care for the smaller number of children. Fewer children and the very rapidly risen, and rising, population in Africa leads to a second demographic dividend: the relatively small numbers of people depending on the working-age citizens. To profit from this potentially double demographic dividend, and thereby to foster economic growth and to alleviate poverty, the working-age group needs productive employment. And that means a good business environment and broad access to quality education. In Africa, access to education is growing at all levels. The quality, however, is dismal. The development policies of many rich countries are directed to improving the business environment and fostering entrepreneurship, and rightly so. It is troublesome that education, and particularly vocational education, does not get the attention it needs in development aid policies. There may well be a role for western institutes of higher – professional – education.

Introduction: Humankind is Doing Better than Ever

If we remove the veil, the very real veil, of armed conflicts in Syria, the wider Middle East, Afghanistan, central Africa, and South Sudan, of the plight of the Rohingya and the Palestinians, of tornado's, earthquakes and terrorist attacks, and look at the bigger picture, humankind is doing well.

Two of the three targets of the first Millennium Development Goal have been reached, and well before the 2015 deadline. The number of people living in extreme poverty – now defined as living on less than US$ 1.9/day, PPP [Purchasing Power Parity] – has dropped from 1.7 billion in 2000 to 767 million in 2013 and the drop in global percentages is even more impressive: from 28.1% in 2000 to 10.7% in 2013.[1] The share of undernourished people has dropped almost 50% from 23.3% in 1990 to 12.9% in 2015.

Despite their semblance of accuracy, these figures and percentages are of course approximations, based on flawed national accounts and household surveys, which also have quite some limitations.[2] But the tendency is clear: poverty alleviation is going in the right direction, although we are far from the target of complete eradication. The numbers of poor people are actually rising in Sub-Saharan Africa, and if the poverty line is raised, say to US$ 2.5, almost half the population of the world still lives under very minimal conditions.

On the other hand, almost half of the world population can now be considered middle class, up from some 20% in 1990, and from 1% throughout most of human history.[3]

In other areas we are doing better as well. The number of deaths per 100,000 people as a result of wars and armed conflicts is lower in this century than ever in human history.[4] The same goes for the number of people dying through natural disasters. We are ever better in avoiding large numbers of casualties by such calamities.[5]

Due to factors as inoculations, improved sanitation and nutrition and impregnated mosquito nets, child mortality, the number of children not surviving their fifth birthday, has more than halved since 1990.[6] Maternal mortality rates are decreasing, as is child labour. Diseases such as polio and

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1 World Bank 2015.

2 Cf. Edward and Sumner 2013.

3 Mahbubani 2013.

4 https://ourworldindata.org/war-and-peace/, accessed 8 September 2018.

5 https://ourworldindata.org/natural-catastrophes/, accessed 8 September 2018.

6 See https://data.worldbank.org/indic ator/SH.DYN.MORT and https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.STA.MMRT.

smallpox and infections by parasites such as the Guinea worm are all but eradicated.

Ever more children and adults have access to ever higher forms of education. Never in human history did so many young men and women obtain a university degree. Scientific research has never been so extensive and of such a high level. Inequality between countries is lessening.

So in a great many aspects humankind is doing better and better. But…

The unprecedented rise of the world population and the impressive growth of incomes and consumption poses a number of challenges: climate change, environmental degradation, the exhaustion of natural resources, and the inherent risk of armed conflicts.

And of course the still gigantic numbers of people living under or near the poverty lines of US$ 1.25, 1.9, or 2.5 per day.

Poverty and Demography

Not too long ago the majority of extremely poor people lived in Asia, in middle income countries like India and China. Now more than half of the world's poor live in Africa, some 390 million; more than all other regions put together.

Of the 47 low income countries 33 are located in Africa. In Africa poverty seems to be most persistent as well. There is the real challenge.[7] Most middle income countries, in Africa and elsewhere, could eradicate absolute poverty in the foreseeable future with relatively minor investments, provided they actively fight internal inequality.[8] Large and rising inequality slows down the growth of a strong, consuming middle class and thus economic growth and poverty alleviation.

Poverty is a many-faced monster. It does not only mean a lack of money, hunger and malnourishment, but also limited access to bad education and poor medical care, being a defenceless victim of lawlessness and violence,[9] ignorance and minimal possibilities to escape the poverty trap. It means susceptibility to diseases, it means inadequate physical and mental growth, stunting, and limited labour productivity. Hundreds of millions of people go to bed hungry for prolonged periods of time, with far reaching consequences. Much research has been carried out on the long-term consequences of nutrition-poor diets before and after birth. The effects on general health, the development of the body and the brain, labour productivity, income and happiness last their whole life, even when life becomes relatively affluent later

7 Cf. Sumner 2016.

8 Chandy and Gertz 2011.

9 Haugen and Boutros 2014.

on.[10] That goes for children in The Netherlands during the Hunger Winter (at the end of World War II)[11] as well as for children in developing countries.[12] A relatively new branch of biology, epigenetics, even sees these effects in the human genome and thus to be inheritable.

Poverty, in short, should be eradicated. And that is possible.

Poverty alleviation needs 1) an economy that grows faster than the population and 2) greater equality.

Demography is an important factor. The demographic transition from high birth and death rates to low mortality and low fertility rates goes through several phases. Usually mortality goes down before fertility, leading to an increase in the population. Africa is special: where in most regions of the world fertility decreased rapidly as a result of parents seeing their children surviving infancy and higher female school attendance rates, in Africa the decrease is much slower.

The population of the world still grows strongly. Of the 2.2 billion people increase between the present and 2050, 1.3 billion people are Africans, and some 750 million are Asians. It takes a long time before decreasing fertility actually leads to a decline in population size. Even if the number of children per woman would go down to 2.1, the replacement level, population growth would continue, as the present children and young adults – 41% of Africans are younger than 15 and 60% younger than 24 – will reach reproductive age and have children.

In the 1980's there were some 300 million Africans, now over four times as many and by the end of this century there will be over 4 billion Africans. Some African countries will have a population that is five times its current size. That makes it extremely hard for the economy to keep up, to alleviate poverty, to fight inequality and to provide everyone with decent education and healthcare.

There is, however, some hope.

Demographic Dividend, Productive Employment, and Education

This century will see the last phase of the demographic transition in all parts of the world. The number of children per women is decreasing everywhere, also in Africa. Twenty years ago that number was around six; at present it stands at 4.5. In other regions the numbers are even smaller: on average over the whole world it is around 2.5.

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10 Cf. Behrman, Alderman and Hoddinott 2004.

11 Stein *et al.* 1975; Rosenboom 2000.

12 Thurow 2016.

So, although the population in many African countries will continue to grow, with all inherent problems, there is a possible double demographic dividend. The first dividend comes from the decreasing fertility. Smaller families mean more time and money and attention and better healthcare and education for the children, which, in turn may lead to higher incomes, more productivity, and increased savings and investments.[13] The other dividend may arise from the many young people entering the labour market with relatively few elders and gradually less children depending on them. That is a distinct advantage over countries with ageing populations, where the workers need to take care of a growing number of elders.

This double demographic dividend is predicted to lead to economic growth,[14] but to realise that growth, there needs to be employment, productive employment for all those young workers. Very poor people are not unemployed. They cannot afford to be. But much of the work they do contributes little or nothing to economic progress, be it of themselves and their families or of their country. So there needs to be more work and labour must become more productive to make African economies grow.[15] The situation does not look promising, but the recent history of Asia and the development of the Ethiopian economy in recent years show that escaping the poverty trap is possible for all countries.[16]

Economic growth rests on both employment opportunities and labour productivity. Jobs come from companies, which need a good investment climate, with sensible and stable macro-economic policies, with investment security, little bureaucracy and corruption, attention to rural areas, freedom for small farmers and entrepreneurs, good infrastructure, safety, and security.[17] Productivity demands access to proper education at all levels, and particularly in the area of vocational, profession-oriented education.

Jobs may be found in economic areas such as the extraction of mineral resources, in industry, in services, in agriculture and in household enterprises. The challenge is on the one hand to create more wage-earning jobs, but as the lion share of employment will continue to be found in the informal sector, it is important to increase productivity particularly there: in small farms and household enterprises. The export of mineral resources, which to a large extent caused the strong economic growth in Africa, hardly contributed to the creation of wage-earning jobs. Industrial production in Africa is smaller

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13 See, for instance, Canning, Raja and Yazbeck 2015.

14 International Monetary Fund 2017a.

15 Cf. Melamed and Sumner 2011.

16 For Asia, see Van der Veen 2010; for a general argument, see Ravallion 2013.

17 Cf. Vlasblom 2013.

now than in the 1980's, and wage-earning jobs in industry constitute only a small percentage of total employment. That is expected to grow in the next decade, but a 50% increase of 3% is still minimal. The services sector is more important, growing to some 20% of all jobs, but most employment will be found, for quite some time, in the informal sector.

Agricultural productivity in Africa is very low. The need for agricultural products will increase sharply with the growing population, and a combination of urbanisation and rising costs of imported food products. More and more food will need to be produced in the hinterland of the rapidly growing megacities.[18] That offers opportunities. Just as in Asia and Latin America, increased productivity of the rural areas can lay the foundation for growth in the formal wage sector.[19]

There are some positive signs with regard to industrial production. Foreign Direct Investment has grown strongly this century, although generally this growth seems to have come to a standstill in 2016. Many of the smaller countries, however, continue to grow and Chinese investments still show a steady increase. Despite these foreign, and domestic, investments, for many African countries the chances for a competitive industrial production do not appear to be very great. The business climate is often not good. Industrial companies choose their location on the basis of such factors as geography, transport, logistics, the size of the domestic market, the competencies of the labour force, the quality of government policies, ICT developments and digitalisation, management capacity, and the cost of labour. With some exceptions, such as until recently Ethiopia, Africa does not do well on these points in international comparisons. Even the costs of labour do not compare favourably with those of other low or lower middle-income countries.[20]

And foreign investments are, despite recent growth, still marginal: a few percent of Sub-Saharan Africa GDP, and they are smaller than, for example, the remittances sent home by Africans working abroad. The most recent Regional Economic Outlooks of the IMF of 2017[21] show that there are a few countries that are still doing well, but indicate a generally limited economic growth, hardly stronger than the growth of the population.

The growth of productive employment is essential to prevent an increase in poverty and social unrest. Enterprises are crucial, as are a sound business climate and macro-economic policies. Peace is a prerequisite.

And education is crucial.

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18 Dietz 2017.

19 Cf. Van der Veen 2010.

20 Gelb *et al.* 2017.

21 International Monetary Fund 2017a; International Monetary Fund 2017b.

Education in Africa

Education is vitally important for development: it enhances labour productivity and contributes to higher incomes. Ignorance is very costly. The relationship between education and prosperity is clear.[22] It shows in access to better paid jobs and higher incomes in work in the informal sector, in agriculture and household enterprises. Education allows for a shift from low-paid jobs in the informal sector to better positions in industry and services. Besides productivity in all sectors of the economy, education contributes to higher standards of living, to more profits in agriculture, particularly if that is more technically advanced, to life-long learning, smaller families, better childcare, less drop-out from schools, better health, democratic developments and the development of twenty-first century competencies. Particularly education for girls leads to smaller families and more productivity.[23]

Two factors stand out: access and quality. The good news is that access to all types and all levels of education is increasing. In recent years Africa was actually ahead of most regions in the world in growth in access. Almost 80% of African children are now enrolled in primary education, and 33% in secondary education. That means a growth in enrolment percentages of 30 and 57% in the period between 2000 and 2014; and a growth in numbers of 74 and 133%. Enrolment in higher education increased by almost 90% and in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) with 115%. With some three million students, however, the TVET subsector is by far the smallest.

So, ever more people are attending ever higher levels of education in Africa, and the prognoses are good. All the same, enrolment figures in Africa are still lower than in the other regions of the world. Almost 60% of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 have only finished primary school.[24] And there are still some thirty million African children who do not go to school at all.

An even greater challenge is the bad quality of education. Going to school is not the same thing as actually learning something. In countries like Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda third grade children were asked to read a simple sentence, such as "The name of the dog is Pluto." Three quarters of them could not read for meaning.[25] The Southern African Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) showed that 74% of school leavers in Mozambique had only a "basic numeracy" level and 44% could not read for

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22 Cf. Filmer and Fox 2014.

23 Crespo Cueresma, Lutz and Sanderson 2013.

24 Filmer and Fox 2014.

25 Uwezo 2016.

meaning. There are many more such studies, and the results for competencies needed to be productively employed are similar. Improvements in the quality of education do not happen quickly.

And, as usual, women and the poor bear most of the brunt. Even if they attend school, they learn the least. In Ghana, for instance, only 3% of the women between 24 and 34 years old, who said that the fifth grade was the highest level they had attained could read a simple sentence; the rest was basically illiterate.[26] Young girls are treated worse than boys; they enter school with less cognitive and socio-emotional skills, and more frequently have to leave school at a young age to start working. They become pregnant at an early age – 25% of the girls aged 15-19 in Africa are pregnant – and they have to take care of the children.[27] In traditional societies there are all kinds of limitations for girls, and on their way to school, and at school, they are often victim of all kinds of sexual abuse. All very harmful for their development.

The transition from school to work is difficult in all regions, but even more so in developing countries. Many children, particularly the poorest, leave school before completing their education and without any of the competencies needed for gainful employment. Lack of education quality affects the labour force. Many school leavers end up in jobs that demand little, and offer less in terms of security, productiveness and possibilities for advancement.

These youngsters have three possibilities. A small group does not enter the labour market and tries to get some form of further education. A larger group starts working and hopes to get some training on the job. A third possibility is attending a formal vocational training that will give them the skills they need for specific types of jobs. Those training programmes often lead to a certificate that is recognised by the industrial sector.

Training on the job is good for both the development of employees and the productivity of the company. TVET, technical and vocational education and training, serves the acquisition of competencies for the labour market. Over the years different regions have been using different terms for profession oriented training, such as Apprenticeship Training, Vocational Education, Technical Education, Technical-vocational Education, Occupational Education, Vocational Education and Training, Professional and Vocational Education, Career and Technical Education, Workforce Education, and Workplace Education.[28] TVET is now considered to comprise all formal and informal profession-oriented education, so covering all terms mentioned

26 UNESCO 2016.

27 Filmer and Fox 2014.

28 Listed in UNESCO-UNEVOC 2017.

above. Most professional training in Africa is on the job, by senior colleagues in agricultural and household enterprises.

Formal lower, middle, or higher vocational education and training could be very important, but where the quality of primary and secondary education often leaves much to be desired, vocational education is doing even worse, both in quantity and in quality. The lack of alignment with the needs and wishes of the labour market and practical experience are some of the major concerns, both in lower and middle vocational education and training and in higher profession-oriented polytechnics.

Polytechnics show a tendency for academic drift, shifting towards "technical universities," with even more theoretical education. Besides low quality and a lack of alignment with the needs and wishes of the labour market,[29] there is also a vicious circle: because there is so little industry in Africa, there are very few internship positions, and a lack of trained personnel hampers the growth of industrial enterprises. Companies are also not used to internships and interns are often seen as either a burden or as cheap labour for the simplest tasks. The lack of internship positions and little structural contact between polytechnics and enterprises make it difficult to enhance the relevance of training for jobs in commercial enterprises.

The number and the quality of the students entering higher professional education are insufficient. Vocational education and training are considered second rate compared to theoretical education. Most students choose to study humanities rather than technical subjects. Lecturers are under-qualified and often absent. In a report of the Ghanaian Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, the situation was described as follows:[30]

> Formal TVET in Ghana is currently limited in scale, scope, quality and relevance. The TVET is largely oriented towards formal rather than informal employment. At the same time, most of the TVET provision is out of touch with the needs of formal industry; curricula are outdated, many TVET institutions lack tools and equipment (and where present, machinery is often decades old and bears little resemblance to that currently used by industry), and many instructors have little knowledge of industry needs. Pre-employment institution-based training finds it hard to connect with industry, to arrange staff and trainee industrial placements and to get industry representation on institution boards. The infrastructure in training institutions is poor with only 80% having functional electricity.

29 For Ghana, see Gondwe and Walenkamp 2010; for Mozambique, see Gondwe 2010.
30 MOESS 2008.

A more recent study by Darvas and Palmer paints the same picture.[31] The system of formal vocational education in Ghana suffers a negative spiral of high costs, insufficient quality and little demand, which in turn leads to dwindling finances, lower quality and less demand. The government's promises of more chances for vocational education and training run the risk of not being fulfilled. Contrary to formal primary and secondary education the formal TVET sector did not grow; it even shrank from 7% in 1999 to 6% now, and the inequality between the numbers of male and female students did not decrease.[32]

Professional, vocational education is of vital importance for the productivity of all sectors of the economy, both the formal and the informal, and for increasing the number of entrepreneurs and employers, job creators, as opposed to job seekers. But the situation is distressing.

What Can Be Done?

To tackle the problems, a multitude of plans, thick reports, proceedings of important conferences and policy papers have been published, with a plethora of declarations, frameworks for action and strategies,[33] but the actual implementation proves to be difficult. National policy and finances seem to be the limiting factors.

The development policies of The Netherlands and other western donors justly pay much attention to the strengthening of entrepreneurship in developing countries, and to investments and investment security. The funding of education, specifically profession-oriented education, however, has decreased substantially.

Consequently, the existing reality is one of many, very many young people, increasingly living in urban areas, with little or no prospects, low quality education, no job, no money, and no wife for the young men, who become disenchanted and angry, which may lead to problems, such as criminality, religious strife and armed conflicts, which exacerbate the situation and which may spill over to other regions. What can be done?

Local governments can play a very significant role. Botswana and more recently Ethiopia are fine examples. International politics and development cooperation are important, but there is also a role for western higher education.

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31 Darvas and Palmer 2014.

32 CESA 2015.

33 E.g. Education 2030, 2015; CESA 2015; UNESCO-UNEVOC 2015.

Our institutions of higher learning can contribute to capacity building for lecturers, to curriculum development, particularly for courses, which are needed but not available, to increasing fruitful cooperation with the world of work and possibly even a shift from humanities to technical disciplines. There are, in the long experience of Nuffic, many possibilities.[34] Western universities can play an important part, and they and their students can also benefit from this cooperation. If those institutions wish to be international, and want to produce world citizens, young professionals with a good diploma, but also with international competencies and with a knowledge of the wider world and an active concern for its problems – then development cooperation is a very logical area. Spending time abroad is a life changing experience for many lecturers and students, and even more so in countries that are culturally, economically and politically different.[35]

Our higher education institutions can make a valuable contribution and benefit at the same time. "Doing well by doing good," as Tom Lehrer sang.

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34 Cf. Amenakpor and Ganaa 2013.

35 Walenkamp 2010; Van den Hoven and Walenkamp 2015.

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2

“Trained for Which Job Exactly?” – Assessing the Impact of Access to Informal Digital Skills Education on Employment Opportunities for Marginalized Youth in Nairobi

Jalmar Pfeifer

Abstract: This paper aims to identify whether informal education in computer use, coding, and digital design is able to change structural mechanisms in society that contribute to high youth unemployment. It critically examines the expectations of researchers and policy makers who argue that such informal training can provide marginalized youth with the opportunity to profit from globalization and new labor opportunities that require digital skills. In order to do so, the study provides insights into the benefits of access to informal digital skills training and it tries to explain the unequal distribution of those benefits. Narratives of students and alumni of informal digital skills education illustrate that marginalized youth keep running into structural obstacles when looking for formal employment. They are challenged by persisting (slum) identities, spatial, and technological boundaries, and limited access to new engagements, spaces, and places. Those alumni who are most successful tend to rely on a broad support system that goes beyond just access to informal digital skills education. The ability of youth to benefit from this access is the outcome of complex social processes and not of education alone.

Introduction: New Perspectives to Combat Youth Unemployment

An increasing number of informal digital skills education programs aim to elevate marginalized youth from poverty and to increase their opportunities for employment. Such training courses in computer use, coding, and digital design are being implemented within educational development programs worldwide.[1]

One example is the Kenya-based informal digital design education program Nairobits. Every year over six hundred youths from the Nairobi slums receive training at this institute. Various success stories of the Nairobits alumni spurred my interest in the opportunities and limits of informal digital skills education to generate jobs for marginalized youth. Especially since there is an urgent need among policy makers for new perspectives and approaches to combat youth unemployment.

In urban areas, worldwide, high numbers of unemployed and underemployed youth are visible. These figures illustrate that the existing discourses on employment opportunities that would arise simply by providing education do not hold up. Studies in Asia and Africa show that education levels of marginalized youth are rising, while these youth's prospects of finding employment do not seem to increase. Education programs across the globe have thus proven to be incapable of structurally transforming the economic opportunities of marginalized youth.[2]

The stories from Nairobits and the faith of policy makers in similar programs made me wonder whether informal digital skills training and education might be more successful in providing a structural solution to youth unemployment as compared to regular educational initiatives. Therefore, in the following chapters I will explore the impact of informal digital skills education on employment prospects of marginalized youth. Also, I will explain how inequalities in these employment prospects are being (re) produced.

Digital Divide, Access to Digital Skills, and (Re)production of Inequality

Donors and researchers have recently looked at the opportunities of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for development purposes. Opportunities of digitization are often accompanied by new and pressing societal and economic issues, among which new inequities occupy a prominent place. Researchers refer to this trend by using conceptualizations such as

1 London *et al.* 2010; Mariscal *et al.* 2009; Koers 2008.
2 Jeffrey *et al.* 2004; FocusAfrica 2010.

the "digital divide,"[3] "digital inequality,"[4] or the need to include "marginalized youth into the knowledge-based economy."[5]

These conceptualizations, combined with the expected ICT-related employment opportunities, have proven to be a motivation for NGOs and businesses alike to increasingly invest in informal digital skills education and thus bringing ICT to underserved communities. Articles and reports both from literature and donors seem to indicate that digital skills education initiatives provide new employment opportunities to marginalized youth and can help bridge the digital divide between society and underserved communities. For example, through digital design training, marginalized youth might profit from a growing globalization of the labor market and new labor opportunities for which the existing labor forces are not skilled enough.[6]

Because of these opportunities that are specific to digital design, different authors and donors suggest that access to informal digital skills education, in contrast to regular education, can transcend or undermine existing social, cultural, and political-economic boundaries. Others are more critical: even if digital skills education initiatives bridge the current digital divides, a new digital inequality might arise based on the benefits that marginalized youth derive from access to ICT, or existing inequities might be reproduced within a digital context.[7]

Whereas the debate on access to ICT was initially framed as a technical discussion, Van Dijk concludes that within the digital divide discourse the social and immaterial play an ever-increasing role.[8] In their research on informal digital skills education projects for marginalized youths in Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico, Mariscal *et al*. already mention different non-technical benefits that youth derive from access to these training programs.[9] Their findings suggest an increase in employment opportunities for these youths. Even though most of the respondents in their research do not use any of the newly acquired digital skills in their jobs, the researchers did believe that these skills helped them locate and secure employment. The training mainly helped youth open new windows of opportunities within their personal networks and communities. Such enablers as growth of social capital, new relationships, and an increase of participants' agency were also

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3 London *et al*. 2010: 199; Van Dijk 2006: 221; Leye 2007: 975.

4 Kvasny 2007: 160.

5 Mariscal *et al*. 2009: 19.

6 Leye 2007; Mariscal *et al*. 2009; FocusAfrica 2010.

7 Mariscal *et al.* 2009; FocusAfrica 2010; Koers 2008; Kvasny 2007.

8 Van Dijk 2006: 224.

9 Mariscal *et al*. 2009.

found in research by London *et al*. at different digital skills training programs in community centers for youth.[10]

Kvasny conceptualizes these kinds of benefits of informal digital skills training.[11] The adult participants in her study framed the impact of access to digital skills not only in terms of tangible benefits, such as being employed, but also mentioned intangible benefits, such as getting a new perception of self. Additionally, London *et al*. found that participants of informal digital skills training showed more civic engagement.[12] Both Mariscal *et al*. and Kvasny support this separate notion of projected benefits on a communal level. In their studies, beneficiaries of informal digital skills training for example started helping other community members with the use of computers.[13]

The literature discussed above shows that the benefits derived from access to informal digital skills training programs are not equally distributed. Examples of these inequalities concern participants that do not find employment, different levels of skillsets that participants obtain, even in similar programs, and a diversity in employment that beneficiaries might find. Employment ranges from digital design-related employment, to business ownership and jobs that do not even involve working with ICT.

In this context, Kvasny refers to what she calls cultural reproduction of existing digital inequalities.[14] The new skills that beneficiaries acquired actually seemed to make participants even more aware that they were disadvantaged compared with other groups. For instance, participants discovered that they lacked writing skills, or they were confronted with constraints in their life circumstances, including the financial capacity to have access to computers and the internet. Research by Unterhalter *et al*. and Jeffrey *et al*. support these notions in which existing presuppositions persist as boundaries to deriving equitable benefits from access to education and newly acquired skills.[15] Youths' backgrounds and existing perceptions concerning these youths and their environment are often reproduced within new contexts and continue to influence current opportunities.

These new inequalities and reproduced inequalities make it useful to look more closely into the mechanisms that structure access and benefits of access. Ribot and Peluso define access as "*the* ability *to derive benefits from things.*"[16] Also, Leach *et al*. see resource access only as a starting point. They

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10 London *et al*. 2010: 221.

11 Kvasny 2007: 169-170.

12 London *et al*. 2010.

13 Mariscal *et al*. 2009; Kvasny 2007.

14 Kvasny 2007: 177.

15 Unterhalter *et al*. 2012; Jeffrey *et al*. 2004.

16 Ribot and Peluso 2003: 153-154.

describe how a legal right (or "endowment") to a specific resource does not provide any direct benefits. It only provides a person with entitlements to use this resource.[17] Access to a computer in a cybercafé, for example, might entitle a user to sell products on a website. It is only after the sale of these products that the actor actually can use the profits to sustain themselves.

Interestingly, the literature on access to ICT also developed from a property-based perspective on access, such as having access to a computer and to the internet, to broader conceptualizations in which researchers started looking at benefits of access to ICT that looked beyond the technical. Examples they used involved growth of social capital and increasing agency that beneficiaries were able to put into practice.[18]

Benefits of access to education are often framed in the context of space: Kvasny, London *et al.*, and Mariscal *et al.* all stress the importance and relevance of communal ties, while Unterhalter *et al.* explicitly connect findings to places where the youth taking part in their study live, both in urban areas, on the streets and in the slums.[19] Jeffrey *et al.* situate young men in local hierarchies and show how newly educated youth deal with "new engagements and new ecologies," such as new networks and the use of technological innovations that can help them transcend local places and spaces.[20]

Methods and Research Setting

Nairobits gave me the opportunity to conduct a two-month field research at its training centers. Here, and at homes and workplaces of alumni, I combined field observations, focus group discussions and interviews with students, training staff, alumni, and employers to help me gain a more grounded understanding of how participating in Nairobits affects employment prospects of its graduates.

In this descriptive case study, I highlight the interactions, expectations and experiences of students, staff and alumni at Nairobits and of employees in the field of digital design-related employment. To conduct my participatory research, I joined Nairobits as a researcher and trainer. This research setting allowed me to make observations and have informal conversations with students at all three Nairobits course levels, staff, and alumni. For example, I visited classrooms at five training centers located in the different Nairobi

17 Leach *et al.* 1999: 235-236.

18 Kvasny 2007; London *et al.* 2010; Mariscal *et al.* 2009; Van Dijk 2006.

19 Kvasny 2007; London *et al.* 2010; Mariscal *et al.* 2009; Unterhalter *et al.* 2012.

20 Jeffrey *et al.* 2004; Jeffrey 2008: 750-751.

slums, houses of alumni, several digital design companies, and workplaces of Nairobits alumni.

As an ethnographic-like approach cannot be rigorously scheduled, more structured research methods were included as well, including two focus group discussions, thirteen semi-structured interviews, and supporting documentation, such as program evaluations.

Additionally, I explored public social media activities by Nairobits students, alumni, and staff. I approached sources such as LinkedIn and the online designers platform Behance, from a digital ethnographic perspective. For high validity, I thus mainly relied on triangulation: the checks and balances between participatory observation and my other research methods. Having the opportunity to meet several people at different times also made it easier to overcome language and cultural barriers. I was able to ask students and alumni for more information, try to get more insights on earlier statements, and build stronger rapport as well. However, students and staff at times might have perceived me as an evaluator – and thus decisive for funding. Therefore, some of their answers might have been guided by these possible expectations. Meanwhile, my own activities did in fact influence the research setting itself. In several cases I purposely used an opportunity to adjust the research setting. For example, I arranged a study project in such a way that I was able to actively observe students within a professional context.

During these research activities I had formal or informal interviews with thirty-four Nairobits students, of whom eighteen were male and sixteen female. Of these students, twenty-four were at the highest level of Nairobits, ten were on lower level courses 1 and 2. Also, I had conversations with twenty-three alumni and eight employers. When interpreting the data, it should be taken into consideration that I mostly interviewed the more successful alumni that advanced to the highest level of the three levels of the Nairobits training program.

In the end, since my research was a single case study, it is impossible to generalize the outcomes of the research for other informal digital skills training programs. At the same time, generalization was not a prior objective of this research. This study at Nairobits provided an interesting case to do in-depth, qualitative research and provide insights that are applicable in other places where NGOs, education, business, and youth from informal settlements meet and interact.

The Nairobits digital design school was founded in 1999 as a one-time course to encourage creativity in youth from informal settlements. One of its major goals was to provide the underprivileged and marginalized youth with a creative outlet to tell their stories. The institute gradually developed into

an educational institute providing training in digital design and coding to hundreds of young people from informal settlements every year.

At the time of my research the program consisted of three consecutive courses which students can gradually move onto. Course one lasts for about six weeks. Every year, over six hundred students are taught the basics of computer use, internet use, and design principles. Approximately two hundred of the students advance to the second level course. Here, for about three months, the students receive more advanced training on design, while they are also introduced to new topics such as web design, motion design, and in-depth practice of professional skills, such as teamwork, project planning, and building a portfolio.

In the end, one hundred students every year get the opportunity to extend their capacities in the Medialab. This third and highest level of Nairobits digital design school focuses on more specific programming languages, company branding, and design theories. Additionally, students make acquaintance with the employment market. The Medialab is the most intensive course of the three, requiring students to participate for another six months.

Apart from the Medialab, all Nairobits courses are provided through six so-called Information Centers in slums in Nairobi, including Mukuru, Korogocho, Kariobangi, Mathare, Eastleigh, and Kibera. These centers are often connected to youth centers, such as FHOK in Eastleigh, or Shofco in Kibera.

Focusing on information centers at these locations ensures that the student population of Nairobits is composed of youth who come from underprivileged backgrounds. When students and alumni refer to the context in which they grew up, they all seemed to struggle to make a living, some were not even sure of getting at least one meal a day. Students and alumni also share an experience of limited educational opportunities outside of Nairobits. For their families, paying school fees was often difficult. Furthermore, a recurring topic concerned safety and criminal conduct in their neighborhoods. Alumni of both Medialab and lower courses I talked to were close to being pressured into crime themselves, seeing their friends end up committing robberies or being involved in prostitution. Before joining Nairobits, some alumni were involved in illegal activities themselves, varying from stealing phones to even robbing matatu drivers.

I also learned that Community Based Organizations (CBOs) are highly involved in ordering and structuring the lives of the Nairobi youth, especially in the context of Nairobits. All youth that get selected for Nairobits have previously been involved in a CBO. Nairobits works with over thirty CBOs to host the selection process for new students and to identify which youth within the community are likely to "give back" to the community during or after their studies. The activities that Nairobits students and alumni were

involved in before joining the informal digital skills training program were as diverse as playing table tennis, going to dances, visiting community events, and participating in workshops.

Findings: Unequal Benefits of Access

One of the most interesting findings in this study is the immediate application and utilization of acquired skills by the Nairobits students. The students do not wait for graduation before monetizing their new skillsets. For example, a student told me how he uses his new computer skills to download movies, before copying them onto DVDs, and selling them to friends and neighbors.

Actually, during a focus group discussion with Nairobits students, all of the participants provided examples of how they use their new knowledge and skills in doing some business. One student mentioned that he designs postcards, while another respondent manages to "source a small income by designing business cards, calendars, brochures, and events cards."

Whereas these examples still seemed quite informal and ad hoc, other students developed small enterprises already. One female Medialab student showed me the Facebook page of her company. On it were posted at least twenty images of different hats that were for sale: berets, sunhats, and even beanies for in the winter. Through Facebook she was selling about four hats per week.

Both FocusAfrica and Ndolo already looked at employment statistics of Nairobits alumni. Within their groups of participants, 66% and 54% were employed, self-employed, or on an internship, respectively. However, what was striking in the report of FocusAfrica was the large gap between beneficiaries who believed Nairobits positively impacted their employment prospects (96%) and the actual number of alumni studied that were formally employed or self-employed (53%).[21]

Looking more closely at professional digital profiles of Nairobits alumni on LinkedIn and Behance provides a diverse image of the different employment-related activities they undertake after graduation. Some are active as web designer, graphic designer, or developer at media companies or agencies. Others have positions in customer relations in call centers, or work on data entry and social media for a large corporation. Also, some alumni show entrepreneurial spirit, labeling themselves CEO of a company or being self-employed. In addition, many other profiles show volunteering positions as the main activity or the alumni simply refer to themselves as having

21 FocusAfrica 2010: 8, 32-39; Ndolo 2015: 50.

"attended Nairobits" if they were not yet employed. Many others in the same situation simply left the space for a current position open.

The diversity I spotted on the LinkedIn profiles is also evident from the interviews and conversations I had with Nairobits alumni. One former student described during an interview how she climbed from an internship with low pay, to a position as web developer at a major international ad agency. However, she was also quick to point out that not all alumni were as successful. She explained how many of her classmates gave up on web design, estimating that only half of them found ICT-related employment. She also knew of classmates that continued their former jobs, for example polishing shoes on the streets.

Especially alumni of the lower level courses 1 or 2 fail to get a job in digital design, if they are employed at all. One of the trainers at Nairobits explained how some of his contacts that finished course 2 found employment, but not per se in activities that require digital skills. This also applies to contacts I had with alumni who never reached Medialab. One of these former students told me she now works in a high street shop in her own neighborhood. Furthermore, her friends that failed to get to Medialab had no current formal position or income.

This all seems obvious, considering the difficulties I had in tracking down course 1 and course 2 students that did not advance to Medialab. In contrast to most Medialab students, trainers did not seem to know a lot about these lower-level alumni, and their known contact details had often expired or they could only be reached through family members. This would seem to indicate that these alumni do not have access to many (digital) platforms for communication.

For those Nairobits alumni who find formal employment, wages are diverse as well. One of the employers I spoke to acknowledges that the wages he pays are often difficult to live off. Most of the Nairobits alumni that worked for his company came in on an internship. They were initially given a stipend, to cover the basic costs they needed to make for their internships, including bus fares and lunch. And whereas I met an alumnus who was already making over 40,000 KES,[22] another employed alumnus I talked to only received a 6,000 KES monthly allowance. With this money she was able to pay her rent of 5,000 KES and bought food with the other 1,000 KES, only possible by doing her grocery shopping at a very cheap marketplace.

The majority of alumni who finished the Medialab perceive themselves to be good, very good, or excellent in Microsoft Office (96%), Content Management Systems (96%), programming languages such as PHP (66%)

22 100 KES is approximately 1 US$.

and MySQL (68%), Internet Use (96%) and Web design (71%).[23] At the same time, my research indicates that the perceptions students and alumni have of themselves are far from realistic. Both trainers and employers told me that they knew of some exceptional students that learn quickly, but most alumni lack sufficient skills to be employed directly. One employer even explained that hiring Nairobits students always "is a gamble."

The enthusiasm in responses by alumni might not have anything to do with actual acquired skills at all. Knowing how to work on a computer, to use the internet and to be actively involved in a new economy makes them proud. Their self-image seems to have got a boost, whereas they also feel they can contribute more to society. Not sitting at home doing nothing and getting an opportunity to leave the slums is an accomplishment in itself.

Being at Nairobits creates the impression that the students are employed. They are busy and leave the house and community every morning to go to school. One student said that he is now perceived for the first time "to be a productive person in the community." A classmate added that he now respects himself more, while he also noticed that he was getting more respect from his parents. These experiences are shared by another alumnus, who now sees herself as a creative young woman that is able to help out her family. Before Nairobits, she did not see any way out of her slum neighborhood. Since getting digital skills training, she believes she has the opportunity to make something better of her life and help her family and friends.

My data actually do show how both students and alumni use their newly acquired skillsets to support their communities. For example, during a focus group discussion with students, participants told me how they now train their friends basic computer skills or how they developed a website for their church.

Findings: Inequalities Explained

The availability of new access points to the online environment, to international networks and the creative elite transforms opportunities of Nairobits' students and alumni. Their worlds actually expand with new networks that might include employers or brokers towards employment, support the students and alumni in building their own businesses, or increase their employment opportunities through additional skill development and self-marketing.

First, there are new online spaces that the participants can make use of. During a focus group discussion with students, I learned how their access to online contexts provides them with new fields and spaces for interaction. For

23 FocusAfrica 2010.

some, this had a professional focus as well, including the exchange of ideas with fellow-students or to give feedback on each other's work. An alumnus I interviewed launched his creative design agency just a year ago and started using the portfolio community Behance to promote his work. Another alumnus showed to me some T-shirt designs with Kenyan-themed prints he posted on this same platform, resulting in various sales opportunities, even in Germany. Two other alumni I met used Facebook for their marketing campaigns. For example, one of them launched her own digital marketing agency. She has been promoting her business actively through Facebook and a website that she built herself.

Those students and alumni that were less interested in starting their own business seemed to have more difficulty in using new digital spaces to advance their careers. Of course some alumni pointed out online vacancy websites where they looked and applied for interesting jobs. However, these applications were often unsuccessful. Only one of my interviewees found a job when she responded to a vacancy that appeared on the Nairobits alumni page on Facebook. On the other hand, being engaged with professionals through online platforms is an important factor for all students and alumni for growing their skills. Current students mentioned that they use these platforms for research on new programming and coding languages that are published.

Second, Nairobits students and alumni get exposed to international contacts and they are able to actively form relations with them. For example, international contacts provide learning opportunities for the students, especially for those at Medialab. Every year, guest lecturers visit Nairobits. These lecturers are often Kenyans, but also foreign developers and entrepreneurs. Additionally, a recurring activity in the Medialab is the visit from a group of Dutch high school students. This sometimes results in quite sustainable engagements. I spotted how different Nairobits students connected with their Dutch counterparts on Facebook, opening up opportunities for future contact.

Through the partnerships of Nairobits, its alumni are also offered opportunities to actually travel abroad for learning or working purposes. I met two alumni who received a grant to work for a Dutch ICT company for three months. Also, based on the Nairobits model, new training centers around the globe have been founded. This opened up concrete assignments for Nairobits alumni in other countries to help build these training centers. Still, these opportunities are often the outcome of intensive selection processes and only benefit the most talented alumni.

Third, almost naturally, Nairobits students and alumni get access points to the creative sector. This starts with the network of other Nairobits students

and alumni. Former classmates tend to use each other for peer feedback. An alumnus I interviewed directly involved his fellow alumni to create his company. At the moment of my research, he was developing a company website. To build his brand, he got support from several alumni. Often trainers provide insights to alumni as well, for example by being helpful when former students drop by for questions on new software. Still, one trainer told me it was quite difficult to keep track of all alumni, especially those who are involved in the lower level courses.

Within the creative industry, some Medialab alumni have shown how they profited from networks and how they influenced the sector. Several alumni have been building on the success of iHub, a community with over 15,000 creative professionals in Nairobi. An even more straightforward example is an alumnus who won the Appstar Challenge in 2013. This former Nairobits student opened up corporate access points for other Nairobits alumni. After winning the award, an ICT industry leader inquired about Nairobits and visited the Medialab to look for cooperation opportunities.

Next to these well-known success stories, other Medialab alumni also built strong relations with professionals in the creative field and secured continued access for themselves. Simply working in an office in the Westlands, an economically developed part of Nairobi, provided an alumnus with the opportunity to meet people at higher professional levels. However, course 1 and 2 alumni seem to be less involved in such new engagements. One of these students explained to me that she did keep in touch with former fellow-students, but only those who are also her neighbors.

Not all Nairobits alumni are successful in adapting to the professional cultures they encounter. Talking to both employers and alumni, I learned that some alumni struggled with their backgrounds, bearing the load of their existing identities of "being from the slum." Looking more closely, it seems that existing identities of Nairobits alumni make it more difficult for them to secure continued access to employment in ICT or digital design.

"When you get a job, the setting changes. Adapting and getting the slum out of your mind [is challenging]," one of the Nairobits trainers told me on several occasions. In class, he therefore motivates his students to get acquainted with what he calls "middle class culture" at an early stage. For example, he organizes a weekly decent day, on which his students are expected to show up in professional attire. The trainer believed that this focus on bridging these students' cultures and office cultures was relevant because he himself had experienced how difficult it was to relate to a professional business environment after graduating from Nairobits.

Blending in and leaving troubles at home is a strategy that several alumni told me about. "I always dress up for work. Leave my problems at home.

At work it is purely professional," one alumnus told me. He does not dare to share his background with his colleagues. He is afraid this might have a negative effect on his image. Most of his co-workers are not even aware that two of his brothers depend on his income.

The adaptiveness of Nairobits alumni also seems to be determined by their soft skills. One of the employers I interviewed told me that the technical skills are easy to learn, "but it is difficult to make them [the alumni] aware that they will need to learn how to speak English, how to discuss and provide feedback." As an example of a vital and business-critical skill, the employer referred to a Nairobits alumnus that had difficulty writing emails. "It is usually reactionary. Sometimes they are overly technical." Also, the company owner believes it is important for Nairobits to teach students how to dress. In his encounters with Nairobits alumni, this was often a focal point of his coaching.

One of the employers I interviewed explained that the creative sector has no problems with identity-related issues such as job market entry boundaries based on class, ethnicity, or gender. She actually advocated for the creative sector as a prime employment opportunity for marginalized youth. "It is extremely multi-racial here. Creativity cannot afford to think in terms of tribes. We just want to see portfolios and speed." Still, for some alumni the reasons for not aligning identities within the working environment were more complex and grounded in beliefs, stereotypes, or value systems. One alumnus for example shared with me that he had difficulties working with his first boss. He had a negative perception of his boss, because the man was gay. Other alumni indicated that women still have to overcome some specific cultural boundaries. For example, a former student claimed that employers consider pregnancy as a liability that negatively influences a company's competitiveness. Meanwhile, this issue already plays a role in the homes of these alumni. One female alumnus told me how her husband asked her to stop working when they got kids – a message that was recognized by another female participant during a focus group with students. She added how her learning at Nairobits confronts practices within her community: "Most girls are married, but [I am] unique by being educated more than them."

Linked to such identity issues are the spatial boundaries that go with them. The slums or shantytowns as a space are perceived as lacking services such as access to a computer and internet and a place where designers and developers are not able to get a job done. One of the employers I talked to highlighted specific challenges for slum youth when it comes to building a successful career. For example, in the case of a deadline, it is more difficult for them to get to the office quickly or to work late from home. Employers

believe that the areas in which the Nairobits alumni live limit the possibilities for them to be active in remote working.

Also, one of the major challenges for slum youth is transport to places where they can be employed. One alumnus told me that it took him over two hours every day to commute to work and two hours to get back. Interestingly enough, many of the lower level alumni also tend to focus on the vicinity of their homes to find employment, thereby limiting their opportunities, especially since jobs in computer use, coding and digital design are often not available in the slum areas.

Another difficulty that alumni encounter is their perception of the entitlements that they have. Research by FocusAfrica concludes that Nairobits alumni that are employed in ICT or digital design-related activities often get a lower salary while executing the same task as their co-workers who graduated from formal education.[24] Staff of Nairobits clearly sees this happening too often: during a focus group discussion, one of the trainers mentioned several examples of youth being on unpaid internships for over two years. Staff members told me that these alumni should get a better insight on the entitlements they have. However, talking to employers, I learned that some alumni also overestimate their own qualities. One employer described to me how alumni who work in her company sometimes want to move too fast and to make more money too quickly. In the end, she explained, Nairobits alumni work slower because they have less skills. "They get more feedback. They think that this extra time they invest means they deserve more money. But their output might not be better or more effective."

Meanwhile, alumni have differing perceptions on their position within the labor force. For example, at the time of my research, one female Medialab alumnus volunteered for a design company. She designed billboards, posters, and banners, but she did not get paid. She hoped to use her job to kick-start her career as a freelance designer and was happy with the opportunity. At the same time, another alumnus was on the lookout for a more promising internship position. "I need a senior who can guide me. I now feel like the chief developer and designer," he told me. He wanted a position that would give him the opportunity to develop his skills continuously.

Employers informed me that they see a lot of potential in the students and alumni of Nairobits, but they also noticed that they still have to teach them several skills. "They had good design skills. But most of them are people you still have to invest in. An environment with a real client is different. We had to train them in quality," one employer shared with me. According to the employer, this investment in quality is also related to the soft skills:

24 FocusAfrica 2010.

"One [alumnus] started talking to a client in Swahili instead of English. When someone makes this switch, it doesn't come across as professional. It is informal, or even impolite." And even though many Nairobits alumni believe most of their digital skills to be good or excellent, they too were able to describe some skill deficiencies. One alumnus explained how she felt inadequately equipped to enter the labor market right after completing Nairobits. In her first job she had to train other youths in her community on computer use, life skills, and entrepreneurship. While the computer basics were no problem, she found the other topics more difficult.

One of the key frustrations some alumni shared in interviews was their inability to continue learning at the companies they worked for. One female alumnus got frustrated because she had to teach her internship boss how to design a website, instead of learning more skills herself. Other alumni even suggested that they were only able to secure continued education by acquiring a job, an internship, or a volunteer position. For example, an entrepreneur illustrated how not getting a job or internship quickly increases inequalities due to the lack of opportunities to stay up-to-date on digital trends and thus remain attractive for employers. In many cases, Nairobits alumni without employment have no access to a computer at all. They rely on friends with access to a computer or on the availability of money to go to a cybercafé. One alumnus told me that: "Per week I can go [online] for three days, one hour a day. That is not enough for research and to not forget what I have been learning. Sometimes I just use my phone for that, but I like to be connected more." Still, the existence of this restriction was contested by some. A trainer and NGO representative said that the lack of buying power in cybercafés might not necessarily be a money issue at all, but an indicator of the lack of skills of alumni in handling money.

Nairobits and Nairobits staff seem to be a key factor for Medialab alumni to achieve employment in the ICT or design sector. Often, students and alumni tried to utilize their access to new ecologies, such as vacancy websites. However, their engagement with Nairobits and its staff often is the main leverage for them towards actual success. The report by FocusAfrica already indicated that Nairobits was able to achieve high employment numbers through its placement services.[25] A large majority of Medialab students were successfully supported by Nairobits to acquire an internship or job. At the same time the report shows that course 1 and course 2 students get less attention. One trainer told me: "Now if somebody wants three students, we are most likely to send Medialab students. Not course 1 or 2 [students]. There is a huge difference in level." He concluded that many of the course 1 or

25 FocusAfrica 2010: 29.

course 2 students are not that well prepared to enter the labor market when it comes to jobs in ICT or design – even though they can apply their new skills in other fields.

A former student explained to me that the company he now works for approached Nairobits in their search for interns. "Many companies come to Nairobits and ask us to apply." Knowing this context, one former Medialab student actually might have relied a bit too heavily on the opportunities he expected Nairobits to offer him. Describing his job search strategy, he explained: "Sometimes I write an application and send my portfolio. Sometimes I just wait for Nairobits to come up with a job."

It almost seems as if Nairobits acts as a gatekeeper for companies. If students and alumni wait for vacancies that come through Nairobits contacts, companies will have difficulty reaching them through other means. The most striking example of this function of Nairobits as gatekeeper *and* broker was provided by an alumnus who told me that her first job interview had even taken place at the Nairobits offices next to Medialab.

Apart from their reliance on Nairobits, alumni themselves have agency in getting access to employment in the ICT or digital design sector. They can take the initiative to succeed – whether by starting up their own company or following up on newly acquired business contacts. Also, the alumni are both a strength and liability for future access to certain companies for Nairobits students. One alumnus was the first to explain to me how important the alumni networks of Nairobits were. "I responded to a vacancy. The person in charge of hiring had worked with other good Nairobits graduates before." An employer I spoke to also told me that the performance of Nairobits alumni is important for others to be given a place. Alumni with great capabilities and results can thus open doors for others to be employed in ICT or digital design, while the inferior performance of others might actually keep doors closed.

Discussion: Individuals Strategize, Structural Boundaries Remain

Over the past few years, studies and evaluations that looked into informal digital skills training programs often focused on quantitative analyses. These studies suggest that access to education in computer use, coding and digital design increase employment opportunities of marginalized youth. Meanwhile, there is a lack of understanding of what narratives lie beyond the quantitative data of these informal training programs and the repetitive use of well-known success stories of some prominent alumni. In order to get more insight into this matter, I conducted a field research at Nairobits.

Students and alumni of this institute seem to benefit from informal digital skills education in ways that Kvasny, Mariscal *et al.* and London *et al.* implicitly or explicitly already revealed from their different perspectives.[26] Nairobits beneficiaries leverage their new skills in computer use, coding or digital design to generate an income, often even starting during the training program. Also, a number of graduates at the highest level of the Nairobits program actually end up being employed in digital design or ICT-related jobs. Their jobs vary from web developer at an ad agency to designer of billboards and posters at a design company. At the same time, many alumni still end up either working in the informal economy, being inactive, underemployed or unemployed.

Informal digital skills training provides agency for participants, but only a number of them are able to leverage this agency to overcome structural boundaries to formal employment and thus benefit from access to the training program. First, acquired skills are not crucial to gaining employment – the power of an alumni's network is. Even though students and recent alumni tend to rate their own capacities highly, employers do not believe them to be employment-ready when it comes to the creative industry. Following London *et al.* and Jeffrey *et al.*, the most successful alumni seemed to be those that were able to use their newly built networks and social capital most effectively.[27] They profited from new engagements and new ecologies, both directly and through mediated access.

The depth and diversity of these new spaces, places, and networks that students and alumni encounter seem to be a reliable indicator of future successes. Those students that do not advance to the highest level of the training program lack the opportunity to utilize the placement service of Nairobits, they tend to stay less involved within the Nairobits community, their relationship with the teachers (an important broker for employment) is less intensive, and those alumni that do not advance their career seem to have more difficulty in sustaining networks outside of their local communities.

A second reason for the Nairobits youth not to profit from their training is related to a misalignment between their expectations and reality. In practice, it is difficult for alumni to adapt in a context of formal employment. They literally "carry" their backgrounds – or: slum identities – with them. For example, it turns out to be a challenge for these former students to dress appropriately and to converse in formal contexts to make a polite impression. These are issues that are problematic, even for graduates that end up as professionals in computer use, coding, or digital design. Graduates also

26 Kvasny 2007; Mariscal *et al.* 2009; London *et al.* 2010.

27 London *et al.* 2010; Jeffrey *et al.* 2004; Jeffrey 2008.

told me that they have difficulty blending in within office cultures, in making sustainable contacts with colleagues, and that they feel they cannot talk openly about their backgrounds. In that sense, these issues culminate in a reproduction of existing inequalities that Jeffrey and Kvasny already refer to in their studies on educated young men and informal digital skills training respectively.[28] They found how education often is not able to transcend, for example, economic, social, or spatial inequities that already exist.

The third major issue concerns growing disparities between those alumni that are successful in gaining access to employment after completing the training and those that are not. Examples in my research highlight how the informal digital skills education at Nairobits at first seems to bridge digital divides, but how in the longer run its effects do support some kind of production of new inequalities.[29] For those graduates that do not secure or maintain employment, the gap towards new employment increases again. For example, being unemployed or underemployed makes it difficult for alumni to stay up-to-date on trends in digital design. These alumni often lack access to the internet or design programs, either because they do not own technology, or they lack the capital to acquire technology.

My research also shows that for those alumni that do not find employment, the reach of their new ecologies and engagements is smaller. Their networks and employment opportunities seem to relate directly to the spatiality of their community and do not go beyond that. This in turn negatively influences the opportunities of the youth to use others as a broker for employment. It also makes it difficult for them to find employment at companies that are outside the spaces they already know, thus limiting their employment prospects. Meanwhile, those alumni that are successful tend to strengthen their networks and expand the number of people that act as a broker for them when looking for new employment opportunities. As the research of Kvasny, London *et al.*, and Mariscal *et al.* already showed, the role of training centers in a digital design training context such as Nairobits is of great importance in enabling alumni to become employed.[30]

It turns out that being literate in digital design skills does not automatically get marginalized youth employed in computer use, coding or digital design. Their employment prospects do not increase rapidly *just* by increasing these skills. Actual formal employment is the result of a broader program that goes far beyond offering digital skills training. The vast majority of the Nairobits alumni keeps running into structural obstacles that need to be overcome if

28 Jeffrey 2008; Kvasny 2007.

29 Jeffrey 2008.

30 Kvasny 2007; London *et al.* 2010; Mariscal *et al.* 2009.

they wish to benefit from access to informal digital skills education. They are challenged by persisting slum identities, limited access to new engagements and ecologies, and practical considerations, such as spatial and technological boundaries. These digital divides that concern employment can only be bridged by challenging existing perceptions on identities of marginalized youth, by introducing them to valuable new engagements, and by providing them with opportunities outside of their current spatialities.

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3

What Do Enrolment Data Say About Education?

Bert van Pinxteren

Abstract: This paper looks at the evolution of enrolment in education over time, comparing Africa with Europe. Using Bourdieu's insights on education as a form of cultural capital and on its functions in elite reproduction, it shows how changes in enrolment data reveal something about the social function of higher education in a given society. Researchers should therefore take enrolment data into consideration when discussing education in Africa. It argues for the importance of broadening the educational pyramid and increasing educational levels in Africa in areas such as agriculture. It predicts that as enrolment levels increase, there will be a growing need for using local languages as the medium of instruction, also at tertiary education level.

Introduction

What role can education play in achieving social transformations? What role has it played over the years and how can processes in Europe and in Africa be compared? This chapter examines one element of this, by looking at enrolment data. It argues that enrolment data help to understand the function of education in elite (re)production, using the theoretical framework developed by Bourdieu and Passeron.[1] This chapter thus illustrates how an understanding of the temporal and spatial differences between countries leads to an understanding of the evolution of the function of education in these countries. This will illustrate the thesis that no discussion on education in Africa is complete without a discussion of the sociological parameters within which such education is provided.

1 Bourdieu and Passeron 1979.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides a brief outline of Bourdieu's theoretical approach. This approach explains the importance of looking at enrolment data for understanding the different functions of education in different countries and at different points in time. The second section compares the evolution over time of enrolment in Europe and in Sub-Saharan Africa and will zoom in on three African countries as well as three European countries: one country that has low enrolment rates, one with high enrolment rates, and a third country with enrolment rates near the average. The third section looks at one issue that is related to the changing function of tertiary education in society, namely the issue of the medium of instruction.

Theoretical Framework

In order to understand the function of education more in general, a productive theoretical framework has been developed by Bourdieu and Passeron. These authors define education as a *field*, a system of social positions, structured internally in terms of power relations. Education helps to form the *cultural capital* of a country and provides a specific *habitus.* Together, these mechanisms help us understand the role of education in class (re-) production. Higher education is conceptualized as a sorting machine that selects students according to an implicit social classification and reproduces the same students according to an explicit academic classification. This explicit academic classification in fact closely resembles the implicit social classification.[2] Drastic changes, for example a rapid expansion of the educational system will change the elite reproduction function of education. Such changes may mean that elites look elsewhere for ways of reproducing their advantageous position.

This is in fact what has happened in Europe in the recent past and what is currently happening in several African countries as well. This analysis will illustrate this by using enrolment data. Before examining the data, though, a short explanation is needed of what is meant by "tertiary education."

This chapter follows the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 2011 scheme, as developed by UNESCO. According to this scheme, "tertiary education" is comprised of ISCED levels 5 through to 8. Level 8 stands for "doctoral or equivalent level," whereas level 5 stands for "short cycle tertiary education," not to be confused with level 4, which stands for "post-secondary non-tertiary education." It is important to note that in this scheme, "tertiary education" refers to more than what is commonly

2 Naidoo 2004, summarizing Bourdieu.

understood as university education: it also includes education for example by polytechnics at the higher vocational level.

Secondary education comprises ISCED levels 2 and 3 – in some countries, this corresponds to a distinction between two phases of secondary education. Primary education then corresponds to ISCED level 1.

The indicator used here is the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). This ratio is the total enrolment within a country "in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education."[3] It is important to realize that in theory, the GER can be above 100: this can happen if more people are enrolled at a certain educational level than there are people in that specific age bracket. A different measure, the Net Enrolment Ratio (NER) shows specifically which percentage of a certain age bracket are actually enrolled at the corresponding level of education. The NER requires more detailed data to compute than the GER and is not published by UNESCO for the tertiary level.

In light of the approach by Bourdieu and Passeron, it will be clear that the GER in Tertiary Education for a particular country gives an indication of the social function of tertiary education in that country. This indication is independent of the quality of the education. In general: if only a low proportion of the population of a country has access to tertiary education, then that education will be key to reproducing such a country's elite. If, on the other hand, a very high proportion of the population of a country has access to tertiary education, then such education itself will not be the key mechanism for reproducing the elite.

As a shorthand for characterizing the functions of education, I will follow the rule of thumb that has been developed by Trow:[4] education that is accessible to less than 15% of the population is elite education. Education accessible to between 15 and 40% of the population is mass education. Education accessible to more than 40% of the population is called universal education.

Bourdieu and Passeron's theory leads to a second important element to look at when analyzing education: this is the relation between the elite and the rest of the population, as evidenced by the amount of selectivity in the educational process. This is about the difference in educational level between the elite and the rest of the population – in other words, about how "steep" the educational pyramid is in a given country and at a given point in time.

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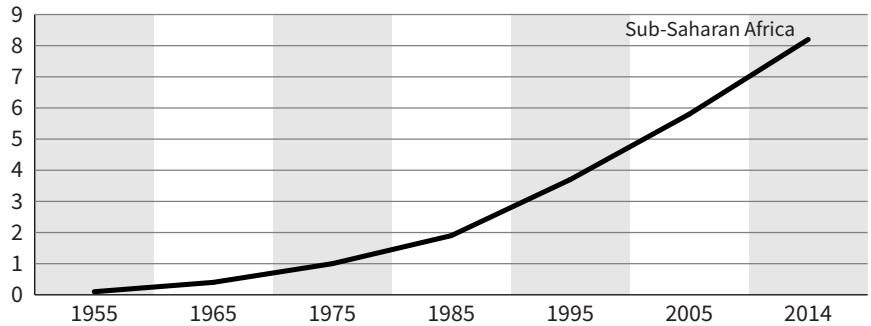
3 UNESCO 2009: 9.

4 Discussed in Cloete and Maassen 2015: 3.

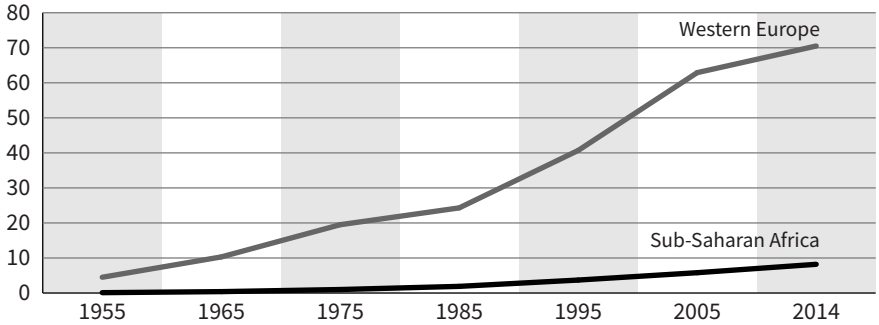
Evolution of Enrolment Data over Time

As shown in graph 1 below, the GER for Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole has greatly increased in the past sixty years, rising from 0.1% in 1955 to 8.2% in 2014. However, a similar development has taken place in Western Europe, as shown in graph 2: there, GER has risen from 4.5% in 1955 to over 70% in 2014. Even though the GER has increased in both regions, the growth in tertiary education in Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole has been greater than in Western Europe.

Today, the GER for Sub-Saharan Africa is approximately at the level that Western Europe had in 1965. In Europe, the function of tertiary education, especially of university education, has changed dramatically compared to the mid-1960s. This did not happen without friction: the wave of student protests that spread over most of Western Europe after 1968 is partly an expression of the changing role of tertiary education in that period. Such frictions are likely to occur in several African countries as well, as will be clear when we take a look at the statistics of individual countries.

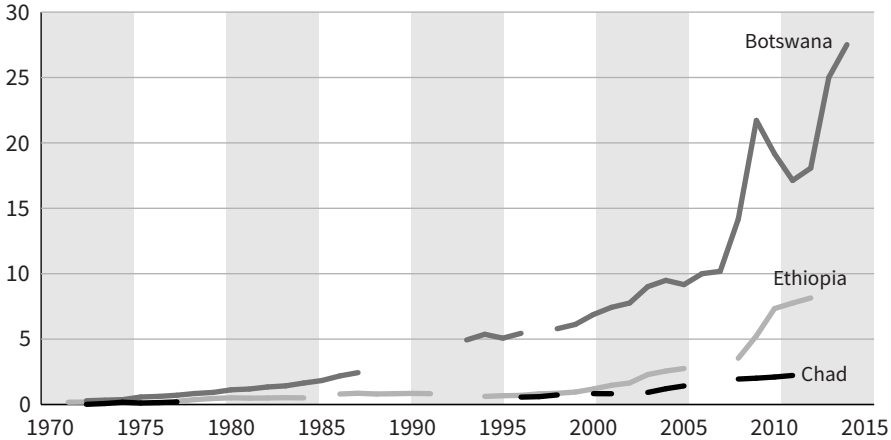


Graph 1 **Gross Enrolment Ratio, tertiary, Sub-Saharan Africa, 1955-2014. Sources: Altbach (2012), UNESCO (2009), and UNESCO (2012)**



Graph 2 **Gross Enrolment Ratio, tertiary, Western Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa, 1955-2014. Sources: Altbach (2012), UNESCO (2009), and UNESCO (2012)**

Statistics that show an entire subcontinent hide the substantial differences that exist between countries. In Sub-Saharan Africa, Chad holds the sad position of the African country with the lowest GER in 1972, and in 2014 as well.[5] The countries with the highest GER in Africa include Egypt and some other Arab countries as well as Mauritius. Of Sub-Saharan Africa, the country with the highest GER is Botswana. A country that is near the Sub-Saharan average is Ethiopia. The evolution in GER in these three countries since 1970 is shown in graph 3 below:



Graph 3 **Gross Enrolment Ratio, both sexes (%), Botswana, Chad, Ethiopia**[6]

As is clear from the graph, the differences between countries are considerable. In 1972, Botswana had the highest GER, of 0.3%. Ethiopia stood at nearly 0.2% and Chad at a mere 0.01%. With figures this low, it seems safe to assume that most of the elites did not actually get their education in their own countries, but instead obtained their education abroad. By 2014, tertiary education had expanded in all three countries, growing to a still very low 3.4% in Chad, 8.1% in Ethiopia, and nearly 28% in Botswana.

These statistics illustrate a number of key points. For some countries, such as Chad, tertiary education is still a mechanism for elite reproduction. Like in precolonial times, it is likely that these elites will be largely foreign-educated.

For other countries, such as Botswana but also Ghana, tertiary education is becoming more of a commodity, accessible to the middle classes. Botswana

5 Note, though, that the GER is not available for all African countries or for all years. Thus, for example, the GER for Sierra Leone is only available for 2000, 2001, and 2002. For Equatorial Guinea, it is only available for 1982, 1991, and 2000.

6 All GER data are taken from UNESCO 2009 and UNESCO 2012. Data selected: gross enrolment ratio by level of education, tertiary, both sexes, %.

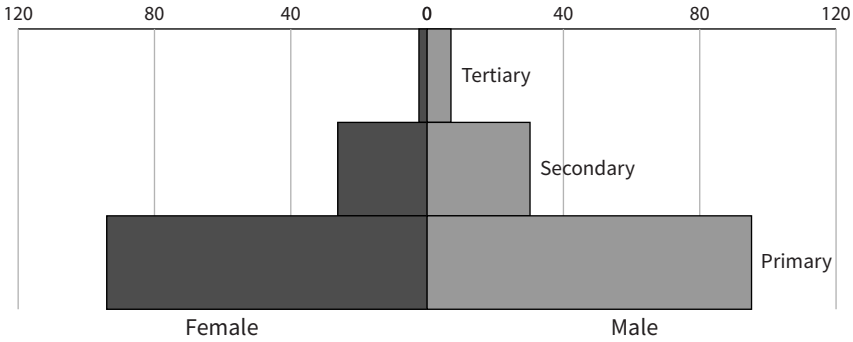
now has a GER comparable to that of Western Europe in 1975. Such countries now offer an alternative to study abroad for a reasonable proportion of the age group – although the elite probably still invest in a foreign education.

Botswana has shown periods of rapid educational expansion, such as between 2007 and 2009, when the GER doubled. Such a rapid expansion can of course lead to a "crisis of expectations:" it is unlikely that those students who graduated in Botswana from the 2009 intake would find the same job opportunities as those who graduated from the 2007 intake.

Educational Pyramids

In addition to looking at the enrolment ratio in tertiary education, it is relevant to investigate the relationship between tertiary education and other levels of education. This relationship shows the extent to which the educational system works as a selection mechanism.

First, it is illustrative to look at the educational pyramid in the advanced countries, at the time when Bourdieu entered tertiary education, so around 1950. Graph 4 below has been constructed on the basis of the material provided by Barrow and Jong-Wha.[7] These authors give enrolment ratios for three levels of education for the population as a whole and for females. From those, I have computed the male enrolment ratios as well.



Graph 4 Educational pyramid, "advanced" countries, 1950

The graph shows a number of interesting characteristics:

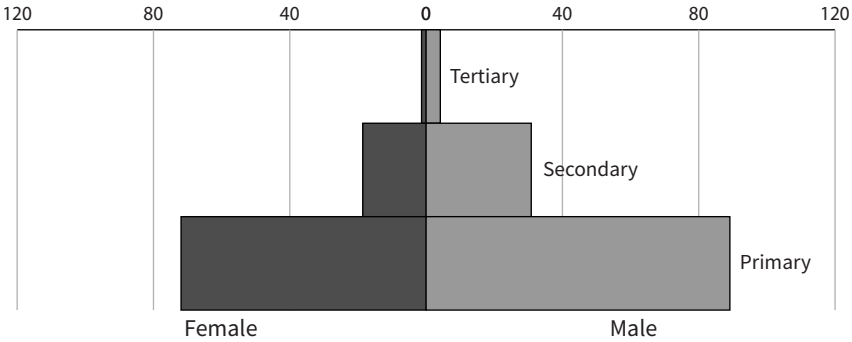
- Primary education at that time was universal;
- Secondary education was not yet universal, but accessible to over 30% of the population, both male and female;

7 Barrow and Jong-Wha 2015: 16-17.

- Tertiary education was clearly for the elite, and considerably more accessible to men than to women.

It is relevant to look at the shape of the pyramid: selection was quite intensive: fewer than half of those who went to primary school could continue to secondary school. Less than a third of the boys and only one-tenth of the girls who went to secondary school could proceed to tertiary education. In other words, there was a large educational gap between the elite and the rest of the population.

Graph 5 shows the situation for Ethiopia in 2005.[8] As is clear from the graph, the pyramid of Ethiopia in 2005 is similar to that in the "advanced" world in 1950, although if anything, the pyramid is slightly steeper.



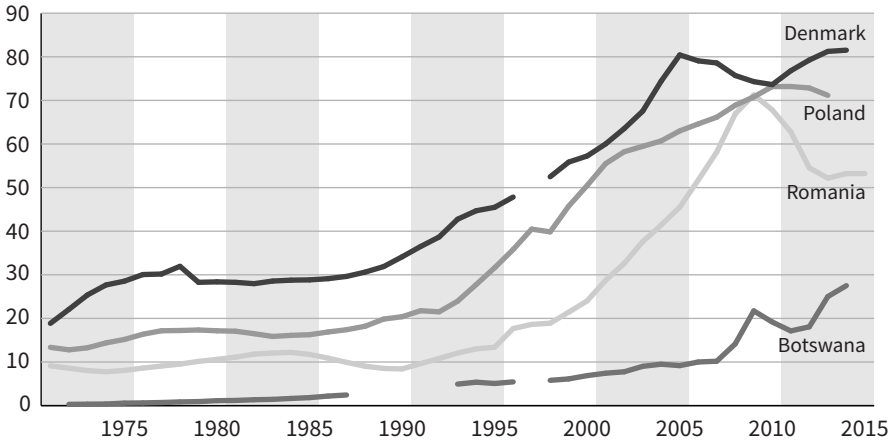
Graph 5 Educational pyramid, Ethiopia, 2005

The purpose of this graph is not to show that Ethiopia is half a century "behind" Europe, but to illustrate that social processes that have been at play in Europe may also be at play in Africa, although the effects and the appearances might be different.

Further insights can be gained from comparing the evolution in Sub-Saharan Africa with the evolution in Europe. Leaving aside the European small-island states of Cyprus and Malta, which show a slightly anomalous picture, the commodification of tertiary education in Europe expanded further between 1990 and 2005, growing from an EU average tertiary education GER of 25% in 1990 to over 60% in 1990 and over 80% in a country like Denmark, as shown in graph 6 below.

What is clear from comparing graph 3 with graph 6 is that the diversity in Africa in the tertiary education sector is far greater than that in Europe. The lines in the European graph show a much more parallel trajectory than the lines in the African graph. In 2014, the Romanian enrolment ratio stood

8 Data for this and following graphs from UNESCO 2009 and UNESCO 2012.



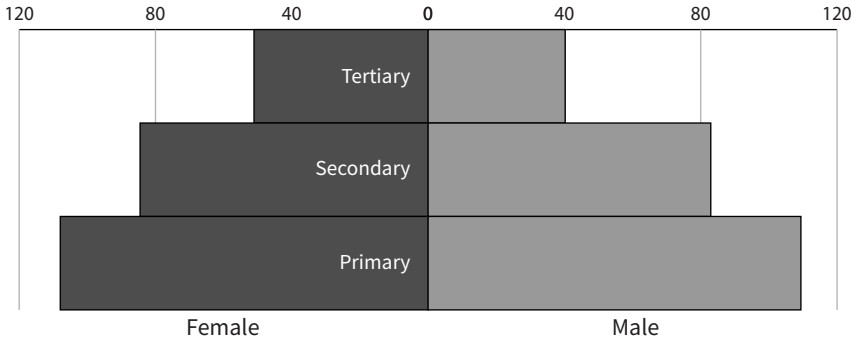
Graph 6 **Gross Enrolment Ratio, tertiary, both sexes (%), Botswana, Denmark, Poland, Romania**

at 65% of the Danish ratio. However, the Chadian enrolment ratio was only 12.5% of the Botswana ratio. This means that whereas it might be defensible to make general statements about the tertiary education sector in Europe, such statements about Sub-Saharan Africa have much lower validity, if any at all.

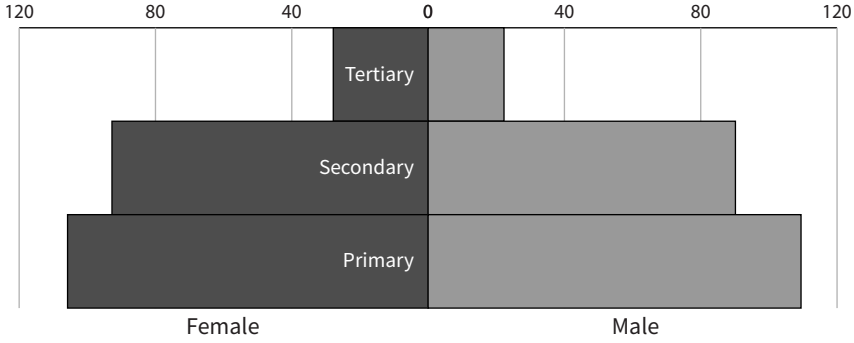
Another point is this: a country like Romania was able to double its tertiary education sector from the current level of Botswana (nearly 30%) between 2001 and 2007, so in a relatively short period of time. Even though population growth in many African countries is higher than in Europe, it is still reasonable to expect that rapid further expansion is possible and likely in Botswana and other countries in Africa, given the right political and economic environment. There is reason to expect that at least in some countries, such rapid expansions will indeed take place. This means that the social function of tertiary education in some African countries has changed since independence and is likely to change even more in the years to come. Such periods of rapid educational expansion are likely to lead to a problem of disillusioned students and are likely to force changes in the educational "habitus," in order to cater for the changed social function of education.

In other countries in Africa, such expansion did not happen and may not happen for some years to come – meaning, of course, that social discontent might show itself in other ways.

It is also illustrative to compare the educational pyramids of Romania and of Botswana, as is done in graphs 7 and 8 below.



Graph 7 **Educational pyramid, Romania, 2005**



Graph 8 **Educational pyramid, Botswana, 2014**

It is clear that these pyramids show more similarity than do the pyramids of Ethiopia (graph 5) and Botswana. In Botswana as well as in Romania, primary and secondary education can now be said to be universal. Tertiary education has become massive. In both countries, more women than men participate in tertiary education. Even though there is still a considerable gap between those who can go to secondary education and the tertiary education level, that gap is now much smaller than it was some years ago. This also means that the relationship between the elites and the rest of the population has changed: the educational gap between the most educated and the rest of the population is now smaller than it used to be. In other words, in order to be able to do its job of managing the country, the elites now, both in Romania and in Botswana, have to take account of and can rely on an educated population to a much greater degree than was the case a few decades ago. This is also happening in other countries in Africa: table 1 below shows all African countries with a gross enrolment rate in tertiary education above 15%.

African countries with a tertiary education GER > 15%		
Country	**2014**	**2015**
Algeria		36.9
Botswana		27.5
Cameroon		17.5
Cabo Verde		21.7
Egypt		36.2
Ghana		16.2
Mauritius		36.7
Morocco		28.1
South Africa	19.4	
Sudan	16.3	
Tunisia		34.6

Table 1 **African countries with a gross enrolment rate in tertiary education above 15%**

Implications of GER Growth

Above, I have shown GER growth over the years, both in Africa and in Europe. Following Bourdieu and Passeron, this growth implies that as the GER changes, the social function of tertiary education also changes. As long as the GER for tertiary education remains below 15%, this education can be said to have elite reproduction as one of its main functions. In most countries in Africa (but not in all, as table 1 shows), this is still the case. Thus, as Cloete and Maassen state: "There has been a common misconception that a major problem in African higher education is that it has massified without resources. In reality, nowhere on the continent is there a differentiated and massified system; there are only overcrowded elite systems."[9] The word "nowhere" seems a slight overstatement in light of the statistics above, but on the whole, their statement seems valid.

It is to be expected that as the social function of education changes, the power relations within educational systems will also change. Change in power relations is almost never completely peaceful: it implies a certain measure of social strife. In the "advanced" countries, the GER in tertiary education rose from 4.7% in 1950 to 24.6% in 1970 and 45.3% in 1990. It is no surprise that in that period there were also waves of student unrest and protest in a number of countries in Europe and elsewhere. It is entirely likely that such struggles will also occur in Africa. It partly explains what is happening in South Africa,

9 Cloete and Maassen 2015: 6.

struggling to increase access to tertiary education after the end of Apartheid. If GER changes rapidly, for example if it doubles in under a decade, then its effect can clearly be felt within a generation: children at the end of primary school have certain expectations of what a university education will deliver that can no longer be met by the time they reach university-going age. The same is true of parents who in many countries need to make considerable sacrifices to give their children a good education. It would be worthwhile to study these relationships more in-depth, but that is outside the scope of this analysis.

Increased enrolment rates in Africa are more difficult to achieve than in other parts of the world, because Africa has higher population growth. However, given the rate of expansion of tertiary education in other parts of the world and given the history of expansion in Africa, further phases of rapid expansion, at least in some countries, can be expected.

As indicated above, this growth is accompanied by even greater expansion especially in secondary education: the pyramid is becoming less steep. The steepness of the pyramid can be expressed as the ratio of enrolment in primary education in any particular year divided by the ratio of enrolment in tertiary education in that year. Thus, a higher value means a steeper pyramid. For the graphs given above, that yields the picture as in table 2 below:

Country	Year	GER primary/GER tertiary
Advanced countries	1950	20.1
Ethiopia	2005	29.2
Romania	2005	2.4
Botswana	2014	4.3

Table 2 **Ratio of enrolment in primary education in any particular year divided by the ratio of enrolment in tertiary education in that year**

In many cases, GER growth will be achieved without commensurate budget growth. It is clear that this is likely to lead to a drop in the quality of education. However, the type of education that was offered to elites in earlier decades is perhaps not appropriate for the broader class of academics of tomorrow. So this begs another large question that cannot be answered within the framework of this analysis – how important is educational expansion for Africa in general?

The Relevance of Educational Expansion

Within the framework of my analysis, it is possible to put forward two points, one more philosophical, the other more practical. The philosophical point is related to the importance of education in general. In general, it seems that development depends on a well-educated population or, in other words, on an educational pyramid that is not too steep. For Africa, this point was well expressed by Prah: "The transition from oral to literate African language-based cultures in Africa is crucial for the scientific and technological renaissance of Africa."[10] In Prah's vision, development requires a literate culture, based on mass literacy: "For Todd, every society that 'takes off' may be seen to have crossed, some decades earlier, the decisive literacy threshold of 50% of the population or – still more decisive – 70% of young people aged 15-25."[11]

This general philosophical point does have very practical implications. Vlasblom (2013), in summarizing the results of the "Tracking Development" study points to agriculture as a key factor in development. The study shows how agriculture was neglected in Africa, leading to low levels of productivity. Increasing productivity in agriculture, however, requires farmers who have some education, preferably farmers who have a good understanding both of agricultural science and who have the required business and marketing skills. The traditional idea that those who were without education could make a living by subsistence farming is flawed, because it stands in the way of agricultural, and thus of general development in Africa. This point could be enlarged to other areas as well. Thus, as argued in the report of the Education Commission, there is, for example, a clear relationship between educational achievement of girls and child mortality as well as family size.

These points may be valid in a very general sense, but of course they leave out the very real problem of possible mismatch between the education a society needs and the education that is actually available – another large issue that is outside the scope of this paper.

The Language Barrier

There is one last point that should be made and that is related to what I would call the "language barrier." In just about all countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, the medium of instruction in tertiary education is a former colonial language that is not the mother tongue of the great majority of students. This is a legacy of a colonial system that was always intended to provide elite educa-

10 Prah 2012: 311.

11 Prah (quoting Todd) 2010: 8.

tion, rather than education for the masses. Students must learn this colonial language in primary and secondary education and they should attain a level of proficiency that is sufficient for the tertiary level. It is reasonable to assume that the B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Language, which stands for "upper intermediate" is a reasonable minimum – it is the level used by many universities, although the University of Cape Town in South Africa uses the higher C1 level as its minimum requirement. Learning a language to this level requires commitment and effort, both from the individual learners and from the educational system. It is, therefore, costly and there is a trade-off between investing more in language learning and investing more in other forms of learning. Given the unequal distribution of learning abilities over any population and given the fact that teaching resources will never be unlimited, it will be impossible to bring an entire population up to this level. The question then becomes: what percentage of the secondary school population can reasonably be expected to reach at least the B2 level of proficiency?

Stoffelsma and De Jong found that in Ghana, 48% of first-year students for a Bachelor of Education had a B2 level in English reading proficiency.[12] On the one hand, one could say (as Stoffelsma and De Jong do) that this isn't a good performance, because these are people who are studying in English and who will be teaching in English. On the other hand, it shows that Ghana and Ghanaians are investing considerable efforts in teaching and learning English to this level.

In 2012, the European Commission investigated second-language proficiency of secondary students in the last year before their final exams, in reading, writing and listening. They found tremendous differences in performance within Europe, ranging from Malta (60% of students at B2 level) to France (5% of students at this level). One of the best-performing countries, doing better for example than the Netherlands, was Estonia, with 41% of the secondary school students at the B2 level. Estonian and English are very different from each other as languages – and yet Estonia manages to be among the top performers in Europe, not much below the first-year university students in Ghana.[13]

I think that this level of 40% of secondary schools students at a B2 level of performance in their second language is a challenging benchmark to aim for in Africa. If we map this level on graph 6 above, the consequences become clear, as shown in graph 9.

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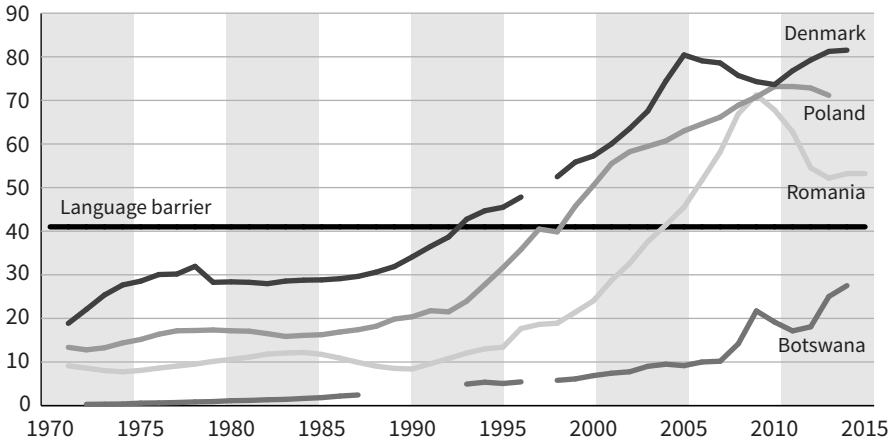
12 Stoffelsma and De Jong 2015.

13 European Commission 2012.



Graph 9 **Gross Enrolment Ratio, tertiary enrolment (both sexes, %) and the language barrier**

It is clear that for European countries, providing tertiary education in a foreign language to all students would be almost impossible: the language barrier prevents it. It would be very costly and inefficient to bring all students that enter tertiary education up the required level of proficiency. African countries do not (yet) have that problem. However, it will become a problem for a country like Botswana in the next decade or so, as Botswana approaches the "language barrier" threshold. Of course the precise level of the barrier is not fixed and can be influenced by policy choices countries make. The basic point is, however, that such a barrier does exist. If African countries aspire to providing tertiary education to their populations at levels comparable to those in Europe, then sooner or later they will have to offer at least part of the curricula in local languages. The alternative would be to dramatically lower the standard of education being offered, but doing so would be inefficient and it would mean a great disservice both to the countries and the students involved.

Conclusions

Using Bourdieu and Passeron[14] as the theoretical starting point and after examining the available data, several points become clear:

- No discussion on education in Africa is complete without looking at the sociological parameters of that education. Researchers should always bear enrolment statistics in mind when studying education in countries outside of their own: if not, their research is likely to be tainted because, consciously or subconsciously, they are likely to use the situation in their home country and at the time they themselves went to university as the norm. In so doing, they will assume a form of cultural capital and a habitus in the foreign educational system that does not reflect the actual situation on the ground;
- An implicitly European frame of reference when discussing higher education in Africa can lead to misleading or even false ideas and conclusions about the nature of education in Africa;
- Tertiary education in Africa is more divergent than in Europe. Analysis must start from the country level, because generalizations are more difficult to make about education in Africa than about education in Europe;
- Differences in enrolment ratios in Africa mean that the social function of tertiary education in society is different from country to country;
- Developed societies need more than an educated elite – those elites also need an educated general population;
- Secondary and tertiary education were always designed to provide elite education. However, this is changing. It is likely that at least some countries in Africa will face the "language barrier" within a decade or so, forcing them to offer at least part of the curricula at tertiary level in local languages.

14 Bourdieu and Passeron 1979.

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4

Catering, Credit, and Compassion: Culture Countering Sustainable Change

Jan Jansen

Abstract: This paper theorises about the author's experience of Private Development Initiatives (PDI) during fieldwork in South-Western Mali from 1988 to the present. Over the years while living in local communities for his research on the military and political history of the region, the author saw people taking the initiative in a number of small PDIs in the fields of agriculture, education, and tourism. In the long run most of those projects failed – at least in the eyes of their sponsors – but this paper seeks to understand and explain those alleged failures as the results of active "resilience" of local stakeholders who mobilise their own pivotal cultural value of compassion and who practice their expertise in catering and credit in order to counter external interventions intended to make sustainable structural change. It will be argued that in many cases PDIs are based on mutual misunderstanding which is often covered as institutionalised pastiche.

PDIs as Institutional Pastiche; Development versus Credit and Compassion

Alongside interventions by national governments and multi-national NGOs, there is a world of development that is barely visible in official politics but which forms the reality of development for millions of people in rural Africa. It is the world of small – sometimes very small – private development initiatives, for instance those that reach small kin-based communities that are too small to be of interest to multi-national NGOs; or distant communities which for parts of the year are inaccessible even to four-wheel-drive vehicles. Private development initiatives for such communities generally have their origins in a relationship between two individuals, usually a local insider and an outsider with a mission. For the local partners it is their way of becoming connected to the world of modernity – and money. The outsider might be a

European or an American, or in fact might just as probably be an educated urbanised African wishing to make a contribution to the development of his or her native village where family most probably still lives. Though the amounts of money involved in such projects are relatively small, their local impact can nevertheless be huge.

All outsiders who offer PDIs implicitly adhere to an agenda of building up civil society from grassroots level, by-passing the State in doing so. I shall argue here that in many cases the logic of how a PDI is supposed to operate is mutually misunderstood by local stakeholders and outsiders alike. Their misunderstanding is covered and even concealed by relationships that evolve into a form of institutional pastiche. But before I describe such relationships I shall pay some attention to the single concept so crucial to defining the setting: namely "development."

Certainly, I am well aware of the principle of linguistic relativity, the so-called "Sapir-Whorf thesis" which holds that the structure of a language affects its speakers' world view or cognition. I know too that the "strong" version of that thesis holds that language determines thought and that linguistic categories not only determine cognitive categories but limit them too. The "weak" version of the same thesis meanwhile claims that linguistic categories and usage influence only thought and decision-making.[1]

It is highly important to analyse how the meaning of a crucial concept like development is communicated when translated into another language, something particularly significant in multi-language settings. For the West African Mande languages such as Bamanakan, Julakan, and Maninkakan I have noticed that the French word "développer" is either not translated at all[2] or is rendered as (*ka*) *yiriwa.* That Mande verb is linked etymologically to a noun "*yiri*" (tree)[3] and to the verb "(*ka*) *wa*" ([to] go). The dictionary's second translation of the verb *ka yiriwa*, after "to develop," is "rendre plus grand."

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1 This paragraph strongly paraphrases https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistic_relativity, accessed 14 March 2017.

2 A team that presents Bambara-language radio programmes from Radio France relayed an illuminating anecdote about language barriers when it comes to global matters. A leading expert on AIDS was interviewed in Bambara. He was very nervous about the result, for he had very often been interviewed in French and English, but never in his native language. He was afraid he might say bizarre or even indecent things (personal communication, Paris, 24 April 2017).

3 It is possible that *yiri* derives from an Arab word *yidin* ("getting bigger"), according to Valentin Vydrine, professor of Mande languages at INALCO, Paris (personal communication, Paris, 24 April 2017). An editor of Bambara-language radio on Radio France told me that, in addition to *yiriwa*, his team used the word *bò-nògon-na*, which means "getting out of the mire" ("sortir de la saleté") (personal communication, Paris, 24 April 2014). That is, I would suggest, an even worse translation of the verb "to develop."

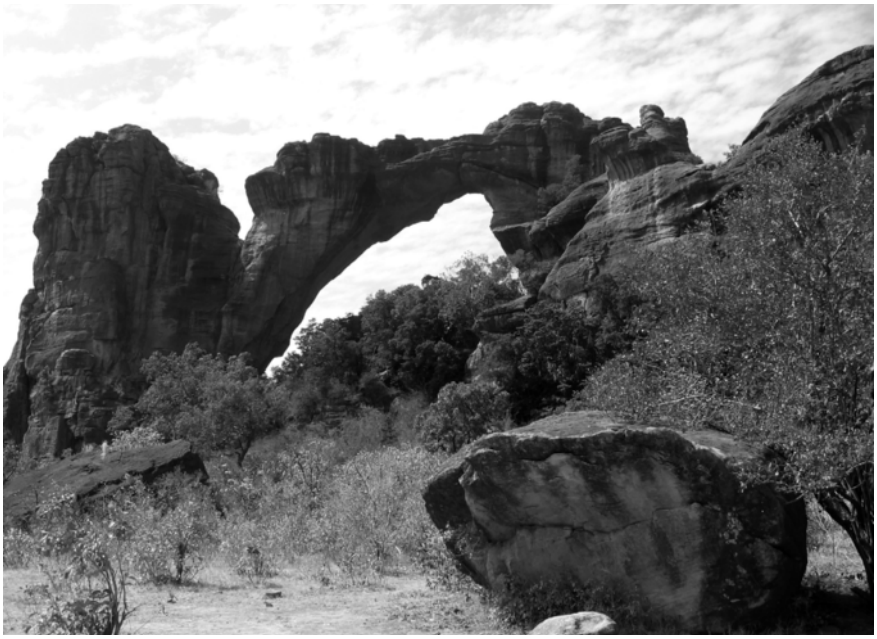
I am unsure if *yiriwa* is a neologism or an ancient concept, but the term will certainly strike the cultural imagination of speakers of Mande languages, with their long tradition as agriculturalists. "The-way-a-tree-goes" however is for speakers of French and English a poor concept for development, since their idea of "development" implies linear and sustained growth producing a positive effect on other spheres of society. While a tree indeed "rend plus grand," it is of course subject too to a finite life cycle and when it can no longer bear fruit it is ready to be cut down, for it is time for it to be harvested. Such an image of a tree's "development" is scarcely the same sort of "development" speakers of French and English have in mind.

The difference between *ka yiriwa* and "to develop" lies at the very heart of my own search for understanding and of my desire to observe the relationships produced when two people from very different cultural backgrounds decide to make a connection with each other in a development project such as a PDI.

My first case study showing the complex effect of "développement" on Mali's countryside is one in which a highly educated Malian invited me to participate in his project... and how it was that the project never got off the ground. This story reveals some of the local premises of sustained growth, structural change, and development. It is the story of Daouda Nambala Keita from Naréna, a small town 90 km southwest of Mali's capital Bamako. Keita is a long-time friend of mine with whom I have co-authored a number of publications, and at that time he wanted to construct a "campement" in Naréna. I will describe in detail what happened:

> From 1998, when prices for intercontinental flights to Bamako dropped, until 2012, when a political crisis struck Mali, the area southwest of Bamako witnessed a steady growth in tourism. In particular the small town of Siby lying between Bamako and Naréna had great success in developing its tourism, thanks in no small part to its scenic landscape. It has interesting rock formations, dramatic cliffs, mango orchards, and, in the rainy season at least, picturesque waterfalls. The first touristic venue in Siby was a simple "campement" and looked like a "traditional Maninka compound." It consisted of four inter-connected reed-thatched huts with a metre high wall round it, a latrine in one corner, and a big shady mango tree in the middle. The "campement" was in the middle of Siby, which is a relatively densely populated area, and hence it was constructed on a small plot about 20 by 30 metres. Until 2012 this simple "campement" and its owner/manager enjoyed sustained success among backpackers who came to experience it as "the African way of life."[4]

4 http://www.maliweb.net/economie/tourisme/sites-touristiques-de-siby-le-charme-des-monts-mandingues-28992.html; http://www.kelamali.com/tag/siby/; it was also mentioned in numerous travel guides.



The arch of Kamadjan, a spectacular rock formation near Siby (© 2007 Reni Muller, used with permission).

Seeing the success of such a simple enterprise, Daouda Nambala Keita therefore asked me about ten years ago if I should care to invest in a similar project in his own native town of Naréna. I could scarcely refuse him, not only for the sake of our friendship but because I knew Daouda as a clever and diplomatic man who had studied Law at the University of Dakar – and indeed before long he would be elected mayor of Naréna.

Daouda and I made some calculations and came up with a business plan. For him it was really business-as-usual as he had been involved in numerous development projects for his town. Then Daouda showed me the terrain for his future "campement," an abandoned millet field of about a hectare at the edge of the town. Daouda proposed to construct a hut at each corner of the field – incidentally thereby confirming his property rights.[5] I objected that his plan would not work for tourists because they like the safe and "cosy" feeling given by adjoining huts. I compared it to the successful "campement" in Siby that consisted of four huts around a mango tree. In addition, I calculated that the construction of a wall 400 metres long to connect the huts would at least double the cost of construction. I decided not to mention that another unattractive thing about the site was its out-of-the-way location and its lack of nice shady trees!

5 A standard strategy in many parts of West Africa by which a person visualises property rights.

> When I left Daouda to return to Holland I donated enough money to him to construct his huts and a wall of sixty metres. When I returned the next year he had constructed two huts – close to each other – and had planted a small tree in the middle of the open field. But there was still no wall. Daouda assured me that the rest would soon follow and I trusted him that the rest of the money was still there; I certainly never thought to ask him about it.[6] At the other end of the field there was a small vegetable garden and Daouda had employed someone to cultivate it. However, there was no change in the situation over the following years, although Daouda claimed to have received occasional visitors to his "campement."

I began to wonder why Daouda, by then mayor of the village,[7] was showing no signs of finishing the project. I found the answer by comparing what had happened to two other friends whose garden projects I had supported over the years. Both of those friends had complained to me about the harsh, and unexpected, consequence that other people stopped helping them in times of great need, for instance when they needed to borrow money to pay for necessary surgery or some other medical cost for their families. Everyone had said to them, "Go to your white friend…!"

I suspect therefore that Daouda from Naréna has intuitively but deliberately avoided finishing the construction of the "campement," at least along the lines of our original business plan, for he appears to have realised that if he did so he would isolate himself from his community. By building the "campement" on a walled one-hectare courtyard he therefore arranged quite on purpose that "notre projet" would become too big for us with the result that the business went unfinished, albeit after enjoying a promising start.

Daouda's reasoning must have been that a project of that sort might attract the interest of other co-investors who would be inspired by compassion (*hinè*), a crucial moral economic concept used to explain simultaneous support and shareholding.[8] A project that does not strengthen the ties of social support, such as my business plan for the "campement" or the garden projects of my other friends will fail to elicit any sympathy or compassion among friends, kin, and neighbours; in fact it will socially isolate the project manager as being a selfish person – which is a shameful condition. My way of

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6 One has to avoid to put a person in a situation of shame. See Holten's contribution in this volume.

7 Daouda is a member of a respectable family owning much property in the region and counts very highly placed civil servants among its members – one of Daouda's brothers was the Minister of the Environment in the 1990s. On Daouda's father, see Keita 2015.

8 On "*hinè*," see for instance the documents edited by Traoré 1992.

providing credit practically compelled Daouda to follow a different building scheme without my consent, for credit should never be used actually to complete a project of any sort. In fact the only morally worthy project is one that cannot be managed alone by one's own efforts. For any NGO or private person, however, it is of course unthinkable to finance any such open-ended social process which has no end in sight.

A morally worthy project is characterised more by its network of supporters who rush after one another to support the initial initiative, than by anything like a business model based on investment and revenue. A worthwhile project must meet the classic moral requirement that in this part of Mali, quite contrarily to the capitalist preference for entrepreneurship, it is selfish, shameful, and not the done thing to stand out from the crowd.

This rule of systematically not accomplishing some project has a long history in the region and follows profound cultural logic. Over the centuries the value of avoiding individual success has proved its importance in the military organisation of the region. While collaboration between so-called segmentary groups had always been necessary for military and political survival, each such group always feared the outstanding success of even a temporary single leader.[9] "Segmentising" amounted therefore to a system of checks and balances and became necessary for political survival at every level, and explained why a number PDIs that I witnessed from close by over the years fell victim to a kind of systematic public ordeal. Such an "ordeal" should not be confused with an audit or review since there was little attention given to any project's impact on local development. Instead stakeholders rigorously challenged the leader for gaining too much personal advantage from his involvement in the project; local people always observed any individual's involvement with a critical attitude.

Although many sponsors and mediators might have thought of supporting some civil society-inspired initiative at grass roots level, I suggest that local people would have been as likely to see the initiative as if it were a military undertaking. They would have thought of it as being about the acquisition of booty, and the project's subsequent failure would have reflected perceived unfair distribution of that booty. My view here is strengthened by my own experience that partners in certain of such failed project often went on to collaborate in later projects without any feelings of rancour or anger – although at the moment of an earlier project's failure they might have thought nothing of accusing each other of treason (*janfa*)!

9 Jansen 1996; Jansen 2015.

The Cultural Division between Credit and Micro-Credit

On one of my annual visits to the area south of Bamako I met an American with a background in development economy who was working with Naréna's women to introduce a system of micro-credit. I was in a critical mood, and sketched the following scenario for him:

> These women receive a loan to expand their businesses, and when they've paid it back they can apply for a bigger loan. That's what *you* think is happening, but I have a different idea about what's actually going on. Someone – woman, man, old, young – receives a loan and then expands his or her business, and that's why other people start to have confidence in that person. Then the moment comes when the money has to be paid back. Development workers think the loan's going to be paid back out of increased profit. But other people have already approached the entrepreneur, asking for *hinè*, and for loans from those increased profits. Then when the time comes to pay back his own original micro-credit loan the entrepreneur has to approach yet other people for yet more loans. People have seen the business growing and more and more people doing business with it, and those other people will have confidence in the business and will provide the money. As a result, it's not business revenues that have increased, but in fact the network of debt-relations has grown substantially. And those who take loans say they have "crédit avec quelqu'un;" I've yet to hear the word "dette"… So I reckon the system of microcredits hardly affects the development of the economy but mainly increases the complexity of social relations within a community.

To my surprise, the American agreed with me that my scenario was plausible. He explained that the women first have to save for a few years in order to prove their ability to do so as a guarantee that they will be able to reimburse the micro-credit. I then asked if the system of micro-credits amounts to imposing Western ideas of individual responsibility on credit-takers, thus ignoring cultural rules for money flows. Again, he agreed with me.

I am still puzzled by my encounter with this development economist, but I will use it to strengthen my argument that while "our," "rational," business-like economic planning is well understood by local populations in Mali, they have strong cultural and social reasons to act differently. Personally I can see that people's reluctance to return the money I lent them for projects is at least partially inspired by the idea that they see no point in ending the relationship with the outsider-sponsor, for that would isolate them from their source of support, which isolation would be added to that caused by the intervention of the PDI in the first place. A debt relation can therefore be seen as a form of

social sustainability, but not in its intended meaning, since it crafts a structural hierarchical relationship based on economic inequality. In summary, local ideas of debt and ideas of micro-credit financing belong to two very different cultural and economic paradigms.

The Logic of Catering, the Power of Social Relations

In 2005 I was co-organiser of a conference held in Museum Volkenkunde – the National Museum of Ethnology at Leiden. At the museum buffet I asked how much lunch would cost for ten participants. The answer was 100 euros. I then sent an e-mail to ask how much fifty lunches would cost. "600 euros," they said. I was astonished, for on the basis of the larger number of participants I had been expecting some sort of discount. Then the buffet's manager explained to me that he "was not a restaurant, but a catering service." This meant that for every special activity he had to employ extra personnel and even hire extra tableware. As a result, it was entirely logical that the bigger the event, the more costly the price per person.

That experience opened my eyes to a structural problem in Africa. The absence of institutionalised settings is much more than simply the absence of institutions, for it means that a successful organisation depends on the principles of catering and is therefore subject to the laws of catering.[10] That is an iron economic law that dictates many dimensions of daily life in many parts of Africa. A good example of its impact can be taken from marriage and funeral practices in modern West Africa. Because of improvements in transport and communication, more and more people are able to accept invitations to attend family events like marriages or funerals. Urbanisation has brought people geographically closer to each other, which has turned rituals in big cities into mega-events that have to be catered for on the spot. Classical ideas of hospitality oblige the organisers to both feed their guests and provide accommodation for them, so naturally the more guests who attend the greater the financial outlay per guest. In practice there are always large numbers of people attending marriages and funerals, and many families are placed into serious debt by their attendance. But such debts are taken on by people who will probably never be reimbursed but who accept their situation because of their relationships of *hinè* with the organisers, as referred to above.

By contrast therefore with what is predicted in models of "development," this fact that catering for a successful event or enterprise implies the oppo-

10 The informal economy is a topic that has fascinated generations of researchers, but all have overemphasised individual creativity and turned a blind eye to the law of catering as I describe it in this paper.

site of cost reduction in the financial outlay per person will not make local organisers adopt more rational formats. Local cultural knowledge embedded in centuries-old experience of successfully organising defensive military operations, as well as aversion from people who stand out, has strengthened belief in the values expressed through "organising-through-catering."

In addition, for centuries most societies in Sub-Sahara Africa have practised a system of extensive agriculture under which for a few days during the agricultural season a great number of labourers must be organised to clear a field, and then to weed it once or twice. Day-to-day involvement with the fields, such as we are used to from our own horticulture, has therefore never been necessary. It is notable that both the agricultural and the military cycles operate on short time-scales, a temporality quite unfit for anything that might be required to be "developed" into "sustainability."

Since a PDI is executed on site by this process of catering, and since by definition catering is a temporary activity, there is a clear structural mismatch because PDIs are required to result in sustained growth. The mismatch is concealed by institutions in which private individuals and local partners presume to imitate the development practices of NGOs and governments. After initial success by a family-based or village-based core-group, the sponsor then feels responsible for the continuation and intensification of the project following an agenda of sustained growth and civil society. Local people, however, will see that step as a political move designed by the initiators to expand their influence and power, and soon the project will collapse; or in other words, the tree will be cut down….

Projects in Education, Connectedness through Pastiche Institutions

> When NGO people visit us, in their 4x4s, we ask the women to welcome them. The women sing, dance, and clap their hands. NGO people like that. It makes them think that the village is in harmony and its population is happy.[11]

Numerous small projects in rural Mali feature women. However, that does not mean that they are *for* women. A woman's sons might work their mother's plot in the women's garden – and the sons will take the revenues. Most ROSCA's too are for women, but similarly that does not mean that women profit from them, for again in many cases it is their sons who save and receive

11 Daouda Keita, in one of my many conversations with him, on a day when Daouda had been Master of Ceremonies during a visit to Naréna by an NGO from Bamako, in about 2008.

the credit via their mothers.[12] In short, women often guarantee that conflict is avoided while men do the work and take the benefits.

The logic of the "front-office" role played by or attributed to women depends on the principle that when men are involved things quickly become political.[13] However, when a small PDI is successful and there is the desire to take it to its next phase, then the PDI must set up a sustainable organisation. At village level that is done by making sure the project is accepted by the chief or the local "notables." An office ("bureau") is then set up and a "président" appointed, along with a "président d'honneur," a "présidente des femmes," a "sécrétaire," "trésorier," "conseils," and so on. That might appear to be the action of grassroots civil society, but actually it shows more of the characteristics of a temporary army whose task is to defend the "*owènzjé*" ("ONG," the French abbreviation for NGO) against envy from "outsiders" in neighbouring villages as well as redistributing the "booty" (the sponsor's money).[14] I would call an institution of that sort a pastiche, and pastiche institutions like it have become Mali's daily reality in its rural and urban areas alike.[15] One sees there too the law of catering, for in being moved to its next stage of apparent sustainability a PDI project demands much more effort in organisation, even to the extent that it becomes necessary to establish a "bureau." The "bureau" is to neutralise the individual who successfully organised the first phase, for whoever that was must not be allowed to take responsibility for the next phase.

Over the years I have been involved in a number of education projects that have become victims to the process described above. They took place in Sobara, a sparsely populated region in the Mande hills close to the frontier with Guinea where I have been conducting fieldwork research since 1999. The area is accessible even to 4x4 vehicles only with difficulty, so such actions by larger NGOs are therefore next to non-existent. For small sponsors education seems a safe investment compared to, for instance, health projects in which mismanagement might have fatal results. What is not visible to the outsider sponsor, however, is the social tension imposed by the education project.

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12 In her research on ROSCA's in Bancoumana, a small town south of Bamako, Esther Kühn (2008) observed that some women had an almost full-time job attending ROSCA meetings on behalf of their sons.

13 Most dramatically expressed in the pivotal kinship principle that children of the same mother (i.e. full siblings) represent harmony and children of the same father (i.e. half siblings) represent rivalry.

14 Note that selection for roles is often based on social criteria, and not on skills (although the secretary at least should always be literate).

15 See, for instance, Jansen 2016.

My first involvement in education was in providing material to the local literacy teacher in the village of Farabako, my host village in the Sobara region. Farabako's literacy teacher was a remarkable man who had taught himself to write Arabic during a two-year labour contract working on a strawberry plantation in Algeria. At the time, in the evenings in front of his house, he was teaching about ten young men to read Arabic. The material I had acquired for him consisted of the usual teaching aids like a blackboard, pencils, and paper, but most money went on a battery and fluorescent lights. The teacher seemed to be an enormous success. Almost all the local adult women and children began attending his meetings, and while most of the adult men were themselves less keen they all supported their wives and children. The literacy training was diverse; the teacher's pupils read Quran texts in Arabic (although without understanding them) and others started to teach each other "the French alphabet," as they called Roman script. A few of the young men soon acquired a reasonable level of literacy and then began to act as instructors. The night before I left I gave the teacher some books of Islamic texts which had been translated into Bambara, and he was clearly much moved. When I returned the next year it appeared that he had replaced his literacy training in Arabic with teaching "the French alphabet," thus giving Farabako's population access both to Islamic and secular texts in Bambara.

The first problem arose during that year's rainy season, which is the time of year when a large part of the population moves to a hamlet closer to the fields. They wanted to take some of the teaching materials (and the battery!) to the hamlet, and a council was set up to discuss the idea. I thought I could solve the problem by a simple intervention; I sent money to buy gas lamps. The next dry season, however, those at the hamlet returned with the claim that they wanted to acquire literacy using the Nko writing system. Nko is a literacy movement that is very active in Guinea and Mali. It has a strong cultural agenda and explicitly rejects other orthographies as well as the study of languages other than Nko/Maninka – although it supports the study of Arabic, for religious reasons. When the village council presented the problem to me I replied that all literacy was equal and that I would immediately reimburse them for the cost of the Nko material they wanted to buy, which would come from Guinea. Unfortunately that is the end of the story, for literacy training had caused so much tension that it was soon completely abandoned. In short, while the literacy training was becoming a success, people could easily cater to its immediate necessities, but when a structural imbalance threatened, that difficulty could be avoided only by cancelling the entire project. To express it in my reading of local terms of development, that particular tree was felled before it could bear fruit, because people began to fear its fruit.

Since Farabako had no school few children received any education. Those who did go to school went either to Tamalen 3 kilometres away or to Danbele Makandjana, 4 kilometres away. The choice of one or the other depended on having friends or family in the village, who might give support – and provide lunch! Both schools are the result of initiatives by the people themselves, which means that the government – very possibly with the help of USAID as in many cases – financed the construction of the school buildings while the community took responsibility for maintaining them and paying staff salaries. The salaries are a sensitive topic in this area where a large part of the population makes money for only the few months every year when they sell part of their annual harvest. Both villages begged me to help them improve their schools. In one case I was able to get a Dutch sponsor to pay for restoration of the school and provide books. However, although both the teachers and the village council proposed it, I refused to allow the Dutch money to be used to pay salaries. All the same, the community stopped paying the teachers. Their argument? "You teachers now have a nice well-equipped school and promising contact with Europeans, so now manage your own business." In the other village the teachers were facing public criticism because the children from Farabako, allegedly sponsored by their home village, had moved to the other school. That was felt to be a loss of face. Another Dutch sponsor provided that other village school too with books and other teaching materials, but the political and social damage had already been done.

In both schools the books were stored in a metal bookcase, also paid for by the Dutch sponsors, and hardly ever used. Although they were the books developed and prescribed by Mali's ministry of education, the teachers had received no training in how to use them and in any case few of the pupils could read well enough to make sense of a school textbook. This all illustrated even more clearly that a primary school in rural Mali amounts to a pastiche institution…

Epilogue

After a number of years of puzzlement I concluded that these projects were less about education and more about giving a group of abandoned or isolated people the feeling that they were connected to the big world of NGOs.[16] Although I had felt the moral obligation to "do something," I now felt that all I had actually done was to have played a part in the organisation of pastiche schools and the creation of social conflicts between villages or within one village. The people involved, however, did not seem to be affected

16 Cf. Jónsson 2010.

by any such feelings; they were shocked and puzzled that I was "découragé" by how things had turned out, and were upset when I announced that the Dutch sponsors had decided to end their commitment to the PDIs.[17] To the population of the Sobara villages the logical thing would have been for me to become convinced that my compassion/*hinè* for them was justified; they expected me to show how powerful my *hinè* was by arranging for even more support from PDIs, or through loans. While attaching no blame to me for anything at all that I might have seemed to have caused, such as the intra-village and inter-village conflicts, they remained puzzled by my lack of appreciation of their relationship of dependency on me. They were in the market for more compassion, more catering, more credit – but they had no interest in sustainable education. A highly institutionalised organisation like a (real) school was decidedly not what was wanted!

In the end I could not decide: was all this an expression of strong cultural pride to counter western models of sustainable growth – "resilience" in fashionable development jargon – or was it a failure in development?

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17 In the context of this paper I am unable to go into other projects in which Dutch sponsors were involved, such as two grinding mills and a garden for the women. Farabako's biggest project sponsored with Dutch money is its maternity clinic, and that is the focus of Holten 2013.

PART II
Language and Literacy

5

Language of Instruction in Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone Africa:[1] An Overview

Ingse Skattum

Abstract: In Africa south of the Sahara and in the Indian Ocean the colonizers' languages (mainly English, French, and Portuguese) dominate as means of instruction, though the majority of Africans do not master or even understand them. In spite of the fact that research shows mother tongue instruction is crucial to children's cognitive development, lack of political interest impedes its development. It is true the continent's approximately 2,000 languages present a pluralistic dilemma, which the countries try to solve in various ways. I here look at empirical evidence from some of the forty-eight states in question, which are representative of certain tendencies, yet special each in their way. Two major research questions are put forward: "African or European language(s) of instruction?" and "Which African languages?" The scrutiny shows there is no simple answer, each country as well as the three European language dominated areas giving evidence to the importance of different historical as well as political contexts.

Introduction

Transfer of knowledge takes place mainly through language. The language question is thus of the utmost importance in education. In Africa, where modern education was introduced by European colonial powers, the language of instruction (LOI) was that of the colonizers. At independence (which in most cases took place in the early 1960s), the former colonies

1 The terms "Anglophone," "Francophone," "Lusophone," and "Romance-speaking" are inaccurate as only a minority of the populations speak these official languages, but they reflect the differences in administrative and educational systems left by the former colonial powers.

south of the Sahara and in the Indian Ocean kept the European languages (English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) as official language and language of instruction. This is, as Bamgbose points out, "an aberration:"

> A look at other parts of the world shows that what goes on in Africa in terms of language of education is an aberration. Even small countries in Europe use their languages as the language of instruction, even if the children have to learn another language such as English or French. This is not just a matter of national pride, it is a sound educational principle to proceed from the familiar to the new.[2]

The distribution of official languages (alone or together with other languages) in the forty-eight states south of the Sahara and in the Indian Ocean shows that this situation still prevails in 2017: French (twenty-two states), English (twenty-two), African languages (thirteen states, twenty-eight languages), Arabic (twelve), Portuguese (six), Contact Languages (Creoles) (two), Spanish (one), Afrikaans (one). Different sub-Saharan countries deal with these challenges in various ways.

In this article, I shall look at empirical evidence from some of the forty-eight African countries. I will examine these cases in the light of two major questions: "African or European LOIs?" and "Which African LOIs?" before I conclude in a final section. Focus will be on formal education, though informal education is also a relevant issue. The geographical and academic scope is such that even this limitation forbids any claim to exhaustiveness.

African or European Language(s) of Instruction?

The various cases of language-in-education policies are representative of different tendencies and yet special each in their way.

Tanzania is one of nine states that combines a European official language with an African language. President Nyerere at independence succeeded in promoting Swahili[3] as the nation's unifying symbol, introducing it as LOI in primary school (grades 1-7) already in 1967. Today Swahili has "a much wider use than African languages usually do south of the Sahara. (…) [It is] the language of parliament, of the lower courts and of the government offices, besides being the language most frequently used in the written press, the television and the radio."[4] It is also taught in Teacher Colleges (which is

2 Bamgbose 2009: 13.

3 Kiswahili, "the Swahili language," is the name in this language. For this and other languages I use the English form without African affixes meaning "language."

4 Brock-Utne and Skattum 2009: 34.

not necessarily the case in other countries using African LOIs). Swahili is spoken by more than 95% of the population as L1[5] or as L2 between speakers of the approximately hundred and twenty local languages, while only 5% of the citizens speak English.[6] In 2015 authorities decided to extend its use to secondary school (grades 8-11): a rare expansion, which however has not yet (2017) been implemented.

Like Tanzania, *Ethiopia* has a dominant language (Amharic), introduced as LOI at an early stage (in 1958/1959, even before Tanzania). And, like Tanzania, Ethiopia chose to apply Mother tongue education (MTE)[7] throughout lower primary school (grades 1-6), and later (1994) to recommend it should expand to upper primary education (grades 7-8). However, unlike Tanzania, Ethiopia – the only sub-Saharan country with an African language as sole official language – contested its linguistic dominance. With the 1994 reform, all "nationality languages" became candidates for MTE and twenty-two were actually introduced.[8] Today thirty of the approximately eighty-five vernaculars serve as LOIs – a record in sub-Saharan Africa. The reform's call to extend MTE to grades 7-8 was answered by four of the then eleven regional states, while seven regions continued to teach in English.[9]"

Mwinsheikhe and Mekonnen analysed the results of their respective countries' educational policies.[10] Their research projects were exceptionally conducted after the lower primary level and both showed far better results for African than for English LOI.

Although a late exit from MTE is proven more effective than an early exit,[11] the tendency after independence has been to diminish African language

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5 L1 and L2 refer to the first and second language. They are defined not according to the order in which the languages are learnt or the speaker's degree of competence (as in sociolinguistics), but according to their mode of acquisition: L1 is a language acquired naturally in the child's environment, while L2 is learnt at school. L2 in this sense does not refer to a foreign language taught as a subject (like English in Senegal), but to a language of instruction which, without being the students' native tongue, has a special status in the polity, as official language and/or LOI (like French in Senegal).

6 Mwinsheikhe 2009: 224. As usual in Africa, language statistics are approximate.

7 "Mother tongue" is a frequent term in English, equivalent to L1 or to a language the child understands. "Mother tongue education" and "national language instruction" are commonly used terms which gloss over the fact that African LOIs hardly exist except in bilingual programs.

8 Lanza and Woldemariam 2009: 191, 194.

9 Mekonnen 2009.

10 Mwinsheikhe 2009; Mekonnen 2009.

11 Baker and Prys Jones 1998: 480. Baker (2011: 216) defines "early exit" as maximum two years of L1 instruction, but the African practice of 3-4 years L1 instruction is also early, considering the weak L2 input outside class compared to that of immigrant children in the West. "Late exit" means continuing through grades 5, 6 or later.

instruction, either by going from a late to an early exit or by cutting out MTE altogether.[12] *South Africa* illustrates this trend, though the country holds a continental record with eleven official languages (English, Afrikaans, and nine of the approximately twenty-five vernaculars).[13] The diminution of MTE is linked to the apartheid past when Black people were confined to Bantustans, conceived along ethnolinguistic lines. These homelands had their own official and instructional languages in addition to English and Afrikaans. The Black however claimed equal access to English, a gateway to social success. So when the 1953 Bantu Education Act extended existing African language education (4-6 years) to all eight years of primary school, it aroused resentment and eventually led to the Soweto rebellion of students in 1976. Amendments were made in 1979, limiting MTE to the first four years of school.[14] In 1996 "all languages that were officially recognized in the old South Africa (…) were also recognized by the new Constitution."[15] Du Plessis contends, however, that South Africa is a "non-active endoglossic nation,"[16] a view that is confirmed by Mahlalela-Thusi and Heugh's analysis of mother tongue and bilingual education today: school books in African languages have now gone out of use, and Xhosa-English biliteracy programs, for instance, lack materials in Xhosa.[17]

The re-implementation of MTE is commonly countered with the arguments that costs would be too high; that there is insufficient terminology in African languages and that for these reasons, publishers will not/cannot produce textbooks in African languages. Such arguments have been refuted by many proponents of MTE, inter alia Heugh and an international team of researchers commissioned by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa and other international agencies.[18] They found that L1 instruction is more economic in the long run because of high repeat and drop-out rates in L2 instruction. They also consider many African languages well instrumented today and observe that using the languages will encourage further instrumentation.

Most Francophone countries teach in French from grade 1, which may (at least partly) explain their remarkably high repetition rates (23%) compared to Anglophone countries (7%).[19] Most of them use MTE only in experimental schools.

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12 Bamgbose 1991: 71.
13 Baldauf and Kaplan 2004: 10.
14 Mahlalela-Thusi and Heugh 2010: 113.
15 Du Plessis 2000: 103.
16 Du Plessis 2000: 96.
17 Mahlalela-Thusi and Heugh 2010.
18 Heugh 2000; Alidou 2009: 108ss.
19 Wolozin 2012, data from 2001.

MTE experimentations are often supported by foreign donors, and therefore unstable. In *Burkina Faso*, a five year period of bilingual teaching in French/NL in the 1980s was abruptly stopped. From 1994-2006 Burkinabe authorities allowed a Swiss NGO to reintroduce bilingual schools. In 2006, forty schools gave instruction in seven of the approximately sixty NLs. Though this alternative education lasted five instead of the normal six years, from 1998-2006 it gave pupils a mean score of 78% success on final exams against 66% for the monolingual French schools.[20] Consequently, the Bilingual Education Program was expanded to pre-primary and secondary schools, and in 2007, it was transferred to the Ministry of Education. After this date, however, it has seriously declined. Burkina Faso has also introduced "satellite schools" in remote villages when the "mother school" is too far away. They give three years of bilingual education before pupils join monolingual French schools. However, they "produce very negative academic results."[21] This failure is attributed mainly to the abrupt switch to French as LOI in the 4th grade, in contrast to bilingual schools, which practice a gradual transfer throughout primary school (10-90%, with a 50/50% distribution in the pivotal 3rd grade.[22] (Both types have final exams in French, which triggers more teaching time in this language.)

Mali is a case apart among Francophone countries, having given bilingual education without interruption (though with ups and downs) since 1979 as part of public policy. The expansion has been substantial: from one to eleven languages (out of the thirteen recognized as NLs and the country's around twenty indigenous languages), and from early to late exit. Though all thirteen languages have been accorded the same NL status, they are actually very different in terms of usage (number of speakers and domains of usage), diffusion (local, regional, national, or international),[23] standardization (choice of dialect, development of orthographic rules) and intellectualization (the existence of modern terminology), dynamics (usage advancing, declining, or remaining stable), as well as their internal relationship (dialect/language). The differences in usage and diffusion are reflected in the order of their introduction as LOIs along with French: Bambara (1979), Fulfulde, Songhay and Tamachek (1980-1990), Dogon and Soninke (1995), Bobo and Syenara (1997), Bozo, Mamara, and Xassonke (2001). Only Maninka and Hassaniyya

20 Ilboudo 2009: 18.

21 Alidou 2009: 109. See also Burkina Faso 2004.

22 Ilboudo 2009: 78.

23 Bambara, spoken as L1 in the south, functions as lingua franca at a national level, while three languages are used as regional linguae francae: Soninke (west), Fulfulde (center), and Songhay (north). The rest are used locally.

have not been granted this recognition. The number of bilingual schools also reflect the sociolinguistic status of the NLs, Bambara being by far the most frequent LOI.[24] Extremely multilingual communities like Mopti and Djenne present a special challenge to any bilingual programme. Choosing a national language as co-medium of instruction here is far from easy. Though Fulfulde is the regional lingua franca, other ethnic groups, like the Songhay, tend to be more interested in sending their children to school than the nomadic Fulani.

A turning point in this evolution occurred in 1994, when Malian authorities decided to generalize bilingual education. By 2005/2006 it had been extended to 2,550 primary schools (31.62% of public schools).[25] (These figures bring out Mali's exceptional policy, compared e.g. to Burkina Faso, which counted only 40 bilingual and 260 satellite schools in 2004-2006.) Of late, lack of follow-up and political will have however brought serious setbacks. Thus, by 2008, the bilingual program Convergent Pedagogy (CP) had lost ground, with 2,338 schools representing 21.1% of public schools. Besides, Maurer criticizes CP for lack of distinction between L1 and L2 didactics, while Skattum points to the inequalities between NLs and French: teacher training focuses nearly exclusively on French, and education programs give more teaching hours and more textbooks in French.[26] To rectify the weaknesses, in 2008 Malian authorities stopped further expansion. Nevertheless, Mali still upholds a leading position among Romance-speaking countries.

Two countries, Madagascar and Guinea, have changed abruptly from French to NL and back to French for ideological reasons. In *Madagascar*, growing discontent with continued French cultural dominance after independence led to riots in 1972. President Ratsiraka, who took power in 1976, introduced Malagasy as sole LOI in primary and secondary school. Declining school results however led to negative attitudes towards this "malgachization" – attitudes which still prevail – so French was reintroduced in secondary school in 1990, and in primary school from grade 3 in 1992.[27] Today, Malagasy is officially used in grades 1 and 2 but in reality longer, tests in 2005 revealing that "only 18.25% of primary education teachers were proficient enough to teach in French."[28]

The Lusophone countries have all taught nearly exclusively in Portuguese. In *Mozambique*, a five year bilingual pilot project (1993-1997) for two

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24 For example, in 1989/1990, amongst the 104 bilingual schools, 83 used Bambara, 6 Fulfulde, 6 Songhay, and 9 Tamashek (Hutchison, Diarra and Poth 1990: 6). (Tamashek, the local language of the Tuareg people, owes its early introduction to political considerations).

25 Skattum 2010.

26 Maurer 2007; Skattum 2010.

27 Babault 2006: 57-66.

28 Rabenoro 2009: 178.

primary schools with two different Bantu languages, was favourably assessed but nevertheless stopped. Lopes claimed that "[t]he psychological and pedagogical arguments advanced for a hypothetical scenario of mother-tongue (i.e. Bantu) instruction (...) are not clearly understood by parents, even by middle-class adults."[29] Today, Mozambique is changing this policy. In 2015, the Ministry of Education announced a plan to use sixteen Mozambican languages alongside Portuguese in primary school, across the nation. This was implemented in 2017.

In *Guinea Bissau*, some twenty NLs are officially recognized. Kiriol (Creole) is spoken by 55% of the population and functions as lingua franca, while very few speak Portuguese.[30] A ten-year experiment (1987-1997) was conducted with Kiriol (Creole) as LOI for the first two years. In 1994, the impact of this bilingual education was evaluated, comparing test results and teacher-pupil interaction between bilingual and monolingual (ex-colonial language) schools.

Testing included maths, reading and writing in grades 1-5, in Kiriol and Portuguese in the lower grades and Portuguese in the higher grades, including thirty-two schools with 1214 pupils. In maths, the *t*-tests[31] used showed a slight advantage (above 0.05) to the bilingual pupils, but all students (whether in bilingual or monolingual classes), achieved better scores when tested in Kiriol, which suggests that "it is more the language of the tests that influence the results."[32] In language tests, on the other hand, results differed significantly. Bilingual classes read better (*t*-test <0.01) than monolingual classes, where pupils often were unable to read at all in grade 1. This changed in grade 3, when bilingual classes were left behind (*t*-test <0.01). Hovens concludes that the early and abrupt transition from Kiriol to Portuguese hampered the learning of reading. In spite of this, he found that pupils transferred their acquired reading skills from L1 to L2, an aptitude he attributes to Cummins' "interdependence theory."[33] Other parameters under scrutiny included gender and the rural/urban dimension. Girls and rural pupils are normally considered more vulnerable (more repeats and drop-outs, results

29 Lopes 2004: 164.

30 Hovens 2002: 252.

31 "The *t*-test can be used, for example, to determine if two sets of data are significantly different from each other. (..) The T distribution is used instead of the normal distribution when you have small samples" (Wikipedia).

32 Hovens 2002: 264.

33 Cummins (1979) maintains that a satisfactory level of cognitive competence in L1 should be attained before moving to L2 instruction, and also holds that concepts and vocabulary acquired in L1 facilitate their acquisition in L2.

below average). It turned out that the differences were smaller in bilingual than in monolingual schools.[34]

Classroom observation showed that there was more dynamic interaction between teacher and pupils as well as among the pupils themselves in bilingual classes (ANOVA test[35] <0.01), and that teachers used more open-ended questions. The teachers also seemed more free to leave the inefficient rote learning when teaching in a language the children understood.[36]

After ten years, the experimentation was stopped, though as we have seen, its results were better in many ways than the monolingual Portuguese instruction.

Which African Language of Instruction?

Once a country decides to give mother tongue or bilingual education, the question arises which African language(s) to choose. The risk of ethnic rivalry is recognized even by Africans who believe in strengthening their role:

> Deciding which indigenous language to promote as the national language within [national] boundaries carries the danger of ethnic rivalry. (...) Any move to make Hausa the national language of Nigeria could precipitate a national crisis in Yorubaland and Igboland.[37]

Some multilingual states nevertheless promote one NL to the detriment of others, with varying results. In *Tanzania*, Swahili is widely accepted as a non-tribal lingua franca. But even where domination of one language is accepted, the difference in exposure is bound to have negative effects for many pupils:

> For example, in Tanzania, where Swahili is used as a medium of instruction in primary schools, there are four distinct categories of children for whom the practice has different implications: a minority of native speakers, a large majority of second language speakers, speakers of Bantu languages like Swahili, and speakers of non-Bantu languages.[38]

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34 Hovens 2002: 261, 263.

35 "Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a collection of statistical models and their associated procedures used to analyze the differences among group means" (Wikipedia).

36 Hovens 2002: 260.

37 Mazrui and Mazrui 1998: 5.

38 Bamgbose 1991: 66.

In *Malawi*, on the other hand, the imposition of Chewa as the sole national language since 1968, with Chewa as LOI in grades 1-3, has met with resistance. This is due to the choice of the first president's own Chewa dialect as a standard, which has created a hostile climate hampering Chewa's development into a neutral lingua franca.[39] Multiparty elections in 1994 put promotion of lesser-used languages on the agenda. But, as Kayambazinthu observes, a pluralistic alternative also brings pluralistic dilemmas, "politically, economically and educationally. Where should the line be drawn? If equity is the criterion, then all languages should be treated equally, an undertaking that the government cannot afford."[40] Faced with these problems, Malawi's language-in-education policy is unclear.

In *Botswana*, policy in favour of one language, Tswana, is clearer: Tswana instruction is given for the first four years,[41] while the minority languages which were taught before independence were "banned from use in school at independence."[42] They are now threatened by extinction because of a general intolerance.[43] Both Malawi and Botswana pupils of course face the same unequal exposure to the dominating endogenous language as Tanzanian children.

In *Mali*, on the other hand, multilingualism is embedded in the Constitution (1992) and further strengthened in linguistic laws from 1996 and 2016.[44] It is supported by the people, who take pride in their multicultural tradition dating from the great medieval empires.[45] These positive attitudes prevail despite the fact that Mali has a vigorous lingua franca, Bambara, which could have taken on the role of a unifying symbol (it is spoken by 98% of the population as L1 (46.2%) or L2 (51.5%).[46]

Multicultural policy does not necessarily stem from tolerance of other ethnic groups but may be the result of ideological battles. *Ethiopia* is a striking example. Amharic has been the country's official language since 1270, and is also "arguably the most advanced African language in Africa,"[47] written for centuries in a script unique to the country (called Ethiopic or Fidel), and possessing a rich literary tradition. Amharic, however, comes second in demographic terms (29.33% of L1 speakers), just after Oromo (33.80%)

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39 Kayambazinthu 2004: 124, 119.
40 Kayambazinthu 2004: 136.
41 Vossen 2001: 511.
42 Nyati-Ramahobo 2004: 43.
43 Nyati-Ramahobo 2004: 57ss.
44 Conseil des ministres 2016.
45 Skattum 2008; Skattum 2010.
46 RGPH-2009, 75 (table 4.7).
47 Lanza and Woldemariam 2009: 193.

but before Somali (6.25%) and Tigrinya (5.86%), language of the present leadership (2007 census). The Tigrayan People's Liberation Front installed a new political structure of ethnic federalism which opened for MTE in any vernacular. However, as the Ethioling project pointed out in 2011, "except for Amharic, the rest have mainly been spoken languages, not written. Therefore, there are problems of implementation related to attitudes, standardization, curriculum, teaching material, and manpower."[48]

Divisiveness is not restricted to multilingual contexts but may also arise in linguistically homogenous polities. *Madagascar* is one of a handful (near) monolingual African countries, and yet Malagasy people commonly consider their country triglossic: "[T]he official variety of Malagasy dominates the other varieties, while Standard French (...) dominates Malagasy."[49] Though Malagasy dialects are mutually comprehensible, the official variety, based on the Merina dialect and associated with the Merina kingdom, is contested. Rabenoro proposes to introduce the main non-official varieties as media of teaching and to train teachers accordingly, but does not specify which or how many varieties nor discuss how teachers could be posted according to their dialects. As Fishman observes:

> [D]ifferences do *not* need to be divisive. *Divisiveness is an ideologized position* and it can magnify minor differences (...). Similarly, *unification is also an ideologized position* and it can minimize seemingly major differences or ignore them entirely (author's emphasis).[50]

Conclusion

Two main issues have been raised in this article: should education be given in European or African languages, and in the latter case, which endogenous language(s) should be chosen?

For answers, I have looked to African experiences from Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone countries, plus the only "Afrophone" country, Ethiopia (which however is Anglophone as concerns secondary and higher education). Anglophone countries are the most favourable, Francophone countries more sceptical and Lusophone countries the most hostile towards African language instruction in primary school. Practically none use African languages as means in secondary or higher education.

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48 ETHIOLING (s.d.).

49 Rabenoro 2009: 175.

50 Fishman 1968: 45.

These attitudes are reflected in the choice of educational models. Of the countries that give bilingual education, only seven practice a late exit from MTE, shown by international research to be the most effective for children's cognitive development in a multilingual context. The trend after independence has rather been to move from late to early exit or to stop MTE altogether, so that fourteen countries today adopt an early exit after 2-4 years.

French and Portuguese assimilation policy has left the Franco- and Lusophone countries with little L1 instruction, given mostly in experimental bilingual schools supported by (foreign) donors and stopped when they withdraw. Exceptions are on the one hand Mali, with fairly extensive government supported bilingual education, and on the other hand Madagascar and Guinea, who have conducted abrupt reforms changing the LOI from L2 to L1 and back to L2, with negative consequences particularly for teachers' competencies.

The answer to the first question (should LOI be African or European?) is that even an early exit from using a local language as LOI usually gives higher success rates, be it in mathematics, science, social sciences or even L2 exams, than L2-only instruction, supporting Cummins' interdependence theory. Classroom observation shows more dynamic interaction between teachers and pupils, and better level of content learning. Statistic analysis of examination results and language tests have also given better results for bilingual than for monolingual L2 schools. However, L1 instruction in itself is not enough, contextual and structural conditions need to be satisfied. These are inter alia a gradual transition from L1 to L2, teacher training in L1 didactics and in the language itself, L1 textbooks, linguistic research to ensure lexical development and an academically sound standard orthography as well as information to parents and teachers to promote more positive attitudes towards L1 instruction. More than advocacy however, quality in the implementation of MTE is what would really change the overall negative attitudes.

The second question (which African LOIs should be chosen?) contains a "pluralistic dilemma." Giving L1 instruction in all endogenous languages (approximately 2,000 on the continent) is beyond the means of any country and impossible for practical reasons. For a written code to be established, a language needs to have a certain demographic weight, with a reasonable readership for literature, the written press, a written landscape, etc. It also needs to develop dictionaries and grammars. Some countries select one major African language or dialect as LOI. This is economically efficient but culturally inequitable. Other countries give MTE in several African languages, chosen for demographic, political, economic, social or historical reasons. Claims of authenticity are better satisfied, but unequal conditions

for children of other NLs remain, if not in the same proportion. This still seems the best solution.

Neither efficiency nor authenticity considerations should however hinder African language instruction. Not only do pedagogical and even economic reasons plead in favour of L1 instruction, it is also a democratic issue of great importance to the development of African societies. As one of the main researchers in the field of language-in-education observes, official imported European languages immediately create two classes of citizens: the included and the excluded. The responsibility of the former in maintaining status quo is heavy:

> The included are a major stumbling block in the use of African languages in a wider range of domains. Apart from lack of political will by those in authority, perhaps the most important factor impeding the increased use of African languages is lack of interest by the elite.[51]

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51 Bamgbose 2000: 2.

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Inconsistent Language Policy and its Implications for the Quality of Education in Ghana

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Abstract: The language-in-education policy in Ghana over the years has oscillated between the two educational models of an early-exit medium of instruction from the Ghanaian language to English, and an English-only model. The current policy in Ghana, therefore, does not support the languages actually spoken by the majority of pupils either in rural or urban areas. In fact, only eleven of the between fifty and eighty languages spoken in Ghana are supported in education, so that children, particularly those at elementary level, from language communities who speak languages other than the eleven official languages are compelled to learn in an unfamiliar language. This has negative consequences for the quality of education. The data is based on three sources. First was our extensive fieldwork in a School Language Mapping project (December 2016-May 2017). We conducted that work in collaboration with the *USAID-Ghana Learning* in one hundred districts, and collected data on early grade and primary schools across Ghana. In addition, we made a number of visits to schools over a period of twenty-five years to supervise interns, and finally we drew on the many years of experience of teaching both in the university and at lower levels of education. In this study we report our findings, including that in many of the classrooms children were compelled to receive instruction in a language other than the one with which they were most familiar. The reason for this is both the non-implementation of the language policy by the educational authorities and non-alignment of teacher posting with teacher language competence. Furthermore, although the current policy provides for bilingual education there were no teachers with backgrounds in multilingual classroom teaching. To resolve the challenges we propose the introduction of a language-in-education policy with legal backing and a clear implementation plan to ensure the delivery of quality education.

Introduction

In this article we examine the language-in-education policy in Ghana before and after independence and consider its implications for quality education. The language policy encourages the use of L1 as medium of instruction at early grade (KG1-P3) and English as a subject of study from grade four to tertiary level. The policy also determines the Ghanaian languages studied at Upper Primary, Junior High School, Senior High School and in the Colleges of Education.[1] The approved languages are also the only ones used for Ghanaian-language subjects examined by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). However, in principle, any Ghanaian language may be used as a medium of instruction in the community in which that language is spoken. The policy also determines which languages are taught as core and compulsory subjects at all levels of education and it is these two components of the language policy which have seen the greatest controversy and been most affected by the frequent policy changes. With the exception of the Ghanaian languages along with English and French, there is no clear policy on the use of other non-Ghanaian languages.

So historically they have attracted the least concern. This paper discusses how these policy arrangements have serious implications for teaching and learning in classrooms especially for the acquisition of literacy and numeracy at the early stages of children's development.

The changes in the language-in-education policy reflect changes in government or political ideology which are often not motivated by any sort of research evidence in linguistics or language.[2] A number of studies have devoted attention to trace the historical trajectory of language policies in Ghana and some have suggested ways to operate a consistent language policy able to help deploy the more than eighty Ghanaian languages effectively in various domains.[3] However, one important component which remains unexplored is the effect of such unstable language-in-education policy decisions. This article seeks to present evidence to discuss the question and suggest ways of improving educational outcomes through the implementation of a more sustained language policy.

Our extensive fieldwork for this study was carried out from December 2016 to May 2017 in collaboration with the USAID-Ghana Partnership for Education Learning and the Ghana Education Service (GES). We conducted

1 Cf. National Council on Curriculum and Assessment 2016.

2 Cf. Nsoh and Ababila 2013.

3 Cf. Dzameshie 1988; Ando-Kumi 1992; Ando-Kumi 2002; Dakubu 2002; Nsoh, Atintono and Logugye 2001; Owu-Ewie 2013; Owu-Ewie and Edu-Bandoh 2014; Ankrah 2015; Wilmot 2015.

a School Language Mapping project to collect data on the language background of children and their teachers from early grade (KG1-KG3) to primary school (P1-P3) levels. We chose these levels because the language policies in Ghana for the most part require pupils in the lower grades to be taught in Ghanaian languages while English is taught as a separate subject. The language mapping project was also supported by the GES. Our sample was based on approximately six thousand combined early grade and primary schools in a hundred selected districts from across all the ten regions of Ghana. A second source came from over twenty years' field visits to schools to supervise Ghanaian language teacher trainees on internships. Our own experience of many years' teaching and research in the university and in lower levels of education constitute our third source of data.

The Linguistic Landscape in Ghana

When discussing language policies in Ghana it is important to mention the linguistic landscape in Ghana for a better picture of the context in which they are designed. Like most African countries Ghana is home to many indigenous languages and a number of foreign languages; in fact a number of linguistic studies conducted have suggested that Ghana has between fifty and eighty languages, of which about seventy-three are said to be Ghanaian languages while seven are foreign.[4] Admittedly, a number of them may be described as dialects of the same language, while others, like the Guan languages, are scattered widely across the entire country and are spoken by very few people.

As a result of the many indigenous and foreign languages, coupled with migration and urbanisation, multilingualism is a major socio-linguistic feature in Ghana. Children who live in monolingual communities soon acquire English as a second language at school, while families who migrate in search of work are obliged to learn one or more languages simply in order to function effectively.

Such great linguistic diversity should really be considered as a valuable resource, but is seen by many Ghanaian politicians and policy makers as an obstacle to the design of national curricula. The multilingual context in Ghana prompts some people to argue that there are too many languages. Many claim that certain languages lack the terminological sophistication to cope up with the fast-growing technological world and therefore inhibit participation in the global space. That argument is not new and there are similar reports from other parts of Africa. As a result, multilingualism should

4 See, among many others, Atintono 2015; Lewis *et al.* 2017.

be a major determining factor in the development of a language policy for the country, but unfortunately has not always been so.

Languages in Education in Ghana

In general, the language policy in Ghana requires that after early instruction carried out in Ghanaian languages with English taught alongside them, from grade four onwards pupils are expected to be taught in English. Ghanaian languages are core subjects up to Junior High School and are examined by the West African Examinations Council, although they are optional subjects at Senior High School level. In the Colleges of Education, Ghanaian languages are compulsory in the first year and become optional in the next two years. In the Education review of 1987 and its subsequent implementation, Ghanaian languages were made core subjects in Junior and Senior High Schools. Unfortunately, because of poor performances by students in the maiden Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (SSSCE) they were hurriedly dropped as core subjects at the Senior High School levels. That poor performance was blamed partly on the introduction of the Ghanaian languages as core subjects; as a result, most students at Colleges of Education have only a Junior High School level of competence in Ghanaian languages which has serious implications for the quality of education, as we shall discuss in the next sections. Tertiary education in Ghana is exclusively in English.

Of the estimated eighty Ghanaian languages only eleven are approved for use in schools although as observed in the introduction, in theory all languages may be used for instruction. However, there is a tendency to compel other communities to use one of the eleven languages as the medium of instruction in a given area particularly when it is considered the most dominant language. The eleven languages are Dagaare, Dagbani, Dangme, Ga, Gonja, Ewe, Nzema, and the three Akan dialects Asante Twi, Akuapim Twi, and Fante which are treated as separate languages. Thirteen Ghanaian languages including Gurenɛ and Kusaal, although not approved are nevertheless taught at the College of Languages Education, University of Education, Winneba. With the exception of Kusaal, all the twelve languages are taught at the forty-six Colleges of Education in Ghana which prepare teachers for the early grade, primary, and junior high schools. In most cases, the languages taught in a given college will depend on where in a particular region that college is and its influence in the linguistic space. Thus, more widely spoken languages like Asante Twi (Akan) may be used in other regions including northern Ghana instead of only in the south. Gurenɛ, which is spoken in the Upper East Region of Ghana, specifically in Bolgatanga and surrounding towns, is the only language yet to be approved by the Ghana Education

Service (GES) but with sufficient teachers and materials to be used at basic and Senior High Schools.

The introduction of the new education reforms in 1987 came with the Non-Functional Education Division (NFED) of the Ministry of Education. The division focused on giving functional literacy and numeracy skills to mostly adult learners in the local languages in a programme funded by the Government of Ghana and the IMF. A number of manuals and post-literacy materials were produced and distributed across the country and the NFED trained facilitators and supervisors to support adult learners. The programme not only generated interest in the local languages but also helped in the production of extensive literacy materials in those languages. In fact more such materials were produced than were produced for schools in the formal sector, where teaching and learning materials in Ghanaian languages were generally lacking.[5]

Over the years, subsequent governments have done very little to provide the necessary teaching and learning materials in the Ghanaian languages. Government officials have often argued that those languages are very many and therefore, materials will be expensive to develop for use in schools. Ironically, the same Government officials then turn round to claim that the same languages lack adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials and so cannot be approved for use in schools. Even though in 2007 efforts were made through the National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP) to bridge the gap, they proved inadequate. Much more work is needed.

Another phenomenon in Ghana is the generally negative attitude of Ghanaians to the use of Ghanaian languages in schools in favour of English. Some Ghanaians would prefer to see English used as the official language because they believe that would lead to mastery of English and eventually lead to good education overall.[6] There is the question too of whether or not the use of Ghanaian languages might lead to resentment among the various multilingual communities. Certain parliamentarians advanced such arguments in debates on the question of a national language in 1971.[7] They argued that English served as a unifying factor among the different ethnic groups making up Ghana as a nation state and to impose any one Ghanaian language, in place of English, would be to risk provoking resentment or even violent reaction, as happened in both India and Ceylon. Clearly, such an argument is purely political since there is no evidence to suggest that homo-

5 Ankrah 2015.

6 Dzameshie 1988; Dakubu 1997; Dakubu 2001.

7 Dzameshie 1988.

geneous linguistic communities do not necessarily experience resentment or violence.

A similar negative attitude to Ghanaian languages refers to them as "vernacular" and perceives them as inferior and incapable of delivering good education. Before independence the nationalists, for instance, were against the use of Ghanaian languages in Ghanaian schools. According to Gbedemah[8] the nationalist agitation in Ghana made people begin to doubt the quality of education derived from use of the description "vernacular." There were people who suspected that encouragement of vernacular languages was a deliberate attempt on the part of the British administration to give Africans an inferior education, because the use of vernacular languages in early education was likely to hold back advancement in secondary or university education.

Further evidence of the negative attitude to Ghanaian languages is attested by Duah and Agbelengor who observed that teachers prefer to teach in English than in Ghanaian languages.[9] They attributed the teachers' choice to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of pupils and argued that English would be a good language to use since the teachers are educated in English and are comfortable using it.

Language Use Outside Education

The landscape for local language use outside education in Ghana has not changed significantly over the past few years except in the case of electronic media, a subject to which we shall return. However, official transactions such as government business, court proceedings, and general administration are still conducted strictly in English, while informal communication between government officials might be in any Ghanaian language. Most written official documentation is in English.

By contrast, as we have noted, in the media, particularly radio and television, there is competition between Ghanaian languages and English, which is a consequence of the neo-liberal democracy embraced by Ghana in the early 1990s. It was realised that only a few people spoke good enough English to be able to participate in governance, so the introduction of Ghanaian languages on radio and television created the opportunity for many people to participate. In fact, with the proliferation of radio and television stations over the last two decades Ghanaian languages are taking centre stage in the media, and that success is a very good indication of the important role such languages can play in the classroom. That is especially true for the majority of children who

8 Cited in Dzameshie 1988: 19.

9 Duah and Agbelengor 2016.

have little or no experience of the English language. Unfortunately, however, much of the news and discussions are mostly presented orally partly because of the poor training of broadcast journalists in writing the local languages. From a practical point of view, studies in some African countries have shown that the purely oral use of local languages on radio, television, and video obviously restricts their effectiveness when compared with the advantages of ease of reference, and permanency of written language.[10] It is, therefore, not surprising that there have been very few newspapers of regional or national importance published in Ghanaian languages. Other print media in Ghanaian languages such as "the drum" produced by the Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) of the Ministry of Education, and "Labaare" by the Institute of African Studies (IAS), Legon, are out of print. We know of no surviving newspaper with national coverage published in any Ghanaian language today.

Language Planning and Policy in Ghana: A Historical Overview

In this section, we provide an overview of the language policy and planning that have been designed and implemented over the years to specify the roles of Ghanaian and foreign languages in Ghana. We shall look at the language policies in Ghana before and after independence to show how they have oscillated between English and Ghanaian languages.

Before British colonial power became well established in Ghana there was no uniform language-in-education policy in the country. Different organizations or institutions planned and used different policies to suit their particular needs and aspirations. For example, the arrival of European merchants in Ghana in the fourteenth century brought with it the "castle schools." They were established and run by the merchants with the aim of training clerks and interpreters to facilitate their businesses, using their own languages such as English or Portuguese.

Missionaries by contrast took a different view of the languages to be used in education. The Basel and Bremen missionaries, for instance, used indigenous Ghanaian languages as the most effective medium for the propagation of their religious doctrines and so promoted the use of local languages in their schools.

The establishment of a well-structured colonial administration marked the beginning of attempts to standardize language policy in Ghana and Guggisberg's 1882 Ordinance was the first major policy statement on the subject. That Ordinance required that the English language be used and

10 See Elwert 1988 on Benin, cited in Bamgbose 1999: 4.

taught in schools, but in 1925 it was amended to allow the use of local languages for instruction during the first three years of schooling. Thereafter English should be used with local languages taught as separate subjects.

The 1951 Legislative Assembly election set in place a new Legislative Assembly. The Assembly introduced the Accelerated Development Plan which re-iterated the position of the 1925 version of Guggisberg's Ordinance that Ghanaian languages be used for instruction at Lower Primary level and later as subjects studied at the Upper Primary level. The Accelerated Development Plan of 1951 emphasised that the primary school course was to provide a sound foundation for citizenship with lasting literacy in both English and vernacular languages, which were to be used for instruction in all subjects from classes 1 to 3 with English used from class 4.

Like the pre-independence era, the post-independence era too was characterized by policy inconsistencies. In 1957 after Ghana had gained independence the government reviewed the Accelerated Development Plan of 1951 to make English the language of instruction from the first year of schooling. However, in 1960 the language policy was changed again to make English the medium of instruction at all levels except the first year of primary schooling.

In 1966 a new government set up a committee to review the educational system at all levels in Ghana. Prominent among the findings of the committee was that the "English only" policy that came to be used as a result of the review of the Accelerated Development Plan of 1951 was not working because, in many regions, the local languages were being used for instruction in all primary level classes. The committee thus recommended that Ghana revert to the use of Ghanaian languages for the first three years of primary school education and that English be used for teaching in the fourth year, with Ghanaian languages continuing from that level as a subject of study.

However, that policy was not implemented in full until the 1970's, when the military government handed over power to an elected government. In 1970, Ghana reverted to the policy of the 1925 Guggisberg Ordinance by re-introducing Ghanaian languages during the first three years of education. During that same period the School of Ghana Languages was established at Ajumako in the Central Region of Ghana, to train teachers to teach using Ghanaian languages. The college is currently called the College of Languages Education and is part of the University of Education, Winneba.

As we noted earlier, the Education Review Committee in 1987 made a significant recommendation in terms of the status of indigenous languages for school curricula. Ghanaian languages were made core subjects together with Mathematics, English, Social Studies, and Integrated Science. They were also made compulsory in the Colleges of Education where teachers

are trained. Those significant changes were in addition to maintaining and sustaining the importance of using indigenous languages for teaching. Such giant steps would have ensured a significant improvement in access and quality of education, especially in remote areas, if they had not been reversed a few years later in 1993. As observed earlier, poor performances in the maiden examinations and the protests that followed compelled the government to remove local languages as core subjects at secondary school level. Thus, a gap was created between the basic level of education and the Colleges of Education, because students were no longer compelled to read indigenous languages at that level.

That policy remained unchanged until 2002, when the "English only" policy was re-introduced, so that English was to be used as the only medium of instruction in schools at all levels. The policy was motivated in part by the attribution of the perceived poor performance of pupils and students in English Language and other subject areas to teaching in Ghanaian languages. Two years after the implementation of the "English only" policy, the government set up the Educational Review Committee to review it, which recommended that subjects should be taught in Ghanaian languages from early grade to P3. However, English could be used where the multilingual nature of a classroom made it difficult to use Ghanaian languages. That was in effect a bilingual policy. In October 2004 the Government issued a white paper on the committee's report, the purpose of which was to give legitimacy to the practice of teaching in either a child's first language or English.

It must be pointed out that in most cases the policy on the use of L1 for teaching was barely implemented, largely because of a lack of political will and the reluctance of educational authorities. It could also be attributed to poor understanding of the policy by teachers and negative attitudes of parents to both the teaching and learning of local languages.

Currently, there is a draft Language-in-Education Policy written in 2016 by experts from academia, educational, and civil society organisations under the initiative of the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) with support from USAID-Ghana Partnership for Education (Learning). The key pillar of the draft policy is a bilingual education model which proposes the use of Ghanaian languages for teaching and English as a subject of study from early grade with a gradual transition to English in upper primary. It was a programme motivated by poor reading skills among early grade pupils, and the draft policy has been reviewed a number of times by academics and education experts. The draft is with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) awaiting legislative backing before final approval by government. A significant component of the policy is that it includes a detailed implementation plan which was lacking in earlier policies.

There is goodwill also from government and determination on the part of the Ministry of Education, the Ghana Education Service and stakeholders to ensure its successful implementation.

It is interesting to note that planned language policies in Ghana are generally based not on well-informed linguistic and language-related considerations but on the unjustified assumption that use of a foreign language is a pre-requisite for good education and development.[11] In many instances, local languages are introduced into the school system only with reluctance and for the first three years at lower primary level to prepare the ground for smooth adoption of former colonial languages.[12] Despite the number of pilot projects and promising research findings from various experiments in the use of Ghanaian languages, such as the School for Life (SfL)[13] and Education Quality for All (EQUALL),[14] language choice favours European languages like English or French. Efforts have even been made to make French compulsory in all Ghanaian Schools from primary level. The recent pronouncement on the subject by the President of Ghana, made without due consultation and planning, is a classic example of an official attempt to influence policy. In June 2017 while he was on an official visit to Togo, the President announced that French was to be made compulsory in Ghana, his argument being that Ghana's neighbours are French speaking countries.

In general, language policy and practice in education have followed the same trend in most African countries where foreign languages are promoted at the expense of the local languages.[15] That is often attributed to similar colonial experiences, which promoted French, English, or Portuguese for use in school and government business while indigenous languages were relegated to informal contexts such as the home, casual encounters and the local market. That approach was continued into post-independence Africa where the former colonial languages are still consciously promoted by governments, with the excuse that it would be politically and economically unwise to use any of the local languages in education since they are spoken by diverse

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11 Cf. Djité 2008.

12 Cf. Bamgbose 2004.

13 The SfG was experimented with in Tamale, Northern Ghana, in the mid-1990s with an emphasis on using the local language (Dagbani) to teach children who for any reason could not attend formal schools. Instructions were carried out purely in the local language for about six hours a week, usually under flexible time arrangements. The products after nine months made a smooth transition into upper primary or Junior High Schools, performing very well.

14 EQUALL project was a USAID project that also used local languages in training basic literacy in selected districts throughout Ghana.

15 Kembo 2000; Trudell 2010; Alexander 2012; Nkuna 2013; Trudell and Ndunde 2015; Trudell and Nyaga 2015.

ethnic groups.[16] It has been argued that the real reason is to avoid conflict where one language group will claim supremacy over another because of the promotion of their language.

The result of that situation is the institutionalization of the low status versus prestige dichotomy between indigenous Ghanaian languages and colonizing European languages.[17] Consequently, the African elites who are the direct beneficiaries of the arrangement and who occupy positions of political power not only deny indigenous African languages resources such as teachers, teaching and learning materials, but have also failed to show any political will to implement policies and programmes in those languages.[18] They have also failed with such policies to realise the link between literacy in one's first language and development. Since there is a perception that grasp of a foreign language is the key to a child's future, the attitude of the elites and rich parents tends to be that they should enrol their children in private "foreign-language-only" schools. The elites therefore pay little or no attention to publicly-funded schools attended by the majority of children. It is not surprising that performance in state schools in many African countries is far below average.

In the particular case of Ghana we consider it to be most appropriate to describe the language-in-education policy as an "English-only" programme even though it has a bilingual or multilingual outlook. Ghanaian languages are to be used in solely monolingual situations, while English is used in more cosmopolitan city communities for lower primary education (from primary 1-3).

Implications for the Quality of Education

Before discussing the implications of these inconsistent language policies for the quality of education it is important to define what we mean by "quality" in education. There are a number of definitions which suggest that it is a complex concept which might be interpreted differently to include efficiency, effectiveness, equality, and equity.[19] Nevertheless, in the literature there is a consensus on the elements that should constitute quality in education. They include learners, learning environment, content, processes and outcomes. In other words, good education according to UNICEF presupposes learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn and who

16 Webb and Kembo-Sure 2000.
17 Kembo 2000: 286-287.
18 Bamgbose 2004.
19 UNICEF 2000.

are supported in learning by their families and communities. Environments must be healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive and must provide adequate resources and facilities. Educational content should be reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and "life-skills," with knowledge and understanding of such things as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace.

Education requires well-tested processes through which trained teachers will use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and schools and will apply skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparity. Outcomes must include knowledge, skills and attitudes and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society. Among those components we consider curricula that foster the acquisition of literacy, numeracy, and life-skills to be an important aspect of education for which a well-designed language policy is essential.

In defining "good education" there is no doubt that education in the mother tongue contributes significantly by facilitating children's learning and improves their ability to learn other languages as well as other subjects. UNESCO said as much in their agenda 2030 document on Sustainable Development Goal 4. Unfortunately, in Ghana, in spite of efforts to formulate a language policy that supports early learning outcomes especially, inconsistency and lack of implementation guidelines have negatively affected the quality of both teaching and learning.

Between December 2016 and May 2017 we conducted linguistic fieldwork in collaboration with USAID Learning (an international NGO on literacy). We collected data on the language situation in classroom in 100 out of 216 districts across Ghana in order to inform the revision and development of a comprehensive language-in-education policy for Ghana, and the findings show a number of problems associated with Ghana's inconsistent language policies and quality of learning in the classroom.[20] First, there is an almost complete lack of any implementation plan or guidelines on language policy, so that teachers decide for themselves which language to use in their classrooms. We found out, for instance, that teachers mostly rely on using only English at early grade levels, which leads to poor teaching and learning. Children are compelled to learn in a language that not only the pupils understand poorly but in which their teachers themselves lack the requisite skills in content and pedagogy for classroom use. We observed too that the eleven languages approved for educational use in Ghana are not representative of linguistic situations on the ground. As a result many children at early grade

20 Cf. USAID 2018.

level cannot access the learning they are offered because it is in a language they are not familiar with. If the Sustainable Development Goals equate good education to participation, then we cannot claim that learning is even taking place when children do not understand the language they are being taught in or understand it only poorly, as is the case in many lower primary classrooms in Ghana.

The situation was made worse as most classrooms did not have teachers capable of teaching in indigenous languages. The main reasons suggested were two-fold. First was the non-alignment of teacher posting with teacher language background and secondly, the non-collaboration between the Ghana Education Service and the Ministry of Education, and Tertiary institutions. That mismatch has led to non-recruitment of trained Ghanaian language teachers. Moreover, there are many instances of teachers' being posted to areas in which they do not speak the mother tongue of most of the pupils. Meanwhile, qualified Ghanaian language teachers are posted to schools where their specialism is wasted because Ghanaian languages are not approved there. That has resulted in teachers teaching in English believing it to be the lingua franca.

We observed in particular that many classrooms were in fact multilingual, especially in towns and cities. Regrettably, early grade teachers are not trained in multilingual language teaching methods to facilitate early teaching. Because local languages are not compulsory at Senior High School level, teacher trainees therefore enter Colleges of Education with Junior High School-level language skills. As a result of the inconsistent language policies, as we noted above, the curricula of Colleges of Education have changed very often, which has led to the current situation in which the curricula of Colleges of Education permit trainee teachers to learn the basics in one of the twelve Ghanaian languages only during their first year.

Also, in most classrooms visited by our research assistants it was clear that teaching and learning materials were not only inadequate but were inappropriate for instruction in the local languages. The USAID-Ghana Partnership for Education (Learning) project therefore recruited consultants and experts in Ghanaian languages mostly from the College of Languages Education, Ajumako. Their job was to help develop teaching and learning materials appropriate to the teaching of literacy at early grade level. Similarly, there were no teaching and learning materials written in Ghanaian languages for teaching subjects such as Mathematics, Science, and Environmental Studies. All such materials are produced in English.

Another major challenge is the lack of political will to implement a concerted and focused language policy. Indeed, there have been many moments in the history of Ghana when politicians have lacked the courage

to implement the recommendations made by committees they themselves commissioned.

As noted by Spolsky, the mere existence of a language policy does not necessarily mean that it will be implemented effectively.[21] Any such policy will require nationwide stakeholder consultation and legal backing by a national parliament to ensure that an institution such as the Ministry of Education or some other authority can see to the implementation of policy. Equally, such a policy must clearly specify the various domains in which Ghanaian languages might be deployed.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It must be emphasised that good education can be assured only when learning is interactive and participatory. The fundamental principle underlying participation in the classroom is children's ability to listen to the teacher and to share the learning experience in the classroom. That can be achieved only if the teacher teaches in the children's first language. In line with that, we have demonstrated in this article that the inconsistent language policies in Ghana have had serious implications for the quality of education in Ghana. That is because it has been impossible for children to receive instruction in the languages they find it most comfortable to learn in. We saw that in the current linguistic situation in Ghana good education is inextricably linked to appropriate development and use of local languages for both teaching and as subjects of study, especially at elementary school level. Until all communities in Ghana speak English as their L1 and the language and cultural environments drastically change we cannot guarantee good education by using what is after all a foreign language, and alien in all respects.

Since good education can be assured only if there is a well-developed and legally established language-in-education policy document, the first thing to do is to secure a parliamentary act or legislative instrument or any form of legal backing for such a policy. Ghana has never had a language-in-education act with policy directions on its use. Almost all the language policies we have examined have lacked legal backing. Rather, they consisted of government directives and committee reports, sometimes supported by government white papers.[22] They were correspondingly vulnerable when it came to implementation and it was effectively left to schools to decide whether or not to implement them. Government, therefore, pretends that there is a policy in place but is not very deeply committed to ensuring that there is support

21 Spolsky 2009.

22 National Council for Curriculum and Assessment 2016.

to see it through. That approach has enabled frequent policy changes and facilitated non-compliance by the Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, and educational authorities at various levels of education. There is urgent need for parliament to promulgate a Language Policy Act which will compel the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service to institute an implementation programme.

The current draft language-in-education policy which is now undergoing review is based on the school language mapping report[23] and extensive consultations among most stakeholders in education. It also seeks to introduce a bilingual policy to give support both to local languages and English, and most importantly that was an initiative of the Ghana Education Service and the Ministry of Education. The current political and educational leadership should allow it to be completed, passed into law, adopted and implemented across the country.

The language policy should make the teaching and examination of Ghanaian languages core subjects from early grade to the Colleges of Education. That would ensure continuous development of skills by students of Ghanaian languages, which currently are not compulsory at the Senior High School level. As a result there are knowledge and skills gaps as many prospective college students lack Senior High School competence in Ghanaian languages.

In addition, language policy must make room to increase the number of approved Ghanaian languages for use in the classroom, and as subjects of study at the various levels of education. The current eleven approved Ghanaian languages are not representative of the complex linguistic situation in Ghanaian schools, especially at the early grade level, as our school language mapping report shows. For example, in the entire Northern Region of Ghana only Dagbani and Gonja are approved Ghanaian languages, despite the fact that there are more than fifteen mutually unintelligible Ghanaian languages spoken in the region.

Again, it is very important that teacher posting is based strictly on language qualification and experience. In general however and especially at the early grade level, teacher posting in Ghana is informed by the availability of vacancies without consideration of the language background of the teachers. It is therefore no surprise to find that teachers with Ghanaian language specialisation are teaching subjects other than what they have specialised in, such as Social Studies, English, Mathematics, and Science.

As stated earlier, bilingualism and multilingualism in Ghana are the norm rather than a choice and that is directly reflected in the classroom. Clearly

23 USAID 2018.

then, pupils can receive appropriate instruction only if their teachers have been given training in the multilingual and bilingual skills needed to manage such classrooms. The language policy must also be bilingual or multilingual and school authorities should be made aware of that.

It has been proposed too that a coordinated review be carried out of the curricula of the Ghanaian languages, from early grade level to the Colleges of Education and universities. The focus should be to ensure that languages approved for use in the classroom and as subjects of study reflect the linguistic backgrounds of pupils or students. That would ensure that children will receive good education in the languages they actually speak. Indeed, universities should be encouraged to align their pre-service curricula with those of the Colleges of Education, Senior and Junior High Schools, and Primary Schools since their graduates are expected to possess the skills needed to teach pupils and students at those levels.

Again, good education depends to a large extent on the availability and appropriateness of the materials used in classrooms. There must, therefore, be a determined effort on the part of the Ghana Education Service and the Ministry of Education to develop appropriate teaching and learning materials in local languages as well as in other subjects such as mathematics and science. Furthermore, materials produced locally must be inexpensive and must be able to be replicated in many other languages.[24] To that end, the Bureau of Ghana Languages (BGL) must be restructured and given the resources it needs to support the production and accreditation of teaching materials in all the Ghanaian languages.

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7

Literacy and Development in Senegal: From Colonial Roots to Modernization Efforts

Ekaterina Golovko

Abstract: This article takes micro and macro perspectives on language policies and practices in Senegal. It explores how colonial relations, development agenda and current language policies in the country are connected. The article consists of four main parts dedicated to the local realities in Casamance, to a wider national and regional context, to development questions, and to critiques of development. The final part of the paper illustrates an innovative approach to literacy, which overthrows colonial relations currently at play in the Francophone education sphere and suggests how local actors can produce knowledge relevant to the needs of the population in local contexts.

Introduction

Formal education can be defined as "the process of receiving or giving systematic instruction," but in reality it has much more complex and far-reaching implications. It is a way to exercise power and mould new citizens to certain types of ideals through the actions of government and non-government actors such as (I)NGOs and IOs. On the one hand it is considered that education, literacy, and development are constitutive of the idea of "modernization" of the African continent. On the other hand and looking at the process from a different angle, those concepts are central to the promotion of what has been called "liberal peace." Besides the ideological perspective taken from which to examine this subject, it is undeniable that the complex combination of languages, education framework, and "the colonial matrix of power"[1]

1 The term has been widely used in the literature after its the introduction in the work of Walter Mignolo 2011: xxvii.

together create an obstacle to that in the region, certainly for the time being. In the following pages I will discuss those aspects in order to evaluate critically connections and links between the concepts in the Senegalese setting. I shall try to demonstrate that the "development" agenda is strongly shaped by Eurocentric ideological premises and consequently political choices prevail over practicality and guide all spheres of action.

Brock-Utne defines the question of language as one of the most complex topics that leads to heated debates on the continent: "What should be the language of instruction at schools?"[2] The question is not exclusively educational but is psychological, socio-cultural, and political too. In the matter of education it concerns the quality of instruction, school persistence, and effective learning, while politically it deals with power distribution between elites and the rest since the colonial times.[3] For instance, knowledge of French has guaranteed to elites in Senegal important positions first in the colonial administration and then in the state apparatus. Cissé saw in the opposition of elites to the introduction of national languages their desire specifically to guarantee their own positions for themselves and their families, thereby making language too a vehicle of social stratification of society.[4] There has been little discussion of the incompatibility of language of instruction within sociologically complex communities as the question relates to African education systems. Donor communities, meanwhile, have rarely demonstrated any interest in matters of language.[5]

One of the main topics of this paper will be literacy and its conceptualization seen within a larger development framework. Literacy is the ability to read and write which is the basis of the Western epistemic system, education model and knowledge transmission. In the African context, first of all through missionary activities, colonial administrations and then in the framework of "modernization," literacy has begun to acquire more and more relevance in society.[6] The process may be correlated with the influence of colonial relations[7] and the introduction of European education models. That centrality of formal education institutions as the main vehicle of knowledge transmission

2 Brock-Utne 2000: 141.

3 Brock-Utne 2000: 154; Dlamini 2008: 6.

4 Cissé 2005: 121; Brock-Utne 2000: 154.

5 Dlamini 2008: 6; Taylor-Leech and Benson 2017: 351.

6 It is incorrect to think of precolonial societies as "oral" and without writing systems. In West Africa Arabic, Ajami, and other alphabets were widely used and they co-existed with others.

7 I use this term following Benoit de l'Estoile and his work on anthropology of colonial legacies. With this term de l'Estoile proposes "to designate a set of related forms that have structured the interactions of Europe with a large part of the rest of the world between the 15th and 20th centuries" (de l'Estoile 2008: 268).

had not been characteristic of West African societies which had had different education and societal cultural strategies. My aim is to discuss the choices that were made, especially about language of instruction, and from a wider political perspective to link them to the development logic. The topic has great relevance to West African countries given a context of low literacy rates and low secondary and tertiary education attainment. In fact, such organizations as UNESCO are currently trying to find ways to adapt education systems to local realities within their global project "Rethinking Education" and the more Africa-focused "Rethinking education in Africa."[8]

This article draws on empirical data and experience of working in Senegal's development sector. The data was collected in Lower Casamance, Southern Senegal, specifically in a village called Agnack Grand where I conducted fieldwork with Friederike Lüpke's project (SOAS, London). The objective of the fieldwork was to observe and discuss with stakeholders (parents, tutors, teachers) the current situation of education provision and their views of it. The fieldwork data does not constitute the main focus of this paper but is the starting point for reflection on certain of the crucial aspects that guide education and language policies in postcolonial countries. I shall begin by trying to combine micro and macro dimensions, starting with a concrete example of a local situation. I shall then turn to a wider perspective on education, literacy and development before returning to consider solutions at the micro level. First, I shall discuss local realities in Casamance. Second comes consideration of the wider national and regional context, characterized by similar features but with a specific focus on language policies. Third, I shall pass from the local to the global dimension and discuss and offer critiques of development matters. Finally, and returning to the Casamance context, I have given a few illustrations of ideas and offered solutions to planning questions at local level using information on the project currently being piloted by Friederike Lüpke's team.

It seems appropriate to start with something said to me by one of the villagers of Agnack Grand during an interview:

> Here in Senegal it is important that everyone speaks French and understands French because we are the French colonies and we need to speak French otherwise you can't get anywhere.[9]

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8 http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/ED/ED/pdf/RethinkingEducationNov2015.pdf

9 "Il faut qu'au Sénégal tout le monde parle le français, comprend le français puisque nous sommes des colonies françaises. Il faut parler le français sinon tu n'iras pas."

Those words include certain crucial affirmations about language policies and language ideologies that will be examined in the course of this article.

Local Realities in Casamance

Casamance is in the South of Senegal and comprises the three provinces of Ziguinchor, Kolda, and Sédhiou. There are 1,664,000 inhabitants of Casamance and more than thirty languages are spoken within an area of 29,000km^2. The area is separated from the rest of Senegal by The Gambia but shares its southern border with Guinea Bissau. Casamance forms part of a zone that, historically, politically, culturally and even climatically is very different from the North of Senegal and has suffered from a longstanding secessionist conflict led by the MFDC (Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance). The MFDC has demanded independence of the region since 1982. Lower Casamance is a cross-border region shaped by three different colonial powers and has a legacy of three different official languages, French in Senegal, English in The Gambia and Portuguese in Guinea Bissau. There is too a high concentration of frontier communities, that is, of small-scale, clan-based settlements spanning national borders and populated by inhabitants with high mobility and intense social ties to neighbouring villages. Internal and external migration is significant for a variety of reasons from social exchanges through child fostering and marriage exchanges, to economic mobility and fleeing from conflict, the Casamance conflict and the Guinea Bissau independence war being the most recent.

Casamance is home to speakers of over thirty languages, many spoken in only one village or perhaps a small group of villages. Examples of such languages include the Baïnounk, Joola, and Bayot languages. More commonly spoken languages and larger language clusters such as Balant, Mankanya, Manjak, Pepel, and Fula co-exist with Portuguese-based Creole, Wolof, and Mandinka, which are used as languages of wider communication. Every inhabitant of Casamance is multilingual either in languages acquired during personal trajectories through migration whether internal or external, or because of deeply rooted social exchanges which have resulted in small-scale multilingualism.[10] Marriage links often transcend linguistic and national borders, child fostering is widespread and brings children with very different linguistic repertoires together into one household, and ritual and religious mobility is pervasive.

Casamance is a small area of land, strongly connected through cross border links to other communities, all belonging to the same cultural continuum

10 Lüpke 2016.

so that all members of its extended communities have dynamic identities. For example, all my interlocutors spoke many languages, for instance Wolof, Joola, Mandinka, Gujaher, and Creole, which represent the most common set of languages in the repertoire. They themselves described their linguistic choices as follows: "I choose which language to speak according to whom I'm speaking to. If they want to speak Mandinka, I would speak that. If they speak Joola, I respond in Joola," and so on. That creates what Lüpke calls small-scale multilingualism, balanced multilingualism practised in meaningful geographical spaces sustaining dense interaction and exchange at their interior.[11] That sort of multilingualism naturally has a strong influence both on the languages and social identities of the inhabitants of the region, but also on the process of language acquisition and language learning among communities. Each child is able from an early age to speak a number of languages, some of them learnt at home (conventionally called by my interlocutors "la langue paternelle") and some, such as Wolof, used for wider communication variously at regional, Islamic, and national levels. Such linguistic ability is not taken into consideration in the formulation of language policies and literacy programmes which tend to be based on views of the context taken through a monolingual lens. Although Casamance is characterized by higher levels of multilingualism than the rest of the country, the difficulty facing such environments is obvious. The number of spoken languages would never allow the training of enough teachers for each language, with the required preparation of teaching materials and ensuring of at least partial avoidance of exclusion. I will return to the specific case of Casamance in the final section which is dedicated to context-based solutions intended to satisfy the needs of multilingual speakers. But first, in the following section I will discuss Senegalese language policies in detail.

Language and Education Policies in Senegal

Language in Senegal

Senegal is a multilingual country but with French as its single official language. There are twenty-eight Senegalese national languages that have been gradually codified by the national commission. According to the OIF (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie) there are 4,277,000 French-speakers in Senegal. The most widespread language in the country instead is Wolof, spoken by 80-90% of the population; native speakers of Wolof make up 44% of Senegalese, while the percentage of people using Wolof on a daily

11 Lüpke 2016.

basis is much higher,[12] and its use extends beyond ethnic groups and specific linguistic zones. In fact the Wolof language is predominant in the country and the term "Wolof" is nowadays a blanket term for post-ethnic urban identity.[13]

The current linguistic situation in Senegal is a consequence of the French colonial policy of assimilation and widespread use of the French language, with mastery of French as the ultimate goal. French colonial rule was "direct rule" characterized by a system of economic and political integration with a general idea of cultural and particularly linguistic assimilation. The choice after independence to use French in Senegal was justified by the idea of maintaining the integrity of the country and was considered to be a provisional policy. However, French has never become the language of mass communication and nor has any other single African language ever replaced it. During Abdoulaye Wade's presidency (2000-2012) a three-tier system was established consisting of a) the official language b) national languages c) all the other languages. While that is the official representation of the language situation in Senegal, the true situation is different. McLaughlin compares the large informal economy of Senegal with the informal language sector. She talks of "linguistic activity that goes on unregulated, either wholly or partially beyond the reach of the state," where Wolof, a national lingua franca, and other national languages dominate.[14] From that perspective the role of French is marginal, being little used in day-to-day life. French has never penetrated family and private life which remain domains of national languages. As Cissé underlines, French is considered by Senegalese as an L2 and is associated with the State, elites and school as an institutional instrument of social advancement.[15] Meanwhile Wolof has the status of a vehicular language in the entire country and occupies a central place at the national level as an urban vernacular and national lingua franca. Wolof might indeed play a more problematic role in certain areas of Casamance, in particular where the more acute phases of the separatist conflict took place. There, Wolof is perceived as a language of Northern domination and thus negatively judged. Instead, what I have seen in practice during fieldwork is the overwhelming use in public of Wolof by everyone, children, parents, adult men and women, teachers, and so on. That complex hierarchy is very significant to the understanding of gaps between education, existing policies, and students' needs. The difference between real practice and stated values is the gap between language ideology and language use.

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12 Cissé 2005.

13 See, for instance, McLaughlin 2018.

14 McLaughlin 2018.

15 Cissé 2005: 105.

Language repertoires[16] are extremely important to an understanding of the ecology of language use in a given community. Language repertoire connects language with both the social and the cultural, and at the same time with the individual.[17] It is also crucial for the comprehension of processes of language acquisition and the acquisition of writing and reading skills, especially in a multilingual setting. Each of the spoken languages bears opinions, ideas, values, and a certain level of prestige in the language ideologies of its speakers, extending power relations to the domain of language use. In the Senegalese case, the complex hierarchy of languages in the repertoires is not based exclusively on the relationships among official, national, and other languages but should be seen through the lens of language ideologies, which very often do not correspond with actual language use. For instance, the official language, French, is associated with formal employment and social mobility but the majority of the population do not speak it – neither to each other nor to their children. Despite the widespread presumption that French is crucial to children's life trajectories, the job of teaching and speaking French is given to schools. In fact, Table 1 well illustrates the current situation in the

Table 1 Completion rates and literacy rates in West Africa.[19]

Country	Primary education completion rate (%)	Secondary education completion rate (%)	Youth literacy rates 2005-2014 (%)	Adult literacy rates 2005-2014 (%)
Burkina Faso	30	25	50	35
Mali	42	33	47	34
Mauritania	49	29	56	46
Niger	28	13	24	15
Nigeria	72	–	66	51
Senegal	51	40	56	43
Sub-Saharan Africa	55	42	71	60

* There are no statistics for Guinea Bissau and there is very limited data for Guinea which could be interesting to compare with the rest of the region.

16 Gumperz (1964: 137) defined linguistic repertoire a "totality of linguistic forms regularly employed in the course of socially significant interaction."
17 Lüpke and Storch 2013: 349.

region, where people actively speak other languages in their everyday lives and use of French remains marginal.[18]

As illustrated above, repertoires in Casamance rarely include fewer than four local languages and although such languages are widely spoken the population does not consider them prestigious.[20] I have encountered various explanations for that. For example, the fact that African languages are locally distributed, even if in some cases they are spread over more than one country, and are in all cases limited to the African continent. They are therefore not considered "international languages" which seems to play an important role for their speakers. Moreover, national institutions do not use such languages as official means of communication. Very often the fact that since colonization education has been transmitted in one or other European language of the various colonizers is never critically analysed as a means of resisting such an imposition. Moreover, as is clear from the opening quotation in this paper, that particular circumstance is often taken as something that demonstrates the intrinsic value of the language. It is very often the point of view of African elites who have access both to the official languages of instruction and to widely spoken local languages. Changing perceptions of the roles and the importance of African languages to African societies would be an important step towards the decolonization of culture and education.

Literacy in Senegal

Senegal's population is 15,412,000 with an annual growth rate of 2.9%. People under 24 years old make up 62.5% of that figure and the youth literacy rate is 56% while adult literacy rate is 43%.[21] In 2016 gross enrolment rate in primary education was 83.09%, in secondary education 48.11% and 10.58% in tertiary education. Only 62.37% of students manage to "survive" until the final year of primary school.

In order to address that state of affairs, in recent years the main institutional effort – supported by the international community in the framework of

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18 In the Table 1 data is reported on several countries in the region in order to demonstrate that the trend (low literacy, high level of school drop-out) is specific to all the countries and not exclusively to Senegal.

19 The table was compiled with the data from UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) available online: http://uis.unesco.org/

20 "Prestigious" stands here for a language that give any social or economic advantage to the speakers, as for instance, French that can guarantee social and economic mobility and formal employment. Different languages have different types of values attached to them, as Wolof is an urban language, language of street culture, etc. Other languages have different networks of associations related to them.

21 All data from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2017.

Millennium Development Goals and, since 2015, Sustainable Development Goals – was related to "universal enrolment rate"[22] with the goal of reaching 100% enrolment in primary and secondary school. While the numbers have certainly increased in recent years, the initiative has failed to take into account either school drop-outs or the effectiveness of the learning outcomes for those who do remain in education. The data shown in Table 1 indirectly signal many potential problems and shortcomings of the current education system of which a number of interrelated causes may be highlighted. First of all, as a consequence of the language problem many children fail to acquire the language of instruction and so for them the entire process of knowledge acquisition is blocked. Secondly literacy, as a construct at a practical and conceptual level, remains a paradox for West African societies for which there are still no durable solutions.[23] Furthermore, the existing school and knowledge systems enjoy a complex relationship with everyday practices, opportunities, and activities. The gap between the needs of the people, their capacities and institutional offer is not new, but is a structural feature of such societies. I interpret the mismatch to be a consequence of a complex system of domination, the "colonial matrix of power," that began during colonization and has never ceased to exist. It is characterized by the legacy of the French colonial presence, the use of French as the national language and language of instruction, and other specific aspects. My aim in this article is to link the existing structural gap to the colonial roots of education and development policies.

The Colonial Roots of Education

The majority of West African countries gained their independence in the 1960s, and while their current state is very often defined as "postcolonial," they are in fact on a trajectory, emerging from the structural violence of the relationship with their colonizers. "Postcolonialism" is a pluralistic concept, with its own specific signs and styles, its ways of multiplication, transformation and circulation of identities summed up against a background of corporate institutions and political violence.[24] The colonial legacy of education systems

22 As formulated in Goal 4 "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities" and in the specific target 4.1: "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes."

23 See, for instance, Lüpke *et al.* (forthcoming).

24 Mbembe 2001: 102.

cannot be overlooked and must in fact be seen as a sort of continuum which began in the colonial past and has been extended into the present.

All across the African continent the colonial education systems remained in place after independence with no substantial reforms anywhere. Indeed, Makuvaza and Shizha refer to political and economic neo-colonialism reinforced by Western education systems in the majority of African countries.[25] It is quite clear nowadays that such systems have not yielded significant results nor do they deliver the desired level of development. Looking at statistics is the best way to demonstrate the condition of education and compare its outcomes with those in Europe and Africa. For example, while an average 96% of children in Western societies are enrolled in schools, about half of African children of school age are unable to secure places in primary schools. Additionally, while an average of 62% of qualified candidates in OECD countries achieve university places, the gross enrolment for tertiary education in Africa stands at a paltry 7%.[26]

Many scholars agree that this situation is strictly related to the promotion of education not rooted in African realities.[27] Very often governments adopted and relied on foreign best practices that were in many ways incompatible with people's needs and aspirations.[28] That view was expressed by Paulo Freire in his seminal work in which he stated that "one cannot expect positive results from an educational or political action program that fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people."[29] Radical change can be made only through the deconstruction of the myth of "development" and referring to local, traditional, and indigenous cultural knowledge.[30] There is therefore a specific need in postcolonial Africa to rethink education from the position of its postcolonial existentiality.[31]

Recent Senegalese history is an example of a situation in which the colonial style of education was not eradicated, with the result that its essence still exists after decades after independence. Immediately after independence the new President Senghor initiated a project that had even been designed by the colonial France – the use of French as the language of formal education and functional literacy. A monolingual project, for a multilingual country

25 Makuvaza and Shizha 2017: 3.

26 Data from the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) 2012; Tilak 2009 in Dipholo and Biao 2013: 49.

27 See, for instance, Kupferman 2013; Occiti 1988; Dipholo and Biao 2013: 49.

28 Bouhali and Rwiza 2017: 17.

29 Freire 2005: 95.

30 Dei 2008 in Dlamini 2008: 229-248.

31 Makuvaza and Shizha 2017: 4.

with 15% literacy[32] at independence in 1960, the plan was supported by the old French administration. The decision to maintain French as the official language is often explained as originating from a wish to maintain strong economic, political, and cultural links with the former colonial power, as in other former French colonies in the region. However, at the beginning of the 1980s when Senghor was succeeded by Abdou Diouf a decision was taken to make a drastic and radical reform of education. One of the main ideas was reform of teaching that imitated the French education model. The aim was to democratize the school system and make it more accessible and one of the main statements of the reform was that the project "Pour parler français" would be abandoned in Senegalese schools, which would then be adapted to local and national reality. It was a genuine attempt at "decolonization" of the Senegalese education system, although lack of space and the different main topic of this paper mean that I am unable here to illustrate how events unfolded in the following years.[33] In short, however, an unfortunate economic situation in the 1980s proved unfavourable to the application of the reforms, as like many other African states in that period Senegal came under pressure from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. In the end, Senegal was subjected to a structural adjustment programme (SAP) that has had negative effects on the state of the national education and health systems, as their budgets were cut severely, making the proposed education reforms impossible. Negative effects of SAPs are still visible and up to the time of writing there has been no great change to national education polity which remains the continuation of the colonial and post-independence system imitating the French system. A clear link between international financial institutions and the development trajectories of countries suggests that ontologies of development thinking need to be examined carefully in order to understand the nature of those interventions.[34]

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32 Literacy in French, data on other types of literacy such as literacy in Ajami or Arabic has not been considered as a functional skill.

33 For a detailed account please see Cissé 2005; Sané 2010.

34 A recent historiographical study (Hodge, Hödl and Kopf 2014) of colonial documents demonstrated the "developmental" logic of colonial relations. The study examined the initial stages of the development programme in the times previous to the Cold war and Truman speech. The results provided by those researchers help to directly trace colonial roots of modern development policies in Africa.

Development Matters: Developmental Logic and the Global Approach to Education in Former Colonies

The single term "Development" stands for "the process of developing or being developed" which could signify a process of growth or advancement, an event constituting a new stage, a new product or an idea, for example, all of which meanings can relate to social and historical, or natural processes. Notwithstanding the multiple possible meanings of the word, the related phenomena are not all of the same nature. First of all, we may refer to the development of natural organisms, like plants or animals, which pass from one stage to another such as birth, growth, death, and so on. It is crucial to underline that in such cases all or at least most stages are known before the start of the process. Social change or transformation, which might occur also in stages although imperceptible and progressive, is nevertheless different and can be only metaphorically associated with the natural phenomenon. It is not simply linear and not always predictable because it depends on specific backgrounds and context. The pairing of the two distinct processes has its roots in positivism and the Enlightenment, which saw history as a linear process, equal in all societies. In the course of the twentieth century that vision has grown into the idea of international development and cooperation related to the development of countries, populations, or individuals.

The same definition of development creates separation between geographical spaces and human beings. In the African context the colonial past and development aid cannot be disentangled. The asymmetrical relationships and imbalances of power generated during colonial rule divided the world population into two categories as colonizers and colonized.[35] After political independence that distinction was transformed into the new categories of developed and underdeveloped nations. Those two phenomena are strictly related to each other, where development represents a remodelled relationship between metropolis and colony, or between centre and periphery. There is therefore an epistemic shift, for while colonizer/colonized is an opposition that presents those subjects as being in opposition and belonging to different universes, developed/underdeveloped suggests a different form of opposition in that "catching up" is always presented as possible.[36] That means therefore that underdevelopment is a passing stage which will then logically at some point allow underdeveloped societies to join the ranks of the developed.

Colonialism was essential to the practice of coercive modification of non-Western populations to fit frameworks of modernity, "enlightenment,"

35 Cf. Anievas and Nisancioglu 2015: 56.
36 Rist 2014: 74.

and scientific knowledge that depreciate local epistemologies and modes of development.[37] First of all, during their colonial rule in Sub-Saharan Africa European countries combined political domination, economic exploitation, and *mission civilisatrice*. Then, after gaining political independence, relationships between colonizers and formerly colonized has not transformed in terms of power hierarchies although it did change, and the development paradigm duly emerged from that change. There was a perceived need for the former colonies to develop and catch up, and that has become a priority. There is a relationship amounting to a kind of duty that "developed countries" are obliged to "develop" others. They must find solutions to inequalities and they must manage hierarchies in world markets.[38] Development trajectory implies both the Westernization of others and Western cultural homogeny. However, in contrast to the restitution of lands, decolonization of knowledge and institutions has yet to take place.

There are however alternative interpretations of development which are useful for a different understanding of the framework and to suggest alternative solutions, and a number of aspects that need to be taken into consideration. First of all, there is the diversity of human societies with their enormous variety in size, culture, political organization, and material and non-material productivity. Anievas and Nisancioglu appeal to that diversity as a trans-historical feature of human history which cannot be reduced to a linear development path. That is one of the central presumptions of the theory of uneven and combined development formulated by Leon Trotsky. Trotsky considered human development to be a multilinear, causally polycentric and co-constitutive by virtue of its interconnectedness. That constitutes another major difference between natural and social development which can be defined as a "multiplicity of differentially developing communities that came to interact with one another in causally significant ways in their own collective reproduction."[39] With that statement the authors intended to underline that relationships and pressures among societies define human existence. That means that the outcome of each situation is unique and could not have been foreseen without site-specific analysis. Another concept used by Trotsky in his theory is "combination" which means no pure or "normal" model of development has ever existed. Instead, every society's development has always been "over-determined" by its interactions with others, creating a plurality of variegated sociological amalgamations. Trotsky's theory postulates that "historical processes are always the outcome of multiplicity of

37 Abdi 2009; Abdi and Gou 2008; Shizha 2008.

38 Bouahali and Rwiza 2017: 16; Chandler 2012: 117.

39 Anievas and Nisancioglu 2015: 45, 47.

spatially diverse nonlinear causal chains that combine in any given conjuncture."[40] In fact, in the following section a concrete situation in Senegal will be addressed and a solution proposed that is modelled on a local context for which it is elaborated.

Education is one of the main items on the "development agenda" which includes goals centred around universal youth literacy, universal primary and secondary education, gender equality and inclusion, early childhood development and other targets. Those things are considered a means to eradicate extreme poverty, eliminate avoidable child deaths and guarantee more inclusive growth and gender equality. Education shapes lives and is a key to improvements in both health and material welfare. Ever since the presence of the European imperial powers on the shores of the African continent and the religious missionary efforts which were the first forms of "development aid," education has had an important role as a field of external intervention. In a secular domain, Western education was promoted in order to create workers and indigenous colonial officials who could perform the tasks necessary for the functioning of the colonial system. After independence, and as illustrated in the previous section for Senegal, the general course of countries has not changed. Dlamini underlines the need for new visions and counter-theoretical perspectives of education and development to disentangle "development" and "education" from the grip of dominant paradigms.[41] While it is suggested generally in the literature that the success of education in improvement of basic conditions can take place only if it is informed by African worldviews, that means it could elaborate an education model that would serve people and their own context. In the following section I shall demonstrate an approach to literacy that could bridge those gaps by looking at local linguistic context, making use of it rather than attempting to circumvent it by using a foreign language for teaching purposes.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) undoubtedly has the leading role in this. While for many years it has promoted multilingual and bilingual education, UNESCO has also focused on the understanding of education. A recent policy paper focused on the difficulties of learning in non-familiar languages and expressed a number of key messages that should become essential for policy-makers:[42]

- Speaking a language that is not spoken in the classroom frequently holds back a child's learning, especially for those living in poverty;

40 Anievas and Nisancioglu 2015: 61.

41 Dlamini 2008: 9.

42 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) 2016.

- At least six years of mother tongue instruction is needed to reduce learning gaps for minority language speakers;
- In multi-ethnic societies, imposing a dominant language through a school system has frequently been a source of grievance linked to wider issues of social and cultural inequality.

Education specialists agree that children need to learn in a language they speak outside the school environment. Being taught in an unfamiliar language hampers the chances of learning, the GEM report argues, especially in the initial stages of acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. Restoring African languages and giving them space and dignity as languages of instruction would also be a better way of "decolonizing" children's minds and ensuring African children's right to education.[43]

Solutions to Planning – A Practical Example: Language-Independent Literacies for Inclusive Education in Multilingual Areas (LILIEMA)[44]

Returning to the starting point of this paper, the Casamance region, I will now discuss an existing experimental approach to literacy conceptualized from a multilingual perspective and piloted in Lower Casamance. The innovative method I shall present here links all the parts of this paper, touching as it does on various institutional, historical and social aspects of education and literacy in Senegal. In the education sphere there are numerous flaws as illustrated above, among them the circumstance of being taught in a foreign language, the practical impossibility of learning the language of instruction during the first years of schooling and the inadequacy of outside programmes in the face of local realities. A new method, called LILIEMA, tries to bridge the structural gaps between language ideologies, practices, and formal education. It was conceived as the result of evaluation of the real-life situation in Casamance and its purpose is to suggest an alternative approach to literacy, different from those approaches currently on the development market.

LILIEMA is a method for the learning and teaching of basic literacy skills in highly multilingual areas that has been developed by Friederike Lüpke and her local team of transcribers. It is based on her longstanding research on West African multilingualism, in particular within the on-going Crossroads Project funded by the Leverhulme Trust. It starts from the presumption

43 Brock-Utne 2000: 172; Babaci-Wilwhite 2014: xv.

44 This section is based on the policy brief of the LILIEMA project available here: https://soascrossroads.files.wordpress.com/2017/06/crossroads-policy-brief-1-liliema.pdf jointly written by Ekaterina Golovko and Friederike Lüpke.

that a language-based approach is inapplicable to Casamance because certain languages and especially small groups of speakers of them would be excluded. LILIEMA is based on the teaching of sound-letter associations that can be applied to entire repertoires rather than being taught for a particular language. It allows inclusive literacy teaching in areas where participants are highly multilingual, particularly in languages spoken by few people. It is practically impossible to prepare teaching materials to include all existing varieties of language. LILIEMA was inspired by UNESCO's acknowledgement of the need to develop inclusive and multilingual literacy strategies in order to reach the Sustainable Development Goals in education. LILIEMA is not intended to become a substitute for school programmes, but rather is a complementary educational training that acknowledges the validity of local knowledge and those parts of learners'[45] repertoires that are not represented in the formal school curriculum – or in fact anywhere in the public sphere. LILIEMA reflects the linguistic realities of learners in highly multilingual settings that are normally overlooked by institutions and form part of what has been called the "structural gap" through which learners' language practices and skills are not reflected in the formal system so that they cannot attain the desired results in the formal sector. Those skills are highly valuable and should not be underestimated.

LILIEMA introduces the sound values of letters based on examples from all languages present in the classroom to allow pupils to recognize letters and their sound values and read and write words and short texts in all the languages in their repertoires. LILIEMA is based on official alphabets, but not on official orthographies. It does not introduce standard versions of languages nor does it insist on standard spellings. Variation is tolerated, and it is expected that conventions will develop through use over time, as they have in indigenous writing in other contexts in Africa, for instance in Ajami writing or digital writing practices. LILIEMA is therefore a solution that overcomes prescriptive monolingual context as well as the language-based monolingual mother-tongue literacy courses very often promoted by NGOs. LILIEMA allows teachers to integrate the repertoires of all learners flexibly and because it uses the official alphabet of Senegal it is compatible with the more resource-intensive standard literacies developed and sometimes taught for larger West African languages. LILIEMA creates cultural and linguistic awareness based on actual practice and regardless of how many people speak them it recognizes African languages as a central form of cultural expression and an important part of intangible cultural heritage. LILIEMA thereby

45 Learners can be of any age and LILIEMA can be used as a programme of functional adult literacy, primary (pre-school) literacy and as an initial approach to literacy at schools.

increases consciousness of the lived multilingualism of heterogeneous societies. By acknowledging and respecting diversity it provides strategies for conflict prevention and building of resilience in Frontier societies.

This strategy has a number of benefits crucial for local sustainable development:

- LILIEMA makes all the languages in an individual's repertoire usable for personal literacy, thus contributing to personal autonomy and development relevant to the local economy;
- LILIEMA reaches groups excluded from language-focused literacy activities. All language-centred literacy programmes struggle to cope with mobility;
- It reaches women, who often marry into different linguistic environments and are excluded from formal education;
- LILIEMA uses local means by training and employing local teachers.

LILIEMA is currently being piloted in two villages in the Lower Casamance area of Senegal. All classes are developed and taught by community members familiar with the multilingual environments of their villages. Teachers at both sites have participated in two training workshops during which they have learned the official alphabet of Senegal, experienced language-independent writing and have developed their own learning resources. Lüpke presents the programme in more detail and describes the progress of this new teaching and recent developments.[46]

LILIEMA is context-specific but can easily be adapted to different realities such as hotspots of rural or urban multilingualism and linguistic diversity, and hotspots of mobility such as refugee or diaspora communities.

Concluding Remarks

In this paper I have sought to link monolingual approaches to literacy, formal education, and development thinking. I wished to emphasize the Eurocentric nature of development policies and their direct connection to current educational practice in former colonies. The prevailing state of affairs causes what I have referred to as a "structural gap," that being a situation in which language use, language ideologies and languages of instruction in formal education create a complex relationship which does not result in successful "modernization" outcomes. My aim was to underline that development policies are part of colonial relations that were established between the Global South

46 Lüpke *et al.* (forthcoming).

and the Global North and which have continued to the present day. That situation is part of a dual global narrative opposing the European historical and development path to that of the rest of the world and emphasizing its translatability into non-European cultures.[47] As far as education is concerned relations of that type are embodied in wholesale adoption of European education models with little or no attention given to the local context. In the final section of the paper I have presented an inclusive approach which addresses multilingual communities through knowledge creation by local actors and which may be expected to overcome monolingual logic. This new method allows recognition of forms of cultural wealth that are not part of the Western conceptual universe and can build tools for knowledge creation that are better aligned with the needs and aspirations of the populations working with them. LILIEMA overcomes the donor-receiver dichotomy by giving agency to local actors and disentangling them from historic colonial relations in the education sector.

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47 Cf. Enwezor 2011: 597.

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8

Literacy Education in Northern Nigeria: Issues, Resources, and Training

Mary Anderson

Abstract: There are innumerable reports that Nigeria has the greatest number of out-of-school children in the world, and these claims resonate with press reports within Nigeria that the educational system is in crisis. Drawing on her experience of researching and co-writing primary-school literacy materials in the Hausa language, and delivering teacher-trainer training in the North of the country, this chapter provides an overview of the challenges and the realities that lie behind such doom-laden claims. Key factors include the need for recognition of Islamic education as a powerful force in northern Nigeria, and the rich heritage of Islamic literature (in the ajami script) and of oral folklore in the region. Whilst these realities sit uneasily with the power of the English language as a vehicle for economic and educational aspiration, hope lies in the sheer energy, optimism and enterprise that are evident in so much of everyday life in Nigeria.

Introduction[1]

Northern Nigeria presents a complex mosaic of languages and cultures, with Islam and the Hausa language providing a certain coherence to the picture. In recent years, since the kidnap of the Chibok girls in 2014, the plight of people living in Borno in the Northeast has hit the international headlines. The association of that abduction with poverty and Islam has been particularly strong, and these are major issues for education in Nigeria.

1 I am grateful to Anneke Breedveld, editor of this volume, for suggestions and help in creating the published version of this paper.

An overview of secular educational policies in northern Nigeria must consider several important issues. Chief amongst these are the Islamic faith and culture, which in recent decades have become stronger. To these must be added the politics of Boko Haram, and problems of poverty, health and hunger.

This chapter aims to offer an overview of the issues, resources and training for literacy education in northern Nigeria. It is based on several visits to the region as a consultant for the development of roman-script literacy books for primary schools, and for training teachers under the Teacher Development (TDP) programme, which is funded by the British government's Department for International Development (DFID). First I describe some of the factors that influence educational issues in northern Nigeria. Then I review a range of resources, followed by a description of some of the training undertaken by the TDP. My conclusion hints at further challenges.

To help focus on the most important issues, I will begin with two vignettes. Firstly a report from Kaduna state, which lies just north of the Nigerian capital, Abuja, and on the southern edge of what is conventionally called northern Nigeria. In a 2017 article in Nigeria's *Daily Trust* newspaper, the journalist Jibrin Ibrahim reported that many teachers in Kaduna state are not qualified to teach. That article resulted in a significant public debate about teacher recruitment, remuneration and training.[2] It is generally acknowledged that the issues teachers face are compounded by the sheer numbers of pupils, many of whom are hungry. The state government decided to solve the latter problem by providing meals, but that exacerbated the situation since – in one case at least – the teacher-pupil ratio rocketed to 1:300. These reports are corroborated by anecdotal evidence from a friend.[3] As well as noting the overwhelming numbers of school-age children, she observes: "Poverty and lack of quality education certainly are intimate relatives. (…) [There is] lack of education on so many levels."

My second vignette relates to Kano, the commercial hub of northern Nigeria. With a population of over 3.5 million, this bustling city is the capital of Kano State and seat of one of seven traditional emirates. Historically, the Emir of Kano is an elite leader, who holds spiritual power in the Sufi Islamic tradition. When Sanusi Lamiḍo Sanusi, former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, was appointed as Emir in 2014, this was seen as offering the

2 https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/more-on-teachers-failing-while-their-students-pass-exams.html, accessed 5 September 2018; https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/kaduna-beyond-sacking-in-competent-teachers.html, accessed 5 September 2018.

3 Private correspondence (2017) between the author and Sister Rita Schwarzenberger of the Hope for the Village Child Foundation in Kaduna State.

potential for a very real dialogue between the Islamic and secular forces that coexist in northern Nigeria.

At the SOAS Africa Conference in July 2017, Emir Sanusi gave the keynote speech, in which he made two significant points.[4] One is the shameful fact that many international agencies only report on secular, roman-script literacy, whilst completely ignoring and discounting attainment in Islamic education at the *madrasas* – Islamic schools – attended by many children in northern Nigeria. The other is that just as in medieval Europe churches and monasteries were hubs of education, so mosques in Nigeria could or should be seen as centres of learning in the present age. Emir Sanusi was deliberately referring both to learning in the Islamic sense and to the western, secular model of education. His message was that mosques have the potential to offer the facilities for secular as well as Islamic learning.[5]

Many in the educational establishment may respectfully disagree with the Emir, but it cannot be denied that whilst depicting some of the tensions in northern Nigeria, his vision offers the possibility of helping to bridge the secular-Islamic divide and re-envisioning education in the North.

Issues at Play in Literacy Education

For a revealing overview of the realities of the Nigerian educational system, it is worth watching the BBC Minute series entitled Why Nigeria's educational system is in crisis.[6] In what follows, I will focus only on the North of the country.

Islam

Islam is a dominant force in northern Nigeria, and the perceived teachings of Islam influence much of day-to-day living, such as regular ablutions, Friday prayers, and women and girls wearing the hijab.[7] Islamic styles of teaching have a huge influence on secular schools. For example, with specific reference to the city of Kano, Bano reports:[8]

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4 https://www.youtube.com/watch?list=PL1z_PGhPjwcq1UKkaU-fxw5sLCiMzZdqZ&time_continue=154&v=ciV5Vi-3Adw, accessed 5 September 2018.

5 For a much deeper reflection on the relationship between Islamic education and modernisation, see Bano 2009.

6 http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3RbFXDdBw3g0HQG0fpyD0xF/why-nigerias-educational-system-is-in-crisis-and-how-to-fix-it, accessed 5 September 2018.

7 A useful explanation about how Islamic schools operate in west Africa can be found in Tamari 2016.

8 Bano 2009: 6.

> The Islamic schooling system in Kano is (…) very old. Even today, there is a high demand for religious education, with the result that the Islamic is larger than the secular schooling system: out of the total 3.7 million people in the age group between 5 and 21 years of age, over 80 per cent are estimated to attend some form of Islamic school, either in addition to attending a regular school or as their sole educational experience.

With a sizeable proportion of non-Hausa minorities, Kaduna state (mentioned in the first vignette above) is not as homogenous as Kano city or Kano state, but the above quotation nevertheless presents the nub of the problem faced by much of the secular educational system. The latter is operating side-by-side with an educational culture that is barely acknowledged in most official statistics, but which is successfully claiming the time and energy of students.

Government and Private Schools

The Federal Government of Nigeria officially controls secular educational policy, but each State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) – especially the chairperson – exercises huge power. Secular primary education is officially free and compulsory (despite the official figures) and lasts for six years. In years 1-3 official policy dictates that the medium of instruction is the "language of the immediate environment," and thereafter English. This policy is rarely implemented, partly because there is an almost complete dearth of teaching materials in local languages, and because teachers do not have the relevant training.

It is an accepted fact that private schools flourish alongside state schools: some are expensive and for the élite, but there is a burgeoning market for lower-cost private schools, especially in and around major conurbations.

The magisterial model of teaching prevails, with teacher at the front and – if he or she and the pupils are lucky – blackboard and chalk. Printed books and exercise books are a luxury, and may be locked in a cupboard for "safekeeping". The main methodology is shouting, repetition and rote-learning. I have watched many lessons where the *ba*, *bi*, *bo*, *bu*, *be* system of teaching the five Hausa vowels and consonants is used,[9] and this is replicated in some standard set texts, which are normally marketed and supplied by the Nigerian publishing industry.

In the government school system classes may consist of 100+ children, and in the words of Sister Rita Schwarzenberger (mentioned in the Intro-

9 I am grateful to Tal Tamari, who pointed out to me that the *ba bi bo bu be* system is derived from Islamic teaching in the madrasas (personal communication, 20 May 2017).

duction above), they are "bored out of their minds." As Edem *et al.* observe, "most primary school leavers in Nigeria constitute Okedara's (1989) class of 'newly-created *il*literate Nigerians' (italics added)."[10]

Economics

The majority of people in northern Nigeria are poor, and large families abound. My friend Hassan Moturba Pullo, who worked at Bayero University Kano, estimated that he had nineteen children. His particular family has prospered and manages to see many of the younger generation through both Islamic and secular education; but this is the exception rather than the rule. Islamic education is very highly valued, and many parents send their children to learn in the Qur'anic schools, where the mallam teaches basic Arabic literacy using time-honoured Islamic methods. The teacher is invariably a man and he is not paid, for he is expected to earn a living elsewhere as a farmer or tailor, for example.[11]

Teachers in the government educational system are not highly paid, if at all. The majority of teachers, and especially those in the rural areas, lack proper training, and they have little motivation to teach effectively. Unlike those in the Islamic schools, theirs is not a highly-regarded profession. The low esteem and low salaries of teachers in government schools do little for the quality of teaching, and bright minds will seek their fortune in other fields such as trade and government. In towns and cities, the many private schools on the whole do have properly paid and trained teachers.

Girls' Education

Although huge value is placed on education, both religious and secular, for girls the norm of early marriage and the cost of a dowry are inclined to militate against keeping them at school beyond primary 6. At secondary school, lack of toilet facilities and the concomitant problems associated with puberty and menstruation add to the pressures. It is far easier, and more economically rewarding, for a family to let a daughter trade at the market and then marry at an early age. A useful overview can be found in David Archer's 2014 report entitled "Nigeria's girls and the struggle for an education in the line of fire,"

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10 Edem *et al.*: 16, referring to J.T. Okedara (1989) "Adult Literacy in Nigeria: Policies and Programmes," in: T.N. Tamuno and J.A. Atanda (eds.), *Nigeria Since Independence: The First 25 Years* (Volume 3, Education) (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books): 3-8.

11 Bano 2009: 10.

and there are useful statistics in the 2014 British Council report entitled "Girls' Education in Nigeria: issues, influencers and actions."[12]

Language

"Nigeria is an English-speaking nation" insists a northern Nigerian friend and academic. This is of course true, in the sense that English is the official language of Nigeria. However, the picture on the ground is extremely complex – Nigeria has approximately five hundred languages – and whilst the lingua franca of the South is Pidgin, in northern Nigeria it is Hausa. At home, a northern family will use their mother tongue, and whilst at the local market they may use another language, such as Fulfulde, Kanuri, Nupe or Gwari. When dealing with government agencies, there is a fair chance that most communication will be in Hausa. In rural areas, English is almost certainly the last choice. However, a huge amount of translanguaging happens in almost all spheres of life, a reality that is a challenge to the educational establishment.[13]

The linguistic situation necessarily impinges on educational policy and practice. In many northern Nigerian schools over the past few decades, the reality has been that Nigerian English, Pidgin, or Hausa are the de facto medium of instruction. In theory and in much government parlance, any mother-tongue, whether Hausa or a different local language, is regarded as providing inferior education. In reality, Pidgin or a variety of Nigerian English is used alongside and mixed in with local languages. Code-switching abounds.

Since the majority of parents perceive English as the means to economic advancement, they expect it to be used as the medium of instruction. This demand is made regardless of whether teachers and pupils can communicate in the language. Initiatives such as Universal Learning Solutions introduce the Jolly Phonics method of teaching basic letter-sound correspondences in English, which provides lots of fun in the classroom, backed up by simple readers (primers) and other pedagogical materials.[14] At the time of writing, these are all in English, despite the fact that most children have no understanding of the English language. A huge amount of energy and enthusiasm has been generated by these programmes, both at a state-government level

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12 https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2014/may/15/nigeria--girls-education-boko-haram, accessed 17 September 2018; https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/british-council-girls-education-nigeria-report.pdf, accessed 5 September 2018.

13 See also Garcia and Wei 2014.

14 http://universallearningsolutions.org, accessed 5 September 2018; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Hx5KFBGJBY, accessed 5 September 2018.

and within teacher-training. Yet most research supports the advantages of early mother-tongue medium of education.[15]

Script

Along with language comes the issue of script. For several centuries an adapted version of Arabic script, called *ajami*, has been used for Islamic writing and poetry in Hausa and Fulfulde. As the Emir of Kano pointed out in his speech, it is scandalous that people who read ajami but not roman-script texts are considered illiterate. Pasch states "[t]hat Ajami is a living script for Hausa, becomes clear by the fact that 3% of the letters to the editor in the Hausa-section of the Deutsche Welle (German broadcasting corporation) are written in Ajami."[16]

Interestingly, the original meaning of *boko* in Hausa is "sham, fraud," and this word was at first used to refer to western-style secular education, which was regarded as insubstantial compared to traditional Islamic learning. Remnants of that value-laden attitude remain, though the economic advantage of roman script is undisputed.[17]

Roman script is used in many spheres. Alas! The much-loved Hausa print newspaper, *Gaskiya ta fi Kwabo*, finally died in 2013. However, there are many on-line Hausa websites providing news and much more. These include the BBC, Voice of America, and Deutsche Welle Hausa services, as well as many Nigerian-initiated websites and innumerable Hausa-medium Facebook pages. Hausa in roman script is included in the official Nigerian educational curriculum.

What is important for this discussion is that, despite or in keeping with the Emir of Kano's words, "literature in the Roman script is here to stay with us. Its engagement with questions of power and domination aside, literature subsists as part of a burgeoning culture industry."[18]

Identity – Communal versus Individual

Two important aspects of identity must be mentioned. One is the fact that people – parents, children, teachers – identify with their home community and its concomitant language, culture and religion, all of which are powerful influences on the educational scene. With so many extant mother tongues, a particular school or class may have a range of children whose home languages

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15 See Trudell and Schroeder 2007; Trudell 2013; Bamgbose 2014 on mother-tongue education.

16 Pasch 2008: 10.

17 See Newman 2013.

18 Nasidi 2015: 200.

are mutually incomprehensible, and the teacher may speak yet a different language.

The other is the fact that, on the whole, individualism has not hit northern Nigeria. People identify with their family group, where kinship naming is very important. One of my Hausa friends always refers respectfully to her (younger) relative as "uncle," because he is her father's much younger brother. People often refer to their family origins, their village identity, or their peer-group. For big family celebrations such as weddings, it is common to see co-wives of the same husband all wearing outfits made of the same cloth. At least on the surface, allegiance is far more important than individuality.

In western educational systems – especially in the Anglophone world – we place enormous value on individuality. In Nigeria, where communality is so important, this is not necessarily the case. Of course there are instances of jealousy, resentment and anger, perhaps most obviously in the polygamous marriage system. But in schools, I would argue that individuated learning (rather than rote and communal learning, for example) is a foreign concept.

Critical Thinking

Both in secular and Islamic schools in West Africa, critical thinking is a skill that does not seem to have a high priority. Some academics have suggested that critical thinking is foreign to minds that have been formed by Islamic teaching. Historically this generalisation can be easily disputed, since the western world owes it to Islamic scholars that manuscripts by Greek and Roman scholars like Aristotle survived. The question remains as to what led to the present-day didactics that emphasise memorisation and copying of knowledge, rather than creative and critical thinking.

Resources

All Nigerians are hugely resourceful and enterprising. Whilst economic poverty is rife – begging, shoeless children, rubbish (and worse) in the gutters – on the whole, energy and optimism abound. This is not to deny the realities of in the North of child marriages, polygamy and Boko Haram, but it is to rightfully acknowledge the strength of culture and community.

People

People, people everywhere. People, with their knowledge-of-the-world, skills and experiences are perhaps northern Nigeria's greatest yet least developed resource. The sheer energy that buzzes on every street is breath-taking, partly because the population is so young. The challenge is how to channel that energy and life into productive learning, employment and economic activity.

Teachers are arguably the most important people in the system of educational resources. But how are they trained and how are they regarded? These questions will be touched on in the next section.

Islamic and Secular Education

Referring back to the Emir of Kano's speech, do the mosques have the potential to offer the facilities for secular as well as Islamic learning? And is there a willingness for that to happen on the ground? Those questions are highly political but we cannot ignore the idea or the suggestion. The current "parallel system" is very well entrenched, with school buildings often used in the morning for secular education, and in the afternoon for Islamic teaching. Is some sort of integration desirable or possible? It is arguable that children actually benefit from the richness of cultural dichotomy.

Oral Literature

Hausa has a wealth of folk tales, proverbs, riddles and poetry. These are the mainstay of evenings after dark when different generations of a family enjoy time together, especially in rural areas. Hausa society has been recently described as being "steeped in the listening culture,"[19] and many stories and books have been adapted for radio listening.

All oral folklore is full of wit and wisdom, implicitly conveying cultural values as they depict people and their foibles. Story-telling, songs and games are a communal resource that children come to school with. Parents and pupils, whether or not they are literate in the conventional sense, are not empty vessels! They know a huge amount about their world; so schools and school resources should build on that knowledge. The question for the teacher, the trainer and the materials designer is how to capitalise on those rich traditions in order to make education – including literacy-learning – relevant, meaningful and useful.

In the spirit of the above observations about oral literature, I have been deeply involved in conceiving and co-writing Hausa literacy materials that depict local folklore and customs with stunning artwork and a structured pedagogy. The interim feedback has been very positive indeed, and we hope that they will find a home in many schools.

Written Literature

There is a rich literary landscape in northern Nigeria, including Islamic teachings and poetry written in Arabic, Hausa and Fulfulde using the *ajami* script. One of the pre-eminent scholars in this tradition was Nana Asma'u.

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19 Garba 2015: 169.

Photo 1
A selection of *littattafan soyayya* book covers. Photo credit: Carmen McCain.

She was the daughter of Usman dan Fodio, founder of the Sokoto caliphate that conquered much of northern Nigeria in the nineteenth century.[20]

In parallel and in contrast, there are also works of considerable influence in roman script in Hausa that are still very much alive in the popular imagination. Many of these were initially conceived and produced in the 1930s by the Northern Regional Literature Agency (NORLA) under Rupert East. I have listened to people wax lyrical whilst leafing through *Magana Jari Ce* (with its familiar parrot image on the front cover), which recounts stories that were originally based on the Arabian Nights.[21]

Kano Market Literature

Since the 1980s there has been a thriving Hausa publishing industry, centred in Kano, which produces "romantic novels" (*littattafan soyayya*) in roman-script Hausa and written mainly by Hausa women. These touch on many of the themes that characterise a culture of arranged marriages, polygamy,

20 See *Boyd and Mack* 1997 for an overview of the work and influence of Nana Asma'u, which continues into the twenty-first century.

21 For a review of the genesis of roman-script publishing, see Nasidi 2015.

poverty, and patriarchy. Rather condescendingly called "Kano market literature" in English, the genre has flourished, despite controversy and risk.[22]

Educational Books

Post-independence in 1960, a successful educational publishing industry developed, mainly driven by UK-based companies such as Longman (now Pearson), Evans, and Macmillan. Conventional western-style publishing in the twenty-first century has much diminished in northern Nigeria, though there is still a substantial industry in the south. The factors at play include piracy (which undermines intellectual property rights, and therefore profit), affordability – including the high cost of paper – and digitisation.

Commercial educational publishing may have waned in the North, but there are many other initiatives. For example, the American University of Nigeria recently published a series of basic readers in Hausa. These books were the outcome of a writing workshop sponsored by USAID, World Vision, and the Australian government through the All Children Reading Grand Challenge for Development.[23] The project hopes to create two hundred similar early-grade books in Hausa using the Bloom book-writing software developed by SIL International.

The Media

No discussion of resources in northern Nigeria would be complete without mention of the media, which impinge on all forms of Hausa city life, whether through smart phones, computers, radio, or TV. All these, and the flourishing Kannywood film market, thrive on story-telling and soap-operas. They offer byte-size input and impact and are a very real presence in everyday life. Electronic teaching resources and Teacher Development will be explored below.

The Local Environment: Local Resources

Let us not forget the environment when considering resources. In my early training, I thought of books, recordings, blackboard, pencil and paper as the only worthwhile teaching resources. But educational thinking has developed enormously in past decades, with acknowledgement of the value of *realia*, artefacts, and everyday objects. A weed is a good plant growing in the wrong place. Is a piece of plastic rubbish waiting to help depict a story? Are bottle-tops waiting to be used for basic mathematics? Is the branch of a tree waiting to illustrate a folktale?

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22 For a scholarly review of these locally-written and locally-produced resources, see Furniss 2005. For a more up-to-date and vibrant account, see Mallonee 2016.

23 https://allchildrenreading.org/book-creation/, accessed 5 September 2018.

Digital Resources

Many initiatives that address the reality of secular education in northern Nigeria have been driven by international aid agencies. For example, the National Library of Norway is planning to create a fully-digitised library of Nigerian literature, including books in Nigerian languages. Others are coming on line all the time, one of which will be explored below. Here I give two examples that are explicitly focused on the secular school system.

Set up through a collaboration between the University of British Columbia and the South African Institute of Distance Education (SAIDE), African Storybook is a wonderful resource for children's literacy, enjoyment and imagination.[24] The website provides open access to picture storybooks in many African languages, including Hausa and Fulfulde, and these may be downloaded or printed as long as their source is acknowledged. In some instances the artwork seems more appropriate for other parts of Africa rather than for northern Nigeria with its strict dress-code. But more and more stories are coming on line, and there is no question that they have great educational value, as long as users have the means to read, download and/or print them.

Another digital initiative is Worldreader, a literacy charity set up by former employees of Amazon and Microsoft.[25] They provide e-reader devices pre-loaded with textbooks, either for classroom or library use. The books are uploaded centrally (in California), after negotiation with the publishers of the paper version. There is still some way to go in providing suitable content for Hausa, but there are several successful trail-blazing projects in Ghana, and one on the outskirts of Lagos. Worldreader claims that once supplied, their e-readers do not need Internet access, and that their e-reader batteries only need recharging on average once a month, depending on usage.

As with all things digital, there are often impediments to their widespread use or usefulness, especially in rural areas: the lack of Internet access and the need for a smartphone, tablet, or computer. Nigerians love to joke about their electric power supply company, NEPA, but the constant need to recharge batteries is a real and constant frustration, and a challenge yet to be met by the developers of solar power and other green energies.

Teacher Training and Development

In his *Daily Trust* article mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, journalist Jibrin Ibrahim mentions "the paradox of students passing exams while even

24 https://www.africanstorybook.org, accessed 5 September 2018.

25 https://www.worldreader.org/where-we-are/nigeria/, accessed 5 September 2018.

their teachers cannot pass the same exams." How can teachers be helped and empowered? Into the complex situation described above, many NGOs and government agencies – both local and international – are offering support. Worldreader and African Storybook were mentioned in the last section, and here are further examples:

- Universal Learning Solutions, mentioned above, is rolling out Jolly Phonics basic English literacy teacher-training in many northern states;
- UKAid has funded several educational schemes for enhancing secular education in Nigeria, including the Girls' Education Project, implemented by UNICEF, and the Teacher Development Programme, implemented by Cambridge Education which is part of Mott McDonald. UKAid also funded the Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN), which came to an end in 2017;[26]
- USAID has a sizeable programme of support for basic education in primary schools in northern Nigeria.

My particular experience is with the Teacher Development Programme (TDP), mentioned above, and an account of my reflections follows. In-service training of teacher-trainers continues at a considerable pace, and there are regular updates and photos to be found on the TDP Facebook page, which is a source of inspiration and ideas as well as news and photos.

The Teacher Development Programme (TDP)

TDP focuses on five northern states of Nigeria: Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, and Zamfara. It aims to enhance the skills and knowledge of 66,000 teachers, and to use technology to improve access to teacher training.[27]

One of the big issues debated within TDP has been the balance of focus between training for English- and Hausa-medium teaching. Because of sustained demand and well-established tradition, there has been a tendency towards English-medium training. Hausa-medium resources include those produced by RARA, with USAID funding and with the cooperation of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC).[28] In the event, when I was invited to be involved in the training of teacher-trainers, we decided on a fifty-fifty split between the two languages, at least for a

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26 https://www.ukaiddirect.org, accessed 5 September 2018; https://devtracker.dfid.gov.uk/projects/GB-1-202643, accessed 5 September 2018; https://www.tdpnigeria.org, accessed 5 September 2018; https://www.esspin.org, accessed 5 September 2018.

27 For several in-depth reviews of its work, see http://www.nigeria-education.org/edoren/publications/, accessed 17 September 2018.

28 https://www.rti.org/impact/reading-and-access-research-activity-rara, accessed 5 September 2018; http://nerdc.org.ng/eCurriculum/, accessed 5 September 2018.

Photo 2 **Acting out "The Hare and the Tortoise" fable, as part of a literacy-engagement activity. Photo credit: Mary Anderson.**

certain period. My input only concerned Hausa, and drew on my experience of developing basic Hausa literacy materials for primary schools.

Hausa Literacy Teacher Training

In the workshops that my colleagues and I helped to run, at all times we aimed to build creatively on existing practice and culture. Encouraging affirmation of prior knowledge, these story-telling sessions entailed acting out a familiar story in order to elicit key oral vocabulary for later reading. The photo below depicts a dramatisation of "The Hare and the Tortoise" fable, which is equally well known in English and Hausa folklore. The use of the branch of a neem tree was a spontaneous use of local resources to depict the tree where the hare went to sleep. Flash-cards in Hausa had been pre-prepared as prompts for teaching the reading of familiar words such as *zomo* (hare) and *kunkuru* (tortoise).

The focus of training Hausa-literacy trainers covered the following aspects of pedagogy:

- Oral/aural story-telling and listening for enjoyment;
- Aural awareness of Hausa phonics – referring to letters by their sounds, not their names;

- Developing awareness of phonemes and syllables – using combinations of syllables to build words by playing a Scrabble-like game;
- Building up a reading programme from syllables to words and sentences;
- Helping to create a sense of ownership of materials, through collaborative writing of alliterative "sound stories" in Hausa, and more;
- Encouraging creative methodology, e.g. using flashcards, riddles, role play, and acting out stories;
- Sharing wall-charts and big books as an introduction to Hausa literacy.

Sustainability

My contribution to teacher training has been a drop in the ocean compared with the ongoing efforts of the TDP team. There is a huge positive drive to encourage teacher trainers, and this is being reinforced by the chairs of each State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), who wield such power and influence in their individual states. Many developments are reported and followed on the TDP Facebook page – an invaluable resource for local teachers and trainers, if they have Internet access. Here is an extract from a recent post.[29]

> The Nigeria Annual Education Conference held in Abuja in November 2017 issued a communiqué which epitomises some of the new-found commitment to improvement. Among many other things it was resolved that:
>
> - Government must make committed efforts to decongest classrooms;
> - We must make the most of available technology especially in this age. For example, things like microphone will help the teaching of large class sizes;
> - Increase funding to education, especially to cater to teacher welfare, teacher development, education infrastructure and learning materials;
> - Tap into the experience of pensioners and retired staff of the ministry to help in the development and implementation of inclusive approaches to education.

Here is another TDP Facebook post explaining the rationale and thinking behind the TDP training schemes:[30]

> We do not just train teachers and let them go. We ensure to support and encourage the relevant State Universal Basic Education Boards, to keep track of their classroom performance, and where essential, recommend additional

29 The Facebook post is based on recommendations in EDOREN (2017).

30 See the fourth comment above.

> training. We call this a Professional Development Meeting (PDM) and it is conducted twice a year. PDM allows relevant SUBEBs to sustain the growth of quality teachers in their respective domains.

And here is a lovely TDP tweet:

> #Monday motivation
> Small daily improvements are the key to staggering long term, sustainable results. Do not disregard the days of small beginnings or the little efforts to become a better teacher. They all add up to something bigger towards a better tomorrow.

Technology

Nigerians are fascinated by digital technology. TDP's innovations have included developing a "Teacher in my pocket" for teacher-training, which is usable on any smartphone; the introduction of Mavis talking pens/books to enhance basic English learning in primary schools; and Kobo Collect, a data collection tool for monitoring and evaluation.

Nigeria is full of entrepreneurs, and a home-grown initiative seems set to challenge Worldreader. Vantium e-learning tablets have recently been introduced at Nasoro Model Primary School in Kano.[31] These are preloaded with lesson plans and a teacher's guide. Vantium Schools claim that they provide a cost-effective platform that works without the Internet. How such an initiative interacts with the many cultural, economic and environmental challenges of northern Nigeria has yet to be seen.

Conclusion and Challenges: Education for Life?

The really big question is: what constitutes education for life? One of my reflections on the training workshops outlined above is that teacher-trainers are confident about reading and writing Hausa in roman script, but only up to a certain level. Roman-script Hausa is used in everyday byte-size messaging, and for reading familiar websites such as Facebook. But how much reading goes on at a higher level? Are teachers and teacher-trainers good literate role-models for their pupils?

I reflected on how much roman-script Hausa is actually in the local environment, and how much sustained reading of novels, newspapers or other works in Hausa. Of course the *littattafan soyayya* are a shining example. For teachers to be really comfortable and confident about teaching Hausa literacy,

31 https://www.myvantium.com

there need to be more ambient roman-script Hausa reading materials in the social environment. And of course Hausa and other Nigerian languages need to invest and strengthen their presence on the Internet.

People need to find a reason to read. If religious works are in *ajami*, and that is an essential and desirable part of life, what motivation do teachers and their pupils have to read in roman-script Hausa? Should the policy of initial mother-tongue literacy in Primary 1-3 be made more explicit, and the transition to English-medium – a very difficult managerial feat, which has not been addressed here – be made more explicit too?

And what about parents? In the west, a child of middle-class parents will have turned the page of many books before going to school. In northern Nigeria, a child may well see books for the first time at school – or not at all. How many children's materials – stories, games, puzzles, and more – exist in roman-script Hausa? Without a reading culture, abstract concepts, poetry and literature are likely to elude the learner.

Northern Nigerians love trading. Theirs is a culture of enterprise, which is often conducted on a small scale from home or in the local market. There are also large-scale enterprises, such as the Kannywood film industry which build on the love of story-telling. How can this spirit of enterprise and story-telling be harnessed to nurture, foster and grow roman-script Hausa literacy? Literacy needs to be enjoyable and conducted for a reason. There need to be both *fun* and *meaning*.

Another key issue is sustainability. Ultimately, the essence of any progress in literacy levels must be driven by home-grown educational and business leadership. Given current economics and values, will the training be sustained if or when aid agencies withdraw? My observations about teachers and trainers above indicate that adult literacy is a desirable part of the equation, and to this could be added numeracy.

Yet the threat of possible failure is also an opportunity. If Hausa women can generate a local publishing phenomenon, so can or could teachers and trainers. True, there are sometimes problems with finding basic paper and stationery supplies. But digitisation offers great opportunities. Whilst most Nigerians use phones for talking rather than texting, their potential for *literacy motivation* cannot be underestimated. Maybe we should be looking at story-telling apps that are not only video- but also text-led. The future has to be bright.

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9

Qur'anic Memorisation Schools in The Gambia: An Innovation in Islamic Education

Tal Tamari

Abstract: The "Qur'anic memorisation schools" – to translate literally from the Arabic – aim to lead their pupils to rapid mastery (typically, in about four years) of the correct oral recitation from memory of the entire Qur'an; they differ in several important respects from the traditional "Qur'anic schools." The first Qur'anic memorisation school in The Gambia was founded in the late 1980s. However, this educational model was not widely emulated until after 2000; presently there are well over a hundred memorisation schools. Although the first school was founded with foreign assistance, growing local demand for full-time formal education has been a major factor in subsequent expansion. Most schools privilege boarding. Most pupils range in age from about 7 to about 16, but some schools admit pupils under 5 while others accept learners in their early twenties. Girls constitute a substantial minority of enrolees. Most graduates proceed to further study at "conventional" (English language) schools or madrasa (Arabic language schools that also teach secular subjects). Like nearly all institutions of formal education in The Gambia, the Qur'anic memorisation schools claim to contribute not only to the spiritual, moral, and intellectual development of their wards, but to the country's economic and political progress.

Introduction

In the half century since independence (1965), education in The Gambia, and Islamic education in particular, has been characterised by extraordinary expansion and innovation. From four high schools and limited access to elementary education, The Gambia has progressed to over 170 English-medium high schools and majority school attendance for the 7 to 16 age

group. In addition, the country now boasts several institutions of higher education, including a national university.[1]

The current educational scene in The Gambia comprises both state and private "conventional schools," which teach in English medium (the main language in which instruction is given), the madrasa – ostensibly modernising Islamic schools that privilege Arabic medium, as well as English-medium Islamic schools and ones that have both English-medium and Arabic-medium divisions, bilingual English-Arabic schools, bilingual English-French schools, as well as numerous international schools and the traditional *karanta* and *daara* ("Qur'anic schools"). After providing an overview of Islamic education in The Gambia, this chapter will concentrate on the emergence of the Qur'anic memorisation schools, a rapidly growing sector and one of the most fascinating developments of the past thirty years.

Contrary to what their name (here literally translated from the Arabic) may suggest, these schools are not a simple perpetuation of the Qur'anic schools, but are also significantly influenced by the Western-derived or Western-influenced English-medium schools and madrasa, and – like nearly all institutions of formal education in The Gambia – explicitly position themselves as contributing not only to the spiritual and moral development of their wards, but to the country's economic and political progress.

It should be noted from the outset that the status of religion in state-recognised Gambian curricula has been historically quite different from that in the neighbouring Francophone countries. In accordance with British tradition, which marks a less radical separation between religion and the state than the French one, and correlatively, the syllabi established by the West African Examinations Council (www.waecdirect.org, www.waecnigeria.org), religious instruction has long been an integral feature of Gambian curricula. While many of the schools founded in the Gambia in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century were church-related, and offered Christian religious instruction to their students, or in some cases required it, and new Christian-affiliated schools continue to be founded, in recent decades

1 For a brief survey of the history of education in The Gambia, see Jammeh 2015. For current statistics, see Republic of The Gambia, *Yearbook*, 2017, available on the site of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, www.edugambia.gm. Earlier years are also available on this website. In Gambian usage, "Basic" education comprises the first nine years of schooling, with a distinction between "Lower Basic" (grades 1-6) and "Upper Basic" (grades 7-9), also referred to in this paper as the "elementary" and "junior secondary" levels. "Secondary" or "senior secondary" refers to grades 10 to 12. Sanneh 1975 and 1989 [1979] include vivid depictions of "traditional" Islamic education in The Gambia. Skinner 1983 provides some first-hand information about the Mohammedan Primary and Ahmadiyya schools (see below). Janson (2014: 41-43, 54-58, 135, 225-254) mentions several forms of Islamic education.

Islamic instruction has achieved better representation in English-medium curricula. Currently all schools (state or private) applying the national curriculum (developed by the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education) are required to offer courses in "religious knowledge" (though in accordance with the principles of religious liberty and freedom of conscience, pupils are not required to take them).

While both "Christian" and "Muslim" options exist, in practice all or virtually all schools are required to offer Islamic studies, since – with Muslims estimated to constitute over 95% of the Gambian population[2] – all establishments enrol Muslim pupils; furthermore, Muslims are often in the majority, even in Christian-affiliated schools. All schools are furthermore required to allow their Muslim pupils to perform their daily prayers on school grounds. Thus, in the Gambian context, "Islamic schools" are those founded with the specific purpose of furthering Islamic religious ideals. "Christian" schools, founded with the aim of furthering Christian ideals, at present also offer courses in "Islamic religious knowledge." The state schools, which have no religious affiliation, offer courses in "Islamic religious knowledge" and, if pupil enrolment numbers warrant it, also in "Christian religious knowledge."

The information presented here was obtained in the course of three one-month field trips, consecrated to various aspects of Islamic scholarship, conducted in July-August 2004, December 2015-January 2016, and March-April 2017. During this time, I visited each of the establishments cited by name below (including eight memorisation schools[3]), as well as several additional Qur'anic schools and madrasa. This is evidently a very small fraction of the Islamic schools in The Gambia, but may nevertheless suffice to identify some commonalities while underscoring their diversity.

Overview of Islamic Education

The Gambia includes both social and cultural groups that have been Muslim for centuries, and others that have converted to Islam (or in some cases Christianity) in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

A first landmark in adapting Islamic education to evolving conditions was constituted by the foundation in 1903 of the Mohammedan Primary School

2 CIA World Factbook 2017, www.cia.gov. Official Gambian statistics do not provide a breakdown by religions (see Gambia Bureau of Statistics, www.gbos.gov.gm). For historical statistics, see Hughes and Perfect 2006: 24-26.

3 As developed below, these are: in the capital area – the Ebo Town school established c. 1987, Dar al-Arqam est. 1995, Imam Malick Islamic Institute est. 2000, Aisha Umm al-Mu'minin and Bilal schools est. 2001, Soumayah est. 2013; near the capital area, in a semi-rural setting – Al-Rahman est. 2016; and a rural school in the Kerewan area.

(renamed Mohammedan Lower Basic School in 1993), which together with a full programme in English, also offered religious instruction (initially taught in the local languages) by eminent local scholars. Established by the Banjul Muslim Elders association, it now operates as a Local Agreement School, applying the national curriculum, under the joint responsibility of the Ministry of Education and the association.[4]

A second landmark was the establishment in 1975, also in Banjul, of the Muslim High School (renamed Muslim Senior Secondary School in 1996), with distinct English- and Arabic-medium divisions. The English division, which enrols the greater number of pupils, applies the national curriculum. The Arabic division includes grades 1-9, in addition to the senior (10-12) grades.

The madrasa movement, which aims to provide instruction in both general and religious subjects in Arabic medium, had a late start in The Gambia, compared for example to Mali, where madrasa were inaugurated in the 1940s. The first school was founded in 1963 in Tallinding (also in the capital area), under the aegis of the Gambian Islamic Union. The madrasa movement has greatly expanded since then, and it is estimated that there may now be about 400 schools, including over 160 under the Gambian Islamic Union. While most madrasa operate at the Lower Basic level (offering grades 1 to 6, or in some cases, just the first few grades), others also offer Upper Basic (grades 7 to 9), while there are about 25 senior secondary schools (grades 10 to 12). Nursery and kindergarten classes have also been created, especially at larger urban schools. Curricula have progressively evolved, placing ever-increasing emphasis and classroom time on English and general subjects (such as maths, natural and social sciences). The relative roles of Arabic and English have been a major subject of negotiation between the Ministry of Education and the Islamic educational associations, with the larger madrasa progressively implementing English medium for the general subjects. All or virtually all madrasa are coeducational, though girls and boys may sit in separate classrooms.

The Ahmadiyya religious movement also runs several schools in The Gambia, including three senior secondary schools of very high academic repute, applying the national, English-medium curriculum. These schools

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4 Information presented in this section is based on interviews conducted at the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, especially the Division of Curriculum Development, the Gambian Islamic Union, and Amana (the "General Secretariat for Islamic and Arabic Education," an association of Islamic schools), as well as with the principals, vice-principals, and other officials of each of the establishments cited. Statistical information about the madrasa is confirmed by the Ministry of Education's yearbooks (see, e.g., Republic of The Gambia, 2017). Interviews at schools and institutions of higher education were accompanied by on-site observation.

are open to all, but are free for those who declare an Ahmadi affiliation and attend Ahmadi religion classes.[5]

An "American" school, located in Brikama, provides a challenging educational experience, teaching both the full government curriculum in English, and the full Arabic curriculum developed by Amana (the "General Secretariat for Islamic and Arabic Education," which represents the majority of Islamic schools, and is responsible for accrediting them in collaboration with the Ministry of Education).[6]

Gambia College was founded in 1978 through the merger of several earlier institutions; its School of Education, which trains the nation's teachers, has had an Arabic and Islamic Studies Unit since 2007. The University of The Gambia opened a Department of Islamic Studies shortly after its founding in 1999. Both departments now cater primarily to graduates of the Arabic-medium schools.

Three specifically Islamic institutions of higher education have been created in the present decade. An Islamic University, founded in 2011, provides a three-year Bachelor of Arts curriculum, teaching Islamic subjects in Arabic medium. The Islamic Online University, also founded in 2011, provides both online and offline courses, taught in English, in a variety of disciplines, through the Bachelor or Master levels, as well as intensive instruction in the Arabic and English languages. Dar al-Hikma College for women, founded in 2014, provides a three-year Bachelor of Arts curriculum in Islamic subjects, taught in Arabic. The Islamic University admitted women as well as men until the creation of the women's college; since then, it has been enrolling men only. A senior secondary (twelfth grade) diploma from a madrasa is a prerequisite for admission to both the Islamic University and Dar al-Hikma.[7]

In addition, as many as several hundred Gambian students, mostly men but also some women, every year obtain scholarships to pursue their studies in Arabic-speaking or Islamic countries.

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5 Concerning the Ahmadiyya movement and Ahmadiyya religious schools in West Africa, see Fisher 1963, 1975.

6 Registered in 2010 as the Al-Madinah School. This school was initially created for the children of an African-American Muslim community that also operates an Islamic religious school in Los Angeles (see "Al Madinah School," www.youtube.com, accessed 5 November 2017, and references in listings of U.S. private schools). However, the great majority of pupils are from local Gambian families.

7 For further information concerning Gambia College, the University of The Gambia, and the Islamic Online University, see their websites: www.gambiacollege.edu.gm, www.utg.edu.gm, and gambia.iou.edu.gm.

The so-called Qur'anic schools, providing elementary instruction in the reading, recitation and copying of the Holy Book, but also advanced instruction in the different Islamic disciplines (a second phase of study, which Gambian Muslim scholars often designate by the Arabic term *majlis*), continue to play an important role in the countryside and even in the capital area.[8] They are formally under the supervision of the Gambian Supreme Islamic Council.

Amana develops both a substantial curriculum in Islamic studies and Arabic language (and corresponding textbooks and teaching manuals in Arabic) for the madrasa, and (in collaboration with the Ministry of Education) the "Islamic Religious Knowledge" syllabi and teachers' guides for the conventional, English-medium schools (corresponding to just a few hours of instruction per week). Although many different religious tendencies are represented in The Gambia, the member schools have decided to emphasise the Maliki tradition, historically predominant in West Africa and in The Gambia in particular.

The English- and Arabic-medium schools are characterised by considerable interchange of teachers and pupils. Thus, many pupils who have completed their junior secondary or senior secondary studies at a madrasa go on to English-medium schools (usually stepping down one or more grades). However, with expanded English-language instruction in the madrasa, some graduates are being admitted directly to English-medium institutions of higher education. Increasingly too, government teachers are being posted to madrasa to teach English and English-medium subjects.

Although there have been attempts to introduce them since colonial times, until recently the study of Gambian languages has received relatively little attention in the conventional schools. There are now plans to include these languages (written in Latin characters), as an aid in learning how to read, in the first three years of Lower Basic, English-medium schools. Materials have been prepared for Mandinka, Soninke, Fula, Jola, and Wolof, and are now being readied for Manjaku and Serer. In contrast, local languages maintain the important roles they have traditionally held at the Qur'anic

8 As I have argued elsewhere (for example Tamari 2016: 31, 54-55), the term "Qur'anic school" is somewhat of a misnomer, among other reasons, because the second phase of study is not essentially consecrated to the Qur'an. Santerre (1973) was the first to note the culturally and pedagogically very significant distinction between "elementary" Qur'anic and advanced "complementary" studies.

schools, as the media of oral explanation, in the memorisation schools and to a considerable extent in the madrasa.[9]

Teachers at the Qur'anic schools are designated by an array of African-language terms, such as *karamoko* (Mandinka) and *kan* (Mandinka, Fulfulde, and Wolof), whereas those at the madrasa, memorisation and other modernising schools are designated by the Arabic term *ustadh*.

History of the Memorisation Schools

The term "Qur'anic memorisation school" is the literal translation (used in The Gambia) of the Arabic expression *madrasa* (or *ma^{c}had*) *li-tahfiz al-qur'an*. The first such school in The Gambia is said to have been founded in the late 1980s, and the second one in 1995. Beginning about 2000, these schools have undergone rapid expansion, with new establishments opening every year. According to Amana, since it decided (in 2016) to admit the memorisation schools to the organisation, it has received and accepted about a hundred applications.

According to all Islamic educationists interviewed, the school at Ebo Town (a lower-income neighbourhood adjoining Serekunda, in the capital area) was the first establishment specialising in Qur'an memorisation to be opened in The Gambia. This school was founded by Imam Bahram Jobe of Serekunda, the widely known religious leader and philanthropist, as an establishment offering free Islamic education, especially memorisation, for boys. It is, however, with the arrival of "Amadu Somali" about 1990 that more efficient, recently developed pedagogical methods were introduced. A Somali national, Amadu had just graduated from university in Medina; he came to The Gambia at the behest of Imam Jobe and Saudi religious organisations. Amadu Somali organised a full curriculum, including auxiliary study of subjects such as *fiqh*, *hadith*, and Arabic grammar. As he was unfamiliar with the Gambian languages, he insisted that his pupils communicate in Arabic only, even among themselves. Although he no longer resides continuously in The Gambia, his aura remains considerable. He is credited with training many of those who went on to teach Qur'an memorisation, and some consider that he was also the first to introduce *tajwid* (recitation of the Qur'an according

9 At the Gambian madrasa I have observed, all content is orally translated into one or more local languages, through grade six; use of the local languages is progressively phased out in the higher grades. Concerning the memorisation schools, see more below. The important role maintained by the national languages in Malian madrasa is documented in Tamari 2009. For a comprehensive study of the Malian madrasa, see Brenner 2001.

to certain rules) in The Gambia. Over the years, more than 250 young men have mastered Qur'an memorisation while studying at the Ebo Town school.

Dar al-Arqam (named for the person in whose home the first Muslims hid to pray), founded in 1995, may be the second Qur'anic memorisation school to have been established in The Gambia. The founder, Ibrahim Thiam, had studied with his father, who ran a large *majlis* in a Wolof-speaking area, memorising the Qur'an under his tutelage. He then went on to Muslim High School, completing grade 12, and from there to Sudan, obtaining a university degree (*ijaza*) in Khartoum, and thence to Saudi Arabia. In the course of his extended educational travels, he was led to re-memorise the Qur'an according to the Hafs "reading" widely accepted in the Middle East,[10] and ultimately decided to open a Qur'an memorisation school. From the very first, he admitted girls as well as boys – thus setting a pattern that has been followed by most other Qur'anic memorisation schools – in his establishment situated in the somewhat peripheral neighbourhood of Sintu Alagie.

The example of Kokki in Senegal – at over 3,000 students, considered by many interlocutors as the largest Islamic school in West Africa[11] – is cited by some Islamic educationists as an inspiration for the introduction of Qur'anic memorisation schools in The Gambia. Kokki is said to have started teaching Qur'an memorisation, according to a particularly efficient method, no later than the 1970s. Many Gambian educationists, including teachers specialising in Qur'an memorisation, have studied this – as well as other Islamic disciplines – at Kokki. Gambians state that memorisation schools have been common in Senegal for a long time, and many Gambian families send their children to study this (as well as other religious disciplines) in Senegal. (Conversely, however, some Senegalese come to The Gambia to study memorisation, though probably in lesser numbers.[12])

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10 "Hafs" and "Nafiᶜ" (whose "Warsh" variant is mentioned below) are among the seven *qira'at* or "readings" that, since the second century AH/eighth century CE, have been widely accepted as valid throughout the Muslim world. Differences among the readings concern the pronunciation of certain letters and signs, pauses, and vowelling (which may, in some instances, induce differences of interpretation).

11 See Ware 2014; Dramé 2014. There are numerous references to Kokki on the internet, for example on www.seneweb.com and www.lesoleil.sn.

12 The transnational movement of pupils is often linked to the belief that a particular school, or schools in a particular area, are better, but also to the view that children concentrate more fully on their studies, and improve their character, away from home. Furthermore, in the Islamic world generally and in West Africa in particular, advanced study has long been associated with travel.

The memorisation techniques introduced by Amadu Somali and some Gambian teachers are said to have been initially developed in Saudi Arabia, and differ, in several important respects, from those practised hitherto.

Contrary to a widespread misconception, in most localities, the traditional Qur'anic schools did not emphasise the full memorisation of the Qur'an – though this was a highly valued achievement. Generally, these schools aimed at inculcating in their pupils the ability to correctly read aloud ("recite") portions of the written text, while retaining by heart a limited number of suras – usually the Fatiha (first sura of the Qur'an), several of the shorter suras from the back of the Qur'an, as well as certain suras that are – locally or more widely – considered of especial significance. Those who had achieved a certain level of skill in reading and recitation were encouraged or required to learn how to write by copying out the suras they were studying.[13] In some localities, those of greater ability and motivation (or coming from scholarly families) were led to achieve the full, correct recitation of the Qur'anic text, reading aloud from an exemplar; those who became teachers themselves might then, through repeated recitation over time, gradually acquire a mnemonic knowledge of much or all of the Qur'an. In some localities and cultural and linguistic milieux only, notably among the Soninke and some Fulfulde-speaking groups, recitation of the full Qur'an from memory, followed if possible by its writing out from memory, was highly desired, and a prerequisite to further study. These feats were achieved, in every generation, by an elite of scholars, most of whom belonged to lineages with a tradition of religious learning. In all cases, recitation of the full Qur'an from memory was rarely accomplished before the age of twenty (often a decade or so later), while the reproduction of the written text from memory required one or more years of additional training. According to all persons interviewed in The Gambia, full memorisation of the Qur'an (whether in oral or written form) has traditionally been a rare – though much admired – achievement.

In contrast, the Qur'anic memorisation schools aim to lead nearly all the children they enrol to achieve correct oral recitation of the whole Qur'an, from memory, within a period of two to six years of intensive study. The exact amount of time a child will need is said to depend on her/his ability (and also appears to vary, to some extent, among schools). However, teachers insist, only a very few children are unable to complete memorisation – whether because they are generally slow, or because they cannot retain longer suras and passages. One teacher cited as extreme cases, a boy who needed eight years in order to memorise, and a twelfth-grade madrasa graduate who

13 In nearly all the Qur'anic schools that I have visited, in Mali and Guinea as well as The Gambia, reading and recitation are studied for a considerable time before writing is introduced.

needed only one year (surely because he already had a good knowledge of the Book). Children are currently being admitted to the Qur'an memorisation schools at ever-younger ages. It is claimed that some children (girls as well as boys) as young as eight have fully mastered the oral recitation from memory of the whole Qur'an, though this is more usually accomplished between the ages of twelve and eighteen.

The preceding remark points to another fundamental change: though girls as well as boys have long attended Qur'anic schools in The Gambia (at least among the Mandinka and the Jakhanke), they rarely persisted in their studies. Therefore, as far as I have been able to ascertain, all the *hafiz* ("bearers" of the Qur'an) there have traditionally been men. Now there are women and girls, as well as young boys.

Another transformation concerns the nature of the recitation itself. Whereas the Maghreb, and correlatively West Africa, have for centuries practised the Warsh "reading," the Gambian memorisation schools teach the Hafs "reading" characteristic of the Middle East, especially Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Thus, the Gambian schools partake of the worldwide trend towards decreasing diversity in recitation practices and the near monopoly of Hafs. Correlatively, local recitation styles (linked to a particular region, or to a linguistic and cultural community) are also under challenge.[14] In contrast, I am told, the Senegalese memorisation schools including Kokki are more conservative, maintaining the teaching of Warsh, and sometimes, additionally offering Hafs.

It may be asked how and why children are able to learn in a few years what once took at least a decade to accomplish. The main factor has probably been correctly identified by one Qur'anic memorisation teacher, who stated that his pupils have all their time available for study, whereas under past conditions, most students had to spend the greater part of their time on farmwork and various other non-academic pursuits.

Furthermore, it is my impression that memorisation pupils are rapidly urged to learn relatively long passages from the Qur'an – longer, at any given level, than those studied by their counterparts in the Qur'anic schools, though the latter are not required to retain them by heart. The memorisation schools insist on frequent – and during the later phases of study, continual – revision of previously studied passages, grouped in progressively longer units. While the Qur'anic schools also place considerable emphasis on revision, their pupils are unlikely to find the time for such extended recitation.

Additional factors may also contribute to the memorisation pupils' success, such as the very regular schedules, and (in most cases) ample food.

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14 Such recitation styles, briefly discussed in Tamari 2016: 40, deserve systematic study.

Social Contexts

All or nearly all memorisation schools have been founded by Islamic scholars, or by philanthropists working in association with Islamic scholars. Of those I personally visited, six were established by persons with expertise in memorisation. On the other hand, the Aisha Umm al-Mu'minin school for girls – the first to be specifically dedicated to them – was founded by a former woman teacher and principal in the conventional (English-medium) schools. She felt that better religious education is essential for girls, and has dedicated her retirement to helping them. An eighth, rural school had long existed as a family-run *karanta* (Qur'anic school), to which a madrasa had been associated for some decades. When the family became unable to maintain the madrasa, due to lack of adequate resources and personnel, it entrusted instruction to two young men, both expert in Qur'anic memorisation, who additionally taught other religious subjects.

The founders and directors of the first, urban schools all had significant international experience, having studied abroad (in Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Mauritania, Senegal, and less frequently, in Mali, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Niger, and/or Chad). The lady director of the above-mentioned school for girls is also well travelled. The women directors, both expert in memorisation, of two small schools (one urban, one semi-rural) have studied exclusively in The Gambia, but one is assisted (in running the school) by her well-travelled husband, while the other is assisted (in teaching as well as running the school) by her husband and co-wife, both of whom had studied in the Sudan (respectively, in Khartoum and Omdurman).

The teachers I met report having accomplished their memorisation studies in Ebo Town, Dar al-Arqam, and other Gambian memorisation schools, but also at Kokki and elsewhere in Senegal, as well as (perhaps according to more traditional techniques) in Mauritania. In addition, many have attended Qur'anic schools (most usually "upcountry") and/or madrasa. Most have studied exclusively in Arabic-medium, though some speak English as well (whether acquired in madrasa classes, or informally). One young man was studying at an English-medium, conventional school when he felt a strong need to deepen his Islamic learning. He began memorising at a suburban school while continuing his English studies, obtained his English-medium senior secondary diploma, then completed Qur'an memorisation while studying full-time at the suburban school. Nearly all the men teachers I have personally met are young (aged about 22 to about 30), and several expressed the desire to pursue their studies; one had just obtained a scholarship to an Arab country. During my school visits, I met just four women experts in memorisation; one appeared to be in her twenties and the other three, in their thirties.

While memorisation teachers may also provide instruction in other Islamic subjects and in the Arabic language, schools often hire additional (usually part-time) instructors for this purpose. They also hire (again, usually part-time) instructors for the English language and general subjects (such as maths). Whether teaching Islamic or general subjects, nearly all these instructors had received most of their education in Arabic-medium schools. Exceptionally, an instructor in English or general studies may have received most or all of her/his education in English-medium schools. Most have received their training in The Gambia; a few have, additionally, studied in Senegal.[15] Many part-time teachers give lessons at several schools.

In our sample of eight, four schools are co-educational, two are restricted to boys, and two are dedicated to girls. Ebo Town, as already mentioned, admits only boys. Having started out with about 20 pupils, it now has about 150. For logistical reasons, the Imam Malick Islamic Institute accepts only boys in its memorisation sections; it has 290 pupils on its main campus (which also houses a madrasa that admits girls) situated in the affluent Kanifing neighbourhood, almost 80 pupils in a unit exclusively dedicated to memorisation in Banjul, and has recently opened an upcountry memorisation unit that is expected to receive 60 pupils.[16] Dar al-Arqam school started out, in 1995, with 20 boys and girls; it now has a total enrolment of approximately 340, including 135 girls. The Bilal school, founded in 2001, which initially admitted only boys, began accepting girls c. 2007. It now has two separate campuses: one in Westfield (a very central and commercial urban area), which enrols 90 girls, and one in Yundum (a semi-rural community on the periphery of the capital area, about 10 kilometers from Brikama) which enrols approximately 230 boys. The Aisha Umm al-Mu'minin school in Kanifing, also founded in 2001, has enrolled as many as 225 girls at one time. The Soumayah school (named for Islam's first woman martyr), founded in 2013 and currently situated in the affluent Brusubi neighbourhood, has enrolled up to 50 girls at a time. The Al-Rahman school, established by a woman teacher in late 2016 in semi-rural Busumbala (adjoining Yundum), counts approximately equal numbers of boys and girls among its 30 pupils.

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15 The Ministry of Education's yearbooks show that nearly all madrasa teachers (98%) are Gambian. See Republic of The Gambia 2017: 78-82, 210-214, 320-324, 428-432.

16 This school is mentioned by Gaibazzi 2015: 58, 85. The Imam Malick school has posted several videos, including "Children of the World" (4 minutes) and "Sumpudo Khati" (showing moments of a graduation ceremony, 5 minutes), added on 3 October 2008 and 17 February 2013, respectively. The Bilal school has posted numerous videos, including excerpts from a graduation ceremony (78 minutes) and from a visit by Sir Dawda Jawara, Gambia's first president (89 minutes), added on 28 February 2015 and 13 August 2017, respectively. (All on www.youtube.com, viewed on 17 August 2018.)

The two smaller schools report receiving numerous applications that they are unable to accept, due to lack of facilities. The director of the newer girls' school envisages the creation of a boys' section, subject to the obtention of adequate facilities. The rural school, located in the Kerewan area, currently has about 50 pupils, both boys and girls.

Of the schools visited, five privilege boarding; nevertheless, at least three (Bilal, Dar al-Arqam, and Soumayah) also admit day pupils. Ebo Town, which has always had both day and boarding students, now has 25-30 boarders, out of a total of 150 students. Bilal hopes to open a special facility for day boys on its campus in Yundum. The semi-rural school in Busumbala only accepts day pupils, who live within walking distance; but it hopes to secure facilities that will allow it to take in boarders. The rural school now receives only village pupils, but the madrasa that preceded it had many boarders.

Age ranges of pupils vary considerably among the schools. Ebo Town has a minimal entry age of 13, and admits many pupils who have completed their senior secondary studies, whether in Arabic or English; it thus enrols many adults. The Bilal School admits children and teens aged 7 to 17, though occasionally it will accept younger or older pupils. Dar al-Arqam and Imam Malick accept a majority of young children, but also mid-teens. The Aisha Umm al-Mu'minin School considers that it is best for girls to begin their studies between the ages of 7 and 10; however, it sometimes accepts girls as young as 5, or ones that are already in their teens (up to age 16). The newer girls' school enrols pupils between the ages of 4 and 18, and includes a majority of small children among its wards. Most of the children at the semi-rural school appeared to be about 8 to about 12 years old, with a total age range of about 7 to about 14. The rural school mostly enrols young children and early teens.

With the notable exception of Amadu Somali, all the founders, directors, and teachers I have encountered in the memorisation schools have been Gambian. Some hail from the capital area or have long been based there, while others are from the interior. Pupils' origins, on the other hand, are considerably more varied. While nearly all pupils are of West African and most usually Gambian parentage, many were born or have lived abroad and/or their parents and some of their siblings continue to reside abroad. The proportion of children whose families reside abroad varies considerably among schools. Such children constitute perhaps a third of the pupils at the Bilal and Soumayah schools, and are also very well-represented at Imam Malick, Dar al-Arqam and Aisha Umm al-Mu'minin. These children include citizens of France, Spain, the United States and Canada, as well as ones whose parents reside in Guinea, Mali, and Senegal. The Ebo Town school currently draws boys from Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, and Mali. A considerable percentage of the Gambian children in the capital area boarding schools are

from "upcountry." On the other hand, the Busumbala day school and the rural school seem to cater primarily or exclusively to local children.

Most children from Europe and North America are sent to the memorisation schools at a young age (c. 8-12). In many cases, two siblings come together. However, a significant number of mid and late adolescents are also enrolled (often after the completion of junior secondary school). These children and young people often declare that they had not been consulted about their wishes, and express the desire to return to their former homes – while also recognising the value of their current studies. Younger children declared that they expected to return to their countries of citizenship and to continue their studies there, after completion of memorisation. Youths also indicated that they expected their parents to come and take them home after graduation, and teachers confirm that so far, this has always been the case. However, this interruption in their secondary school studies obviously raises the question of whether or not they will be able to pursue a senior secondary or professional programme in their home countries, and therefore, of their future prospects. On the other hand, several older girls (aged about 18 to about 22, and fully veiled – unlike the other young women studying at the same schools) claim to have come to The Gambia, and their chosen school in particular, on their own initiative. They furthermore state that once they have acquired sufficient religious knowledge and skills in Arabic, they intend to travel to the Middle East to pursue their studies there. All children and youth are fluent in the official languages of their home countries (English, French, or Spanish), and the older ones are literate in them as well.

Children from Europe and North America are also enrolled in the madrasa – where they appear to form, however, a much smaller percentage of the student body. Parental preference for the memorisation schools may be due to the fact that they generally provide for on-site boarding, and exert closer control over pupils' activities.

Islamic educationists, but also Gambians generally, view favourably the return of West African, and especially Gambian, children and youth for study in religious institutions in the African homeland. They consider that this is an excellent means of providing them with the religious and cultural knowledge, and sense of identity, that they might otherwise lack.

All the boarding schools included teachers and students from a diversity of linguistic and cultural backgrounds: Mandinka, Soninke, Fula, and Wolof, in some cases also Jola. At any given school, students sharing the "ethnic" or linguistic background of the founder constituted the majority, or alternatively, the largest single group within the student body. Thus, at the Bilal school and especially the Imam Malick Islamic Institute (which was founded by and receives the support of a Soninke community association), Soninke children

are in the majority; at the Dar al-Arqam school, Wolof children constitute the majority. Mandinka constitute the majority at both girls' schools, while the rural and semi-rural schools recruit among the local, Mandinka children. Many children learn an additional Gambian language through their interactions with their teachers and fellow pupils. Foreign-born pupils usually have some knowledge of their parents' native language, and improve it or acquire another African language. Teachers use any and all of the languages they know to communicate with their pupils. Usually this is a Gambian language, but teachers may use English with North American children, as well as with other foreign-born children who had studied this language in the course of their previous schooling. At the Bilal School, the majority Mandinka and few Fula teachers use these languages (especially Mandinka), but also Wolof, to communicate with their mostly Soninke pupils – who thus acquire Mandinka in the course of their studies. Among Gambians abroad, Soninke-speakers are the ones most likely to enrol their children in the memorisation schools.

Fees for day pupils are moderate. Dar al-Arqam charges 1,050 dalasis per year, the Busumbala school 100 dalasis per month, and the Soumayah school 150 per month. The Ebo Town school, which receives various charitable contributions, is free even for boarders. These charges are lower than those at most madrasa (3,000 to 5,000 dalasis per year, depending on the grade and the school) and average, neighbourhood English-medium private schools (6,000 to 8,000 dalasis per year).[17]

Bilal and both girls' schools charge 1,000 per month for boarders (inclusive of tuition and fees as well as room and board), while Dar al-Arqam has an annual charge of 8,000 dalasis. Although the above fees do not seem high by international standards (over the past two years, the Gambian national currency has fluctuated at about 40-50 dalasis to the euro), they are considerably more than most Gambian families can afford.[18] All school directors comment that many families do not pay, while others pay partially, irregularly, or late – and that they have to make up for the shortfall from charitable contributions or their own resources. The relatively low fee levels (by international standards) may be a factor explaining the substantial representation of pupils whose families reside abroad. However, directors point out that foreign-based parents are among the least reliable fee-payers.

Directors and teachers strive to provide their wards with the best living conditions possible, within the limits imposed by the schools' means. Thus, living conditions are correlated to school fees, and the higher-fee schools

17 The most prestigious private schools may charge fees that are almost ten times higher.

18 Most public sector salaries range from about 1,000 to 10,000 dalasis a month, and the average annual GDP per capita is below 500 euros.

are located in average to better-income neighbourhoods. Conditions are minimal in Ebo Town, significantly better in the peripheral suburb of Sintu Alagie, but at the other schools, probably equivalent to or in some cases better than those children might have at home. Conditions are best at the Imam Malick, Aisha Umm al-Mu'minin, and Soumayah schools, all located in above-average neighbourhoods. Both girls' schools are located in private villas. Aisha's director added one, then a second, floor to her home, in order to accommodate the many applicants to her school. The director of the Soumayah school moved to and chose her current home specifically so as to be able to adequately house her pupils. Her husband, who works in Britain, provides considerable funds for the school, and brings treats and gifts for the pupils every time he returns to The Gambia. Directors of both girls' schools explain that they do everything they can to provide their pupils with a homelike atmosphere. With the possible exception of the Ebo Town school, all boarders receive abundant food.

Most pupils appear to come from families that draw their living from commerce, or from wage employment abroad; most fathers seem to have a background in Islamic studies rather than English. However, at least one senior civil servant, and one leading businessman educated in English, have enrolled their children in memorisation schools.

Children are largely liberated from the chores they might have to do at home (or would have traditionally accomplished at the Qur'anic schools), since the larger and more expensive boarding schools hire professional cooks and cleaners. At the family-run Sintu Alagie school (with teachers' families living in adjoining compounds), women family members do much of the cooking. However, at the two girls' schools and at Bilal, girls are required to join the cooks at certain times, so as to acquire appropriate skills. The boys at Bilal are required to help clean the school grounds, not only so as to keep their campus in better shape, but also to build their character.

All the boarding schools allow their pupils opportunities for leisure and amusement. Children may watch television or converse during breaks. Boys generally play football on their days off, while the two girls' schools encourage physical exercise and sports. Children may also shop and walk around in the areas near their schools. Some schools encourage children to relax rather than revise in the time immediately preceding sleep.

Some schools threaten young, unruly and unmotivated pupils with physical punishment, and exceptionally, apply it. Teachers explain that some of their wards had proven "troublesome" in the conventional schools or madrasa they had previously attended. Usually, their behaviour improves at the memorisation schools, but in extreme cases, they are sent home. I have seen no evidence of corporal punishment at the girls' schools.

Pedagogy

The daily schedules of the memorisation schools are based on those of the traditional Qur'anic schools. Boarding schools thus have an early morning session (beginning at 4 AM) in which pupils revise their previous day's lesson. This is followed by the dawn prayer, then a nap, then breakfast at about 9 AM. Then there is a substantial study session, in which the pupil may revise the previous lesson, have her/his knowledge tested, and/or receive a new lesson (on condition of having mastered the previous one). From about noon to three o'clock, there will be rest, the early afternoon prayer, lunch, and more rest or relaxation. Then, there is a long afternoon session, from about 3 to 6 PM, in which pupils revise and, if this has not been done earlier, have their knowledge tested and receive a new lesson; they also perform the mid-afternoon prayer. Students may then briefly relax prior to the sunset prayer. They will have some more food, then study until the night prayer, and sometimes after it as well. The daytime naps compensate for the relatively short night's sleep.[19] Usually, day pupils do not attend the early morning or late evening sessions. The Bilal girls' section often follows up the morning prayer by a lecture on general topics of religion and morality (usually given in a local language, but in some instances partially in English – understood by some pupils).

This daily schedule differs substantially from those observed in the conventional schools and madrasa. The latter favour a long morning shift, from about 8 or 8:30 AM until 1 PM (punctuated by several short breaks), with an afternoon shift for classes that cannot be accommodated otherwise (due to lack of classroom space and/or teaching personnel).

The scheduling of weekly and holiday breaks, at both the memorisation schools and the madrasa, is inspired by Qur'anic school practices. Thus, all these schools either have Thursday and Friday off – the most common pattern – or break from Wednesday afternoon to Friday morning inclusive. Schools grant their pupils a total of two weeks to a month off for the ᶜId al-Adha (Sacrificial Festival) and the ᶜId al-Fitr (end of Ramadan) festival; some close for the entire month of Ramadan. Certain schools grant pupils one or two days off for the ᶜAshura' and/or Mawlid (Prophet's birthday) celebrations.[20]

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19 Compare to the typical daily Qur'anic school schedule reported by Wilks 1968: 168-169, note 3. Tamari 2016: 34-36 also provides information about Qur'anic school schedules and holidays.

20 The religious status of these holidays is controversial. Though Mawlid observances are becoming increasingly elaborate in some circles, they are criticised as *bidᶜa* (illegal innovation) in others.

Many pupils join the memorisation schools after study at a Qur'anic school, a madrasa or an English-medium school; for some of the youngest children, however, the memorisation school is their first scholastic experience.

The memorisation schools distinguish several levels of study. A fundamental distinction is drawn between the study of the Arabic writing system, called *huruf* (from the Arabic word designating the letters of the alphabet), and memorisation (*tahfiz*). All pupils begin with the study of the Arabic writing signs, unless they have learnt them earlier. Pupils study first the consonants, then the vowels, progressing from isolated signs to syllables. Having mastered these, pupils will then learn to read words and short sentences. Some schools will also introduce elements of *tajwid* (Qur'an recitation rules) at this stage. For those studying the Arabic writing system for the first time, this process may take anywhere from two months to a year (depending on the child and the school). Entering pupils who have a partial knowledge of the Arabic writing system are placed in an appropriate group, so that they can progress without loss of time.

This introductory study is in several respects very different from that traditionally provided in the Qur'anic schools. In The Gambia as elsewhere in West Africa, most Qur'anic schools teach the alphabet beginning with *bi-si-mi*, i.e. in the order in which the different characters and signs appear in the Qur'an, starting with the *basmala* (initial blessing formula) and Fatiha (the first sura, regularly recited in daily prayers); a few Qur'anic schools base their instruction on the *abajada* (old) order of the Arabic alphabet. But the memorisation schools base their teaching on the *a-ba-ta-sha* order of the alphabet, which though prevalent in the madrasa, has to the best of my knowledge been traditionally used only in Timbuktu.[21] *Huruf* classes also differ from Qur'anic school instruction in that they make use of prepared booklets, presenting words and phrases that may be neutral rather than religious in content; whereas in the Qur'anic schools, pupils begin their study with the Holy Book. Furthermore, the teacher writes on the blackboard – as well as on individual slates and copybooks – and pupils typically follow the teacher's explanations in small groups, rather than receiving wholly individualised instruction.

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21 Mommersteeg 1991 provides an excellent analysis of the process of learning to read (following the *bi-si-mi* method) in Djenne. Ndiaye 1985 analyses the pedagogies of reading and memorisation in Senegal. Eickelman (1978, 1985) analyses, in some depth, the process of Qur'anic memorisation in Morocco. It is an open question when the *a-ba-ta-sha* method – the only one known and remembered in the Timbuktu area – came into use; could it be related to the influence of the *médersah* (Fraco-Arabic school) founded in Timbuktu by the French authorities in 1910? (see Tamari 2016: 37-38).

As may be inferred from the above, a *huruf* class may integrate pupils of widely varying ages.

The *tahfiz* (memorisation) phase comprises several levels. As in traditional Qur'anic instruction, pupils learn first the Fatiha, then the last *juz'* (S.78-114) of the Qur'an, proceeding from the last sura (S.114) forwards. They then continue towards the beginning of the Qur'an, concluding with a re-study of the Fatiha. During this phase, they are required, at least at some schools, to enunciate the Qur'anic text from memory, without looking at their slate (or more usually copybook), on which the teacher has written out the assigned text. In some memorisation schools, the pupil may be required to recite with his back to the teacher and the text, whereas in most Qur'anic schools, at least during the first "voyage" through the Qur'an, the pupil will on the contrary look at and attempt to follow the written text while reciting. On their second voyage through the Book, pupils may (as in the Qur'anic schools) proceed in normal order (from S.1 to S.114). Pupils are assigned progressively longer units to read and memorise, but the target for each pupil in set individually, in accordance with her/his ability. Teachers state that in the revision phase, pupils will review one, then two, and finally as many as ten *hizb* at a time. The final revisions are based on the four-quarter division of the Qur'an (S.1-6, S.7-17, S.18-35, S.36-114).[22]

Most of the memorisation schools, teachers state, do not emphasise writing. Children nevertheless learn how to trace Arabic characters and words by copying from the blackboard during *huruf* instruction, and later in the context of lessons in the auxiliary subjects. However, a few schools, I am told, require pupils who have attained a certain level of skill in recitation and memorisation to also copy out the text of their lesson (as is done in the Qur'anic schools). None of my interlocutors knew of any school that aimed at the writing out of the Qur'an from memory.

In the larger memorisation schools visited – Bilal, Imam Malick, Dar al-Arqam, and Aisha Umm al-Mu'minin – learning is furthermore structured through "classes." These are, as one teacher explained, based neither on pupils' ages nor on their scholastic attainments. Rather, "upon completion of *huruf*, the pupil may be taken to any class." In practice, it seems there is a tendency to create classes of approximately similar size. Most classes include pupils of widely varying ages, positioned at very different levels of study; this

22 The *juz'* is a thirtieth part of the Qur'an, the *hizb* is a sixtieth part. The term *rub*ᶜ may refer not only to the four quarters of the Qur'an, but (in other contexts) to a quarter of a *hizb*. The *thumn*, which is a standard study unit in some phases of traditional Qur'anic memorisation, is an eighth-part of a *hizb*. Hamès 2013 studies the roles of these subdivisions in several sub-Saharan Qur'an manuscripts.

is too regular to be coincidental, and one could say that each class comprises a representative sample of the school's pupils. Each class is placed under the responsibility of its memorisation instructor, whom one could compare to a "homeroom teacher."

Though Dar al-Arqam states that it initially taught only memorisation, all schools currently teach other subjects as well. The most frequently taught subjects are *fiqh* (Islamic law and jurisprudence), *hadith* (study of traditions concerning the deeds and sayings of the Prophet), and Arabic and/or English; some schools offer additional religious disciplines or maths. These subjects are taught using differing methodologies. In some schools, such as Ebo Town and Dar al-Arqam, concise (often: medieval to early twentieth-century) manuals may be memorised.[23] At other schools, teachers may lecture on various religious themes, while interactive methods may be used to teach Arabic or English. Aisha Umm al-Mu'minin uses the English course (structured around videos) developed by the Islamic Online University (which has donated a copy to the school), studied with the help of a teacher.

Most schools introduce at least some of these complementary subjects early on in the memorisation process. However, Dar al-Arqam presents them only after this process has been completed; it nevertheless insists that pupils study them before leaving the school, as essential preparation for further learning. The complementary subjects are often scheduled on "weekends," i.e. the Qur'anic schools' traditional two-day weekly break, on which no Qur'an study takes place in the memorisation schools; but they may also be scheduled during some of the daily breaks. Their role in the memorisation schools' curricula has been growing steadily, with the goal of helping pupils make the best possible transition to further study at madrasa or conventional schools. At many memorisation schools, some pupils, especially ones who have entered the revision phase, may also attend a conventional school or madrasa (and therefore, in some cases, attend only some of the memorisation school's study sessions). This can be done with particular ease on Imam Malick's main campus, since it comprises both a memorisation section and a madrasa.

Instruction at the memorisation schools thus involves an original combination of individual tutorials (for Qur'an memorisation), small group study (for the Arabic writing system), and classroom-type instruction (at many of the schools, for complementary subjects). Individual one-on-one instruction, with each pupil progressing at her/his own pace, is a hallmark of traditional Qur'an instruction in West Africa, and may well be general throughout the Muslim world. On the other hand, neither the madrasa nor the memorisation

23 These manuals are also used in the Qur'anic schools.

schools have maintained the tutorial study of other Arabic books that has traditionally been such a distinctive feature of advanced Islamic education in West Africa (as pointed out by both Santerre 1973 and Brenner 2001, 2008). Small group and classroom instruction clearly derive from Western models, as exemplified in the madrasa as well as conventional schools. On the other hand, as noted above, the use of local languages, both for general communication and for religious explanation, has been maintained in the memorisation schools and to a considerable extent, also in the madrasa.

Most pupils who have completed memorisation proceed to further study in a madrasa or English-medium school. Depending on the school, the individual pupil's ability and general educational background, s/he may be admitted to any grade between 6 and 10 in a madrasa or conventional school; those who have achieved proficiency in the complementary subjects tend to be admitted to higher grades. Some memorisation schools have developed a close relationship with one or two madrasa, and graduating pupils interested in Arabic-medium instruction usually pursue their studies at these. Many memorisation school leavers, and their directors and teachers, cherish the hope that they will eventually go on to university, whether in Arabic or English.

The ideal trajectory, according to memorisation teachers, is for a child to enrol in their schools at age 7 or 8, either directly or after a brief spell at a Qur'anic school or madrasa; after full memorisation, the pupil should proceed to and complete, if possible to senior secondary level, a madrasa or conventional school. However, many children come in at later ages, and as noted above, a small but significant number of young men in their late teens or early twenties enrol in a memorisation school at their own initiative, late in or even after their senior secondary studies.

Directors, teachers, and many other Gambians insist that children do not "lose time" by attending a memorisation school. They state that after mastering the Qur'an, all other subjects become easier, and children experience great facility in pursuing their studies at madrasa and conventional schools, where they are often among the brightest pupils.

As may be inferred from the above, mnemonic mastery of the Qur'an is not necessarily associated with Arabic language skills. Most of the memorisation schools attempt to instil their pupils with some knowledge of the Arabic language, but this may be limited to an elementary, formal study of (classical) Arabic grammar and/or elementary communication skills (in modern literary Arabic). Some memorisation school pupils may understand Arabic because they had previously studied it at, or are simultaneously attending, a madrasa, while a greater number will master this language later, through subsequent studies at a madrasa. However, those continuing in English are unlikely to

acquire significant Arabic comprehension or communication skills in the course of their secondary studies. One of the rural memorisation teachers, who had completed twelfth grade in English, is now seeking to learn Arabic. Some schools may hold *tafsir* (Qur'an commentary) sessions – enunciated in the local languages – in Ramadan, or at other times of the year, but this is not a major part of their curriculum.

Remarkably, none of my interlocutors – Islamic educationists, teachers, or pupils – ever expressed any misgivings about the teaching, study or use of English or any other Western language. As one Islamic educationist stated: "English is the official language of The Gambia. It does not interfere with our religion. It is a language of international communication, necessary for access to science and technology."

In several respects, the memorisation schools exhibit the influence of the Western (specifically British) school system. Thus, like the conventional schools and the madrasa, they have names, school mottoes and statements of purpose. Their mottoes and paragraph-long statements of purpose (which are generally formulated in both Arabic and English) usually refer not only to Islamic ideals but to pupils' expected future contributions to national development. Furthermore, like the Gambian madrasa and conventional schools (and unlike most scholastic establishments in the neighbouring Francophone countries), most memorisation schools have a uniform (specific to each school).

Examination and graduation practices reveal the influence of both traditional Islamic and Western education. Thus, traditionally in West Africa, those who completed certain phases of Qur'an study underwent a public examination, in which they were required to recite before – and answer questions from – several recognised scholars, in addition to their own teacher; usually, some of the examining scholars hailed from other localities. In some regions, persons who wished to have their knowledge of "books" recognised would pass an oral examination in front of an assembly of scholars. Nowadays in The Gambia, the memorisation schools call together a panel of internal and external examiners (including teachers from other memorisation schools, and in some instances, also other reputable scholars) to formally examine those pupils who, they believe, have successfully committed the Qur'an to memory. Schools may organise these examinations, which are usually held for several pupils, at fixed times of year. Some schools cooperate regularly in this task, examining each others' pupils (but also adding other external examiners). The fixed dates, and the vocabulary employed to describe these examination practices, suggest that Western models have contributed to their elaboration.

At their graduation ceremonies, pupils receive written certificates from their schools – whereas traditionally in most West African societies, written certificates were not delivered for Qur'an recitation or memorisation;[24] somewhat more commonly, the completion of "books" – or of certain books only – could be recognised by a written diploma (*ijaza*), signed by the teacher (Wilks 1968). The grandiose graduation ceremonies, which are filmed and photographed, are clearly indicative of Western influence.

Memorisation schools operate with a mix of traditional (or semi-traditional) and Western-style furnishings. All have blackboards, which are systematically used in *huruf* lessons, often in complementary subjects, and in some schools, also in Qur'anic instruction. Pupils usually sit on mats but there may also be desks and chairs. One school is planning to obtain furniture specifically designed for children.

To sum up, the schools' approaches to their pupils are best described as humane, with considerable tolerance for slower learners as well as encouragement for brighter ones, and concern for their physical and psychological well-being and their futures.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Qur'anic memorisation schools, which at first glance might appear to be a prolongation of the traditional Qur'anic schools, in reality constitute a veritable revolution in social and educational ideologies and practices, while auguring further changes to come. Their success shows that many parents feel that their offspring should be spending their childhood and adolescence studying full-time, rather than working to support themselves or their families, or even as apprentices to a trade. Furthermore, parents are willing to invest substantial resources in order to provide their children with adequate learning opportunities. Qur'an memorisation, though a supreme value in itself, is not conceived in opposition to madrasa or English-medium study, but rather as a particular phase in a young person's educational trajectory, which may be followed – or more rarely preceded – by secular or practical studies. In all types of educational establishments, both Islamic and secular, boys outnumber girls, but the latter are everywhere substantially represented, and constitute a quarter to a half of the pupils at the coeducational memorisation schools that I have had the good fortune to visit. The rapid growth observed in nearly all educational sectors[25] and the continual experimentation with new curricula and pedagogical methods – this unceasing

24 With the notable exception of Borno, in present-day Nigeria.

25 The Qur'anic schools may be an exception.

educational "bricolage" – is expressive of a relatively recent yet very strong demand for formal education – which is, in itself, a sea change. Notwithstanding any appearances to the contrary, Islamic education, including the Qur'anic memorisation schools, can provide a path towards educational and professional advancement, and increased personal autonomy, for women and girls. A significant number of European and North American minors are being sent to study in Islamic schools in The Gambia, not always in accordance with their own wishes. Qur'anic memorisation schools see themselves as fully preparing their pupils – spiritually and morally, but also in terms of general knowledge and a range of practical skills – for life and a better future in a developing nation state.

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10

Health Education in a Zone of Awkward Engagement: Malnutrition in Rural Mali

Lianne Holten

Abstract: This ethnographic case study explores the therapy management of malnutrition in a small village Farabako in Mali where a large proportion of children are nutritionally vulnerable. From a biomedical standpoint, malnutrition is caused by not eating enough food or eating the wrong kind of food. However, from a local standpoint, malnutrition was not primarily about food. It was a shameful illness (*sede*) caused by lack of reproductive choice within a context of vulnerability. This lack of fit between biomedical and local medical discourses could be one explanation of why nutritional health education programs have had little effect in Mali. For a program to be effective, these discourses must be negotiated to find a common ground, an overlap. In Farabako, the necessity of child spacing fit both discourses; therefore, making contraceptives available in the village was a locally acceptable and useful intervention to combat malnutrition.

Introduction: Malnutrition in Mali

> Today a woman with an extremely malnourished and sick child came to me asking for medicine. Her little boy was two years old, he used to be able to walk, but he had stopped; his legs were just too thin. The mother asked me for medicine so that he could walk again. I asked her how long he was sick; she answered "a year." I asked her if she had gone to the doctor; she said no. I asked her what she had done for her child. She said she gave him tea with sugar. How to understand this? How can you see your child wasting away for a year and do nothing but give him tea? (Field notes January 2007)

As a midwife working on health promotion, in Farabako, a small geographically isolated village in southwest Mali, I found the seeming passivity of mothers incomprehensible and extremely frustrating in cases of what I diagnosed as malnutrition in their children. As an anthropologist doing fieldwork on therapy management of pregnancy and children's illnesses, I wanted to understand how it could be that the mothers and I were looking at the same symptoms of extreme emaciation, yet coming to such disparate conclusions regarding an appropriate response.

Despite abundant research on the economic, agricultural, educational and cultural factors influencing malnutrition in Mali and nutritional programs, malnutrition is still endemic in Mali as it is in much of sub-Sahara Africa.[1]

In rural Mali, the setting is characterised by poverty, high exposure to disease and poor quality diets. Therefore, a large proportion of children are nutritionally vulnerable. An episode of diarrhoea, fever or abrupt weaning can trigger a downward spiral of malnutrition. In Mali, 28% of the children under five years old are stunted (low height for age), 39% of the children are underweight (low weight for age) and 15% suffer from wasting (i.e. low weight for height), indicating acute weight loss. The under-five case-fatality rate for severe acute malnutrition typically ranges from 30% to 50%.[2]

Both research on malnutrition and programs for the prevention and treatment of malnutrition in Mali have much in common. There is an underlying assumption that malnutrition is about food: household food security, food consumption, cultural beliefs about food and feeding practices. However, anthropological studies have shown that people do not always relate malnutrition to food, and that to understand malnutrition one must understand cultural beliefs about illness. For example, in Kenya, the Luo do not consider the illness category *ayieny* (which corresponds to the biomedical term kwashiorkor[3]) as related to diet entirely, but it can also be caused by witchcraft. *Chira* (which corresponds to the biomedical term marasmus) is seen

1 Discussion in Holten 2013. See also Sidibé *et al.* 2007; Tefft *et al.* 2003; Dettwyler 1994.

2 World Health Organisation 2017.

3 Kwashiorkor and marasmus are two biomedical illness categories for severe acute malnutrition. Kwashiorkor is characterised by oedema, irritability, loss of appetite, ulcerating skin lesions and discoloured hair. According to a biomedical explanation, kwashiorkor is caused by insufficient protein consumption even with sufficient caloric intake, which distinguishes it from marasmus. Marasmus is caused by insufficient caloric intake and is characterised by extreme emaciation. In clinical practice, many children manifest symptoms of both kwashiorkor and marasmus and these are referred to as having marasmic kwashiorkor, or more recently as protein-energy malnutrition.

by the Luo to be caused by breaking taboos, for example if a man has sex with another woman within four days of the birth of his son.[4]

An understanding of local medical and moral discourse is a prerequisite for a successful health education project targeting malnutrition. Biomedical discourse and local medical discourse must be negotiated to find a common ground, an overlap, that fits both discourses. I argue that only when this overlap is found, an intervention will be acceptable. In this chapter, I reflect on how the lack of fit between my western medical ideas and local medical discourse made health education difficult. I will posit that negotiation of these discourses is necessary before health promotion can be successful and will show how this negotiation took place, and how my assumptions got in the way.

Methodology: A Case Study on Health Education for Women

It was a coincidence that I ended up in a maternity clinic in the small geographically isolated village of Farabako in southwestern Mali.[5] Two women had been chosen by the villagers to go to the capital, Bamako, for a six-month course in midwifery. The men of the village were finishing, with money from Dutch sponsors, the building of a three-room clinic, but there was no local expertise available to run such a clinic. As an anthropology student and practicing midwife interested in studying the therapy management of pregnancy and children's illness episodes in a non-Western country, I agreed to go manage the clinic for a while and simultaneously start my ethnographic research for my PhD thesis.[6] In the period 2007-2012 I worked in Farabako almost every year for a period of two months or more. I trained two local midwives, together we did prenatal checkups and deliveries and we set up a mother and child clinic. In the clinic, the midwives and I held health promotion meetings on various subjects such as contraception, infant feeding, and treatment of diarrhoea. I held semi-structured interviews, open interviews and focus group discussions with sixty mothers, twenty fathers, ten mothers-in-laws, ten traditional birth attendants (*musokɔrɔbaw*) and five traditional healers (*somaw*) on their perceptions, treatment and therapy management of children's illnesses.

In this article, my experiences as a midwife and my anthropological field data are used to describe and analyse the process of awkward engagement between *Western* biomedical health care standards and local health and

4 Olenja 1991.

5 For the whole story, see Holten 2013: 1-6.

6 Published as Holten 2013.

gender discourses and practices in the case of malnutrition. One of my goals was to come to an understanding of the lack of fit between the dominant Western biomedical discourse on malnutrition and local conceptions in Farabako. I was in the ideal position to observe this lack of fit because I was giving biomedical treatment to children who were severely malnourished and I was holding health education meetings with the mothers of these children, in the maternity clinic. Furthermore, participant observation allowed me to observe the local therapy management and feeding practices of children suffering from malnutrition.

Therapy Management of Malnutrition in Farabako

Health Resources

The village of Farabako is quite isolated, even by regional standards, since there are no bridges over the three small rivers that need to be crossed to get there. In the rainy season when the water level is high, the village becomes inaccessible; thus, programs to reduce child mortality and malnutrition initiated by NGO's and the Mali Ministry of Health do not always reach Farabako. The government immunisation campaign only comes to Farabako sporadically and few children are fully vaccinated. Distribution of mosquito nets and vitamin A supplementation is also infrequent. This has contributed to the children's susceptibility for diseases such as malaria and measles that can cause a negative spiral into malnutrition. Doctors in health clinics twenty kilometres away, in the towns of Sandama and Nioumamakana, are able to treat children's infections. But, due to bad infrastructure and a lack of funds, health care is not easily accessible for the children of Farabako. In the village elderly women and traditional healers can be consulted for free in cases of malnutrition.

Access to Food

In Farabako, in the dry season after the harvest, there is enough food, but the diet is not varied. The inhabitants live from subsistence farming; they eat only what they are able to produce. The daily meal consists of millet or corn with a sauce of vegetables or groundnuts. Meat is seldom eaten. There are fruit trees in Farabako and in the months that they bear fruit, children eat mangoes, oranges, and papayas. Fish and potatoes are thought to be good food for babies, but they are not available locally and money is rarely spent buying them at the market. Most families own a cow, but they don't keep it for milk production; when a cow has a calf there is however some milk for a few months. In the months preceding the next harvest, when the reserves of millet and corn have been depleted, people go hungry. Another factor that contrib-

utes to malnutrition in Farabako is that good food is thought to be wasted on children, who do not appreciate it. It is said that the best food should go to the people who work the hardest or the elderly who will die soon.[7]

Feeding Practices

Most babies are breast fed for approximately two years. As a supplement to breast milk, babies start eating solid foods between eight-twelve months by joining the family meal. Mothers do not spoon feed their children, but rather give them a small bowl of food to eat with their hands. I did not see mothers putting food directly into a child's mouth. Children three and older, eat together from one large dish on the ground with little supervision. Therefore, it is difficult to know how much a child eats. The child who eats the fastest eats the most. The child without an appetite will eat the least. Mealtimes are structured; children are offered food three times a day. Women of the household decide how often the children eat, however, only the child decides how much to eat. A lack of appetite is considered a normal part of many childhood illnesses, in Farabako. There are no special foods for sick children and mothers do not prepare favourite foods to tempt a child to eat. There is a strong belief that children will eat if they are hungry and should not be given food against their will.

Sede: *Becoming Pregnant Too Soon*

In 2011, I weighed and measured all the children under five years old (seventy-seven children in total). Ten (13%) suffered from wasting and six of these children suffered from severe acute malnutrition. When I asked my translator what the word for malnutrition is in the local language he answered "*sede*." I assumed that *sede*[8] corresponded with my biomedical category of malnutrition and that it was caused by protein-energy deficiency due to early weaning and by not substituting breast milk with cow's milk or other foodstuffs high in protein. Therefore, I asked many questions about *sede* expecting to hear about malnutrition. In fact, I got answers about pregnancy instead. When I asked "What is the cause of *sede*?," my respondents would answer: "When a woman becomes pregnant too soon."

> The first months after the delivery are called "*den turu tɛ kalow*." If a woman has her menstruation during this time, her child could have *sede*. (Fadima Kulibali, 30 years, focus group discussion February 2011)

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7 Cf. Dettwyler 1994.

8 The official spelling is *sere*, but in Farabako it is pronounced with a "labidal r" that sounds to my ears as a "d." Hence, I chose to write it as *sede*.

The phrase "*den turu tɛ kalow*" was explained to me as the months that a woman should not become pregnant again because her child has not matured enough. Like a rooster needs time to grow a crest, so the child needs time to grow. The women mentioned pregnancy as the cause of *sede* and not early weaning. When I asked about treatment for *sede*, my respondents answered "contraceptives." But contraceptives were not always available in or around Farabako, and if they were, not all husbands approved of their wives using them.

Most respondents named abortion using traditional medicine (leaves of the *dòdòturu* or *surumugu*) as the only (unreliable) treatment for *sede*. Both men and women said three years was the optimal time between deliveries to avoid *sede*, yet women had a lack of reproductive choice and possibilities for spacing their children were limited.

A Shameful Diagnosis

If a woman is unable to prevent becoming pregnant while breastfeeding, she will have shame (*maloya*). People will say that "she could not control herself" or "they have sex often." Both men and women feel ashamed about the pregnancy. However, according to a male respondent, for *sede*, "women have more shame than men." Female respondents agreed; in cases of *sede* women have shame because they are often blamed for becoming pregnant too soon. For this reason, women keep their pregnancy a secret as long as possible and sometimes deny being pregnant when asked. A woman is reticent to say that her child has *sede*, because to say so is to admit to being pregnant. A woman may not seek treatment as long as she can hide her new pregnancy. *Sede* is a shameful diagnosis, especially during early pregnancy. As one young mother explained:

> Yes, women whose child has *sede* have shame, it is not as it should be; they put their child in danger. (Fadima Kulibali, 30 years, focus group discussion, February 2011)

Dangerously Hot Belly

If a woman overcomes her shame and seeks advice from the *musokɔrɔbaw* (elder women) on how to treat her child's *sede*, she will be told to stop breastfeeding when she is newly pregnant, preferably as soon as possible. A pregnant woman is said to have a "hot belly" (*kɔnɔ funteni*). The heat that a pregnant woman gives off can be dangerous for the child she is breastfeeding since it can cause the child to have a fever and diarrhoea. It is for this reason that the *musokɔrɔbaw* advise women to keep their distance from their child

and stop breastfeeding. This heat can also be dangerous for older children, as the next case illustrates.

> Kadiatu Kante (age 4) was sick; she had a fever. Her mother said that the fever had been caused by the child sleeping with her while she was pregnant. She explained that a pregnant woman gives off a great deal of heat and this can be dangerous. She washed the child with water in which medicinal plants had been boiled and the fever went down. (Fatumata Kante, 28 years, January 2009)

One male respondent told me that having sex with a pregnant woman could cause a man to become ill. In Farabako, it is not (early) weaning that is seen to be dangerous, but rather the physical contact between child and pregnant mother. It is not the perception that weaning leads to malnutrition due to lack of protein, but rather that the heat of pregnancy leads to the illness *sede*.

Treatment of Sede

During a demonstration of how to prepare oral rehydration salts as a treatment for diarrhoea at the maternity clinic one morning, I took the opportunity to ask the young women present what they gave their children if they had *sede*. The women answered that they gave tea and thin millet porridge and "for the rest, it is up to God." When I asked why tea? I was told that the tea, prepared with sugar, was light to digest and easy to drink. It is used as a remedy because it makes it possible for a sick child, who has no appetite, to eat at least a little bit. Tea is also said to give "liveliness to the blood" and this is thought to be necessary to ward off illness.

Several respondents named the *musokɔrɔba* Kinyèba Fofana as the expert for treating *sede* in Farabako. During an interview, Kinyèba confirmed that indeed she was an expert and that *sede* was a serious illness that kills many children. When mothers come to her, some say that their child is ill, and some say that their child has *sede*. Many women are ashamed to say that their child has *sede*. "A woman who has a child who suffers from *sede* is not appreciated in the village, this is because of shame (*maloya*)." Shame will not keep her from seeking a treatment, but it will keep her from saying that her child has *sede*. The shame is greatest when the new pregnancy is not visible. Once everyone can see that the woman is pregnant, the mother can ask for a treatment for her child's *sede* without problems. Women have confidence in Kinyèba's treatment and know that she does not gossip; therefore, some women come to her early in their pregnancy.

Kinyèba's treatment consists of an infusion of *seretoro* leaves over which she has spoken incantations (*kilisiw*). The child is washed with this infusion and also given this infusion to drink. Kinyèba has three distinct incanta-

tions to choose from. She chooses one and if it does not work she will try another. She does not have a fixed method. She learned the incantations from *musokɔrɔbaw* in her natal village. The incantations are secret since it would be "violating the rules" to give them to others.

Kinyèba explained that a child who suffers from *sede* often has other illnesses such as *tekeje* (anaemia), *sandafe*, and *kɔnɔ* (illness categories that correspond with serious infection with convulsions). Kinyèba can also treat these illnesses. When I asked her if it takes a long time to treat *sede* she answered: "It depends, some recover quickly, others slowly. Some children recover at the moment of the delivery of their mother. This happens often if it is only *sede*, not complicated by other illnesses, because after the delivery the heat goes down." She explains again that a pregnant woman's belly gives off heat and that it is not good for the child to be too close to the mother because this can cause diarrhoea. She advises women to stop breastfeeding, keep their distance and give the child cow's milk.[9] If this is not possible, the mother can (out of necessity) give the breast. If the child is old enough to eat, Kinyèba advises soup with meat, a peanut paste and a sauce made from the leaves of the *seretoro*. She told me that she does not know if women follow her advice.

Other *musokɔrɔbaw* in Farabako treat *sede* similarly. They also use the leaves or fruit of the *seretoro* which are boiled and used as an infusion or pound into a powder. This is given a little at a time to improve the child's appetite. The focus of treatment given by *musokɔrɔbaw* is on enhancing the child's appetite not the child's diet.

I now present a case study as an example of my biomedical approach to the treatment of malnutrition in Farabako. This case illustrates that despite health education and the fact that the child recovered after receiving biomedical treatment, the link between malnutrition and quality of food was not apparent to his caretakers.

Case Study Samba: A Biomedical Approach to Malnutrition

In November 2009, I treated the little boy Samba Kante (1½ years) for a severe case of what I call malnutrition. When I first saw Samba, he was dying. It was evening and he was lying alone on a bed in his grandmother's room. His family had lost hope that he would recover and he was left to die. Samba

9 Kinyèba was the only one in the village who named cow's milk as a substitute for breast milk. It is possible that she did so because the year before I had repeatedly talked about cow's milk as a treatment for *sede*, and she probably knew that I had bought a cow with the purpose of giving the milk to the malnourished children in Farabako.

was extremely emaciated; you could see every bone in his body. Where his buttocks used to be there were folds of skin. His face, hands and feet were swollen (oedema) and he was having great difficulty breathing. I immediately gave him antibiotics and an antimalarial. While I tried to warm the child and spoon-feed him some milk, his grandmother Mariamu Kante told me his story.

Samba's mother had become pregnant four months after his birth. She delivered a new baby when Samba was a little over a year old. His mother could not "carry two children on her back" so Samba was given in fosterage to his grandmother. The grandmother, Mariamu Kante, who has delivered eight children found this "tiring, but obligatory." It is the custom that a foster child stays until he or she can go to the fields (which is usually around four years old).

According to his grandmother Mariamu, all this time Samba had been very skinny. In the past month his hands and feet had become swollen, he had white palms and a fever. She had consulted two *musokɔrɔbaw* who diagnosed *tɛgɛjɛ* (anaemia, literally "white hands") and *dino* (cold). They prescribed traditional medicine. When this was not effective, Mariamu's mother-in-law thought it was *sede* and advised her to take Samba to the doctor. The doctor diagnosed *joli t'a la* (anaemia, literally "there is no blood") and gave her iron syrup, an antibiotic, and anti-malarial medicine. Despite this treatment, Samba's condition worsened.

Samba had been ill for a month by the time I saw him. My diagnosis was severe malnutrition complicated by a respiratory infection and/or malaria. I gave Samba powdered milk that I had brought from the capital city Bamako for my own use since there was none for sale in Farabako and the cows were not giving milk at the time. I fortified the milk with sugar, vitamins, and vegetable oil. I showed his grandmother Mariamu how to prepare this. I gave Samba medication for malaria, and respiratory infection and worms. I was doing my best, but I had never seen or treated a severe case of malnutrition before and felt that this child must go to a doctor.

Samba's father came to Farabako the next day. He lived in another village with his two wives and seven children. His first wife was ill and he was worried about her. He had no brothers to help him in his household. He looked as if he was at his wit's end. I explained that this child should go to the hospital for treatment and that I would pay the initial costs, but the father refused my offer. After talking for a very long time, we decided that I would continue treating Samba as best I could in Farabako (despite my explaining that this was beyond my expertise).

So, I continued treating Samba with antibiotics and quinine injections and every morning and every evening for two months, I went to his grandmother's

house and together we prepared the special milk-feed I had procured from a health clinic 20 km away. Some days, Samba would vomit and we would worry. Other days, he seemed more alert and we were hopeful. After about one month, we began to see improvement. We carefully started giving Samba solid foods high in protein (such as beans) and vegetables high in vitamin A. After two months, the swelling in Samba's face and feet had gone down and he began to gain weight, was able to sit up and he even smiled.

I had hoped that this case would be educational for all the mothers of Farabako and would show that milk and a varied diet could cure *sede*. A year before, I had bought a cow. The cow had a calf and was giving milk just before I left Farabako. So I left in a hopeful mood: now there was milk for the children with *sede*.

When I returned in 2011, a little more than a year later, Samba was still seriously underweight, however, he was in reasonably good health and walking and playing and smiling. To me Samba was my success story. That is until his grandmother Mariamu Kante (the same woman I had prepared milk and special food with twice a day, every day for two months) came to me and said, "Samba still sometimes gets a swollen face and feet, what should I do?" In reply, I asked what Samba ate. She answered, "*kini* (boiled rice [with sauce]) with the rest of the family." I asked if she ever gave him special food. She said no. I asked if she ever gave him milk, beans, or fruit. She said no, and looked at me as if this was the first time she had ever heard of this. How could this be? Mariamu recognised the signs of malnutrition and she had learned how to treat malnutrition, yet she did not practice what she had learned. Why had she not done anything?

I believe that the reason Mariamu had not paid special attention to Samba's diet after I left was because I had not convinced her that *sede* was about food. For grandmother Mariamu, Samba's *sede* was an illness caused by the "hot belly" of his mother. Mariamu probably thought that my medicine had been responsible for curing this illness, and that the milk and beans were just a custom from my country, *Peyiba* (The Netherlands). Samba now had the same symptoms that he had had the year before, but this did not mean that Mariamu saw them as the same illness. This time, it may not have been seen as *sede*, because there was no clear link with a pregnant mother. What was clear was that, despite my health educational efforts, seeing the symptoms of malnutrition did not make Mariamu think of paying special attention to Samba's diet.

Discussion: Unsuccessful Health Education

I started this article with a description of my frustration about mothers "not doing anything" when their children suffered from malnutrition. On closer consideration, I realised that this frustration had to do with my biomedical assumptions about appropriate behaviour in cases of severe malnutrition—going to a doctor. The awkward engagement of my biomedical discourse with the local moral and medical discourses in Farabako brought into focus the factors that hinder mothers in seeking biomedical health care for their malnourished children. One factor is the fact that nutritional health education initiatives may not be successful in convincing mothers that malnutrition is about food.

Unsuccessful Nutritional Health Education

In 2001, UNICEF and the Mali ministry of health initiated a program known as the Strategy for Accelerated Child Survival and Growth (ACSD) to reduce child mortality due to disease and malnutrition by at least 25% by the end of 2006. In an assessment of the programme, Sidibé *et al*. found disappointing results.[10] Later, Bryce *et al*. undertook a retrospective evaluation of the programme, but could find no significant improvements in nutritional status attributable to the ACSD.[11] The nutritional status assessment of children by health staff was neglected because of a lack of training and "ignorance about the importance of malnutrition." The authors recommended training the health staff and the "intensification of behavioural change communication for mothers." This is a typical approach to the problem of malnutrition: parental agency must change through education by trained health staff. A shift in parental agency is seen to be necessary for a nutritional program to work. Malnutrition in Mali has been portrayed as an invisible problem; there is a lack of awareness that must be remedied by education.[12] Yet despite nutritional health education programs, malnutrition is still endemic in Mali.

My assumption that health education would convince the women of Farabako that *sede* is about nutrition proved false, as the case of Samba illustrated. Despite months of demonstrating how to make fortified milk to supplement the diets of children with *sede*, and despite the fact that Samba recovered, once I left Farabako, Samba's grandmother no longer paid special attention to his diet. I had not convinced her that *sede* was about food and it

10 Sidibé *et al*. 2007.

11 Bryce *et al*. 2010.

12 Tefft *et al*. 2003.

was presumptuous of me to think that she would see me as an authority on the subject.

Contraceptives as the Only Method to Prevent Malnutrition

Prevention of malnutrition from my biomedical standpoint was geared towards insuring that the child has a diet with sufficient protein and energy. To this end, I started several small projects that, sadly, had little effect on children's diets. I had a vegetable garden planted with vegetables high in iron and vitamin A, especially for the children. Everyone – men, women and children – ate the vegetables. The idea that children need a different diet than adults because they are growing is a Western concept. To further supplement the children's diet, I bought ten chickens and a cow to produce eggs and milk. But in Farabako, people normally do not eat eggs, since chickens are valued for sacrifices. Unfortunately, all but one of my chickens died from the chicken pest that is endemic in the region. My cow gave milk for a few months, but it was not easy for women to ask for milk because having a child with *sede* is considered shameful. Saying "my child has *sede* may I have milk?" is like saying "look at me, I could not control myself, I like sex."

The women of Farabako assured me that prevention of *sede* is only possible by adequate child spacing, that is, by not becoming pregnant too soon. Therefore, I introduced contraceptives in Farabako and the women eagerly (although sometimes secretly) made use of them. The introduction of contraceptives was perhaps the only effective intervention I implemented. That child spacing is a factor contributing to malnutrition was the only part of the biomedical discourse that fit with the local medical discourse regarding *sede* in Farabako.

Conclusion: Finding an Overlap

I have argued that understanding local medical and moral discourse is one of the prerequisites for understanding the therapy management of malnutrition. This article has highlighted the (almost) complete lack of fit between the dominant Western public health and biomedical discourse on malnutrition and local discourse in Farabako. From a biomedical standpoint, the cases of severe malnutrition that I have described here were caused by a protein-energy deficiency, in other words malnutrition is caused by not eating enough food or eating the wrong kind of food. Malnutrition was presumably caused by early weaning and by not substituting breast milk with cow's milk or other foodstuffs high in protein. However, from a local standpoint, malnutrition in Farabako is not primarily about food. It is a shameful illness (*sede*) caused by lack of reproductive choice within a context of vulnerability.

This lack of fit could be one explanation of why biomedical treatment and nutritional health education programs have had little effect in Mali. For a program to be effective, biomedical and local medical discourse must be negotiated to find a common ground, an overlap, or an aspect that fits both discourses. In Farabako, the necessity of child spacing fits both discourses; therefore, for the mothers of Farabako, making contraceptives available in the village pharmacy was an acceptable and useful intervention to combat what I called malnutrition.

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PART III
Learning Strategies and Outcomes

11

Improving Learning Outcomes for All: Lessons Learned from Capacity Building of Teachers of the Deaf for Inclusive Classrooms in Tanzania

Maria Brons and Bernadatte Namirembe

Abstract: This article discusses education system change in secondary education in Tanzania. By embracing the lessons learned from a fundamentally inclusive approach, as we have experienced in the field of deaf education, we can identify key success factors that improve teacher motivation, student learning, and institutional cooperation. The argument of our analysis is twofold. First, the objective of improving learning outcomes can benefit from teaching methods originally designed for the deaf learner in an inclusive learning environment. Second, efforts made over the last five years in the education system in Tanzania have neglected learners with disabilities, and with them the building of integrated capacity in teachers and institutions, and so failed to benefit from the enabling environment related to such learners. The article elaborates on the role of the teacher as the key agent of change in education reforms.

The Policy Context and the Role of the Teacher

The Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030 that was approved by the UN in September 2015 aims in its Goal 4 to "Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning."[1] In the 2011 report "Learning for All: Investing in People's Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development" by the World Bank Group Education Strategy 2020, appears the remark, "the overarching goal is not just schooling, but learning." The report continues by

1 http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/sdg-goal-4

emphasizing the importance of the teacher. "Learning gains typically require structural and behavioral shifts made possible by institutional changes. (…) Reforms require buy-in from a large group of stakeholders, with teachers playing a special role."[2]

It is widely accepted that the single most important factor in improving learning outcomes for all learners is quality of teaching.[3] It is known too through the literature that the success of inclusive education depends greatly on what teachers do in classrooms.[4] The motivation of teachers should therefore be addressed as a key success factor for SDG4.

Richardson *et al.* explain three major teacher motivation theories which include: the expectancy value theory (EVT), achievement goal theory (AGT) and self-determination theory (SDT).[5] The EVT theory explains that the initial motivations to teach are mainly inherent characteristics and perceived ability together with altruistic-type factors. However, they observe that there might be a potentially harmful motivation too, in response to which certain people choose teaching as a "fall-back" career, or do so under social influence. The AGT looks at the school as an "achievement arena" for teachers, considering teachers' desire to learn and to understand professional skills. Another aspect of AGT is that teachers should strive for goals and maintain professionally close and caring relationships with students, an approach which explains teachers' classroom teaching strategies. Meanwhile, SDT identifies two kinds of motivation to teach, described as "autonomous" and "controlled" motivation. Autonomous motivation positively correlates with teachers' sense of accomplishment, and their own predictions of positive outcomes for themselves; the risk of burnout is therefore less. When teachers' motivation is inherent in them as individuals they wish to help children, and to learn skills and demonstrate developed ability to do so. Such teachers acquire a sense of accomplishment which can easily exert a beneficial influence on learning. On the other hand controlled motivation is suppressive, requiring teachers to follow policy without fail. That means that government policies and school managements must support teachers' autonomous motivations rather than their controlled ones.

Based on the above theories and with reference to developing countries like Tanzania, it might be that many teachers feel some counterproductive motivation with respect to the goal of improving the quantity and quality of education. First and foremost that would be because it is widely known that

2 World Bank 2011: 1, 9.

3 Hattie 2012.

4 Yada and Savolainen 2017; Prakash 2012; Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden 2000.

5 Richardson, Karabenic and Watt 2014.

widespread poverty prompts many to go into teaching as a fall-back career. Such individuals choose teaching as an easy way of acquiring government loans to study and because they expect to be employed quickly in a government placement. Second, since very few schools offer teachers opportunities for further education or in-service training, AGT can hardly be thought of as a motivating factor. Additionally, most school management and government policies in Tanzania are suppressive of teachers rather than encouraging their autonomy. Education reform must therefore address the question of teacher motivation if it is to achieve better learning outcomes. But how can any teacher be motivated, in the current context?

Apart from the focus on the pivotal role of the teacher as a crucial agent of change in "learning," the World Bank report elaborates too on the notion of "education for all." It states that "this goal will require lowering the barriers that keep girls, people with disabilities, and ethnolinguistic minorities from attaining as much education as other population groups."[6] We can see that the emphasis there was still more on access to schooling than access to learning. However, the ground was prepared for the next step that culminated in 2015 in the SDG4. So far, the twenty-first century is very definitely an era of inclusive education with teachers expecting classes of diverse learners. That is explicitly recognized in Tanzania's inclusive education strategy (2009-2017) the overall gaol of which is to ensure that everyone – children, young people, and adults in Tanzania – has equitable access to good education in inclusive settings.[7]

Learners who are more likely to be vulnerable in Tanzania have been identified as children with disabilities, children from poor families, children in gender-biased families or communities, children from farming or fishing backgrounds and from hunters/gatherer communities. The same is recognized to be true of children from geographically disadvantaged areas, children from backgrounds in the worst forms of labour such as commercial sex workers. Then there are children who are neglected or otherwise abused, children in conflict with the law such as young offenders possibly in prison, drug abusers, children living with and affected by HIV/AIDS, children displaced by catastrophic events whether natural or man-made such as, droughts, floods, armed conflicts child mothers expelled from school or forced to marry in their teens; children end up on the streets as the result of matrimonial conflicts, abject poverty and/or peer pressure, orphans, child-headed families deriving from abject poverty, broken families bereft of parents and abandoned by kinfolks/community. How teachers might accommodate

6 World Bank 2011: 5.

7 Ministry of Education and Vocational Training 2009.

any of all of such a variety of pupil circumstances has now become a major concern, but children with disabilities are especially challenging for teachers.

It should be mentioned here that Tanzania is a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD).[8] Art. 24 of the convention deals with the right of access to education. Art. 24.2.b states, "States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live."[9] Any discourse therefore on inclusive education is incomplete if it limits its focus for example to gender – especially that of girls – low-income families or school drop outs. Such discourse would neglect the international legal obligation on Tanzania deriving from the CRPD, and offers the government no good service for its regular reports to the UNCRPD committee. The CRPD refers too to the role of teachers, underlining the importance, noted above, of their attitudes and motivation. According to the CRPD:

> In order to help ensure the realization of this right, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to (…) train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities.

The Capacity Building Project "Teaching Deaf Learners"

Inspired by the vision of an inclusive society and motivated by the clear mission of the CRPD to strive for better access to education and learning for disabled learners, Archbishop Mihayo University College of Tanzania (AMUCTA) and Royal Dutch Kentalis embarked on a three-year cooperation for capacity development of teachers for inclusive secondary education in Tanzania. The focus was on teaching deaf and hard of hearing (Dhh) learners, developing innovative teaching methods that would help teachers improve the learning experience for them in inclusive classrooms. The programme was part of an initiative called "PSIPSE" (Partnership to Strengthen Innovation and Practice in Secondary Education).[10] Of a number of inclusive projects on Tanzania, ours was the only one related to learners with disabilities.

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8 Tanzania ratified the CRPD on 10 November 2009.

9 https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-24-education.html

10 http://psipse.org/

The overall objective was to improve the quality of teaching of deaf students in secondary schools. Specifically the project aimed:

- To develop a Bachelor programme and implement it during three years by using the "train the trainer" principle;
- To develop teaching and learning materials in specific subjects for the Tanzania lower secondary national curriculum;
- To promote informal cross-cutting thematic learning in collaboration with deaf adults and sitting teachers;
- To offer direct services to schools to upgrade audiology laboratories, in screening, and to help them establish ICT [Information and Communication Technology] resource rooms.

In Tanzania currently nineteen schools are assigned to receive and educate deaf learners in secondary education. Most teachers in secondary schools lack specific knowledge of special education. Of those who do, many have general knowledge of special education and different types of disabilities and so on, but have none of the specific skills needed to help deaf and hard of hearing learners. Understanding deafness, knowing about vocabulary and language development, concepts of bilingual education, classroom management and teaching strategies as well as the use of different modes of communication; all of those were added to the conventional teacher training with the focus on learning sign language and knowledge of audiology. During the three co-operative years, the following capacity building took place. A hundred pre-service teacher trainees entered the Bachelor programme and the first group of thirty graduated in November 2016, waiting for placement in secondary schools. A multidisciplinary team of five university lecturers from the AMUCTA College (education, linguistics, special education, psychology, and counselling) were trained and coached by Kentalis experts and deaf adults were given training in sign language teaching. The college built an infrastructure for practical assignments in audiology and ICT-supported teaching and strengthened institutional capacity to develop a long-term profiling strategy for inclusive and special education. To create interrelations between institutions involved with deaf education in the local context, the college worked to cooperate both with the local secondary school for deaf learners and the wider deaf community. The aim was to establish sustainable arrangements for practical and informal learning. To take the first steps in system change, a visit was made to the Prime Minister's Office - Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG) in Dodoma and they were informed of the human resources that the college had developed for the special education sector of Tanzania. Being responsible for correct

placement of teachers according to their specialization, the PMO-RALG are a crucial success factor.

It was envisaged that the project would lean on the three pillars for sustainable capacity development found in the guidelines proposed by the UNDP:[11]

- The individual who receives education, on-the-job training, and formal and informal skills, accomplishing tasks and solving problems, participating in decisions with a clear understanding of their role and function receiving adequate incentives, being held accountable and involved;
- The institution in which the individual is embedded and interrelation between institutions that are interacting with others for a common purpose;
- An enabling environment where private and public sectors meet for the benefit of sustainable change.[12]

What is most relevant to mention here is that, based on that approach, teacher training and teacher motivation, be it inherent or incentive-driven, is not in itself sufficient to bring about sustainable change in education outcomes. While in the Tabora programme most emphasis was laid on training teachers in innovative teaching techniques and changing their attitudes to deaf learners, institutional strengthening, and formal and informal linking with other institutions are just as relevant for bringing about change:

An essential ingredient in the UNDP capacity development approach is transformation. For an activity to meet the standard of capacity development as practised and promoted by UNDP, it must bring about transformation that is generated from within and sustained over time. Transformation of that kind goes beyond performing tasks; instead, it is more a matter of changing mind-sets and attitudes.[13]

While we could have made a start on the process of transformation, we still faced obstacles, in particular concerning the two pillars of capacity development, institutional support and an enabling environment.

Tanzania ratified the most important regional and international treaties protecting the right to education. Those policies, laws and strategies are meant to provide an enabling environment for capacity development and are the basis for the Tanzania inclusive Education Strategy (2009-2017). However, actual implementation of the policy on inclusive education with specific

11 UNDP 2009.
12 UNDP 2009: 11.
13 UNDP 2009: 12.

reference to learners with disabilities is still lacking in Tanzania and remains a challenge. In addition, there is no clear placement procedure for specialized teachers despite the promotion of inclusive education which brings its own challenges because it affects placement of teachers and teacher training. For example, one secondary school we visited had blind teachers teaching inclusive classes with Dhh learners. Furthermore, it is common knowledge in Tanzania that most teachers trained to teach special needs students at primary or secondary level have in fact been posted to normal schools. The biggest obstacle here is lack of institutional accountability, while schools have no authority to determine who should be sent for training nor what training they would receive. Another difficulty is that many teachers from inclusive schools currently make a step up to work in normal education, a problem of lack of coordination between posting officers, training institutions and schools. We approached many inclusive schools with Dhh learners who shared with us stories of their plight in teaching, but procedural and financial constraints meant that teachers could not join the college when we started the training programme. Until now therefore, Tanzania has lacked a holistic, coordinated mechanism for translating national development plans into skill requirements and cascading them to the various training institutions.[14]

Deaf Education in the Inclusive Learning Environment

In this section we describe the four areas we identified as valuable for secondary education in general, learning from approaches we had introduced and taught to our teachers for deaf learners.

Typical in the inclusive classroom is the learner with a hearing impairment. Dhh learners often lag behind their hearing peers in language development, therefore it is important that teachers expect to see cognitive divergences between deaf and hearing learners. Additionally, deaf children are far more variable than hearing children and their backgrounds set them more learning challenges than those of hearing children. Teachers can address such differences with the goal of providing deaf children with the cognitive foundation they need if they are to achieve the intended level of learning rather than mere remediation. Therefore special education accommodation must be provided that goes beyond consideration of the problems of the deaf. Deaf students are not simply hearing students who cannot hear but might have academic needs and strengths different from their hearing peers.[15]

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14 Luhanga 2015.

15 Knoors and Marschark 2014; Knoors and Marschark 2015.

Our experience of training teachers for deaf learners in inclusive settings afforded us new insights into how teacher training can reform education systems to improve learning outcomes for all learners, not only the deaf. Among our new insights are:

- Understanding learners and their needs;
- Seeing the benefits of technology to promote contextual learning;
- The need for teaching settings that provide opportunities for reiterated learning;
- The value of constant interaction and feedback from learners.

Understanding Learners and Learners' Needs

Very explicitly orchestrated in the implementation of the project was the need for teachers to show a proper attitude and passion to help their learners. Teachers need to manage learning through the eyes of their students, appreciating that most students will learn in fits and starts and will not make simple linear progressions to their goals. Teachers need to support students' deliberate practice, giving feedback on their errors and wrong-turnings, and caring that students reach their goals. Keen enthusiasm must be ingredients of learning and must come from students and teachers alike.[16] To achieve that teachers must make sure they understand each learner's needs so that they can teach individual students appropriately. The correct teaching methods must be applied and teaching content organized to meet students' needs. For instance, the majority of Dhh learners have limited prior knowledge of most academic concepts, so that teachers should adopt strategies to enable Dhh learners to connect their limited knowledge to the new lesson concepts that confront them. While not always required for hearing learners with a rich language background, such strategies are equally essential for hearing students whose English background is poor, as it is for most students in Tanzania. Students treated thus can feel "important," accepted by teachers and fellow students.[17] With a deaf or hard of hearing learner, a teacher has to be mindful that nothing must be taken for granted, whether that be conceptualizing the world, communicating, or learning with or without context. Realizing that, teachers will focus on the sort of learner-centred education strategies that are pivotal to improving learning outcomes.[18]

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16 Hattie 2012.

17 Marzano and Pickering 2003.

18 "The teacher needs to know what every student in class is thinking and what they know, to be able to construct meaning and meaningful experiences in light of the knowledge of the students," according to Hattie 2012: 22.

The trainee teachers were asked to find out about the hearing loss and other audiological difficulties of their Dhh students. They were also required to be aware of things that promote social connection such as students' names, how they felt, and how well they could follow the teaching. This all helped make the first important connections between the teachers and the Dhh students.

Such connection between teachers and students created a feeling of safety, confidence, and acceptance that made the Dhh learners feel well liked and cared for and so increased their participation in class activities. The teacher's most important focus while in class became their learners' well-being and ability to participate rather than mere subject content. The environment so created motivated the Dhh learners to study, and helped bring about better learning outcomes.

It is worth noting here the reason why the trainee teachers found it easy to understand their Dhh learners, which was quite simply that the Dhh were few in number as compared to hearing learners in the inclusive class. There were four to twelve Dhh learners per class, so the teachers were able to give sufficient care and attention to each deaf student in the class and had time to understand their learning styles.

Picking the bones from this experience leads us to suggest that reform in education systems must enable teachers to understand their students. Under the current system that is difficult or even impossible in situations with large classes and where most of teacher's attention is on the content of lessons rather than on the students. Most classes in Tanzanian secondary schools contain about fifty-five students, far too many for any teacher to show passion and care because the sheer number of them makes the students seem like a burden. Additionally, normal teacher training focuses mainly on making sure teachers understand the content of what they must teach and is less concerned with understanding students. While teachers certainly are taught that in theory they should deal with each student as an individual that is not emphasized in practice. Paradoxically, the campaign for "education for all' and inclusive education has actually worsened the classroom environment by increasing not only enrolment but diversity too, which has thrown up even more challenges for today's teachers. The ratio of teachers to students must be one of the focus points to be addressed in reforming the education system.

Using Technology to Promote Contextual Learning

One of the major factors that influence learning and performance in school is teachers' instructional strategies. The most effective are those where learning is visible to both the teacher and the learners.[19] Typical of Dhh

19 Hattie 2014.

learners is the fact that they lack prior knowledge of many general concepts learned in different subjects and situations. That is because they are unable to benefit from incidental learning so can acquire such expertise only from intentional teaching. Dhh learners' prior knowledge should therefore never be presumed. An innovative strategy devised for teaching Dhh learners was an ICT-supported tool to help them connect the concrete to the abstract (e.g. the book to the library). The whole ideas is to use what each learner knows to help him or her understand an abstract concept in concrete terms. That is done using different kinds of visual presentations such as pictures, films, graphics, pictograms, and photographs. If teachers learn to use such technology they can simplify their preparation of visualization materials in particular and all teaching material in general. They can also reflect on learning strategies and how they make learning visible, for better future replication.

Experience with Dhh learners in secondary schools was that since the languages of instruction (English and Kiswahili) were unfamiliar to them, many strategies had to be called into play to enable them to grasp both concepts and content of subjects. Moreover, since many of the learners were growing up in language-impoverished environments, they were unaware of what would normally be simple concepts. For that reason alone many strategies were used to stimulate comprehension of subject content. Strategies involved translating, defining, providing synonyms, providing pictures, real objects, videos, role playing, context sentences, and examples. Such strategies are highly demanding for teachers in terms of time, creativity, innovativeness and resources which are very limited in many schools in developing countries. There arises therefore the problem of a situation in which something deemed impossible to put into practice is also deemed necessary for comprehension and improving learning outcomes for Dhh learners. We wondered, "How can we solve this?" Not discouraged, the project therefore worked hard to develop an innovative ICT tool to enable teachers to develop, store, and reuse materials. The idea was to create a knowledge bank which could be easily updated when necessary, so that individual teachers do not have to spend time and money or rely on their own creativity but can refer to an off-line version of the database.

Experience in Tanzania has revealed that it is not only the Dhh who need such support, for all learners do. There is ample evidence that the combination of pictures and words fosters deeper learning for Dhh students.[20] Picture are supreme in their ability to arouse emotions while text illustrations deploy an affective-motivational function to help learners. The study by Segers and

20 Knoors and Marschark 2014; Knoors and Marschark 2015.

Verhoeven on deaf learners' opportunities for multimedia learning shows that in the long run deaf learners too can benefit from a combination of written text, sign language, and visual images.[21] Research shows too that learners, especially struggling learners, need to combine different input modalities to learn effectively.[22] In Tanzania, most learners in secondary schools are likely to be struggling, most particularly because the widely unfamiliar language of instruction create so much difficulty with comprehension. Tanzanian primary school pupils are taught in Kiswahili, while in secondary schools they are taught in English. The problem there is that besides the limited teaching materials available to them, most secondary school teachers themselves struggle with English which makes it almost impossible for them to teach even concrete concepts effectively, let alone abstract ones.

Drawing from the above inference, we therefore suggest that a most important requirement is reform of teacher training curricula to include courses on how teachers can integrate technology into children's education. There are however many problems in preparing trainee teachers within developing countries to use ICT. In Tanzania for example many trainee teachers lack access to the hardware, while others have had no exposure to the use of ICT and therefore lack basic skills in the use of it. According to the Tanzania ICT Policy for Basic Education (2006) education should integrate ICT into pre-primary, primary, secondary, and teacher education. However, although the government of Tanzania supports the use of technology, current syllabi focus on teaching ICT as a subject and less on using it as teaching aid.[23] In addition, reform efforts should consider offering schools incentives to provide computers and laptops in classrooms for use by teachers and students.

Teaching Settings that Provide Opportunities for Reiterated Learning

According to Hattie, learning is not always pleasurable nor easy. It requires overlearning at certain points and spiralling up and down the knowledge continuum.[24] A learner must, of course, remember what has been taught, which means storing information in long-term memory. Research shows that Dhh learners remember less than hearing students in memory span tasks involving verbal and non-verbal materials alike. Gathercole and Alloway suggest that a teacher of Dhh can support working memory by presenting external memory aids such as charts on the walls of the classrooms. Such aids

21 Segers and Verhoeven 2015.

22 Hibbing and Rankin-Erickson 2003.

23 Kihoza, Zlotnikova, Bada and Kalegele 2016.

24 Hattie 2012.

of course remind students of important information but can also help with repetition of information and reiterated learning.[25] In the context of teaching Dhh learners the project's innovative aspect was the use of three teaching settings. Those are pre-teaching, teaching, and re-teaching, and the idea is to give learners the opportunity to repeat and reiterate learning to improve learning outcomes. The intention was to enable Dhh learners to learn the same concept using different approaches for clarity, emphasis, memory, and thereby improve learning outcomes.

It is natural that all learners need repetition and reiterated learning for emphasis and memory, and system change should ensure that every learner be able to benefit from it so that everyone's learning outcomes can be improved. The challenge experienced in schools in practice was the nature of the resulting workload for teachers of Dhh learners. For effective implementation, schools need to invest in technology, especially in the development, for all school subjects, of the ICT tool referred to above which of course will enable self-teaching too. Alternatively, if they are to provide such support to students, teachers would be forced to invest a great deal of time in their teaching. In Tanzania as in most developing countries the teaching and learning environment is characterized by limited incentives for teachers, especially in that salaries are too low for their needs. That in turn leads to low levels of job satisfaction and reform of education must address that point too, especially if teachers are to be expected to devote more time to their students and to developing ICT tools for reiterated learning.

Constant Interaction to Test Effectiveness and Provide Feedback from Learners

Interaction with learners provides teachers with real-life experience and feedback. Feedback is most powerful when related to the student's degree of proficiency. Progress feedback is expressed in relation to the expected standard, to prior performance or to success or failure at a specific part of the task. It is important for teachers to gain formative feedback relative to the criteria of success.[26] To enable them to test classroom theories and acquire feedback on who the Dhh are and how they learn, the trainee teachers were given repeated opportunities to interact with Dhh learners and adults in formal and informal learning settings. The trainees could gain a true sense of deafness and could collect feedback on their questions by counter-checking and reflecting on the theoretical material they had heard in lectures. They discovered that they had taken an enormous amount for granted about how

25 Gathercole and Alloway 2008.

26 Hattie 2012.

deaf children learn. Clearly, timely feedback is a powerful tool for enhancing learning outcomes.

Teaching any learner requires that hypotheses be generated and then tested and reflected upon. When students themselves are involved in that process they not only receive immediate feedback but also learn something of deductive and inductive thinking, which again enhances learning outcomes.[27] The same strategies can be beneficial to trainee teachers no matter whom they will ultimately teach, and should be adopted by all teacher training colleges. To gain timely feedback trainee teachers must spend more time interacting with real learners, and not only during their teaching practice. More time spent with real learners would not only promote understanding but would also enable trainees to learn the importance of generating teaching hypotheses, testing them and gaining feedback on them. Teacher training colleges must address this point too.

To summarize, we argue here that analysing the success factors for learning, as opposed to of schooling, from the point of view of deaf learners as some of the most challenging, will help those involved in reforming the educational system to find the right tools to help all types of learner. Proper analysis sharpens the view on what really matters in teachers' attitude, which is that they must understand their learner's circumstances, communicate creatively but accessibly and use multiple repetition. Teachers should be enabled to have real-life encounters with students in order to turn themselves into critical self-reflective thinkers. If a child does not improve its learning outcome, the teacher should be questioned, not the child. That premise applies as much to hearing as well as dhh learners, to the healthy as well as to the disabled and to the highly intelligent as well as to the less intelligent learners.

In order to prove our argument we intend to carry out a longitudinal study that will involve both deaf and hearing learners. Following the teaching strategies outlined above we expect all learners to benefit from deaf-related teaching methods. In 2017-2018 we will conduct a baseline study in the nineteen secondary schools in Tanzania that are assigned to teach deaf learners. We shall collect data on the learning outcomes of the deaf and hearing students in a particular subject such as geography, using data from a randomized group of students over the last four years. Once the teachers who graduate from the Bachelor of Education in Special Needs-Hearing Impairments (BEDSN-HI) in AMUCTA are placed in those secondary schools, the second phase of the study can be designed. That study will follow a similar randomized group of deaf and hearing learners throughout the four years of

27 Marzano, Pickering and Pollock 2001.

their secondary school careers. The study will reveal whether and how far additional teaching methods related to education of the deaf will allow both hearing and deaf learners to benefit.

Conclusion

We have referred at length here to teaching methods derived from educating deaf and hard of hearing students, and that they can contribute positively to learning outcomes for all learners. Once teachers have the tools available and have learned to approach teaching from the perspective of children as individual learners, they will feel satisfaction as they see the learning outcomes of their student improve. Teachers' vocational motivation will be stimulated when they are actually in a position to help their learners and realize that the new methods are indeed leading to successful learning, happy learners, and a positive, stimulating atmosphere in the classroom.

Based on that, we would emphasize that system change in education must embrace inclusion of disabled learners, in particular the deaf or hard of hearing learner. Such learners must come to be seen as bringing added value, creating a "win-win situation," rather than as a burden that should be postponed in systemic change strategies. We therefore argue that taking into account SDG4 in combination with the UNCRPD, it is true not only that we cannot afford to leave disabled children out of classrooms from some political or legal imperative, but that everyone benefits by considering them beneficial.[28] The extra challenge to teachers brought by disabled learners will sharpen teacher training, increase teacher motivation and change teachers' attitudes to learners with disabilities. Finally, that will lead to system change in education for all.

Capacity development theory teaches that not only individual teachers but institutions, linkages between content-related organizations and an enabling environment are all crucial for sustainable change. A holistic inclusive education approach is the most promising, as long as no target group is "postponed" in the process. Secondary school reform in Tanzania is possible. Education outcomes can be improved if the bilingual situation of many

28 Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, General comment No. 4, "Article 24: Right to Inclusive Education," 2 September 2016: "Barriers that impede access to inclusive education for persons with disabilities can be attributed to multiple factors, including (…) c) lack of knowledge about the nature and advantages of inclusive and quality education, and diversity, including regarding competitiveness, in learning for all; lack of outreach to all parents and lack of appropriate responses to support requirements, leading to misplaced fears, and stereotypes, that inclusion will cause a deterioration in the quality of education, or otherwise impact negatively on others."

learners is taken into consideration, along with the poor starting position of many learners caused by poorly performing primary schools, and the poverty and isolated upbringing of many children which gives them limited exposure to learning and shaky contextual foundations as they start secondary school. Finally, we are certain that education concepts related to the dhh can help solve the specific challenges in secondary education in Tanzania.

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12

"Each One Teach One" – Collaborative Learning: An Anthropological Approach

Madi Ditmars

Abstract: The importance of higher education is entrenched in Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The challenge for educational institutions is not only meeting monitoring indicators that focus on enrolment and participation rates, but to provide quality education. Education systems that were developed without consideration of how students conceptualise, relate to, and value knowledge, adversely affects the quality of learning. Acknowledging the opportunities that technology brings, this paper applies Hofstede's cultural dimensions to explore how culturally appropriate collaborative learning techniques can enhance indigenous knowledge at Unisa - a South African distance education university.

Introduction

Sustainable development begins with education. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognises this in Goal 4, which sets out to ensure inclusive and equitable *quality* education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Target 4.3: "By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and *quality* technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university," is of special interest in this paper. Particularly because the only monitoring indicator that this crucial goal is measured against in the "Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex" (SDG Indicator 4.3.1, italics added), do not measure if quality education has taken place.

One of the aspects of quality education is that students can relate with the education they receive. Here an anthropological approach in invalu-

able, as these researchers investigate how societies conceptualise, develop, and transmit knowledge, skills, and values. Based on their understanding, different models to measure cultural influences in learning and teaching have been developed. Hofstede's cultural dimensions strategy, is used as an example of a model that can be effectively applied when developing didactic strategies in different cultural environments.

Concurrent with adapting the educational delivery process, content also needs to reflect student's cultures, identities, languages, histories, and value systems in traditional university curricula. This requires a radical transformation, that South African students are rightfully demanding. Online learning offers an opportunity to incorporate indigenous knowledge, through collaborative learning strategies.

The University of South Africa (Unisa) embraces this strategy, as it is similar to the approach freedom fighters used to educate South Africans who were denied education in the dark days of apartheid. After the Soweto student protest in 1976, the anti-apartheid student organisation COSAS, adopted the slogan "Each One Teach One" which can be traced back to the days of slavery and oppression. Sharing knowledge with others remains a powerful education strategy in today's online collaborative learning environment.

Quality Education

Education provides skills and knowledge for the world of work, but, fundamentally, it is also a force for empowering individuals and enhancing their inherent dignity. It is a multifaceted system embedded in independent yet interrelated political, cultural, and economic dimensions. Within this complex system, what can be considered as quality education? How can it be achieved and how can it measured?

There are many definitions of quality in education, testifying to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept. Five aspects that entail quality education stand out:

- Quality of learner's lives including their living environment, basic education, health, and financial situation;
- Quality of learning environment such as the physical buildings, educational media, and service delivery elements;
- Quality learning outcomes which requires accredited learning material, standard based assessments, and quality management systems;
- Quality of delivery processes demand competent educators, learner supervision, and other support systems;

- Quality of curricula content in line with local and global standards and values.

Briefly exploring what is required to *deliver* quality *content* in the online learning environment, I question the appropriateness of Western methodologies in non-Western contexts. Although education is an universal human activity, with the exception of activities such as observing and imitating, trail-and-error and storytelling, few educational methods can be described as universal. To realise the future we want for all, I call for a ethnographic approach in educational delivery and content design.

Cultural Differences in Delivery Process

Although it is a given that cultural factors are important in education practices, there is surprisingly little literature concerning the cultural aspects of learning and teaching, and even less regarding online studies. Geert Hofstede was one of the first to attempt measuring cultural varieties and its effect on a nation or society.[1] He identified four dimension, and later a fifth, to explore cultural differences in teacher-learner roles and teaching and learning styles:

- Power Distance: This dimension differentiates between levels of authority and indicates the extent to which less powerful individuals in a society accept power inequality. Low Power Distance countries are presented as egalitarian and high Power Distance countries accept unequal distribution of power, and display difference in behaviour and communication, depending on the status of the individuals interacting;
- Individualism: This is, in Hofstede's model, the power of the group over the individual, and defines collectivist nations as "those where the group's interest prevails over an individual's interest."[2] Hofstede assumes this has an effect on group dynamics, on student participation, and even on the perceived purpose of education, e.g. critical thinking versus knowledge accumulation;
- Uncertainty Avoidance: This dimension measures how people from different countries are likely to "feel threatened towards situations they perceive as uncertain, unstructured or unknown."[3] In countries with a high acceptance score, learners operate in informal learning environments with ease and are unconcerned about public disagreement;

1 Hofstede 1986.
2 Hofstede 1986: 307.
3 Hofstede 1986: 308.

- Masculinity: Hofstede uses this dimension to describe the polarisation between universal characteristics of the sexes. The male role reinforces assertiveness and competition, and is centred around material success, whilst the female role stresses nurturance, modesty, and a concern for relationships and the living environment;
- Long-Term Orientation: The fifth dimension which was later integrated in the original model, measures how societies view the importance of the past, while dealing with present and future challenges.[4] Originally this dimension was developed to differentiate between Eastern and Western approaches. Short term orientated cultures focus on the present, maintaining traditions and norms, as opposed to long term cultures, who prepare for the future, embracing thrift and change.

All five dimensions are very general and have limitations, for example equating "culture" to "nation," and not considering cultural diversity in a society or organisation. It does not take into account the dynamic and changing nature of culture or the influence of other variables on learning styles, such as individual identities, socio-economic factors, competency of educators, etc. There are also other models that measure cultural influences in learning and teaching, but they too have similar limitations.[5]

Non withstanding the justifiable critique against Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, it provides indicators to measure and describe broad differences in educational settings, which can be inferred to the online environment. His model has with some success been used in cross-cultural comparisons of Western and Eastern online learning delivery styles and could also be applied in the African context.

Culturally Relevant Content

Through modernisation and globalisation, education has undergone a dramatic change. It has become a commodity trading lifelong learning skills applicable to competitive markets. Technological advances have broken down distance barriers, enabling online education that conveys universal values, institutionalised social structures and Western-orientated knowledge

4 Hofstede and Hofstede 2005.

5 Cultural profiling, another model that measures cultural influences in learning and teaching, provides a framework to identify and compare differences, and to develop teaching strategies to deliver education in different cultural contexts more effectively. Most importantly, it stresses cultural influences on the way students experience, receive, process, and apply information, which is essential to develop higher order thinking skills.

systems, to the four corners of the world. The internationalisation of higher education shapes individuals into "global citizens," dominates the world's knowledge systems and displaces indigenous forms of knowledge.

For universities to lead social change and ensure sustainability, they have to create education systems that are responsive to the diverse and multiple needs of the society they serve. Quality and relevant content incorporates two layers of knowledge and principles:

- Universal academic knowledge shared by all people and valued in a globalised world;
- Indigenous knowledge incorporating values, beliefs, and practices of a particular society.

Whilst the future of individuals and nations lies in their ability to compete globally, the loss of identity and own knowledge systems leads to a breakdown of norms, values, and belief systems. Finding ways to document indigenous knowledge and contextualise practices in global knowledge systems, is a key enabler for local ownership and inclusive participation. It will enhance cross-cultural understanding, foster tolerance, and assure the sustainability of societies through providing future generations of capable, critical, and ethical citizens of their country and the world.

The growing recognition of the value and importance of indigenous knowledge, places education institutions under enormous pressure. They face the dual challenge of equipping learners with knowledge, skills, and values needed in a globally competitive world, whilst producing graduates who are able to find solutions to their unique national and regional challenges.

Success requires a critical interrogation of the relevance of existing Western-oriented methods of knowledge accumulation and dissemination, which has over decades marginalised non-Western and particularly African knowledge production. Bridging the gap between academic and indigenous knowledge requires participation and collaboration between education institutions and the holders of local knowledge. The key factor is the political and institutional will to adapt and involve those who possess and practice indigenous knowledge.

Higher Education in South Africa

As in many counties, the South African higher education sector is in turmoil. Two popular student-driven movements petition for precisely what SDG Target 4.3 sets out to achieve: The Fees Must Fall campaign: *Affordability,* and the Rhodes Must Fall campaign: *Quality*. These protests have become

the largest social movement since the dawn of South Africa's democracy in 1994. It has set in motion a process that will fundamentally transform the current higher education sector, similar to what the youth and student uprising, which began in Soweto on 16 June 1976 achieved. i.e. demolish unsuitable education structures.

Student demands are legitimate and justified and give rise to uncomfortable questions about whether the state and education institutions are doing enough to transform in the post-apartheid era. Universities in Africa, and South Africa in particular, remain elitist, too academic, alienated from the people it serves, and does not address the development challenges of local communities. The urgency to transform and establish relevant and acceptable education institutions, cannot be over emphasised. The Rhodes Must Fall movement, calls for a radical "decolonisation" of university structures and "Africanisation" of learning content, giving impetus to the necessity to tap African indigenous knowledge as a foundational resource for the socio-educational transformation of South African higher institutions.

The University of South Africa (Unisa) is not spared from these demands. The institutions, founded in 1873, transformed to a distance education institution in 1946. Today, it is the only comprehensive open distance and e-learning education provider in South Africa. As the biggest learning institution on the African continent, and the twentieth largest university in the world, Unisa has the potential to contribute significantly to the African development needs and skills shortage. Guided by principles of lifelong learning, student-centeredness, innovation, and creativity, its vision is "towards the African University shaping futures in the service of humanity." This African focus does not only refer to a specific geo-political location, but a commitment to the Africanisation of curricula.

Unisa promotes African thought, philosophy, interests, and epistemology, to address the legacy of neglected and marginalised issues relevant to South Africa and the rest of Africa. Endorsed by the global development agenda, it mandates an evaluation of existing learning content and rethinking of modes of knowledge accumulation and transfer. The strategy is expanded in the institution's Curriculum Policy: "Unisa acknowledges the richness of the oral traditions and cultural heritage of our students (…) [which] often provide alternative explanations and world-views. Unisa will encourage academics and students to explore indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) as curriculum resources, and as IKS resources are identified, Unisa will include these resources as valid epistemologies and knowledge systems."[6]

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6 Curriculum Policy 2010: 17.

The university defines IKS as systems of knowledge that is grounded in the total "cultural" heritage of a nation or society, and maintained by communities as they negotiate their sustenance and livelihoods. These systems are undergirded by an interlocking web of ethical, social, religious, and philosophical sub-systems that determine broad patterns of cognition which provide them with a rational essence and emotional tone.[7] To acknowledge IKS, Unisa's curricula:

- promotes African thought, philosophy, interest, and epistemology;
- is located and rooted in the African context, addressing African concerns, challenges, opportunities for innovation and critical engagement;
- develop African and IKS as knowledge systems in their own right;
- offers alternative worldviews to the dominance of Western canons and contribute to a multiplicity of voices, alternative canons, and diversity in thought;
- does not promote a new hegemony but rather stimulate curricula as spaces for interplay between diverse knowledge systems.

Adapting international practices to the local setting, improves the impact of education and sustainability of development. Internationalisation of higher education is often viewed as opposing Africanisation of these institutes. According to this view, the more Africanised, the less a person can internationalise, but "it is only when we have a deep understanding of our experiences that we are able to conquer knowledge and concepts that are not part of that experience."[8] Integrating IKS in all disciplines enhances quality education by providing learners with a relevant education that adheres to their own perspectives, and customs. The art of achieving this lies in acquiring an understanding of culture as a cognitive system, and developing a culture-based curricula that integrates all elements of learning (objectives, content, delivery, evaluation, etc.) into unified and coherent learning modules.

A Transformative Agenda

To be prepared for study, work and life in the twenty-fist century and become competent life-long learners, students firstly need to internalise an online learning culture. Developing learning skills unique to e-learning, entails more than digital technology skills. E-learning affords opportunities for much more engagement, creating dynamic communities of practice that enable

7 Curriculum Policy 2010: 13.
8 Dowling and Seepe 2004: 196.

knowledge making practices. Through collaboration, online learners actively construct and co-construct their own meanings, share and infuse their knowledge and understanding with different world views. Becoming knowledge producers – not merely knowledge consumers, requires an induction into interactive, interdependent, and self-directed learning. Learning from and with others, and applying new knowledge in their social environment.

A key ingredient for raising the quality of online courses is strong interaction between all the participants. In facilitating active collaboration, tutors have to move away from hierarchical top-down knowledge flows to more lateral knowledge exchange practices, yet mindful of the complex influences of cultural dimensions on students' approaches to learning. For Unisa tutors, the challenge is to blend the interactive nature that online learning offers with the social expectations and cultural dimensions of students.

An analysis of students cultural educational contexts is helpful to understand their strengths and weaknesses in a collaborative learning environment. What didactic methods should be followed to accommodate local cultural dimensions? Categorising the majority of Unisa's undergraduate students according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, the following andragogic approaches appear essential:

Dimensions	**Online Tutors Application Skills**
Power centric	Strong leadership Uphold authority Provide clear instructions Monitor progress
Collectivist	Provide group work Stimulate comments Reward collective action Use social media Value all contributions
Uncertain	Structure learning platform Set rules Pace activities Clarify roles Stimulate curiosity and free thinking
Masculine	Avoid competition and comparisons Stimulate interest (not only to study toward achieving a qualification)
Short Term	Value traditions and norms Stimulate future thinking and planning

Applying these dimensions to devise learner support strategies will improve student interaction, and ensure that learners from different cultural contexts achieve their personal and course learning objectives. It is clear that collaboration within the Unisa environment needs to be structured and coordinated. Tutors have to carefully plan, create, and maintain a safe platform, where they initiate and monitor discussions and other online activities.

Hofstede's fifth dimension, Long Term Orientation, is particularly relevant in terms of academic content. Determining the extent to which traditional knowledge and values are esteemed, is evident in the urge to Africanise curricula. Unisa still offers too few academic modules that place IKS central, as efforts to develop academic content that relates to African heritage, remain stuck in policies and theory. Despite the urgency to transform, attempts to develop relevant curricula thus far have only involved modifying the existing Western knowledge system in response to the political context and economic developmental needs of the continent, and country in particular. As stated by Catherine Odora-Hoppers, Chair in Development Education, Unisa: "Clearly, a tremendous challenge is posited to academic disciplines across the board to revisit their core perceptions of African society, to question their theoretical habits and images of thought, and especially the normative and conceptual backgrounds that shape the rules and define parameters for what is considered 'real' knowledge in academic work."[9]

Recovering lost knowledge systems and developing indigenous curricula is a slippery road in unknown territory, that cannot be done from an ivory tower. Transformation has to happen collectively in an academic appropriate way. Technology offers a tremendous opportunity to compare different sources of knowledge, whilst collaboratively collecting and documenting indigenous knowledge. Although not an easy task, indigenisation through an ethnographic participatory approach, is a feasible alternative. My proposed eight step approach entails:

1. Presenting brief explanations of concepts and terminologies;
2. Sourcing and refering learners to online resources and repositories;
3. Developing learner's participant observation and recording of oral traditions skills;
4. Cultivating self-reflection, sensitivity and cultural relativism approach;
5. Providing a structured platform for written responses;
6. Stimulate constructivist discussions, debates, and critique;
7. Facilitate group evaluation, review and synopsis;
8. Sharing and publishing collaborative content for further research.

9 Odora-Hoppers 2017: 176.

Through this process students collaboratively develop learning content that recovers indigenous knowledge, reflects on current values, reclaim their identity and fosters cross cultural tolerance.

The success of this method to collect and integrate appropriate academic content, depends on the skills of tutors. Their own ITC skills have to be developed to a level where they can effectively use all interactive learning management system (LMS) tools available, as well as range of Web 2.0 platforms that promote greater collaboration and content generation. A major factor in providing quality online courses is maintaining high standards of teacher training. Online educators have to understand and apply andragogy principles, and facilitate group work, in a cultural appropriate way. The challenge is to be aware of the multiple and complex nature of cultural and sub-cultural influences on learners' learning behaviour and on their own teaching. Their ability to facilitate the process, inspire students, evaluate and weave contributions and lastly share the collaboratively compiled content, will determine the validity of content and programme success.

Through these delivery and content development strategies, quality in education comes a step closer to realisation. The SDGs give higher education institutions a springboard to adapt and develop learning approaches and material that takes their own unique features into account. Together with institutional policies, the development of sophisticated technology infrastructure, and skilled facilitators, the powerful teaching and learning strategy, Each One Teach One, effectively used to liberate South Africa from oppression re-emerges.

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Finding Learning in Teaching: Eritrean Primary Teacher Educators' Perspectives on Implementing Learner-Centered and Interactive Pedagogies

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Abstract: Eritrea has given an increasing policy emphasis on implementing learner-centered interactive pedagogies (LCIP) at all levels of the education system. However, both teachers and teacher educators struggle with implementation of matching school practices. This study attempts to identify some of the gaps between the objectives set in the National Education Policy of the State of Eritrea and the everyday practices observable at the educational institutions. The focus of the analysis is on examining data from teacher educators at the Asmara Community College of Education. The international exposure and collaboration with Finnish education experts has been appreciated by the teacher educators as a source of inspiration and modelling of learner-centered practice. The findings are indicative of changing pedagogical practice and an enhanced culture for professional development.

Introduction[1]

Learner-centered pedagogy is one of the most pervasive educational notions in contemporary Africa. Yet, there is an overwhelming amount of evidence from a variety of sources that learner-centered education has not become established in the average African classroom.[2] The theory of learner-centered pedagogy suggests that learning is more effective when the learner actively constructs knowledge instead of rote-learning and cramming. Learner-centered education is regarded as an effective alternative to teacher-centered education, since the focus is shifted from the teacher's activity to the student's activity. In accordance, the learner-centered approach is believed to help improve students' academic performance. In Eritrea, like in many African countries, the educational system is frequently blamed for leading to uninventive, patterned thinking, and for lowering students' academic motivation.

In Eritrea, the official educational policy strongly advocates learner-centered and interactive pedagogy.[3] The core objective is to enhance national productivity and innovation. The teacher educators' role is crucial as they are key agents of change. A teacher education that promotes the learner-centered approach will bring forth teachers, who advance the called for skills of innovative thinking and life-long learning.

Background and Context

The Sustainable Development Goal 4 calls for significantly increasing the number of qualified teachers particularly in least developing countries by 2030, "especially through international cooperation for the training of teachers." This, in essence, was the starting point for the cooperation between Finn Church Aid (FCA) and the Eritrean Ministry of Education (MOE) focusing on teacher educational development in two Institutes of Higher Education.

The multiple challenges of education development in Eritrea are reflected in the high repetition and drop out-rates and in the low levels of youth proceeding to secondary education. According to the most recent available statistics only 69.5% of students proceed to junior secondary level and only

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1 Our sincere thanks to colleagues at the Asmara Community College of Education, EIT College of Education, and the Finn Church Aid for a sharing their insights and contributing to the shared learning process in pedagogical development. Special thanks to Alem Ghebrecal, Director of the ACCE for his continued encouragement and support of this collaboration.

2 Mtika and Gates 2010.

3 Government of Eritrea 2010.

31.5% continue to upper secondary education. Girls' enrolment is critically low, averaging about 44% for primary schools, 33% for secondary schools and less than 5% for tertiary institutions.[4] Furthermore, the quality of education has worsened: the 2015 national assessment to Monitor Learning Achievement (MLA 3) revealed declining performance at Grade 5 where only 25.4% of students attained the minimum master level (MML), compared to 49.9% in 2008.[5]

Just as in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, a transformation from teacher to learner-centered pedagogy is seen as one solution for enhancing quality in education in Eritrea.[6] The educational policy of Eritrea strongly stresses the importance of Learner-Centered and Interactive Pedagogy (LCIP) at all educational levels. With the implementation of a new National Curriculum in 2008, LCIP is introduced as the foundation of education. However, both teachers and teacher educators struggle with implementation of matching school practices. This study attempts to identify some of the gaps between the objectives set in the most recent National Education Policy of the State of Eritrea from 2009 on the one hand, and the everyday practices observable at the educational institutions on the other. This study focused on examining data from teacher educators at one of the two Eritrean teacher education Colleges, Asmara Community College of Education.

The National Curriculum Framework for Eritrea sets Learner Centered Interactive Pedagogies as its foundation "to promote learning with understanding."[7] In the Curriculum Framework, learning is clearly regarded as an active process:

> Learning is more than simply attending classes for a prescribed period of time. It is an active process in which learners share responsibility for initiating, sustaining and managing the learning situation. The more learners feel that they share responsibility for their learning, the more they get engaged to achieve particular educational outcomes. This process is central to learning with understanding.[8]

To this end, a 2012 Ministry of Education report indicates that several actions have been taken to promote LCIP in Eritrean education, including monitoring curricula, a study on the application of learner-centered and

4 Government of Eritrea 2013a.
5 Government of Eritrea 2015.
6 Posti-Ahokas, Idriss and Hassan 2016.
7 Government of Eritrea 2008: 1.
8 Government of Eritrea 2008: 35.

interactive pedagogy, as well as in-service training programs, workshops and seminars conducted for teachers, school directors and supervisors.[9]

The Curriculum Framework recognizes the various challenges and the critical role of pre-service and in-service teacher education for successful implementation of the LCIP approach. A recent study found cultural conflict, insufficient education of teachers, lacking teaching resources, and low teacher motivation as the key challenges to implementing LCIP at school level.[10] The commitment to learner-centered and interactive pedagogy represents a new challenge to teacher education programs. This includes operationalizing a range of innovative approaches, which require teachers to involve and inspire learners in the process of constructing and developing knowledge. To promote the implementation of these approaches, pre-service and in-service teacher training programs will need to critique and move beyond the traditional conceptions of pedagogy. Also the key role of teacher educators' as implementers of change is acknowledged. To generate change in the curriculum reform, teacher educators will need professional renewal in teacher education and in school-based Continuous Professional Development (CPD).[11]

Quality teacher education has been globally recognized as a critical aspect of education development.[12] In Eritrea, the national Education Sector Development plan for 2013-2017 identifies teacher education as a priority. The low quality of education is strongly attributed to low capacity of Higher Education Institutions to provide quality training and professional support to teachers: only 46% of primary school teachers and 83% of secondary level teachers are formally qualified.[13] Specifically, there is a critical lack of quality pre-service teacher training programs aimed at equipping teachers with professional competence and proficiency in subject content, lack of training in pedagogic theory, lack of in-service training, teacher practice, and post-training follow-up, and limited monitoring and professional support.

Asmara Community College of Education (ACCE), where the studied activity is located, is the first governmental teacher education institution established in 1945 during the period of British military administration. ACCE has a mandate to train primary school teachers who will be assigned to teaching positions by the Ministry of Education, and to provide in-service training and upgrading programs for teachers, who are already in service. The

9 Government of Eritrea 2012: 16.

10 Hamid, Zerai and Muhammedali 2016.

11 The National Curriculum Framework: 42-43.

12 E.g. UNESCO 2014.

13 Government of Eritrea 2013b.

National Commission of Higher Education accredits the diplomas provided by the ACCE. The integral linkage to the Ministry of Education supports effective placement of teachers after graduation. Academically, ACCE can be considered independent in terms of curriculum development and practical implementation of teacher training programs.

Until 2015, recruitment of students to primary teacher education at ACCE has been based on Grade 12 matriculation examination results only, so that the lowest-performing students have been selected for the low-status teacher education programs. Low student motivation resulting from involuntary placement has been a key challenge for the college. However, as the only primary teacher education institution in the country, ACCE has advocated for finding ways to reinvigorate the teaching profession and to increase the quality and motivation of teacher students. As a result of these efforts, the recruitment process of primary school teachers is being reformed.

The existing, yet developing, partnerships between Eritrean Higher Education Institutes and international actors can provide a valuable starting point to the achievement of the national education development objectives. This paper draws on the experience of the collaboration between ACCE, FCA, and the Teachers Without Borders (TWB) Network Finland launched in 2015.[14]

The focus of the study is to analyze the impact of Finnish-Eritrean collaboration on the attitudes and practices of the teacher educators at the ACCE. We aim to analyze 1) what kinds of gaps can be identified between the Eritrean Educational Policy regarding LCIP and the current classroom practices and

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14 Finn Church Aid (FCA) is a Finnish non-governmental humanitarian and development cooperation organization that operates in over twenty countries across four continents. FCA's work with local communities is organized into three key areas: the right to education, the right to peace, and the right to livelihood. FCA's work to support the Right to Quality Education in Eritrea is firmly based on FCA's Strategy – both the one covering the years 2013-2016 (Finn Church Aid 2013) as well as the new Strategy 2017 onwards (Finn Church Aid 2016). The strategy has guided FCA's work to support the institutional capacity of the Eritrean education institutions since 2015. Teachers Without Borders, a network based in Finland and coordinated by FCA, is a network of education experts who provide technical education expertise and are deployed for a period of six-twelve months to development programs run by FCA and other Finnish NGOs. At the core of the FCA Eritrea program on the Right to Quality Education are the efforts of two of these education experts who work in ACCE. The focus of their work is on enhancing holistic professional support and research required for quality teaching and learning in schools. Since the academic year 2015-2016, Finnish education experts sent through the TWB have worked at the ACCE, providing day-to-day support to professional development of the academic staff of the College in the forms of trainings, peer-learning support, co-teaching and collaborative action research.

2) in what ways has the ACCE-FCA cooperation built the capacity of teacher educators to provide quality education.

The analyzed data consists of a needs assessment done with ACCE teacher educators at the beginning of the academic year 2015-2016 and an end-of-year evaluation by teacher educators of collaborative practices, including study circles, pedagogical forums and learning cafes. The analysis was conducted after the first two education experts had finished their postings and before the next experts had started their work. The literature review below frames the study in proven solutions for building the capacity of teacher educators to engage in LCIP. Furthermore, the analysis will consider the emerging knowledge of these Finnish-Eritrean experiences, in order to offer suggestions and recommendations for the future development of ACCE-FCA cooperation and teacher education development more generally. Through the study, we want to provide evidence of practices that work in international professional collaboration in the area of teacher education to be used by FCA and other actors who work to support use of LCIP in developing countries.

Enhancing Learner-Centeredness in Teacher Education

To understand how learner-centeredness can be enhanced in teacher education, one must first look at those, who could implement such a pedagogy, that is, teacher educators:

> Just as student learning is significantly determined by the quality of teaching (of teachers by extension), teacher development (conceived as teacher learning) is in part determined by the quality of the learning opportunities which teachers (prospective, beginning and experienced) engage in. The quality of such learning opportunities is, in turn, determined in part by the quality of the designers and facilitators, that is, teacher educators and trainers.[15]

The professional development of teacher educators, and thus their ability to implement various pedagogies in teacher education, has begun to receive attention relatively recently.[16] While the rhetoric on professional development for teachers strongly advocates a linkage between teaching and learning, the reality is often top-down mandated and one-time sessions, leaving little room for more thorough involvement and control by teachers and teachers educators for their own professional development.[17]

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15 Dembele and Lefoka 2007: 547.

16 Loughran 2014: 271; Olatunji 2013: 73-74.

17 Loughran 2014: 271.

Loughran points out that many teacher educators begin their career as school teachers and only later take on the role of educating future teachers. This transition can be demanding as the work context of a higher education institution is an academic one, characterized by research in addition to teaching.[18] The more demanding goals of teacher education require teacher educators to have not only a sound grasp of pedagogy, but a mastery of how to use pedagogy effectively in their own practice. In Olatunji's study of professional development in African universities, he found that only a minority of universities offer induction programs to support new faculty members as they make the transition to university teaching.[19] Likewise, this issue is especially salient in the Eritrean context, where ACCE is still very much in the middle of the process of reforming teaching from a technical to an academic discipline.

The curriculum of teacher education is often organized so that there is a divide between subject matter and teaching about teaching. At the Asmara Community College of Education, both previous and ongoing efforts aim at holistic curricula for the different teacher education programs. However, it has proved to be a challenge to ensure a strong shared ownership of those curricula. In practice, the subject content is often prioritized at the cost of didactic support provided by the curricula. Such a fragmented starting point easily leads to a gap between theory and practice, because student teachers lack a coherent approach that would simultaneously support their learning and teaching.[20] The so-called "technical rationality model" assumes that knowledge on subject matter and pedagogy will be transmitted to student teachers in the same way that they will then go on to transmit this same knowledge in their future classrooms. Epistemologically this model is strongly inspired by behaviorism, and reflection by the student-teacher is notably missing. The idea of teaching as a technical profession is prevalent in much of the globe, also in Eritrea.[21]

Alternatively, a constructivist epistemology espouses the role of learners' interactions and reflection in creating knowledge. There are a variety of constructivist-oriented perspectives, but LCIP can be used as an umbrella term to understand and refer to such pedagogy. Simply, LCIP is "an approach that informs the practices of teaching based on the assumption that people learn best by actively constructing and assimilating knowledge rather than through the passive addition of discrete facts to an existing store of knowledge."[22]

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18 Loughran 2014: 272. See also Olatunji 2013: 74-75.

19 Olatunji 2013: 78-79.

20 Loughran 2014: 274.

21 Vavrus, Thomas and Bartlett 2011: 26.

22 Vavrus *et al.* 2011: 26-27.

Vavrus *et al.* situate the relatively recent push for LCIP in sub-Saharan Africa within the postcolonial historical context of education in the region. While there have been some attempts for reform or even transformation through decolonization of the mind, for the most part, formal education carries the legacy of colonialist education structures, including traditional, teacher-centered methods based on a technical understanding of teaching.[23] The dissatisfaction with these traditional methods has led to calls for LCIP and other education reforms.[24]

Many sub-Saharan African countries have joined the trend towards LCIP at least on the policy, if not on the practical, level since the mid-1990s (33). These policy changes were often linked to wider political and economic changes as reforms were implemented to appease international donors (34). The international development organizations have used their influence to a large extent to push the global educational trends involving LCIP in sub-Saharan Africa (36). Importantly, the Education for All global initiative was launched in 1990 and further enhanced awareness and eagerness to implement LCIP (35).[25]

Mtika and Gates, in their study on Malawian teacher students attempting to put learner-centered theory into practice, also point out how progressive pedagogical notions promoted in teacher education institutions have not resulted in widespread change in classroom practice.[26] They underscore that teacher educators and policy makers need to be aware of this to ensure that the educational system actually benefits from the strength of learner-centered pedagogy. This notion clearly illustrates the two levels of the puzzle: how to successfully transform an educational policy into practice in both teacher education and schools. Considering this same puzzle in their study on the professional development of teacher educators at the College of Education in Eritrean Institute of Technology (EIT), Posti-Ahokas *et al.* point out that there is limited research on how teacher educators can develop their own practice to be more learner-centered and bridge the gap between theory and practice.[27] This study aims to contribute to the knowledge-based practices that could be applied to bridge the gap and thus enhance quality and relevance of teacher education in Eritrea and elsewhere.

Citing a wider study of teacher education programs in sub-Saharan Africa, Vavrus *et al.* point to the conflict that often arises when LCIP is found on

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23 Shizha 2005: 67-68; Vavrus *et al.* 2011: 32-33.

24 Dembele and Lefoka 2007: 535-536; Shizha 2005: 67-68.

25 This paragraph is based on Varvrus *et al.* 2011: 33-35.

26 Mtika and Gates 2010.

27 Posti-Ahokas 2016.

the policy level and possibly preached by teacher educators, but much more rarely put into practice when educating student teachers.[28] Through his work in Uganda, O'Sullivan emphasized the importance of taking into account the contextual realities when aiming for pedagogical change in teacher education.[29] Posti-Ahokas *et al.* address the Eritrean teacher education scene in particular, positing the need to identify practices that support the professional development of teacher educators for the sake of reaching the Eritrean government's goal of quality and learner-centered education.[30]

The debate on LCIP in the African context is a lively one and can be understood as part of the broader discussion on the urgent need for increased quality in African education, as outlined by Dembele and Lefoka and Vavrus *et al.*[31] Vavrus *et al.* conclude that the conditions for quality teaching must include elements of various pedagogies. Eschewing a divide between learner-centered and teacher-centered approaches, it is instead wise to see these approaches lying on a spectrum from which the teacher is able to choose different approaches at different times.[32] LCIP's role in improving the quality of education is clear when teachers are empowered to implement various pedagogies in their own contexts.

The complex process of teacher educators' professional development demands that teacher educators themselves have "agency in the active development of their scholarship."[33] According to O'Sullivan, quality should be contextualized by identifying teaching and learning practices that are effective in their contexts.[34] As teachers should be trained to use those practices that work, the role of teacher education and particularly the pedagogical practices used in initial teacher education become critical.

When considering teacher educators' own journeys in professional development, it is vital to point out that recognizing and responding to students is only possible when teacher educators come to confront their own values.[35] This has been a crucial element in the professional development of the teacher educators in this study, as they have been exposed to new ideas and methods. Their own agency can be enhanced through sustained, structured professional development programs.[36]

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28 Vavrus *et al.* 2011: 38-42.

29 O'Sullivan 2010.

30 Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Eritrea; Posti-Ahokas *et al.* 2016: 1-2.

31 Dembele and Lefoka 2007; Vavrus *et al.* 2011.

32 Vavrus *et al.* 2011: 58.

33 Loughran 2014: 280.

34 O'Sullivan 2006.

35 Loughran 2014: 279.

36 O'Sullivan 2010.

Furthermore, a teacher's identity as a professional is formed in relation to their colleagues and student teachers, as well as affected by the wider society. In the Eritrean case, the low status of the teaching profession and the general lack of motivation amongst teachers and teacher educators can be a severe stumbling block for improving one's own practice.[37] In contrast, Posti-Ahokas *et al.*'s study shows the significance of collegial support in individual teacher educators' professional development, but also clarifies the need for sensitivity, contextual understanding and an interactive approach to professional development activities.[38] Similar, Isotalo points to the potential of collaborative learning communities within teacher education institutions as a key context for professional identity development and improvement of practice.[39]

In this study, it becomes clear that by using LCIP to learn about teaching with LCIP, the lessons learnt from research on professional development have been put into practice. Vavrus *et al.* argued that teachers tend to "teach as they were taught" and in this way end up teaching lower-order thinking skills.[40] As an example, a study by O'Sullivan in Namibia showed how teacher students who were taught in the college using teacher-centered methods transferred the practices to their own teaching in primary schools.[41] Loughran explains Lortie's concept of "the apprenticeship of observation," which is helpful in understanding how some approaches and beliefs are brought to a student teacher's or teacher educator's practice, regardless of pedagogy and more explicit intentions.[42] When one understands the weight of such beliefs on teaching, teacher educators are able to see "the ramifications for ways of working with students of teaching and what that might mean for enhancing the knowledge and development of their own professional practice."[43]

When teacher educators engage in meaningful professional development, they are able to affect change to make teacher education more learner-centered and interactive. Posti-Ahokas *et al.*'s study places Eritrean teacher education in the wider discussion on teacher education in sub-Saharan Africa, calling on continuous professional development activities for teacher educators in such a way that activities and training sessions utilize a LCIP.[44] Indeed, the real drive for LCIP comes when the teacher educator learns

37 Posti-Ahokas *et al.* 2016; Isotalo 2017.
38 Posti-Ahokas *et al.* 2016.
39 Isotalo 2017.
40 Vavrus *et al.* 2011: 32-33.
41 O'Sullivan 2002.
42 Lortie 1975 in Loughran 2014: 275.
43 Loughran 2014: 276.
44 Posti-Ahokas *et al.* 2016: 15-16.

to, in Russell's words, "resist the myth that teacher educators provide right answers about teaching, such as teaching tips and resource packages, so that productive professional learning can begin."[45]

It is clear that enhancing LCIP in teacher education takes time. Loughran cites several researchers, who all posit that teacher education should involve creating knowledge together, significant relationships between teacher educators and student teachers, and the modeling of sound practices by teacher educators.[46] Drawing on Westheimer and Lord, Posti-Ahokas *et al.* explain the significance of critical and open discussion in a professional learning community as a vital foundation for teacher educators to reflect and improve their own pedagogies.[47] Clearly, such an understanding of teacher education requires the ongoing and reflective professional development of teacher educators as they both teach about teaching and learn about teaching.[48] Changes in ways of thinking about and understanding learning require teacher educators to continue their professional development. Indeed, Vavrus *et al.* advocate that practicing teachers need time and support to understand and implement new pedagogies like LCIP.[49] In the same vein, Olatunji recommends that African IHE that want to strive for quality education put into place activities that promote professional development. These can include work within the faculty as well as work in cooperation with outside consultants.[50] This study focuses on the latter kind of work, in which Finnish education experts support the capacity of local Eritrean teacher educators.

Methodology and Protocol Followed

The target group was the ACCE teaching staff, approximately 56 teacher educators. (There was some fluctuation in the staffing throughout the academic year 2015-2016.) The age range of the target group was 21-72 years. The gender distribution was 4 female teachers and 52 male teachers.

The focal data consists of two surveys for teacher educators at ACCE, and of the continuous monitoring and evaluation process. Both questionnaires were distributed to the entire teaching staff. The number of returned needs assessment questionnaires was 31. The number of returned end-of-year evaluations was 17.

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45 Russell in Loughran 2014: 279.
46 Loughran 2014: 274.
47 Posti-Ahokas *et al.* 2016: 5-6.
48 Loughran 2014: 275; Olatunji 2013: 76.
49 Vavrus *et al.* 2011: 69.
50 Olatunji 2013: 81.

The first of the two surveys was conducted in November 2015 as part of FCA's needs assessment upon entering the College and starting new cooperation. The first two TWB education experts started to work in ACCE in October 2015. The second survey is the end-of-year evaluation conducted in June 2016, after the first academic year during which ACCE and FCA were working in cooperation.

The research design of this study is mainly qualitative, and data has been collected using several methods. In addition to the data collected through the questionnaires, the personal experience of the international education experts is used as a significant reference. Continuous and frequent classroom observations, both at ACCE and in schools of different educational levels, consultations, and co-teaching helped build a comprehensive understanding of the current situation. The brief review of literature on professional development in teacher education presented in the previous section frames the qualitative content analysis of the data.

Presentation of Findings: Needs Assessment

The first data set includes the answers to the first two questions of the needs assessment survey conducted in the beginning of the academic year 2015-2016.

1. The Eritrean National Curriculum emphasizes a learner-centered and interactive pedagogy. How do you implement these approaches in your work as a teacher educator?
2. The Eritrean National Curriculum highlights the learners' active participation in their own learning process and the development of creativity and critical thinking. Can you give examples of how you promote these goals in your teaching?

The 31 answers to these two questions resonate a somewhat consistent voice. Roughly summarized, the answers are characterized by four features. First, the answers are heavily problem-focused and tend to highlight the challenges involved in implementing LCIP in the Eritrean context. Next, answers emphasize methods instead of philosophies, and in this way portray LCIP more as a set of methods than a philosophy or way of thinking about teaching and learning. In addition, the methods are listed without contexts. Fourth, the answers reflect uncertainty about what LCIP is on a practical level.

Many of the teacher educators felt that LCIP is something that cannot be implemented in their context. This becomes evident in both the survey answers and particularly in the professional conversations with the educa-

tors. A third (9 out of the total 31) brought up experienced obstacles with applying LCIP. The answers reflect the same issues that are typically brought up in conversation too. The following reasons include material and structural challenges, but also issues related to human resources. Teacher educators pointed out their own challenges as well as those of their students, in particular the unqualified in-service teachers, who study at ACCE to gain accreditation:

- Large class sizes;
- Shortage of facilities;
- Time pressure in delivering vast subject contents;
- Difficulty of changing the teacher-centered tradition;
- English as the medium of instruction;
- Students' poor academic competence;
- In-service teachers' inefficient competence in applying LCIP;
- In-service teachers' lack of professional motivation;
- Teacher educators' lack of professional motivation;
- Teacher educators' inefficient competence in applying LCIP.

The comments resonate the findings of several previous studies.[51] An apparently widespread perception amongst the teacher educators was that large class size is a stumbling block for applying LCIP. Also, they experienced that the shortage of teaching aids prevents the use of LCI methods. Many of the answers also reflect concern for unqualified in-service teachers' inefficient skills in applying LCIP. This answer summarizes a cascade of experienced concerns:

> In my opinion in Eritrea it is impossible to use learner-centered and interactive pedagogy. Because the size of the class is very big, you can't get enough material and specially in elementary school the teachers will not [have] enough knowledge of these ideas.

In accordance, the collaborative pedagogical activities during the academic year 2015-2016 paid attention to exemplifying a solution-oriented approach to LCIP, showing how learner-centeredness can be seen as a way to solve the challenges posed by e.g. large class sizes or lack of materials. The general goal was to transfer the focus of attention from problems to solutions, calling for resourcefulness instead of resources. Novel ways of overcoming the experienced challenges were created together (e.g. during pedagogical forum

51 See Mtika and Gates 2010; Vavrus *et al.* 2011.

meetings), best practices from other comparable contexts were discussed (e.g. during study circle meetings), and concrete methods were experienced and tested (e.g. during training in LCIP for teacher educators).

Several answers manifested the unfamiliarity with LCIP in practice. As widely recorded in educational research,[52] teachers tend to favor and hence pass on the types pedagogical practice they have been objected to themselves.

> It is not easy to change from the teacher-centered to student-centered. So we need to really feel the importance of LCIP.

> Most of our schools don't apply this method in their teaching and learning activities specially in the lower classes (levels) (intermediate and junior).

The nature of the cooperation with non-Eritrean education experts also led to challenging viewpoints on both sides. The teacher educators' attitude towards LCIP was positive in general. However, especially in discussions with the educators, it also became very clear that the LCIP approach was seen as something requiring extra effort and energy instead of easing the teachers' work. Some of the answers credited the efforts made to promote the LCIP and the usefulness of professional development activities:

> [W]ith continuous workshops and discussions it somehow is okay. But still we have problems in class sizes and having motivated teachers.

As the answer above indicates, teacher educators are concerned with the structural problems preventing LCIP from becoming widely rooted in the school system. In the collegial discussions in particular, the low status of the teaching profession and difficulties in recruiting qualified teachers and motivated teacher students were recurring themes. Furthermore, even though the teacher educators were apparently familiar with the national educational policy in general, most of them seemed to be short of a deeper understanding of the policy's objectives. Also, they seemingly lacked a feeling of having possibilities to influence the system. These observations call for a recognition from the educational policy makers who should carefully consider how to effectively support the stakeholders active in implementing the educational policy, and how to use their expertise and experience as a resource in further developing the policy.

From a broader perspective, academic success in Eritrea is traditionally measured in high stakes testing and numerical grades within an educational

52 Loughran 2014; O'Sullivan 2002; Vavrus *et al.* 2011.

system that is widely based on rote learning. Thus, the teacher educators, too, often struggle to recognize the value of creative thinking and testing hypotheses as part of the learning process. This, for some, makes LCIP seem like a strange and ineffective approach. Quality learning is easily understood as high achievement in the traditional, exam-driven system.

Some of the most commonly mentioned individual methods associated with LCIP as reflected in the educators' answers were discussion, question and answer, role-play, brainstorming, and open-ended questions. While the answers on the one hand display a great deal of commitment to challenging and guiding students towards higher-order thinking, they on the other reveal a shakiness in fully understanding the concept of LCIP. The answers frequently contain hesitation markers such as "I try my best," "as far as I can," "even though – but." This together with the problem-focus creates a sense of defensiveness, as if LCIP was regarded as slightly unpractical or inconvenient. Many of the answers reveal an underlying thinking of LCIP as a teacher-dictated assignment which gives students a limited space for creative thinking before returning to the more familiar method of teacher-led lecturing.

> Question and answer method is my preferable method that I currently employ in my classroom practices. In addition to this, I also give my learners assignments that would help them to make sense of whatever issue they are supposed to accomplish.

In the collaborative planning and action, the FCA education experts strived to systematically place emphasis on regarding LCIP as a comprehensive line of thinking instead of a set of separate methods and techniques. In other words, efforts were made to see the forest from the trees. Importantly the pedagogical activities involved engaging the teacher educators in trying out LCIP in practice and also being subject to LCIP methodology during for example workshops. The educators were encouraged to modify the exemplified practices to suit their subject-specific needs, personal preferences, and familiarity with their students.

Another marked concern displayed in the needs assessment answers was that of the medium of instruction. After primary school (grades 1-5), the medium of instruction changes from the mother tongue to English in Eritrean middle schools, high schools, and IHE. In reality, the English skills of the majority of teachers are at best very basic.

> Of course, if learning in our country is in vernacular, we may not face problem to use learner-centered pedagogy. However, how the students actively participate in English???

The need to support both English teaching and teaching in English had already been identified by the management of ACCE. FCA activity in this area is a sustained feature of the cooperation.

Overall, it is also noteworthy that the kinds of tag words that are usually related with learner-centered study or theory are widely missing or few and far between in the answers. A person well familiar with the theory around learner-centered education would be likely to use concepts such as *active learning, responsibility for learning, innovative thinking, creativity, ability to take initiative, life-long learning skills, learning to learn, problem-solving skills* or *social skills* when describing such practices. Eight of the total of 62 answers (by 31 respondents) to questions 1 and 2 mention problem solving as a method applied. Creative and critical thinking are mentioned in 14 answers. Students' active participation is mentioned in six answers. Other concepts listed above were not mentioned.

To sum up, the needs assessment manifested a relatively superficial understanding and a light resistance towards LCIP. The approach was generally regarded as advantageous, but a deeper understanding of "why" seemed to be missing. The classroom observations and co-teaching experiences also strengthened the recognition that LCIP is rarely a prominent feature in either Eritrean primary teacher education classes or in the primary schools.

In consequence, the FCA activities throughout the academic year chose a consistent focus on approaching LCIP and educational quality through a variety of activities and perspectives, with practical, solution-focused routines. In addition to discussing, studying, and observing educational quality and LCIP in practice, the teacher educators were involved in activities where they took up the role of learners. This method was solidified by diverse ways of reflection and comparing cognate experiences.

Presentation of Findings: End-of-Year Evaluation

The second data set is from the end-of-year evaluation. The main message emerging from this set of data is an experienced strengthening of a practical understanding of the LCIP practice. The answers still heavily build on a methodology focus which indicates that it takes time for a new way of pedagogical thinking to take root. The second data set includes the answers to four question items on the evaluation survey. Questions 1 and 2 were multiple choice questions (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree) with the option to specify how in one's own words. Questions 3 and 4 were open-ended.

1. I have learned new pedagogical practices that help me apply a more learner-centered and interactive approach in my teaching.
2. My professional identity as teacher educator has strengthened.
3. What has changed in my practice as an educator as a result of FCA interventions?
4. What kinds of new methods have you used, inspired by the new skills you have learned?

Of the seventeen teacher educators who returned the end-of-year evaluation questionnaire, eleven strongly agreed that they had learned new pedagogical practices that help them apply a more learner-centered and interactive approach in their teaching through FCA-cooperation. Six agreed. Ten respondents strongly agreed that their professional identity as teacher educator had strengthened. Six agreed and one disagreed.

The answers to both questions 1 and 2 reveal a way of recognizing professional value and potential in the familiar, everyday context:

> Now I am able what kind of materials can I use from my surrounding environments.

> It has refreshed my mind to use what I have learned and read about in books to use them.

The most striking finding regarding the sixth question about practice development was that – even though the question did not point the way towards specifically considering LCIP practices – seven out of the eleven answers mention an increased application of LCIP.

> I have started to engage in learning-centered interactive pedagogy.

> To plant the seed of "nothing is impossible."

The seventh question rather openly ushered the respondents to think about new LCIP-based methods they had applied. As the focus of collaborative action throughout the year had been on putting educational quality and LCIP into practice, it was not surprising that most respondents mentioned methods they had practiced and discussed during the range of pedagogical activities. However, these answers also support the previous finding that resources can be discovered in the commonplace setting, even within what might have previously been seen as troublesome.

> How to take advantage of the existing resource and class-size, how to inspire my learners towards the lesson.

> The work station activities, in a group work inspired me and I modified it and used it in my class context.

> Discussing with colleagues to the use of similar way of teaching, exploring ideas more than before.

Also, the answers give voice to thinking on a deeper level about the essence of learning. For example, one teacher educator answered:

> Individuals are responsible for their learning, and the role of the teacher is to facilitate the process.

The end of semester evaluation demonstrated an openness to change among the teacher educators. Despite the professional commitment evident in the needs assessment answers, that set of data did not directly suggest such flexibility and readiness to develop and implement new approaches during and after what, at the end of the day, is a relatively limited time. The data from the end-of-year evaluation, however, reveals a very positive attitude towards personal professional development and a generally strengthened professional identity.

The concern regarding these answers is the proportionately low number of returned questionnaires (17 out of 56). The returned questionnaires give a very successful image of the first academic year of cooperation between ACCE and FCA. Although there is reason to believe that the results reflect the teacher educators' true experience, the possibility of a higher questionnaire return rate by those especially satisfied with their experience of the collaboration needs to be acknowledged. At any rate, it becomes evident that at least a third of the ACCE teaching staff felt they had benefitted from the collaboration. This understanding was also supported by the constant increase in collegial consultations and initiatives taken by the Eritrean teacher educators to undertake common projects, as well as by the continuous feedback through working together during the academic year 2015-2016.

Implications and Key Lessons

The starting point for this study was the new Eritrean National Curriculum in 2008, with its heavy emphasis on LCIP, and the Finnish-Eritrean collaboration between FCA education experts and ACCE teacher educators. The

study sought to identify 1) what kinds of gaps can be identified between the Eritrean Educational Policy regarding LCIP and the current classroom practices and 2) in what ways the ACCE-FCA cooperation built the capacity of teacher educators to provide quality education. The results of the study reflect the work done in the academic year 2015-2016, by analyzing both a needs assessment from the beginning of the year and an end of semester evaluation on collaborative practices, such as study circles, pedagogical forums and co-teaching.

The long-term presence of FCA education experts has allowed for a continuous, repetitive and well-informed cooperative process of giving the teacher educators chances to become learners themselves. In the trainings and other pedagogical activities, they have been given the opportunity to integrate new experience in their existing expertise. Also, the teacher educators have been encouraged to share their knowledge and skills among the professional community. In addition to being taught about and discussing the pedagogical philosophy of LCIP, the teacher educators have also had the chance to try out activities that promote learner-centeredness, and are tailored to their context. An open and sincere collegial relationship has encouraged frank discussion where critical views and doubts have been welcomed. Despite a plenty of hesitation expressed along the way, the end of semester evaluation shows that the teacher educators strongly felt they had benefitted from the cooperation.

The findings show that continuous professional development activities increased the motivation of Eritrean teacher educators. The international exposure led to learning on both sides and provided modeling of learner-centered practices. Teacher educators' notions of LCIP remained, in some instances, problem focused, as they struggled to develop sound practices amidst many real, practical challenges in the Eritrean teaching environment. The emphasis was on methods rather than philosophies of education, indicating that further reflection on the nature of learning and teaching is needed. Indeed, a deep understanding of LCIP remains to be reached. This focus on methods, however, also often rightly brought discussion back to the context in which the participants live and teach. In this way, they had agency over their own professional development, seeking solutions and practices applicable in their own work.

The key lessons learnt by ACCE and FCA include the importance of dialogue and joint planning. Indeed, building trusting collegial relationships takes time. Conducting a needs assessment at the beginning of the cooperation was vital for ensuring that all voices were heard in the beginning stages of planning. The needs assessment in itself exemplifies a way of opening the

dialogue and willingness to learn from the context. The collaborative working methods, observation, discussion and feedback led to increased relevance in training and other activities. Secondly, joint planning and a long-term presence in-country made it possible to gradually transfer responsibility from FCA to ACCE staff. Indeed, by using LCIP in training and other activities, ACCE teacher educators were active from the beginning. By taking time to know each other and share points of interest, it was possible to increasingly transfer responsibility of professional development. Ideally, the ownership of the activities should be shared widely by the teacher educators' community. International experts' role should be genuinely collegial; experts are also developing as professionals through collaboration, learning and receiving from the Eritrean colleagues under ACCE management.

Another critical lesson was that change begins with individuals. Collegial support and continuous professional development activities are necessary support structures for individuals, who aim to improve their own practice.[53] Individual teacher educators showed motivation and agency in taking responsibility for their own professional development.

The challenges to collaboration also taught us valuable lessons. Certainly, there must be a balance of expectations. The Finnish education experts sought to bring international exposure, activities for professional development and a culture of learning. On the other hand, their Eritrean counterparts were understandably interested in material support and sponsorship for degrees in addition to the aforementioned. The motivation of teacher educators to participate in such cooperation can be difficult to raise, as individual teachers might struggle with difficult life contexts, the lack of incentives or formal credits. The sustainability of change beyond single projects remains an issue, as professional development is a long-term process that requires support, resources and time. The findings of this study challenge international actors to move towards more structured approaches to professional development of teacher educators that go beyond the common one-off workshop approach.[54]

Overall, the findings are promising in that they point to changing pedagogical practice and an enhanced culture for professional development at ACCE. The activities focused on collaborative professional development that aims to build a sustained professional learning community at ACCE. The findings have shown how these collaborative activities have enhanced teacher motivation and commitment at ACCE which could potentially contribute to increased staff retention.

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53 See also Posti-Ahokas *et al.* 2016.

54 O'Sullivan 2010; Posti-Ahokas *et al.* 2016.

Institutional capacity building ensures that new and refined systems and policies can take root, and that programmatic activities in the short-term have a sustainable and lasting impact long after program activities conclude or passionate supporters have left. Based on the results, it is recommended that the current ACCE-FCA cooperation continues. Indeed, the study suggests that professional collaboration between teachers and teacher educators from the South and the North is a worthwhile enterprise.

While this study offers proven solutions and emerging knowledge on increased quality of education through the professional development of teacher educators, it is vital that in the future the wider scope of structural challenges in the Eritrean education sector are addressed. There is a clear need to re-evaluate assessment systems: the current examination system compels both students and teachers to stay rooted in a system of rote learning. Until this system is reformed, it is anticipated that rote learning and preparations for exams will continue to dominate classrooms at all levels of education. Such high stakes exams undermine the goals of the National Curriculum 2008 to found education on LCIP. Therefore, teachers' and teacher educators' continuous access to meaningful professional development and study of classroom practices are critical to contextualize LCIP in the Eritrean education system.

Towards a Conclusion

The objectives of advocating LCIP could be summarized into three macrolevel goals: 1) learner empowerment, 2) improved educational quality, and 3) improved status of the teacher profession.

Reaching these goals would in turn lead towards satisfying the Sustainable Development Goal 4 items. Learner empowerment encompasses promotion of gender equality and equality in general, as encouraging critical and creative thinking would support the questioning of experienced injustice. Understanding the usefulness of learning creates a solid basis into life-long learning. Reaching this understanding requires responsibility and possibility to at least limited self-determination to be given for the learner. Improved quality of education and learner empowerment can potentially lead into flourishing entrepreneurial innovation and activity. Obviously, the learners' increased competences mean a better-capacitated society. On a different level, yet extremely importantly, enhanced quality of education will ensure basic literacy and numeracy skills throughout Eritrea.

As the status of teacher profession in Eritrea is currently relatively low, this is a key issue calling for change. At present, it is very difficult to recruit qualified, or any, teachers in remote areas of the country. An increased number of applicants into teacher education is the only way of solving the

critical problem of too few teachers, and would also improve the accessibility to basic education. Furthermore, did the teaching profession become more attractive for well-performing students, this would manifest in increased professional motivation and commitment to develop the school culture, and the educational culture more broadly.

Perhaps the most important bottleneck in making any educational policy reality through practice is in proper training of teachers and, crucially, teacher educators to implement the policy. Mere theoretical informing does not seem to be enough. Even if the theory becomes widely accepted and the philosophy embraced, the practical implementation might remain a distant goal. However, the findings of this study suggest that significant educational change can be brought about in a relatively short period of time.

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PART IV
Vocational and Informal Training

14

Could Vocational Training Be Part of the Solution for Sub-Saharan Africa's Youth Unemployment Crisis?

Mariama Mary Fall

Abstract: This paper seeks to stress the many obstacles to employment in West Africa, including the length of training curriculum, the mismatch between the training offered and the labor market needs, and recognition of diplomas and qualifications. It gives a few definitions of competencies and transitions, especially those required for vocational training, to address the skills and knowledge critical for young Africans' adaptability and employment possibilities. I present vocational training as a potential solution and its actual usefulness and discuss where it stands in the utilitarian versus transformative debate on the role of education. My key results after interviewing 31 young: people, aged 25 to 35, showed the undeniable link between poverty and education, the vicious spiral of lack of education that leads to poverty while being poor hampers access to education in Africa but also the need for training in line with the job market. I conclude with the idea that with market demands constantly changing, it is important to provide boys and girls with technical education and vocational training programs relevant to their social and economic environment.

Introduction

Youth unemployment keeps rising and is one of the major issue economies and societies in the world face today, both in developed and developing countries. No fewer than 475 million new jobs will have to be created over the next ten years to absorb the 73 million young people currently unemployed and

the 40 million people entering the labor market each year.[1] There are also 1.44 billion workers in precarious jobs throughout the world. In parallel, OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) surveys show that both employers and young people consider that many graduates are ill-prepared for the world of work. In many countries, the informal sector and the traditional rural sector remain a major source of employment. Workers in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia account for more than half of this total, with three out of four working under precarious working conditions in these regions. Sub-Saharan Africa is the youngest world region with 200 million young people aged 15 to 24 years, which represents 60% of its population. Instead of being a force for the continent, this demographic explosion is of concern as 65% of the youth are unemployed.[2]

Vocational training has been raising a lot of expectations in addressing youth unemployment and is considered the perfect answer to improving the competitiveness of enterprises. However it has long been (and still partly is) considered a choice of lesser quality, a solution in case of school failure, stifling the potential of part of the population that could emerge with training focused on their needs and interests.[3]

This paper seeks to stress the many obstacles to employment in West Africa, including the length of training curriculum, the mismatch between the training offered and the labor market needs, and recognition of diplomas and qualifications. I will discuss a few definitions of competencies and transitions, especially those required for TVET, to address the skills and knowledge critical for young Africans' adaptability and employment possibilities. I will then look at vocational training as a solution and its actual usefulness, while discussing where it stands in the utilitarian versus transformative debate on the role of education. To do so, I will try to answer the following questions: Are young African acquiring the essential attitudes, knowledge, and skills needed in today's labor market and to function well in all other spheres of life? Migration and globalization being a reality today, how transferable will these skills be? Will they be valuable in but also outside the continent? Thirty-one young Africans, age 25 to 35, were interviewed and revealed that their training wasn't necessarily linked or useful to their current job/occupation. When asked about the link between education and poverty, results showed that it is a vicious spiral as lack of education leads to poverty and other risks such as health risks, while being poor in Africa can hamper access to

1 See: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_337069.pdf

2 Betcherman 2015.

3 ILO 2016.

education: the many governments' failures accelerated the creation of private schools, which are not always the best in terms of quality but at least keep youth who can afford it occupied. Those who cannot afford private schools and cannot rely on public schools will most likely remain a poor household.

Sub-Saharan Africa: Youth Obstacles to Employment Context

By 2050, the number of young Africans is expected to rise to 830 million, half of the world's youth population. School enrolment rates remain insufficient with nearly 60% of 15-24 year-olds who did not go beyond primary school and 10% who completed secondary school. Those with a primary level are usually engaged in agriculture-related work. Unemployment is not the only problem but also to the precariousness of employment that exists, for instance situations of underemployment and low wages.[4] In regions of the continent where school enrolment and other indicators seem to indicate progress in education, the obstacle is shifting and is now the level of (in) adequacy of young people's competencies with respect to the demands of employers; the supply and demand for skills does not appear to be consistent, at least among employers.

West Africa, particularly the French-speaking part, is not completely freed from the colonial legacy and struggles to provide vocational training systems that can respond to the region's development needs. The schooling of the colonial period still in force in practice was too long, too theoretical, and mainly aimed to train civil servants. This had made classic training a reference, an ideal to attain, granting it a certain social rank. Increasingly, governments have been making efforts to adapt to the changing needs of the labor market, but Éyébiyi considers that West Africa is torn between international requirements and local realities when it comes to Higher Education: the latter has become a great market value, which the populations have difficulty in acquiring.[5] This internationalization has also created profound changes in the curricula, which do not always match their realities. Moreover, income-generating trades or activities in rural areas are neither valued nor promoted, but the population of West Africa is mainly rural! Schools and training centers rarely available outside major urban centers, and this means additional transport and accommodation costs for rural people who would like to pursue education or training.[6]

4 Fox and Filmer 2014.
5 Éyébiyi 2011.
6 Éyébiyi 2011.

Social scientists have long been interested in the relationship between education and employment. Authors such as Yabiku and Schlabach found that length of schooling generally delayed youth transitions as student roles are often considered incompatible with other roles, normative expectations of societies, particularly in West Africa, sometimes considering the completion of education as a prerequisite for the role of an adult: spouse, parent, and/or employee.[7]

Defining Competencies and Transitions

Competencies

UNESCO identifies three types of competencies as essential: (1) basic reading and numeracy skills that will enable youth to meet at least their primary needs. They will also make it possible to pursue studies at a higher level and thus aspire to better jobs; (2) transferable skills such as problem-solving, creativity, leadership, entrepreneurial skills, to prove a certain adaptability in different workplaces; (3) the technical and professional skills required in many areas requiring specific technical skills, from sewing to agriculture and construction.[8] These three types of skills present a variety of opportunities for young people to acquire a mix of the three kinds of skills or those that best fit their environments, their personal abilities and the opportunities available to them.

However, the notion of competency has multiple definitions. An author such as Perrenoud sees a competency as the task it allows to perform and confers the person performing it a social recognition but also a certain responsibility (e.g. doctor responsible for his patient, professional driver responsible for its passengers)[9] Thus, when we see someone performing an action, we can deduce that he has the competency required for its realization or not. Voorhees defines it as an integration of the skills, knowledge and abilities needed to accomplish a specific task. This notion of competency is differentiated from the plural form, *competencies.* Montmollin insisted early on that particular plural form and defined competencies as stabilized sets of knowledge and know-how, standard behaviors and types of reasoning that can be implemented without new learning.[10]

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7 Yabiku and Schlabach 2009, and Raymo 2003 on student roles, and also Rindfuss, Swicegood and Rosenfeld. 1987 on adults' roles.

8 UNESCO 2012: 24.

9 Perrenoud 1999.

10 Voorhees 2001; Montmollin 1986.

The constitutive elements of the notion of competence consistently come from the analysis of a corpus of definitions in education sciences and imply that: (1) competency is always associated to a situation, to a family of situations and to the fields of experience of a person or a group of persons; (2) the development of a competency is based on the mobilization and coordination by a person or a collective of people, a diversity of resources, the resources specific to the people and resources specific to certain circumstances of the situation; (3) a competency is actually constructed only in the case of a completed and socially acceptable treatment of the situation; (4) competency results from the dynamic and constructive process of dealing with the situation, i.e. a person/group of persons are declared competent after the situation has been dealt with.[11]

Transitions

The definition of "youth" slightly differs from country to country; The United Nations puts them in a 15 to 24 years old bracket while the Economic Commission for Africa puts them in a 15 to 35 years old one. The definition of "employment" also differs in different regions of the continent, depending on the economic models and realities of the countries: in sub-Saharan Africa, employment is still largely informal, which makes it difficult to assess the situation, in contrast to some more advanced countries where employment is structured and surrounded by standards (wages, contracts, insurance, etc.). Elder and Koné find it crucial that employment is decent, as access to employment is the first guarantee for youth's socio-economic equilibrium but also for improved self-esteem.[12] The authors refer to the school-to-work transition indicators designed to measure the ease or difficulty with which youth can access employment; for instance, the transition of a young person from the end of his schooling to his first "official" job, stressing that higher degrees do not necessarily guarantee an easier transition.

Their study showed that transition periods were longer for young men than for women (32 versus 20 months), with gradually shorter transition periods depending on the level of education (96 months for those with a primary education versus 19 months for those with a university degree). Elder and Koné thus distinguish three types of transition: (1) the complete transition which means stable employment; (2) the ongoing transition which implies that the individual is out of school and unemployed or engaged in a temporary, unsatisfactory job; (3) the "not-started transition," which means that the individual is still in school or is "inactive," meaning not looking for a job.

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11 Jonnaert 2013: 5.

12 Elder and Koné 2014.

In many sub-Saharan countries, the first work experience for youth, even the first internship, happens relatively late. Youth are educated at school and then enter the labor market sequentially, making the school-to-work transition difficult due to their lack of practical experience. Companies therefore have a role to play in the skills development of youth through practical training and access to employment: educators and governments should not be alone in this. Indeed, it seems clear that if companies aspire to a workforce in line with their expectations, they must participate in workforce training as their effective involvement allows training validation and tailored to enterprises' needs.[13] It is in such a relationship that we can look forward to improving the workforce quality, productivity, service, and industry growth. All this will necessarily improve economic growth and contribute to unemployment reduction.

Labor Market Needs and Skills/Training Inadequacy

In Francophone sub-Saharan Africa, educational models might have contributed even more to the inadequacy of work and training in technical and vocational training.[14] This inadequacy seeks to be solved in the region through work-study training that combines theoretical study at school and phases of professional activities during work placements.[15] After having realized and accepted that the technical and vocational training of the colonial era no longer corresponded to the socio-economic realities and even less to the needs of their development, this work-study type of training has been adopted in education systems by most Francophone African countries for more than a decade now (Cameroon 1998, Mali 1989, Senegal 2009, Burkina Faso in progress) but is not fully implemented yet. The impact should be visible on the socio-economic and industrial development of these countries.

Jean also finds that the mismatch between training and employment is aggravated by the increase in youth unemployment at the end of their technical training, while the professional development of technical teachers remains problematic. These teachers receive a very theoretical training, often without trainee placements and seldom continuous professional development during their career. The few training programs available are obsolete and inadequate for technological and scientific changes.[16] Regarding training schools themselves, equipment, laboratories, and other structures for

13 Jean 2014.
14 Jean 2014.
15 Angel-Urdinola *et al*. 2010.
16 Jean 2014.

professional work are sorely lacking. To make this match between training and employment a reality, African countries must show greater political will and adopt concrete reforms in the education system the quality of vocational training first occurs in its design.[17] According to the ILO, the alternation between training and apprenticeship is the best way of achieving technical skills for the learner: s/he acquires the theoretical knowledge required for the trade of his/her choice while acquiring practical skills during his internship. In the same vein, mechanisms for the early identification of school drop-outs should be provided and young people should be encouraged to stay in school by accessing other training or employment channels, with particular emphasis on so-called "second chance" programs for those who have never attended school or dropped out too early, so that they can also acquire basic knowledge and skills.[18]

Since most African youth work in the informal sector, it would be logical that they benefit from training adapted to them, but this is not the case. Thus, practical training in the form of internships, apprenticeships, is, at the moment, one of the prominent solutions to deal with the inadequacy of skills. Unfortunately, in West Africa, 90% of training is informal apprenticeships or courses based on private arrangements and personal relationships, which annihilates the quality of these courses.[19]

New skills and competencies, real and perceived, are essential to the achievement of socio-economic objectives dictated by these countries current development constraints and realities. Jean points out an extremely important aspect raised by the June 2006 African Union action plan, which states that: "In our 21st century knowledge-based society and dominated by information and communication technologies, with market demands constantly changing, it is important to provide boys and girls with relevant technical education and vocational training programs."[20] This AU statement means that Africa cannot afford the luxury of solely contemplating the humanistic spirit of education. In all countries around the world, although education is not the only variable to solve all youth problems and those of socio-cultural, economic, and industrial development (as the practice of democracy, culture, peace, economic policies, employment, and information policies are other variables that have an impact on society and its day-to-day management), it is nonetheless essential to human development.

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17 Perrenoud 1999.

18 ILO 2016.

19 Bertrand and Crepon 2014.

20 Cf. Jean 2014. Quote from "Extraordinary Summit of the African Union on Employment, Poverty Eradication and Inclusive Development," Ouagadougou, 3-7 September 2014,.

ILO also argues that youth unemployment rate sometimes increases with the level of education: young people with tertiary education are two to three times more likely to be unemployed than young people who dropped out at the end of primary level. This confirms the persistent inadequacy between the supply of training and demand for jobs that we mentioned earlier. In response to the inadequacy that makes youth employment a major challenge for sub-Saharan countries, the African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES) encourages the acquisition of skills but also encourages a greater synergy between universities and the private sector. Employers' involvement in curriculum development is highly fostered since they are the first "users of the universities' products." Such an approach would make it possible to see "what they can bring to the university and what the university can give them back. (…) The disparity in supply and demand in Africa no longer needs to be proved given the high number of unemployed graduates."[21]

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), a Punctual-but Short-Term Solution?

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) includes education, training and skills development covering a wide range of occupational fields, production activities, services, and livelihoods. As part of lifelong learning, TVET can lead to certification following continuing education and some professional development. TVET also includes a wide range of skills development opportunities adapted to national and local contexts such as learning writing, reading, and numeracy skills, and developing cross-curricular and citizenship skills. According to UNESCO, TVET therefore contributes to the development of individuals' knowledge, skills and competencies for better job and career planning, livelihoods, and lifelong learning. Individuals are better equipped to facilitate their transition to workforce, combine learning and work, make informed choices, and fulfill their aspirations.[22] It essentially allows the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in a particular trade or occupation. To do this, the programs take into account generic and specific skills. Together, they ensure practice and thus proven experience and are referred to as a "technical skill." Also, TVET being anchored in the labor market, it anticipates and facilitates changes in the context of work and organization, including the emergence of new industries and occupations, as well as scientific and technological breakthroughs. By promoting entrepreneurship, TVET promotes self-employment and business growth and can

21 ILO 2016.
22 UNESCO 2012.

also offer skills development opportunities for low-skilled, underemployed or unemployed people, out-of-school youth, and individuals who are neither in employment nor in education and training ("NEET").

However, vocational training often refers to a shortcut, a way to avoid long and expensive training, but sufficient to access employment. As few studies or systematic evaluations are carried out, the impact of these trainings on the economy (businesses and individuals) can be difficult to measure or prove. Therefore, a sine qua non condition of relevant vocational training is its accreditation and recognition, even if only regional, although preferably continental and international, in order to guarantee greater mobility of people and skills and to respond to demands from a given country, depending on the relevant skills acquired by the learners.

Educational economists highlight an interesting dichotomy of TVET and argue that learners in this system face a compromise between its short-term benefits and long-run costs. Indeed, in the short term, their transition from training to employment is fast enough because they have skills that can be exploited immediately. But over the long term, these skills can depreciate quickly if they are not "up-to-date" and tied to the ever-changing technology and business needs. However, TVET still does not meet the needs of the economy and the labor market. According to the ILO, the acceleration of economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa during the 2000s has not resulted in a significant improvement in labor market performances, despite some progress, compared to the 1990s.[23]

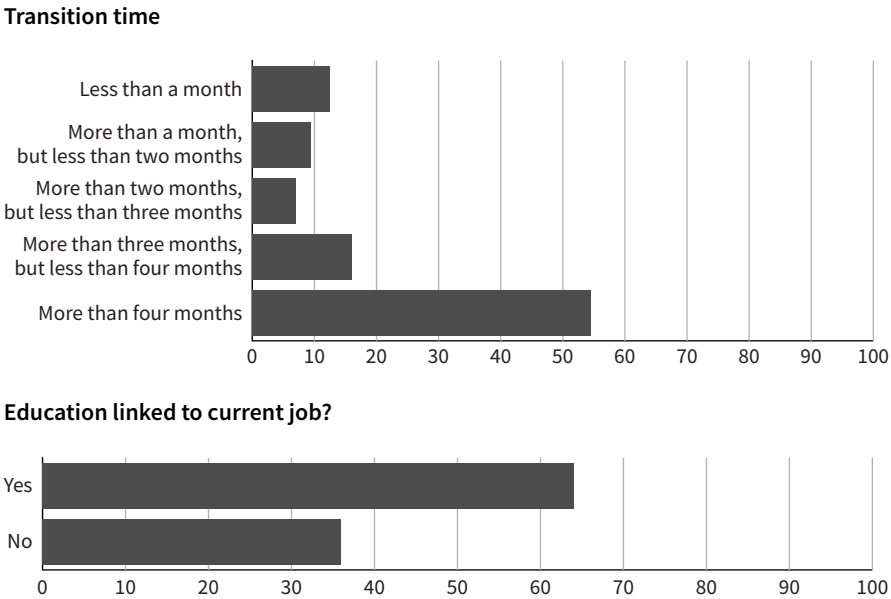
On the other hand, vocational training raises many expectations because it has long been presented as the perfect answer to improving the competitiveness of companies, although it faces several obstacles: the length of training curriculum, the inadequacy between courses offered and the labor market needs, and the recognition of diplomas and qualifications. West Africa (particularly the French-speaking countries) has difficulty in providing a vocational training system that can meet the development needs of the region. Also, African universities and research centers are accused of being ivory towers producing out-of-date graduates working on subjects that are too far from the social, economic, cultural, and environmental challenges faced by their countries. For me, the labor market needs are defined as the needs due to employment growth, replacement of the labor force, and the emergence of new sectors or fields. ILO advocates, as a beginning of a solution that, for a better understanding of the subjects taught and better practice, vocational schools should require that learners have at least one year of

23 ILO 2016.

work experience.[24] But in this case the problem would remain a whole: they will certainly require a minimum of qualification and training before they can access their first job because the first experience requires the recruiter's trust, usually justified by a previous work experience.

Another issue is the over-privatization of training schools is almost a scourge, or in any case a double-edged sword because yes, the choice is there for the learners and those schools are often recognized and approved by the governments but they do not always control the teaching quality. This affects the certificates and diplomas issued and makes equivalences and portability of qualifications difficult. This situation also contributes to the saturation of the labor market by too many graduates without operational skills and to the frustration of young people who have to pay to obtain diplomas without any hope of a rapid return on their investment. To remedy this inadequacy, it is important that teaching methods change, and that lectures be transformed into practical courses, based on real situations (visits, case studies, simulations, demonstrations, etc.). Strong partnerships should as well be established with as many employers as possible to enable learners to apprenticeships in their companies.[25]

Figure 1 Mismatch between training and labor market needs & poverty and education: results of 31 interviews



24 ILO 2016.

25 Betcherman and Khan 2015.

People were also asked about the link between education and poverty and results showed that it is a vicious spiral as lack of education leads to poverty and other risks, such as health problems, while being poor in Africa can hamper access to education: the many governments' failures accelerated the creation of private schools, which are not always the best in terms of quality but at least keep youth who can afford it occupied. To them, a prerequisite for relevant vocational training is its accreditation and recognition, even if only regional, but preferably at a continental and international level, to guarantee greater mobility of people and skills and to respond to requests from a given country, depending on the relevant skills acquired by the learners.

Responsibilities are therefore shared between States, trainers and employers: States must do their utmost to halt or at least slow the brain drain but also have greater confidence in its local workforce and train it, rather than importing qualified human resources with the professional skills and attitudes sought by private employers. Trainers must align their programs with the real needs of the market in which their learners are operating. Employers are responsible for participating in the practical training of learners and should not, in the event of non-participation, expect to be able to recruit "ready-to-go" staff, already aware of their needs, functioning and procedures. For an employer, hiring a learner who has already completed an internship at home significantly reduces the time spent on accommodation and immersion, thus avoiding employers' waste of time and resources.

Does TVET Go Against the Humanistic Vision of Education?

School is at the heart of the debate about its humanistic function for which it seemed to have been created and its utilitarian function which seems to take over today: the capitalist school is a school that revisits the unique need of corporate learning but this type of schooling has proved to be a necessity for many countries, given the conditions of global employability that have prevailed since 2008.

Flexible work (variable), adaptability to and outside of that environment, and the new management logic are all factors that push towards an ever more precise integration of training criteria leading to any job.[26] Education has as a strategic mission to support the world of work and industry by training the minds according to the needs of the moment.[27] In this way, the experience of the work world becomes a field where competition is everywhere.

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26 Auclair 2013.

27 Auclair 2013.

Rey does not share this opinion and confides that if "the school of humanism is in bad shape it is because humanism itself is."[28] In this context of learning, humanism itself becomes a skill to acquire! Yet this isn't a new debate. In 1987, Dandurand and Olivier were already talking about the two poles of education: the "economist" and the "culturalist" pole. The authors have reported in their works about forty years of research and studies, starting with the 1945-1965 period, which the authors consider the first moment of education's sociology of institutionalization. According to their chronology, the role of education was primarily to meet the needs of equality and achievement for society as a whole. This implied a classical application of the functionalist paradigm to education, the priority being often given to the cultural action of the school, which "mobilizes individuals and integrates them into the larger groups through socialization."[29] These needs then evolved with society, which then favored technocrats and technical and scientific skills to meet the need for labor mobility.

During the same period, the needs eventually become purely economic because society ends up adopting a "functional-technocratic" vision. The latter questions the role of education in terms of a political economics view of education. Dandurand and Olivier rely on a 1961 publication by Halsey, Floud and Anderson, who considered that education was more than a "consumer good" but represented an important economic investment that should be able to participate in the development of modern societies. The years 1965-1975, which marked the beginning of the age of consumerism in most (capitalist) industrialized countries, made universities more accessible to the less well-off (middle and even working/lower classes). However, this liberalization of higher education has costs that are rapidly being revised downwards and raises concerns about the already high numbers of unemployed at the end of their training. Moreover, the works of this period (Bourdieu, Passeron, Coleman, Touraine, and Lipset) retain a profound mark of functionalism which implies that school essentially fulfills the socialization functions on one hand and selection functions on the other; according to them, socialization confers knowledge and morals while selection ensures mobility and distribution.[30]

This proves again that changes in society lead to changes in schools, which have to adapt to those changes and meet the needs of its society because, all in all, the role of school is strongly dictated by society and the individuals who constitute it. For the same reasons, and because Dandurand and Olivier

28 Rey 1996: 24.

29 Dandurand and Olivier 1987: 89.

30 Dandurand and Olivier 1987: 93.

argue that in the years after the Second World War, education had gained dual legitimacy as a "lever for economic growth" and as an instrument for equalizing opportunities "it is difficult to understand why this dual role suddenly appears monstrous to the defenders of the humanist, culturalist school."[31] This legitimacy has been attributed by the sociologists of education of that time who had drawn upon an economist vision.

In that case, how can we deny the role and the weight of education in reducing poverty? Some of the humanistic school advocates would probably think differently if they were faced with the same difficulties as young people without – and even worse, those with – a solid education but unable to access decent work. Their situation inevitably reflects the socio-economic "health" of their respective countries. These populations, who are victims of their lack of qualifications, work long hours in the informal sector and still live below the poverty line. Short and medium-term education is therefore essential: young people from disadvantaged groups must acquire skills through different training methods in order to enter the labor market.[32] The scarce vocational training offered to these populations rarely results in employment, while Styler, in 1984 already, argued that people in poor countries prioritize training for immediate use.[33] Also, because some cultures remain unresponsive to "classic" education offered in classrooms, vocational education, manual labor is of great importance to youth concerned about providing for them and their famil(y)(ies) It is important here to recall the importance of family in the West African context: solutions are more collective than individualistic.

Conclusion: Is the Shortest Route Always the Best?

Vocational training appears to be a good short-term solution but that needs constant updating. This shorter route is still belittled in many ways and can lead to underemployment after a few years. Longer studies might mean more opportunities but they require means, which some populations don't always have. Longer studies are still the most common scheme but employers still complain about graduates' skills inadequacy.

However, difficulties faced by youth in accessing employment cannot be fully attributed to them. The socio-political climate (governance, transparency, level of development) of their country represents the major part of

31 Dandurand and Olivier 1987: 96

32 Brewer, Brown and Petty 2005.

33 Styler 1984.

the enigma to be solved.[34] Recurring conflicts in the region also accentuate this difficulty in creating a climate conducive to job creation since instability does not encourage (foreign) investments. As a result, many prefer short and practical training to ensure a return on investment and enter the workforce as soon as possible. This category ends up poorly educated and without the tools to succeed in the formal work sphere.

In order to try to limit the harm, governments should first find a way to assess their training needs in line with their labor market so that these trainings have a concrete impact on youth and make them immediately employable.

Zimba and Tiraboschi advocate a modern vision of the relationship between education, training, and socioeconomic development, calling for the design and implementation of policies and actions that take into account not only labor demand, but the quality of supply as well.[35] Authors affirm that only a genuine link between education, training, and the work world strengthening placement services and training programs while alternating school and work, will allow handling youth employment in more global and pragmatic ways. On the other hand, the risk of discouragement and skepticism, which results from the perception of low employment opportunities, leads to the exit of youth from the labor market (they prefer to pursue studies to improve their employment prospects, or simply stay out of work)

An integration of work-study training should ease studying, analyzing, and understanding its issues.[36] According to him, combination of work and training significantly reduces learning and adaptation time at the end of training and promotes youth's faster socio-professional integration. This time saved is profitable for youth and companies, because for each new hire, adaptation time is essential to understand the functioning, procedures and realities of the employer. A "brand new" staff member, who was never trained in that company will not be able to deliver results as fast as someone who interned with the company before (whose performances would likely be increased tenfold from the beginning of his official hiring) Le Boterf also suggests that "job placement is an opportunity to learn how to build skills from the resources acquired in training and that they lead to combinatorial knowledge."[37]

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34 AfDB *et al.* 2012.

35 Zimba and Tiraboschi.

36 Cf. Houpert 2005.

37 Boterf 1998: 24.

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Between Bare Necessity and Transformative Power: The Value of Informal Schools in Kibera, Kenya

Inka Mackenbrock

Abstract: While policy makers are still debating the formulation of Sustainable Development Goals to attain "education for all," that same challenge is being addressed by a huge number of informal schools in countries such as India, Nigeria, and Kenya. Informal schools provide care, health, wellbeing, and education for children in informal settlements. Informal schools established as a result of the need to provide care for their communities could have transformative power by provoking social change beyond the reach of governments. This article is addressed to governments and to the international community to acknowledge the potential of informal schools by shifting the focus from abstract goals to the real solutions such schools can provide. A case study of informal schools in Kibera, Kenya, aims to understand their management in the political context of informal settlements. The results of that case study answer the question of how the potential of informal schools can be strengthened.

Introduction: Education for All

Policy makers in the international community concerned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)[1] for 2030 regard access to primary education as a starting point for the development of a different future for marginalized people. Indeed, they see education as the main challenge facing people living in areas with limited access to public services. Attendance at primary school is considered the main opportunity for children to have a chance of a different future, and it is a challenge that has not been met despite the burst of millennial optimism promising that by April 2015 "the unacceptable position of millions of children never even beginning school would be consigned to history."[2] Rather, there are 58 million children around the world missing out altogether on primary schooling; meanwhile 100 million children do not complete primary school and 250 million children attend schools of poor quality where they are unable to acquire even basic skills such as reading.[3]

The pressing matter of lack of education is particularly relevant to Kenya. The Free Primary Education (FPE) introduced there in 2003 was beneficial but chiefly only for already advantaged groups, such as people urban areas – those not living in slums, at least – male pupils, and the wealthy. The challenge of academic quality remains great. While the "Uwezo" project (the word means "capability" in Kiswahili) measured learning outcomes since 2009 at 36 primary schools, it "has found that less than half of students in grade 4 are able to pass both English and numeracy tests at the standard 2 level."[4] Furthermore, the introduction of the FPE led to problems with the quality of education in public schools as increasing rates of enrolment led to difficulties in provision of learning materials, an increasing pupil/teacher ratio, and crowded classrooms. Those problems resulted in high drop-out

1 The global development agenda which formulates the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 was aligned at the UN High-Level Summit in September 2015 which took place in Korea and was organized by UNESCO and other UN Agencies. The education goal seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all" (UNESCO 2015). The UN intergovernmental Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) prepared the global goals and corresponding targets for the universal post-2015 development agenda. This agenda is based on "key human rights elements, including the right to development (…), including important elements of human rights obligations (e.g. socio-economic goals responding to the requirements of ESCR on availability, accessibility, affordability, quality), (…) including targets on key civil and political rights issues" (United Nations Human Rights-3 2015).

2 BBC1 2015.

3 BBC1 2015.

4 Uwezo 2012.

rates among students as, for instance, "districts that registered a 20% increase in enrolment in 2003 hardly recorded more than 5% in 2004."[5]

The focus on education in informal settlements is increasingly important as, "over 60% of Nairobi residents live in slums that constitute only 5% of the residential area."[6] Kibera is one of the largest slums in Africa. The "Map Kibera" project estimated a total population of between 235,000 to 270,000, while the "KeyObs Respond" project estimated based on satellite imagery that the population ranges from 199,959 to 205,108.[7] Kibera is characterized by "a violent and largely lawless environment (…) [where] people have effectively been left to protect themselves."[8] Free primary schools in particular are lacking in Kibera, with only three public schools at all available in Olympic, Kibera, and Ayany. Even though the Free Education Policy was introduced in 2003, the pupil/teacher ratio is high, with the Kibera School for instance having only twelve teachers for approximately 2,400 students. Another of the challenges facing public schools arises from the high number of school-age children and lack of equipment. Studies state that "around three-quarters of Nairobi's slum dwellers are thought to have completed primary school"[9] but fewer than one in three children attends secondary school.

The problem is addressed in Kibera by a huge number of cheap private or "informal" schools established by community members, particularly groups of women. I shall assess in this article the ability of the initiators of such schools to influence policy processes around the global aim "education for all." I shall investigate whether the establishment of informal schools is not only a response to the recognition of a bare necessity in managing a society and the need to sustain a living, but I shall ask too whether the initiators of informal schools have transformative power to change the schooling system. The term "transformative power" refers to the possibility that the initiators of informal schools can influence schooling systems and policy processes as part of "education for all" and to the ability to change living conditions within Kibera. This article therefore addresses the research question "to what extent can the establishment of informal schools be valued as a bare necessity or potentially transformative power?"

Based on the findings of the research presented here I shall argue that the initiators of cheap informal schools do indeed have transformative power, They have created a schooling system which directly meets the needs of

5 Oketch and Rolleston 2007: 149.

6 Mugisha 2006: 472.

7 Map Kibera Project 2010; Dixon and Tooley 2012.

8 Metcalfe *et al.* 2011: 13.

9 Oxfam GB 2009: 11.

communities and have offered children some possibility of a different future. Moreover, the new type of informal schooling can influence the formal schooling system if it is incorporated by the formal sector to help achieve the goal of education for all. My argument is based on the following findings: 1) the language of "need, help, community" that shows informal schools are a result of pressing need, 2) the influence of the initiators of informal schools created through a plurality of elements in their own communities, using their knowledge and networks, and 3) the interplay of control and authority between initiators of informal schools and government authorities. That interplay results in interdependency and the incorporation of a new form of schooling system into the formal sector.

The Potential of Informal Schools

According to scholars, informal schools, also known as "low cost private schools," are described as "a 'bottom-up' or 'grassroots' privatization by which the people themselves, not the state – perhaps even against the wishes of the state – engage in reassigning education to private rather than state control and ownership." Informal schools in Kenya are called "low-cost private schools" because they mostly charge a small amount for schools fees, for instance something in the order of 100 KES (US$ 1.18) per month. They are run by communities, organizations, religious groups, or private individuals instead of by the Kenyan government. Many such schools are registered not with the Ministry of Education, but with the Ministry of Culture and Social Services as children's centres or rehabilitation centres. All the same, the majority of informal schools follow the curriculum of the Kenyan government and enter their students for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). Many low-cost schools are small, housed in temporary structures built of corrugated iron sheets, or mud; and teachers are volunteers or have no formal teacher training of any kind.

One advantage of informal schools for slum residents is their size, for many of them are smaller than government schools and that can be beneficial for disadvantaged students. However, the ratio of trained teachers is better in public schools than in informal schools, since "more than 40% of teachers in non-government schools are untrained, compared to only 1% in government schools." Additionally, the infrastructure of the buildings, as well as the pupil/textbook ratio is better in government schools than in community organized schools.[10]

10 This paragraph is based on Ngware *et al.* 2008, quote from page 8.

Low-cost private schools of this type are increasing in number in Kibera. According to Open Schools Kenya, only 27% of students in Kibera attend government schools (including schools slightly outside Kibera for both slum and surrounding areas), while 81% of students attend informal or "low cost" schools.[11] In general, roughly 40% of students from slums go to informal schools, and most students at low-cost private schools are from the poorest families. It is stated that "43% of the poorest quintile of families in the slums send their children to private schools compared to only 5% of the poorest quintile in the non-slums."[12] Additionally, it is found that children often transfer from private schools to other private schools or from public to private schools, but rarely from private schools to public schools. The importance of informal schools in Kibera is also highlighted by the increased rate of enrolment in informal primary schools of 56.4 % between 2003 and 2007. In the same period new informal primary schools were established so that total enrolment actually increased by 129.8 %. However, the enrolment rate in government primary schools increased by only 23.2 % during the same period.[13]

The inadequacy of FPE in Kibera is defined by Oketch: "One would have expected free primary education to reduce the use of private schools, especially among the slum residents (…) but the results reveal that in spite of free primary education, parents still are searching for a 'good' school for their child."[14]

The introduction of FPE led to problems in public schools, such as with the quality of education, so much so that there is a suggestion that students who leave public schools tend to do so in order to go to informal schools.[15] Thus, the preference of slum residents for informal schools is not caused only by a lack of public schools but also by problems within those schools. It is clearly shown that Free Primary Education "has not led to any decline in the number of low-fee private schools in the slum of Kibera, or in the proportion of children enrolled in them."[16] Rather, it is stated that Free Primary Education is benefiting the better-off households, while poorer students attend low cost private schools.[17]

The high attendance at informal schools in Kibera not only reflects FPE's lack of impact, it also raises the question of whether the informal schools might contribute to the Sustainable Development Goal of education?

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11 Open Schools Kenya 2015.

12 For the data in this paragraph, see Oketch *et al.* 2010: 28.

13 Dixon and Tooley 2012.

14 Oketch *et al.* 2008: 19.

15 Oketch and Rolleston 2007.

16 Dixon and Tooley 2012: 702.

17 Ngware *et al.* 2009.

Scholars show that slum residents "perceived public schooling under FPE as inadequate and consequently sought alternative schools for their children."[18] Those alternative schools, the informal schools, are perceived by slum residents as better. Tooley *et al.* have shown for India and Nigeria that the presumption of poor academic quality in informal schools is not justified.[19] Tooley *et al.* point out:

> Our research findings suggest that these concerns may be somewhat misplaced. Considering the fifteen indicators investigated in the survey concerning infrastructure, facilities, and teacher activity, plus pupil-teacher ratios investigated in the census, we find that private unaided schools in general provide a superior level of inputs to government schools, and, in all but two indicators, this also applies to unrecognized private unaided schools.[20]

While that statement refers to slums in India and Nigeria, it rejects the general presumption that the academic quality of informal schools will be poor. Informal schools in Kibera have the potential to provide access to education for all, as defined in the Sustainable Development Goals. If access to education is to be provided to the poor, it must be accepted that informal schools "are performing a valuable role in helping meet education for all" and that the belief that "only through public education (…) these needs can be met" must to be questioned.[21] The focus of development agencies, philanthropists, and investors could shift to informal schools as another possibility for providing access to primary education.

To understand the informal schools as worthwhile alternatives their position and recognition in the wider power relationship between the international community and government needs to be elaborated. This article therefore shows to what extent the establishment of informal schools could serve the management and needs of their communities. Or, to put it another way, I shall consider how much initiators of informal schools could contribute to changing living conditions and schooling systems in pursuit of the international goal of "education for all" and national policy making processes.

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18 Ngware *et al.* 2009: 594.

19 Tooley *et al.* 2010.

20 Tooley *et al.* 2007: 558.

21 Dixon and Tooley 2012: 704.

Analytical Framework and Methodology

What people who live in slums do to organize their lives, care for their communities and express their aspirations for a different future is captured by the notion of "slum politics;" (…) "the poor are free from the institutional foundations of civil society: property and the detailed apparatus of governmental rules to which citizens are subjected."[22] Slum residents can create opportunities through their awareness of being part of an undefined space in their society and through their insistence on recognition. The position of slum dwellers, in an area not bound by government regulations, offers them the possibility of forming a different society centred on belonging, solidarity, care, and respect.

The empowerment of initiators of informal schools is analysed through the concept of "interactive framing" which is defined as "an interpretive schemata [sic] that signifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of action in one's present or past environment."[23] Interactive framing is also defined as a process of persuasive communication and as the mobilization, sustaining and management of collective action. Frameworks can construct the problem, the target, and the call for action, while in many cases they emerge from a dynamic process of interaction between power holders, challengers and a specific subject. In that sense frameworks are a way of sharing beliefs, presenting ideas and developing strategies for action within an interpretative package.[24]

Their interaction with government and development agencies means that the language of initiators of informal schools can be influenced by an institutionalized discourse over rights and citizenship. In particular, there is the question of whether initiators employ a human rights discourse which could "act as an instrument of transformation."[25] Here it is worth noting that discourse scholars do not regard human rights s a given solution to global problems. Rather, "human rights exist only because people talk about them"[26] and such people therefore create a certain "language" – the human rights discourse. That discourse may be a used as a powerful tool to formulate political claims[27] and it leads to debate about whether human rights are

22 Koster and De Vries 2012: 86.
23 Snow and Benford 1992: 137.
24 In this paragraph I follow Steinberg 1998.
25 Hadiprayitno 2012: 172.
26 Dembour 2010: 4.
27 Cf. Dembour 2010.

expressed in a "top-down" or "bottom-up" approach. On the one hand, it is argued that human rights discourse serves the interests of the top, such as donors and the international community, which are based on "a distinctive vision of the good society."[28] On the other hand, it is argued that the discourse empowers local communities because it is universal, adapted to the hybridity of the local context and serves as "a language of moral empowerment."[29] Based on the application of the concept of interactive framing it is possible to analyse whether the articulation and use of the human rights discourse in interactions between different groups of actors stimulates power relations.

This research is based on a qualitative research design. Access was gained to 37 informal schools in Kibera, mainly in the Lindi district, and was established from the website of informal schools in Kibera (http://openschoolskenya.org/) and via connections with the informal schools themselves. Interviews were conducted with the directors and head teachers of the schools. Meanwhile the community and international NGO's were selected for their relationships with informal schools and their willingness to participate in the research.

Results

The main finding, which was that low-cost private schools create a new schooling system in cooperation with the formal sector with the aim of providing education for all, is supported by the following findings:

- The language of the initiators of informal schools, expressing "need, help, community;"
- The transformative power of initiators through the plurality of elements, their knowledge and networks;
- The interplay of control and authority and the interdependency between initiators of informal schools and government authorities.

First of all, the establishment of informal schools is mobilized through the language of "need, care, and community" – a language which defines their establishment as a bare necessity to offer children in Kibera a future. We were able to identify a framework of collective action by initiators of informal schools in Kibera, who develop agencies to build the schools and who mobilize their social environment using a shared framework of helping children to make future contributions to their communities. The phrase "giving back to

28 Merry 2006: 49.
29 Ignatieff 2001: 113.

the community" is used by directors not only to refer to their own actions but is applied to expected future actions by the children. That basic expectation that children will give back to the community in the future is obvious in the statement by one director who said, "We want to see a future where they can raise the living standards of the parents and of the community as a whole" (Director 3, June 2015).

The opening of informal schools is itself described as a way of giving back to the community, contributing to its future. The language of initiators is further characterized by the idea of helping vulnerable children. The teachers and directors of schools habitually use words for "helping" when describing their actions. The problem of education in Kibera is formulated in terms of need. Conversations with initiators are dominated by remarks revealing a shared belief, as described by one teacher, in "helping the young vulnerable orphans in Kibera" (Director 4, July 2015); teachers and directors of the schools refer to the need for education as the very reason they started the school. One teacher stated, "The idea came up as a result of a need which we saw" (Head Teacher 5, July 2015) while another confirmed, "we saw the need of the vulnerable kids around here, we realized that there are so many kids out there who cannot even afford a meal, that is why the school started" (Head Teacher 8, July 2015). Awareness of the need for education is expressed through a shared belief that it is necessary to help children and to contribute to the community.

Such initiatives not only empower an agency that can transform processes, but mobilizes communities too. As shown, the involvement of parents and community members in the establishment of informal schools shows how successful initiators have been in mobilizing their communities, as does the huge attendance at informal schools by children born in Kibera. The framework of helping, of answering need and of the sense of community resonates with the social setting in Kibera and forms the discursive field. Our results here agree with the theory of Koster and De Vries[30] in that the discursive field of the social environment in Kibera constitutes a lifeworld centred on belonging, solidarity, and care.

The mobilization of informal schools results from a pressing need to help the community. That pressing need means that initiators, through their ability to change the living conditions of slum residents by creating "spaces of change" to offer a way out of Kibera, have transformative power within their own social settings.

Initiators of schools address many elements in the raising of children, such as nutrition, healthcare, personal care and spiritual wellbeing, so that

30 Koster and De Vries 2012.

simple education is regarded as only one element among many others. It is clear then that informal schools are organized around holistic care for children, especially for vulnerable children. Initiators therefore, recognizing that the needs of their communities in Kibera are much greater than the need for "education for all" formulated in the SDG's, address those needs directly. Initiators proceed differently and with locally appropriate strategies for the running of their particular schools, but they also achieve a certain social position recognized by parents and their community. In the majority of cases an informal school starts out as a day-care centre based on the idea of providing food and care for children. Different elements are then added to their daily management which not only meet the various other needs of the children but also offer them the possibility of sitting primary examinations. Thereby the emerging schools continuously develop practices to enhance their status. One such practice is to secure payment of school fees, usually in small amounts or paid over time; another initiative is to open schools on Saturdays and early in the mornings so that children have somewhere to stay and where they can study. Such strategies arise from a combination of different characteristics. Initiators understand the social environment of Kibera, they want a different future for their communities and they know how it can be done. The daily practices which sustain the management of informal schools combine to form "a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood."[31] The interconnection of understanding, willpower, and knowledge leads to varied forms of organized routine, such as regular provision of meals, collection of schools fees, meetings with the board, the transfer of knowledge from a trained teacher to non-trained teachers; and income-generating activities such as catering services or the renting of tents. That is the sense in which initiators create and foster "spaces of hope" which outperform the idea of primary education but at the same time, because of the importance of the plurality of its elements, narrow the idea of it.

The development of informal schools creates possibilities for children to grow up in an environment providing "spiritual, mental, physical [care]" (Director 8, July 2015). The schools create the possibility of caring for their surrounding community, for children as well as for working mothers; to bring order to life in Kibera and to harbour dreams about the future. The language used is free from institutionalized discourse and provokes not only the creation of such "spaces of hope" – spaces to dream about a different future – but might actually lead to social changes within or even beyond Kibera. The "spaces of hope" created through the establishment of informal

31 Reckwitz 2002: 250.

schools goes beyond the immediate community and the organization of daily life. Social change is created within Kibera, expressed in the changed lives for future generation of children and the chance of a way out through education. Such social changes could reach beyond Kibera, as dominant power system changes where these "spaces of hope" are embedded. Thus, "spaces of hope" are not only about the desire for and aspiration towards a different future, they are extended into "spaces of change" through the agency of slum residents to create possibilities for their own communities.

Additionally, the mixture of networking within Kibera, partnerships with external development agencies and knowledge of how to achieve social change in informal settlements – a key item on the development policy agenda – constitutes a form of "governmentality [sic] from below."[32] It is argued that the networking and organization of residents in Kibera based on the establishment of informal schools not only offers possibilities for their own community, but rather that networking from the bottom can lead to the networking of globalization, thus to international relations and partnerships with development and governance agencies around the world. That form of networking, or brokering, as "governmentality from below," is placed in the context of the practices of school initiators. Appadurai illustrates that this form of "governmentality from below, in the world of the urban poor, is a kind of counter-governmentality, animated by the social relations of shared poverty, by the excitement of active participation in the politics of knowledge, and by its own openness to correction through other forms of intimate knowledge and spontaneous everyday politics."[33] According to Appadurai "governmentality from below" is enabled by means of "the politics of knowledge," which is the expertise that offers control of or at least influence over policy processes. In the context of informal schools in Kibera, "governmentality from below" is defined by the creation of networks within Kibera, the forging of partnerships with external, international development agencies and through the accumulation of knowledge inaccessible to actors outside the local social setting.

While the international community formulates the SDG of education, initiators of informal schools know *how* that aim can be achieved. The knowledge of how education for all or, more precisely, how development in informal settlements can be achieved is central to the policy processes of the international community and the Kenyan government. Initiators of informal schools could influence those processes and could "demonstrate to

32 Cf. Appadurai 2001.

33 Appadurai 2001: 35.

governments (local, regional, national) and international agencies that urban poor groups are more capable than they in poverty reduction."[34]

Discussion – Forms of Transformative Power Outside Kibera

The relationship between initiators of informal schools and government agencies is characterized by an interplay between autonomy and control, and interdependency. While both actors use different forms of expression – the language of need, help and community on the one hand and the institutionalized discourse based on the aim of "education for all" on the other, the difference in the two languages does not lead to opposition. Rather, the public representation of initiators leads to tolerance of them, while the institutionalized discourse of government agencies highlights how necessary the new schooling system is to achieving that "education for all."

The establishment of informal schools mobilized through a language free from institutionalized discourse is disciplined by the framework that "every child belongs to the government" and is actually limited by the schools' own language of "helping the government." The authoritative view represented by directors that "every child is a child of the government" (Director 6, July 2015) and "the child is for the government, it's a Kenyan child, they also have a say over the child" (Director 8, July 2015) is used to justify a shared belief in the need to help the government. The same framework also calls for action to follow all regulations drawn up by the government and limits the autonomy of school initiators. The disciplinary power of government agencies to limit the development of "spaces of hope" is expressed in the statement by the Chair of the Teacher Service Commission's that, "There is no challenge in the relationship because they need to obey by all means" (Teacher Service Commission 2, July 2015). Additionally, initiators of informal schools perceive themselves as assistants of the government. They use the language of need, of helping and community to justify the establishment of their schools as a way of helping the government. One director stated, "In fact all these kids if they didn't go to such schools like this one, where would they go? We're trying to help the government, because when you look at the other side, the government has failed to take all these kids in Kibera" (Director 12, July 2015).

While the language of "need, help and community" is familiar to government agencies and has the sense of "helping the government," the same language is used to express critique. That transformed meaning is illustrated by the statement of another director who said, "we are trying to help the government on the other side to a certain level, but the situation is that they

34 Appadurai 2001: 23.

don't recognize us" (Director 3, June 2015). That director's critique could be interpreted as a subtle from of resistance to the disciplinary power of government agencies. The struggle to cope with government requirements provokes in initiators practices and discourses which are hidden behind their public self-representations as "helpers of the government." Such "hidden transcripts" are described as "discursive resistance."[35] In other words, they are a strategy used by initiators to gain acceptance by government agencies for their running of the schools and to be tolerated as a new category of educational institution alongside the public schools. They gain a certain level of autonomy and ways round government control; so in effect, it works. Thus, low-cost private schools established by communities in informal settings can change the formal settings.

Interaction between government agencies and school initiators is characterized by a power struggle over autonomy and control, which in turn leads to a form of interdependency. The mantra "education for all" used by government agencies leads to the recognition and acknowledgement that informal schools are needed. That is clearly reflected in a statement by the Chair of the Teacher Service Commission who said, "Community schools are our only saviour, at least to try to make sure that more children are in school" (Teacher Service Commission 3, July 2015). The need for informal schools in informal settlements is shown by the huge number of them – approximately 400,000 in Mombasa and Nairobi alone.[36] The Kenyan government's wish for "Education for all" therefore means they must depend on informal schools if they are to achieve that goal. As the Chair of the Teachers Service Commission put it, "Community schools are a good solution, they only need to be improved" and "It would be better to have the same for secondary school" (Teachers Service Commission 1, July 2015). "Education for all" therefore shapes the perspective of government agencies and their acknowledgment of their need for the informal schools.

Because the Ministry accepts that informal schools "are meeting a need in hard-to-reach slums,"[37] there are exceptions in the Ministry of Education's guidelines, formulated in the Basic Education Act 2013, for registering informal schools. For instance, in informal schools a minimum of only 30% of teachers must be properly trained while the rest must receive have three-years' service training.[38] Another exception is that buildings for informal schools may be secured by rental agreements for eight years rather than

35 Cf. Scott 1980.
36 Buhere 2015.
37 Buhere 2015: 8.
38 Buhere 2015.

being fully owned by the school (Teacher Service Commission 2, July 2015). Easing of the guidelines has actually brought more government control over more informal schools; and that is ultimately the result of the transformed meaning of "education for all." Initiators of informal schools and government agencies are now seen to be interdependent, and while informal schools need the recognition of government agencies in order to operate, the government too needs individuals to initiate informal schools in order for the government to be able to appease the international community by showing that there are a huge number of schools in informal settings.

It may be stated that initiators have been wielding transformative power even outside their social settings in Kibera. They have incorporated formal structures such as recognized examinations in their new form of schooling system in informal settings, and have thereby influenced formal education policy-making in Kenya.

The Human Rights Discourse as a Tool for Empowerment

The production and use of the human rights discourse shapes the interaction between government agencies and initiators of informal schools in two different ways. The initiators of schools rarely mention that discourse but when they do, it is not to gain empowerment but rather to argue that they are assisting the government. The government on the other hand does enhance its agency through the use of the human rights discourse, in their formulated goal of "education for all." That declaration has led to acknowledgement of the necessity for informal schools and thereby justifies the disciplinary power of government agencies.

On their side, initiators of informal schools have transformed the meaning of the human rights discourse in order to justify their own actions as "helping the government" which they use to argue that they are supporting the government. The initiators know that government education cannot reach everyone, so they use the human rights discourse as an argument for establishing their schools. The articulation of the human rights discourse is shown in this statement of directors: "The government is not able to take on board every child but every child has the right to education" (Director 11, July 2015) and "I want to believe that the government is doing so much as it can but it does not reach everybody, there is a right but a right that is limited" (Director 4, June 2015). The international community uses the human rights discourse in its declared aim of "education for all," which framework in turn shapes the agency of the government.

The human rights discourse of initiators is therefore embedded in their world-view of belonging, solidarity and care which they express using the

language of need, help and community. They use language to insist they are helping the government rather than to demand empowerment, or rights and respect, from it.

The need for "education for all" in particular in slum areas has stimulated acknowledgement of interdependency between government and the initiators of informal schools. That acknowledgement might therefore lead to redistribution of power in favour of slum residents. How, then, could acknowledgement of that interdependency be achieved? Could the use of the human rights discourse by initiators of informal schools serve as a bridge between them and policymakers?

Those questions may be answered based on three statements. First, for a complete bottom-up approach, initiators of informal schools must be aware of human rights as a legitimate basis for their arguments. Awareness of human rights feeds into a "shared vocabulary"[39] in a given locality to allow the people there to demand their rights. Human rights discourse is needed for that, and there is an interrelation between top-down and bottom-up approaches which leads to three propositions. First, the important question is not how human rights are translated but – given that the language of human rights is introduced – how human rights discourse is used by local actors. In our case here, human rights discourse is used to gain tolerance and recognition instead of to demand services. The second proposition is that the translation of human rights always takes place by means of interaction between the top and the bottom – it is not a one-way process but rather a continuous interchange between the two levels, in which power relations exist. The important thing is therefore not the direction of flow of power but how power relations are formed through the articulation of human rights discourse.

Regarding interaction between government actors and initiators of informal schools, the government is in a position to implement formal elements by making use of the informal schooling system, which in turn allows initiators to influence the formal sector. Third, we must question the presumption that human rights discourse is an "instrument of transformation."[40] The results gathered from research for this article show that the empowerment of informal schools is not in fact based on a discourse of human rights. Rather, it is based on the inclusion of formal elements and on a language which confronts the institutionalized discourse.

As the second statement referred comes the paradox of the translation of human rights in informal settlements. Even if the human rights discourse is taken to imply demanding of rights and respect, from whom could slum

39 Ignatieff 2001: 116.

40 Hadiprayitno 2012: 172.

residents demand them? The translation of the human rights discourse "demands an ideal environment where those rights have already been adequately acquired, and where society functions in a way that enables rights to be realized."[41] Although there has been progress through the work of development organizations, in Kibera neither the legal system nor the socio-political culture are open to claims to human rights.

Third, I have shown that the creation of "spaces of hope" is enabled through a language free from institutionalized discourse, citizenship, or rights. Such spaces are in fact created through awareness of being part of an undefined area in society and through claims for recognition.[42] The particular language of "need, help and community" enables bottom-up development. The creation by initiators of informal schools of possibilities for their own community would be replaced by the simple idea of the demanding of rights. The plurality of elements in informal schools would then be reduced to the one-dimensional focus on primary education given by the SDG's of education. In a very critical point of view, the human rights discourse is not "a language of moral empowerment,"[43] but rather hampers the transformative power of "spaces of hope" expressed in the language of "need, help, and community." The dominance of the human rights discourse in policy processes places only certain matters on the agenda and limits views on possibilities created by people in informal settlements. In this case, the formal elements included in the running of informal schools are indeed recognized. However, the plurality of elements developed through a language of "need, help and care" are not recognized by actors using the human rights discourse. The transformative power of slum residents is diminished by placing it within a system of norms, rights and demands defined by human rights discourse. That discourse may be regarded as a tool for the international community to expand the influence of their ideas over policies, to hold other actors accountable and to enlarge their own power system over emerging power struggles. Hence, the SDG's formulated by the international community have emerged newly to maintain the power system and to limit bottom- up developments.

Conclusion

Initiators of informal schools can change living conditions within Kibera, as well as influence the formal education sector. They can influence their own social setting by developing a new schooling system that includes a

41 Hadiprayitno 2010: 374.

42 Cf. Koster and De Vries 2012.

43 Ignatieff 2001: 113.

plurality of elements and meets the needs of their respective communities by knowing how to offer the needed education and by creating partnerships and networks. Initiators are mobilized through the rhetoric of "need, help, and community," which does not run counter the institutionalized discourse used by government agencies. Rather, it opens up to initiators of informal schools the possibility to influence formal education policy, managing to transform the formal sector while incorporating elements of it. Informal schools are now recognized as a new category of schools which go beyond the simple idea of education.

The acknowledgement of the interdependency of the two main actors could open a way for initiators to influence policy debate about "education for all." They must ask how they can influence development policies? How can they be recognized by the international community without sacrificing their autonomy, without reducing the plurality of elements of their schools, and without using a human rights discourse? Such questions go beyond the scope of this research but opens a door to further debate. The results used here show that initiators of informal schools are not actually in such a weak position, for in fact they have considerable power which they can wield in discursive resistance. That has led to tolerance of informal schools and their acceptance by government as a new category of school. It could well be argued that the transformation of discursive resistance into open resistance has made policy makers more aware of the potential of informal schools. By resisting the official view that "every child belongs to the government" the knowledge and voices of informal schools and their potential for development can be officially recognized, which can alter the dominant power relations of the international community and government.

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16

Training in the Production of Clan-Bond Trades in Southwestern Nigeria: The Non-Formal and Informal Learning Approaches

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Abstract: In Africa, there are trades, known as clan-bond trades, that are explicitly practiced in certain clans and regions and are therefore very indicative of a person's clan and identity. Training for these trades is traditionally done through a close master-apprentice relationship. This study examines and discusses the learning approach of four clan-bond trades specific to southwestern Nigeria: the production of *aso-ofi*' (hand-woven fabric); the productions of *adire* (tie and dye fabric); *agbede*, which means blacksmithing; and the production of *dodo-ikire* (plantain chips). It focuses on three aspects of the aforementioned clan-bond trades: (1) the method of training for the production of the clan-bond goods; (2) the training procedures; and (3) the prospects of the artisans. This study shows that there are no structured procedures for learning clan-bond trades; the apprentices are often the children or relatives of the tradesmen and -women, keeping the trade within the clan, while outsiders rarely train for the jobs. Consequently, this study recommends that higher education institutions partner with master craftsmen and -women who practice clan-bond trades so that students can learn these practical skills in the framework of their formal education.

Introduction

Work requires training in order to be productive and profitable. Learning can be divided into three different approaches, namely formal, non-formal, and informal learning. This study focuses on non-formal and informal learning approaches that are used to train tradesmen and -women in the production

of various clan-bond goods and services in southwestern Nigeria. Clan-bond goods and services refers to goods that are transmitted in a specific family lineage, for example iron production (*agbede*) is practiced in family lineages or clans that worship Ogun the god of iron and the production of indigo-dyed cloth (*adire)* is practiced in family lineages or clans that worship *Osun*, the river goddess, or *Oya*, the queen of the Niger River. There is even a place in southwestern Nigeria called Osun Aro ("River of Dye").

In Southwestern Nigeria, several oral poems instil children with beliefs, morals, and customs related to the dignity of work. Below are two examples of such poems (in Yoruba language):[1]

Ise Loogun Ise	**Work is the Cure for Poverty**
Ise loogun ise	Work is the cure for poverty
Mura si ise ore mi	Be hard working my friend
Ise la fi n di enigiga	Through working you become great
Bi a ko ri eni fi ehin ti	If you do not have a helper
Bi ole laari	You seem to be a lazy person
Bi a ko ba ri eni gbokan le	If you do not have a supporter
A teramo ise eni	Be passionate about your work
Baba re lee lowo lowo	Your father may be rich
Iyaa resi lee lesin leekan	Your mother may have a horse
Ti o ba gboju le won	If you depend on them
O te tan ni mo so fun o	You will soon be put to shame
Ohunti a ko ba jiya fun	What you do not labour for
Se ki lee tojo	Will not last long
Ohun ti a ba fi ara sise fun	It is what you work for
Lounpe lowo eni	That endures tides of life
Apalara	Your arms are your relatives (supporters)
Igunpa ni iyekan	Your shoulders are your relations
Ti aye ba n fe o loni	If people cherish you today
Ti o ba lowo lowo	If you have money
Won a maa fe o lola	They will still cherish you (more) tomorrow
Tabi ki o wa ni ipo atata	Or you are in high position of honour
Aye a ye o si terin-terin	The people will cherish you with laughter (delight)
Je ki o di eni ti o n rago kiri	If you then suddenly become a poor person
Aye a maa yinmu si o	The people will wince at you
Eko sit un nsoni doga	Learning makes you become great

1 The first example is presented and discussed in Adebisi 2015: 91-96. The second example I know personally as an oral poem.

Mura ki o ko daradara	Ensure you learn it very well
Bi o ba si ri awon eniyan	If you see persons
Ti won n f'ekos'erinrin	Making jest of learning
Dakun, masefara we won	Please, do not emulate them
Iyanbof'omotikogbon	Suffering is imminent for a child that is not wise
Ekun nbe f'omoti o nsa kiri	Weeping is imminent for a child wandering about
Ma f'owuro sere, ore mi	Do not play with your youthful time, my friend
Mura si ise, ojo nlo!	Work hard, time is far spent!

Ise Ni Ise Nje	**Work is Work**
Ise ni ise nje	Work is work
Ma tiju ise re	Do not be ashamed of your work
Bi igi lo ba nge sowo	You may be hewers of wood
Bi won si pe o	If you are employed
Ki o gbale oja	To sweep market place
Ma tiju ise re	Do not be ashamed of your work
Ikan kii tiju a nmole	Termites are not shameful of moulding
Eera kii tiju a nyena	Ants are not shameful of making a path
Alapandede kii tiju a nfo kiri ni gbangaba	Birds are not shameful of flying in the open space
Ma tiju ise re	Do not be ashamed of your work
Ise ni ise nje!	Work is work!

These poems emphasise that regardless of an individual's economic background (especially when one comes from a rich family), the most expedient thing is to have a job. The second poem reiterates that the most important thing is to have legitimate work, regardless of what kind of work it is, and to be proud of it. Many young people from family lineages that practice clan-bond trades no longer practice their parents' trades. The above poems were used to make children aware of the necessity and dignity of work. However, it is disheartening that nowadays these poems are no longer in vogue.

In a traditional context, training for vocational work that involves the production of goods or rendering of services is done through apprenticeship. From an early age, boys and girls are apprenticed to a master craftsman or craftswoman in order to serve the master and in the process learn the secret of the trade. When the master is not the apprentice's biological parent or relative, the apprentice moves in with his or her master. Moloye observed that apprenticeship begins at a very early age, especially as most apprentices learn the trade from their parents or relatives. In the process of helping their

parents or relatives in the business, which is considered to be the children's duty, they also learn the trade through practical experience.

All these trades enjoy certain trademarks and secrecy that protect the quality of the goods and services. In modern economy, trade, and commerce this is referred to as copyright. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has emphasised that without trademarks and other business identifiers (trade names, character merchandising, etc.), patent and copyright protection would be of relatively lesser economic value.

In a traditional context, the originality of goods and services is protected by secrecy so that only the family or clan that knows the secret behind certain goods or services can make use of it. Knowing the secret demands absolute loyalty and trust of the trainee. This loyalty and trust are built through years of close intimacy between the master and apprentice and through commitment and dedication to the training in a particular trade. By keeping the trade secret, the monopoly and the prospect of the vocation are kept safe. Moloye noted that the master-apprentice relationship was what protected the integrity and continuity of the trade.

In this article, I discuss the following four clan-bond trades:

Dodo ikire

Ikire is a town in Osun State, Nigeria. *Dodo* is a sweet snack made from ripe or overripe plantain. Consequently, *dodo ikire* refers to a sweet plantain snack made in Ikire.

Agbede

Agbede is blacksmithing. It is also known as *ise agbede* in Yoruba language, which means "to be a professional blacksmith." It is the art of forging and creating items like cutlass, hoes, rake, traps, shovels, diggers, and local guns.

Adire

Adi means "to tie" and *re* means "to dye" or "soak in the dye;" it is the name given to indigo-dyed cloth produced by the Yoruba using a variety of resistant-dye techniques that are characteristic of Yoruba culture. In other words, hand-patterned cloth is known as *adire*, in which patterns are created by making certain parts of the material resistant to dyes.

Aso-ofi/aso-oke

Aso-ofi is made of hand-woven strips of colourful cloth. The three classic Yoruba strips of cloth are *sanyan*, *alaari*, and *etu*. They are worn on important occasions, such as weddings, funerals of elderly relatives, chieftaincy

Figure 1 ***Aso-ofi* being processed (Iseyin, Oyo State, April 2017).**

rituals, and royal coronation ceremonies. For the Yoruba, the *aso-ofi* is a timeless technique of cloth weaving, with which they express their splendour and which serves as an identity marker.

This study examines three aspects of the aforementioned clan-bond trades: (1) the method of training for the production of clan-bond goods and services; (2) the training procedures; and (3) the prospects of artisans who practice clan-bond trades.

Training for the Production of Clan-bond Goods and Services

Training for the production of the aforementioned goods is mostly done through traditional apprenticeship, in which a trainee is apprenticed to a master craftsman or craftswoman. In most cases, the master is a family member of the trainee or a close friend of the trainee's parents. The purpose of the apprenticeship is to guarantee effective and efficient training, just as the purpose of vocational training is to help employees perform their work at the required standard.[2] Most traditional trades cannot be learned hurriedly;

2 Cf. Bennett 2012.

they require a lot of time to acquire a certain level of expertise. Thus, training through apprenticeship becomes very germane.

Adult learning can be divided into three contextual categories: formal learning, which is offered in a degree-granting institution; non-formal learning, which is an organised form of learning that usually focuses on leisure or community-oriented learning; and informal learning, which is mainly derived from the experience of daily life.[3] Production of clan-bond goods demands continuous and daily practice, which is one of the characteristics of the informal learning approach, making this approach paramount to the training in clan-bond trades. Bennett observed that informal learning offers adults greater freedom and flexibility to discover through their lines of thought and action, which can result in tacit or unspoken knowledge. This kind of knowledge can only be learned through close and continuous day-to-day interaction with the custodian of such knowledge.[4] The knowledge that trainees in informal learning settings obtain cannot be quantified as much of the knowledge and skills are acquired by means of interaction and observation.

People's ability to carry out their work depends on the knowledge at their disposal. Knowledge is acquired by means of education. Consequently, every work requires a certain level of education. Work is the application of the knowledge that one has acquired through education. As such, work is practical in nature. There are three important stages when learning a new skill: theory, practice, and exposure to challenges. An important factor in the process of skill acquisition is exposure to practical situations in which skills are displayed and utilised. The traditional apprenticeship setting provides ample opportunities for practitioners and trainees of clan-bond trades to go through the aforementioned stages of learning and training.

Informal learning includes all activities that focus on acquiring knowledge or skills outside the curricula of educational institutions or the courses and workshops offered by educational or social agencies.[5] The curricula in informal learning are unstructured. They exist in the minds of the knowledgeable and in most cases are passed down to the learners or trainees orally and in the form of practical work. It is a hands-on type of learning. Most of the significant learning we apply in our everyday lives comes from informal learning. Informal learning occurs through everyday application of available information in our vicinity. Thus, clan people practice their trades with the utmost ease and perfection even though they have had little or no formal

3 Merriam, Caffarella and Baumgartner 2009 cited in Bennett 2012: 25.

4 Bennet 2012: 25.

5 Schugurensky 2000: 14.

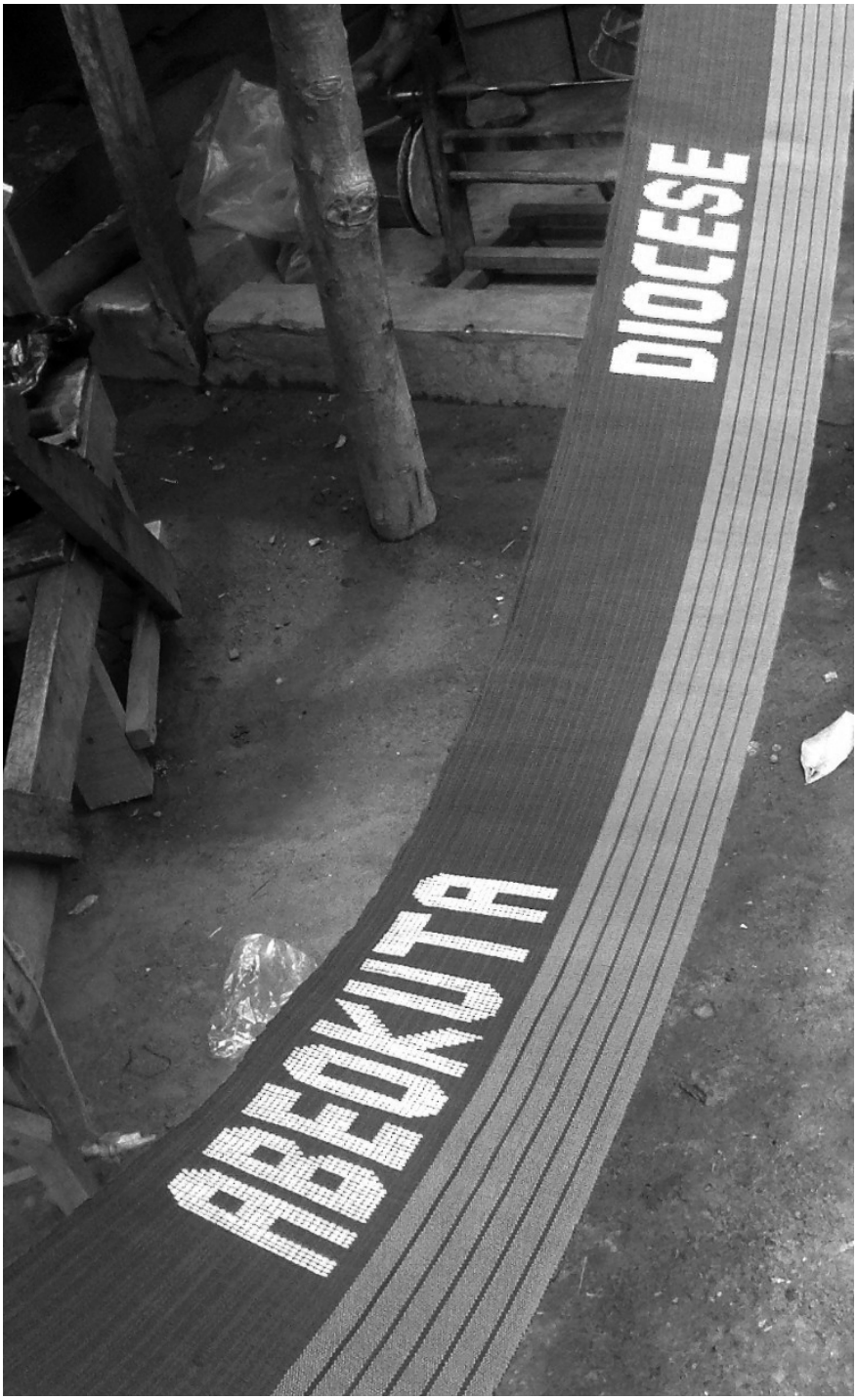

Figure 2 *Aso-ofi*, finished product (Iseyin, Oyo State, April 2017).

education. In informal learning situations, the atmosphere is relaxed and devoid of the fear of failure that is characteristic of formal education. Though failure or poor performance might be experienced, learning and improving comes through repeated efforts and experiences; informal learning is experiential learning.

The informal learning culminating in vocational training for clan-bond trades always begins with trainees rendering petty services, such as bringing work tools, arranging the workplace, setting things in order, fixing machinery, and watching the ways things are done, sometimes on a subconscious level. In most cases, the trainees grow up doing the work intuitively and expertly. They may not be aware of the academic and technical intricacies of the processes involved in the production of the goods; nonetheless, the goods are produced and rendered in good quality.

In contrast to informal education, formal education has a clearly defined curriculum and rules for certification.[6] It uses prescribed and compulsory syllabi and work schemes. It includes pre-nursery, nursery, primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of schooling, and maintains a certain degree of uniformity either at a local, state, or federal level; the implementation of the prescribed modus operandi is monitored by ministries of education and statutory institutions established for that purpose. Eaton notes that teachers in formal education are usually trained as professionals in some way.[7] Formal education is characterised by formal interaction between the teacher and pupils. Though formal education has a structured curriculum and a legislated certification, the certification often does not proportionally reflect the student's work skills, as opposed to informal education, in which the trainee is equipped, from the onset, with the required skills for a job. Hence, unemployment is rare among recipients of informal education.[8]

Non-formal education is voluntary and takes place outside formal educational systems. Eaton describes non-formal education as that which may or may not be guided by a formal curriculum.[9] It is usually led by a qualified teacher or a leader with more experience. Though it does not result in a formal degree or diploma, non-formal education is highly enriching and develops people's skills and capabilities. The non-formal learning approach allows people, especially young school leavers and unemployed graduates, to learn and practice a certain trade, usually in the form of a short-term course,

6 Du Bois-Reymond 2003 in Adebisi 2013: 2.

7 Eaton 2010.

8 Cf. Adebisi 2015.

9 Eaton 2010.

which results in instant practice. Bennett emphasises that there is a great need for adults to learn this way to keep up with the fast pace of life.[10]

Theoretical Framework/Learning Models

This study is based on Jay's model of workplace learning and Bennet's four-part model of informal learning, which is an extension of Schugurensky's conceptual model.[11] According to Jay, experience is still a more significant teacher in the workplace than classes or workshops; this teaching is enhanced when practitioners continue practicing the same line of work. Jay believes that people acquire skills and retain more knowledge when they learn informally. Learning becomes more practical when it is in response to some felt need. An unquantifiable amount of learning takes place informally while carrying out work. Jay emphasises that informal learning carries anywhere from four to ten times the weight of formal learning. Jay's model of workplace learning is built upon how people internalise and apply what they learn based on how they acquire the knowledge. Jay classified acquisition of knowledge into:

- 70% from real life and on-the-job experiences, tasks, and problem solving;
- 20% from feedback and from observing and working with role models;
- 10% from formal training.

This is very true for the artisans who practice the trades examined in this study. Virtually all of the artisans in this study learn through experiences, corroborating Jay's stance that whatever is learned is reinforced when it is put into practice.

Bennett's four-part model of informal learning buttresses Jay's 70-20-10 classification of knowledge acquisition. According to Bennett, adults learn all the time, especially in an era in which lifelong learning is integral to the present-day knowledge economy. Bennett emphasises that there is a great need for adults to learn informally to keep up with the fast pace of life now that technology offers unusual access to new information and to knowledge networks. Informal learning is everyday learning and it is best done when training at the workplace. The trainees in clan-bond trades continue to learn new things on a daily basis as they work.

Bennett reiterates that what distinguishes informal learning from other learning approaches is the context or location of learning, rather than the learning process itself. Thus, formal learning occurs in certificate-granting

10 Bennet 2012: 29.

11 Jay 2011; Bennet 2012. The paragraph summarizes Jay's work.

institutions; non-formal learning occurs in organised leisure or community-based settings; and informal learning occurs in daily life and is gained from experiences. Formal learning fails to meet adult learning needs in a virtual era where web-based and digital learning options are available. Informal learning offers adults greater freedom and flexibility to discover new knowledge and skills through their own lines of thought and action.[12]

Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey research design. The respondents in the study are artisans who produce and train others in the production of *dodo ikire*, *adire*, *aso-ofi*, and *agbede* in southwestern Nigeria. For each trade, I interviewed two master craftsmen or -women whom I chose specifically from the clan or family lineage that practices the trade. In order to obtain the relevant information from the respondents I created a semi-structured interview guide called the Engagement in Clan-Bond Trades Interview Guide (ECTIG). Prior to the interviews, I inquired about where I could find artisans from clans or family lineages that are known to practice the aforementioned trades. Thus, for *agbede* I interviewed artisans at the Agbede compound, Ibadan; for *dodo ikire* I interviewed artisans in Ikire; for *aso-ofi* I travelled to Iseyin; and for *adire* I conducted interviews in Kemta-Itoku, Abeokuta. The interviews were conducted by me and two trained research assistants. The analysis of the data was done using phenomenological narration. According to Lester, phenomenological research illuminates the specific and identifies phenomena based on how actors in a situation perceive the phenomena.[13] In this study, the specifics are the indigenous vocational trades that the interviews focused on and through which information was also obtained from the actors themselves on their experiences and perceptions of the trades.

12 The previous two paragraphs summarize Bennett 2012.

13 Lester 1999.

Analysis of the data

Table 1

Method of training for clan-bond trades

Interview question	**Answers of the respondents**	
	Dodo ikire	***Agbede***
How did you train for this trade?	I grew up doing it. My mother taught me how to do it. I stayed with my mother and assisted her whenever she was making *dodo* and in the process, I learned how to make it.	We grew up practicing the trade. As little children, whenever we came back from school we stayed with our elders and assisted them and in the process, we gradually began doing it ourselves. *Agbede* has been the indigenous trade of our forefathers.
How did you acquire new skills (learn to create new styles or products)?	I improved as I gained more experience. Ideas always come as I work and I try it out. And it works!	It's intuitive. Some customers will describe to us what they want and we manufacture it based on their requests.
Do you have trainers who assist you to train your trainees?	I don't have trainees so there is no need for trainers. Every child is a trainee and every mother is a trainer.	We don't hire trainers. All of us are trainers and our children are the trainees. Trainees don't come from outside the clan to learn *agbede*.
How did your children learn your trade?	By helping me when I am frying dodo. In the process, they learned to do it perfectly.	By participating and always being present at the *agbede* (workplace) whenever they return from school.

	Adire (two respondents)	*Aso-Ofi*
	First respondent: I like the trade and learned it from my Master. I was an apprentice. I learned the trade by watching and doing. No paper work; it was purely watch and do. Second Respondent: It was my grand parents' trade. I started doing it as a child. Nobody taught me. I grew up doing it.	It is our heritage. We learned it from our forefathers. Everyone who makes *aso-ofi* in Iseyin learned it from their elders. In Iseyin, *aso-ofi* is produced in almost every compound.
	Every mistake in *adire* is a style! We change the patterns of tying and it creates different but beautiful designs.	Customers often come with a design; we produce the design based on our experience or seek the assistance of a more skilful and knowledgeable master.
	There is no need for hiring trainers because the trainees learn by watching and doing.	No! Everybody doing this trade learned it by watching and doing.
	By being observant and practicing.	They learn it the same way we learned it: by watching their elders and gradually starting to do it themselves.

Table 2

Training procedures for clan-bond trades

Interview question	**Answers of the respondents**	
	Dodo ikire	***Agbede***
What are the training procedures for your trade?	There are no written procedures. You get ripe or over-ripe plantain peels, which you smash and fry.	No procedures. You come to the Agbede compound, set up your tools and begin to manufacture. Anyone who wants to learn comes to the Agbede compound and in time begins to manufacture some small pieces until he becomes a master in it.
What are the requirements for learning your trade?	No requirements other than being enterprising.	*Agbede* requires a high sense of commitment and intelligence. It is rigorous and requires physical strength and energy. It is not a job for the lazy. That is why it is for men only; women do not practice *agbede.*
How long does it take to learn your trade?	No specific time. It does not take a long time, maybe about three months.	Three-four years
Are there secrets behind your trade? If so, what are they?	Nil	Nil
Is there any idol/ ritual/festival associated with your trade?	Nil	*Ogun* (the god of iron). We celebrate *Ogun Oba Koso* festival.

	***Adire* (two respondents)**	***Aso-Ofi***
	Anyone who desires to learn *adire* will come as an apprentice. He/she will continue to watch and do. No other procedure than that.	Learning how to do *aso-ofi* begins like child's play. Many people learned it during their childhood by helping their parents and elders with some little assignment at the workplace. There are no fixed procedures.
	No requirements but anyone who wants to learn *adire* should be able to identify and appreciate colours. And an interest for the trade matters a lot.	High intelligence is needed. Readiness on the part of the trainee is the major requirement.
	Six months	Three-four years
	Nil	Nil
	Nil	Nil

Table 3

Prospects of artisans of clan-bond trades

Interview question	**Answers of the respondents**	
	Dodo ikire	***Agbede***
Do you have trainees under you? If yes, how many trainees do you have?	No trainees from outside. The trainees we have are our children and wards.	Outsiders do not come to train for *agbede.* Everyone here is from the same extended family.
Are any of your children doing this job or learning how to do it?	Yes. They know how to do it because it is a family business.	Our children are learning it because we also learned it from our parents.
Do you really want any of your children to do this job (practicing your trade for a living)?	Yes. Because the trade must not die. However, due to the economic situation, they can also have some other business or job in addition.	It is essential that our children continue to do it but we cannot force them. It is a tedious job and every parent wants ease and prosperity for their children. If they choose to get a better job, it is ok.

	Adire (two respondents)	*Aso-Ofi*
	There are trainees who come to learn how to produce *adire*. Our children are the trainees; there are as well few trainees from outside. We have about ten trainees.	All the children from the family compound work here and learn how to weave *aso-ofi*. We have many trainees but they are mostly children from the family lineage.
	Yes, the children assist us in the work. So, it becomes their work too. They learn it in the process and they do it well.	Yes. You will rarely meet a man from Iseyin who does not know how to make *aso-ofi*, unless he did not grow up in Iseyin. Our children are in the trade.
	Yes, it is a lucrative job. I want my children to do it.	Why not? It is a good business and very lucrative. We are all doing it and our children will continue to do it. Many of us here are well-read and we still practice the trade.

Discussion of Findings

The first aspect of clan-bond trades that this study examined is the method of training (table 1). The respondents' answers clearly indicate that the method of training is in conformity with the informal learning approach. All the respondents in this study acquired their trade skills during childhood, as is common in informal learning settings, which provides individuals with opportunities to acquire skills in a natural or incidental way. Kerla describes incidental learning, which is a form of informal learning, as unintentional or unplanned learning that results from other activities, usually in the workplace.[14]

There are many forms of informal learning – many of which were stated by the respondents in this study when asked how they acquire new skills – such as trial and error, repetition, thinking and reflecting, observation, incidental learning, social interaction, such as consulting with colleagues or experts, or learning assumptions and beliefs. Kerla conforms that informal learning is situated, contextual, and social.[15]

Another point attesting to the use of the informal learning approach when training for clan-bond trades is the absence of trainers and the informal setting in which the artisans' apprentices acquire the skills. The artisans in this study do not employ trainers to assist them in training their apprentices as there are no actual trainees; the trainees are their children. According to the respondents, their children learn by helping around at the workplace, observing, and practicing until they gradually start doing it by themselves.

Observational learning is especially relevant when training for clan-bond trades; it is learning that occurs from watching, absorbing, and replicating the behaviour of a model (master craftsperson). Although observational learning can take place at any stage in life, it is thought to be particularly important during childhood. It is possible that in other places where the clan-bond trades are practiced, the craftsmen and -women also use the non-formal learning approach (although researching this was beyond the scope of this study); however, in the sampled location, the answers of the respondents indicated that only the informal learning approach is used.

The second objective of this study was to examine training procedures of clan-bond trades (table 2). The respondents indicated that there are no standard or structured training procedures, which corresponds with the unstructured nature of informal learning as opposed to formal and non-formal learning approaches. As opposed to both, informal learning

14 Kerla 2000.

15 Kerla 2000.

follows no curriculum whatsoever and does not award its students any diplomas or credits. It is a learning approach in which the teacher simply is a person with more experience, such as a parent or a grandparent passing on their knowledge of a trade to their child or grandchild.[16]

The second interview question examined the requirements for learning clan-bond trades. The respondents indicated that trainees should be enterprising, intelligent, and have a sense of commitment and dedication. The third interview question sought to know how long it takes to learn the clan-bond trades. The least possible period of time is three months for *dodo ikire*, six months for *adire*, and three-four years for *agbede* and *aso-ofi* respectively. *Agbede* and *aso-ofi* have more intricacies than *dodo ikire* and *adire*, hence their longer years of training.

Responses to item four showed that there are no secrets to the clan-bond trades as might have been speculated as all the respondents answered "Nil" to the interview item (see Table 2).

Another form of informal learning in indigenous education systems occurs through ritual libations, idol worshipping, or traditional festivals. Skills and knowledge are acquired during such celebrations. In this study, *agbede* was the only clan-bond trade that worships an idol (*Ogun* the god of iron) and has an associated festival or ritual.

The third objective of this study was to examine the prospects of artisans practicing clan-bond trades (table 3). The questions in this segment focused on whether the respondents have any trainees from outside the family lineage or clan, whether their children are learning the trade, and whether the respondents want their children to practice the trade. In all the clan-bond trades examined in this study, the children are practicing or learning their parents' trade. This gives these trades prospects. However, the fact that outsiders do not come to learn these trades – *adire* is the only trade in this study that has trainees from outside, in addition to children from the family lineage – is alarming and insufficient to keep the trades and the required skills thriving. Consequently, they may soon go extinct. This was particularly noticeable in the case of *agbede*. The respondents do want their children to practice the trade, but at the same time they wish their children a more lucrative job so that they don't have to go through the same kind of suffering.

16 Eaton 2010.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The unstructured nature of learning and training in clan-bond trades provides its trainees with unlimited opportunities. Practitioners of clan-bond trades transmit their skills and knowledge only to members of their clan/family lineage. The prospect of clan-bond trades is therefore limited because they are not available to the wider public.

I therefore recommend that adult education centres should collaborate with clan-bond tradesmen and -women to create opportunities for the wider public, especially the unemployed youngsters. Allowing unemployed youngsters to acquire the required skills for practicing clan-bond trades will create employment opportunities for them. Governmental and educational institutions should aid practitioners of clan-bond trades in the provision of relevant training facilities that will make learning the trades attractive to the wider public. The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), the National University Commission (NUC), and other establishments responsible for creating and implementing educational policies should introduce courses and training in the arts and science of clan-bond trades with the intent of un-bonding the trades.

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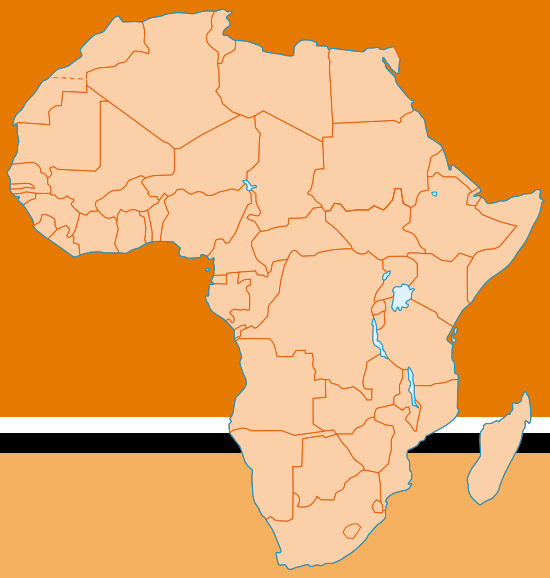

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*Gl*obally, the goal of education in the developing world has moved from "Education for All," which was one of the Millenium Goals of the United Nations, to focus on "Quality Education" as Sustainable Development Goal 4, formulated by the same United Nations. As the number of children going to school all over the world increased and the expected results of the reduction of extreme poverty and hunger materialised, governments and NGOs alike soon realised that the term "education" covers a wide range of activities and ways of schooling, not all of which contribute equally and in all circumstances to the continuing development goals of any particular country or region. Sustainable development can be attained only when individuals and groups have and are able to use the tools and can adapt to local circumstances. Education should provide learners with those tools and only education that does provide them and prepares its learners for their futures can be called "quality education." Rethinking how "education" can be put to use strategically for long term gain therefore assumes the utmost importance, and the focus must then turn to the quality of education. Good and sustainable education is understood to be education that prepares its participants for both social and professional life by equipping them with appropriate knowledge and skills. Hence the title of this volume: *Education for Life in Africa.*

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