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PATTERNS OF CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN EDUCATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

By
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On this eve of a new millenium, African nations have continued to be "shepherded into penury and dissolution," by monumental and unprecedented problems. The continent has paused on the razor edge of total collapse. The crises are most severe in Sub-Saharan Africa where several nations have been the site of a rapid succession of military take-overs. There are problems of hunger, illiteracy, chronic embezzlement, sickness, massive unemployment and, for millions, a sense of hopelessness. "The nations of Africa", editorized a Boston Globe article, "crowd the top of nearly every international index of misery." Others were more sarcastic: "Africa is no longer part of the Third World. It is the Fourth World," wrote the journalist David Lamb.¹ Surprisingly Edem Kodjo, a secretary-general of the organization of Africa Unity, joined the chorus. "Africa is nothing, does nothing, nor can do anything," he anguished.²

In the midst of these crises, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have stepped in with their Structural Adjustment Program as a solution to Africa's most severe problems. But by now it is common knowledge that programs emanating from the World Bank and the IMF, designed to cure Africa's ills, have failed. One observer has labeled those organizations as the homes of economic misplanners, charging that, "the IMF strategy is to fleece and bankrupt it [Africa], and hand it over to western creditors for debt trap peonage."³

Experts in the west have been busy at work analyzing the origins and causes of Africa's plight. While many have made a living lecturing and relecturing on Africa's problems, others have rushed to the conclusions that the region's woes result from the continent's inability to implement and sustain a western style democracy and a free market system. Africans are, therefore, responsible for their own problems. True, Africa is currently faced with monumental and unprecedented problems. But analysts whose perception of Africa is based on a diet of negatives have omitted the other side of Africa's story. In fact they have foreshortened that continent's historical record.

Despite the immense crisis facing the region, Africa is home to over 600 million people. As the first frontier of human existence, Africa continues to be a continent with enormous human and natural resources. Neither the popular books nor media stories tell the whole story. They don't discuss the complex social patterns that exist

within the continent, the high rate of communal responsibility and the overall makeup of a typical traditional society. From a distance traditional African society looks simple and remote, but a closer examination reveals something else. As the writer Basil Davidson warns, African societies are complex and sophisticated.

Africa is full of challenges, attractions, hopes and promises. It is a giant that temporarily may be shelved but not ignored. Africa is the "birth of humankind", the commentator Sanford Ungar wrote. It is "a source of vast human, economic, mineral and agricultural potential. Africa is critical to American interests in the world, they argue, a site of political and social drama that may eventually become issues in domestic American politics and society as well," he added.⁴

After serving in African nations, returned U.S. Peace Corps volunteers echoed a similar theme. They spoke about the importance of Africa and what this continent can teach the world. They informed Americans to withhold judgement until they discover the African people, insisting that from Africa much will be learned about culture, tolerance, humanity, ingenuity and the like. The volunteers overwhelmingly reiterated that service in Africa taught them about themselves, human relations and what it meant to be human. In short, they gained more than what they put in. They were forced to examine their society from outside and in relation to other cultures. Commenting on the lessons of his service on Africa, David J. Dwyer, a returned volunteer from Cameroon, wrote:

As far as service to the country [Cameroon] is concerned, it is clear to me that I gained far more than what I thought I could gain, for Cameroonians taught me things that I could not easily find in my own culture, namely that what is important in life is not high energy technology, but the importance of human relations, family, friends and so forth... [Since my return from Cameroon] I have found myself working with peace and justice oriented groups in my own community.⁵

In 1959, the then senator John F. Kennedy informed an American audience that Africa was "a land of rich variety - of noble and ancient cultures... of vital and gifted people."⁶ Earlier in a speech, "The Coming Challenge" he warned that Africa must be taken seriously. To his senate colleagues, he admonished, "Regardless of what Africa has been in truth or in myth, she will be that no longer. Call it nationalism, call it anti-colonialism, call it what you will, Africa is going through a revolution.... If African progress falters because of lack of capital and education, if these new states and emerging peoples turn bitter in their taste of independence, then the reason will be what Western powers, by indifference or lack of imagination, have failed to see that it is their own future that is also at stake."⁷

Earlier, Pan-Africanist leaders, including George Padmore, Sylvester Williams, W.E.B. DuBois, J.E. Casely-Hayford, Nnandi Azikiwe, Marcus Garvey and more had championed these ideas. They called for the liberation of Africa and predicted that the tide would eventually turn in Africa's favour. They talked about the African revolution, spirit and consciousness. The African revolution emphasized by the apostles of the Pan-African movement, Kennedy and others is not over. In the field of politics, economics, education and culture, Africa is going through major changes. It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss all the changes taking place within the continent. Rather this study attempts an examination of the patterns of change and continuity in education in Sub-Saharan Africa, from 1919 to the present. This study argues that while significant developments have taken place in Sub-Saharan African nations since the colonial era, there has been more continuity than change in that region's educational system. The bedrock structure of the colonial education system inherited from colonialism by those nations is still largely unrevised. The period of study from 1919, when as members of the League of Nations, European nations were supposed to prepare their African colonies for self-determination, to the present.

By 1920, the division of Africa among the European nations of France, Britain, Belgium, Portugal and Spain was complete. The colonial administrators were determined to reap maximum benefit from the colonized. Among the methods used to achieve this objective were forced taxation and labour, land seizure and the establishment of large plantations. Perhaps, one of the most significant tactics used by the European power in their attempt to fulfil their objective was the educational system they imposed in the colonies. The colonial educational system was established in part, to destroy African culture. "Colonialism," the renowned nationalist Frantz Fanon wrote, "is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic it turned to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, and disfigures and destroys it."⁸ In many Sub-Saharan African nations it was in the field of education that colonialism left one of its most enduring and tragic legacies. Because university education was generally out of reach for most people during and after the colonial era this study focuses on primary and secondary levels of education.

The dominant colonial powers in Africa established policies designed to extract the maximum economic gains from the colonies. All political, economic and educational policies were directed towards achieving that objective. Whether by direct or indirect rule, both systems were devised to enrich the colonial powers by any means necessary. Thus the colonial era was one of massive economic exploitation, cruelty, indoctrination and humiliation.

On the eve of the inception of colonial regimes in Africa, the establishment of schools in the region was handled by missionaries from mission groups, including the Roman Catholic, British Baptist and Basel Mission. The cardinal objective of these denominations was to spread Christianity. However, they focused on the establishment of primary or elementary schools because these institutions attracted a large percentage of the population. The colonial administration turned these schools into acculturation centers where the colonized people were taught European culture and languages. The administrators encouraged a very small group to pursue post-elementary education in order that they could serve as clerks interpreters and security officers.

Colonial education was designed to turn Africans into servants of the colonizer regime. Missionaries who arrived in Sub-Saharan Africa to establish schools had developed pre-conceived notions about blacks. According to them Africans were uncivilized, unchristian, primitive, backward and consequently different. Emphasizing these colonial perceptions Fanon wrote that "For colonialism, this vast continent was the haunt of savage, a country riddled with superstitions and fanaticism, destined for contempt, weighed down by the curse of God, a country of cannibals, in short, the Negro's country."⁹ Like the colonial administrators, the missionaries had been contaminated by the European disease of racism. The racist literature on Africa prevalent in the west before and during the colonial era convinced the missionaries that their thoughts were correct. Armed with such beliefs, the missionaries used the school system to colonize the minds of young Africans. In both primary and secondary schools, the pupils were given voluminous notes on the glory of western civilization. Africans were labeled as barbaric and their continent as a place where the wheels of civilization went flat. As the anthropologist Melville Herskovits, an early crusader for the reinterpretation of African societies in America, had stated that as late as the 1950s, very learned people perceived Africa as a place where its "people were held to have fallen behind in the march of progress, with ways of life representing early stages in the evolution of human civilization."¹⁰ Consequently, it had nothing worth studying. Young men and women were taught that Africans such as Chaka Zulu of South Africa, the Asante of Ghana, Samori Toure, and others who opposed colonialism, were deranged individuals who did not know what was good for them.

The colonial educational system was designed to infuriate, ridicule and destroy African culture. It was an "education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion, and the development of underdevelopment."¹¹ Past atrocities, such as the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and European conquest of Africa were justified by colonial educators. Africans were taught little about the Black Diaspora or the lives and contributions of African descendants in other parts of the world. It is no surprise that young secondary school students until very recently were not taught the

significance of Black nationalists such as W.E.B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X and others.

Educators focused on disciplines such as Geography, Literature, History, Religion and English. While these were disciplines within the humanities, rote learning was the only study method. Students were not taught how to develop critical abilities, analyze and make generalizations. They memorized voluminous notes on Stuart and Tudor England, English and French culture, and many other topics that had little relevance to the development of Africans living on the African continent. In fact the educational system made a mockery of African culture, and beliefs. In the final analysis the system "corrupted the thinking and sensibilities of the African and filled him with abnormal complexes."¹² Referring to the in-built problems of colonial education, a Guyanese scholar, the late Walter Rodney wrote that:

"Some of the contradictions between the content of colonial education and the reality of Africa were incongruous. On a hot afternoon in some tropical African school, a class of black shining faces would listen to their Geography lesson of the year-spring, summer, autumn, and winter. They would learn about the Alps and the river Rhine but nothing about the Atlas Mountains of North Africa or the river Zambezi. If those students were in a British colony, they would dutifully write that "we defeated the Spanish Armada in 1588" - at a time when Hawkins was stealing Africans and being knighted by Queen Elizabeth I for so doing."¹³

Like Rodney, the Cameroonian novelist Mongo Beti was critical of the course content were taught in schools. "[These] tiny tots would turn up from backward villages thirty or forty miles up-country The books in front of them presented a universe which had nothing in common with the one they knew; they battled endlessly with the unknown, astonished and desperate and terrified," Beti wrote.¹⁴

Because examinations and certificates, under the colonial system, made "all the difference in the world between a mean and limited existence or a fortunate one," few dared question the existing educational system.¹⁵ Education became an end in itself rather than a means to make life and society a little better. It was all part of what Nnandi Azikiwe of Nigeria described as the "miseducation" of Africans.¹⁶

The educational system encouraged elitism in society. Not designed to educate the masses, the system focused on a chosen few and the examination system selected out most of the pupils. The successful student was programmed for an office job. Emphasizing the problems of colonial education in Africa as a whole, John K. Marah wrote that:

"Western education in Africa negated the African youths not only from their African heroes, but also from their agrarian background. At school, they were punished by being sent to dig

the school gardens, pick up rubbish and debris from the school compound... this taught the African students that farming and working with hands is a form of punishment, reserved for those who break rules, rather than a necessity in a predominantly agrarian society. Furthermore, the teachers were always dressed as Westerners, in ties, and had smooth hands that manifested the life of leisure; the African student therefore equated Western education with a future life of leisure. In addition, European colonial administrators, who were often objects of imitation and superficial emulation, were first and foremost office workers; the African student therefore saw himself as a future office worker in a modernized town or city."¹⁷

Initially colonized by Germany and later by France and England, Cameroon became one of the few nations to have had a triple colonial heritage. However, the colonial objective in the territory was the same as anywhere else in the continent. Missionaries began the process of establishing schools in the region. As in other colonies, the establishment of secondary schools did not receive much attention until after World War I.

Following the defeat of Germany, Cameroon was split into two zones to be administered by Britain and France. Thus between divisions in 1919 and independence in 1960, West Cameroon was colonized by Britain. During this era, secondary schools, teacher training colleges and vocational/technical schools were established in the colony. In the field of education, Germany established precedent and Britain followed it. The Roman Catholic Mission, Basel Mission, and the Cameroon Baptist Mission, again established primary and secondary schools. Their activities were focused in the towns of Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe, Bamenda, Wum, and Nkambe. Of the 590 primary schools that existed in 1960 in West Cameroon, 324 were started between 1946 and 1960, and 94% of them were established by the Catholic, Basel and Baptist Missions. By reunification, on 1 October, 1961, there existed 499 primary schools, which enrolled 85,000 pupils; three established secondary schools, namely St. Joseph's College, Sasse (1938), Cameroon Protestant College, Bali (1949), and Queen of the Holy Rosary College, Okoyong (1956); and seven teacher training colleges.¹⁸ The only technical institution, the Government Trade Center in Ombe, was closed at this time. The educational structure established during the colonial era and continued afterward required seven years in primary school and in post-primary institutions, either five years in secondary school or five years in Teacher Training college or four years in vocational school. Following the years spent in either of those schools those interested in pursuing a university education would have to spend an additional two years in high school. Therefore, successful students spent fourteen years in school before university admission.

In East Cameroon, the educational system was modeled after the French. Pupils did six years in elementary school, after which they proceeded to the Lycee where they spent seven years with hopes of earning a baccalaureate certificate. Technical schools,

otherwise known as Lycee Techniques, were available for those uninterested in the traditional disciplines. Again, this was a seven year program. Before independence both the missionaries and the colonial administration established schools in the region. As in other colonies, schools were located in towns, while the rural areas were ignored. By 1964, there were 3,380 primary schools that enrolled 643,449 pupils and 108 post secondary institutions (including 10 lycees) which enrolled 33,448 students in the region. Also in existence were 47 technical schools which enrolled 9,685 students.¹⁹ Whether in East or West Cameroon the colonial educational system was dominant.

In territories colonized by France, the educational system, except for slight moderations, was identical to that established in East Cameroon. The colony of Mali, administered for a long time as part of French Sudan, had a similar educational system. The first school that served the colonized people was established at Kayes, the capital of the French Sudan. Established in 1886, this school was known as "the school of hostages", because its initial student body were children of traditional rulers enrolled forcibly there. It was not until 1910 that France began to extend education to other parts of Mali, after which more elementary and secondary schools were established in the region after World War I. Despite the increase in the number of schools, the colonial educational structure remained. The curriculum ridiculed African culture. It focused on the glory of French civilization and history. This system remained in place until 1960 when Mali gained independence. It is no surprise that at independence, less than 10% of Mali's population was literate and only 12% of the school age children went to school. Technicians and other professionals were almost unavailable. In fact in 1960, there were less than ten medical doctors in Mali.²⁰

Colonized for more than seventy years by Belgium, the Congo was in a similar position in 1960, when it received independence. Belgium's colonial policy in the Congo was cruel, exploitative and harsh. Little or no development had taken place there under Belgium's authority. Neglect of the development of the colony was probably the worst in all of the Sub-Saharan Africa. In 1960, when Congo received independence a viable educational system which the Africans could build on was almost non-existent. At all levels, educated people were in acute short supply. It is no surprise that the region was thrown into a civil war shortly after independence.

In the British Colonies, such as Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Kenya and Uganda, missionaries were at the forefront of the establishment of elementary and secondary schools. As in Cameroon, the colonial administration did not push for the establishment of many post-secondary institutions. However, in many British colonies educational reforms preceded independence. In Nigeria, substantial reforms began when the

western region, in 1955, embarked on universal primary education, a move which eliminated most of the primary school fee.²¹ Other regions, the eastern and northern, copied that example. Following independence, the Nigerian government continued with the policy of universal primary school education. As enrollment increased so did the opening of more primary, secondary, technical and commercial schools. The new institutions were created in both the rural and urban areas. By establishing schools in the rural areas, African nations began reversing a colonial tradition that ignored the development of those areas. In Ghana, Lesotho, Senegal, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, the story was the same.

Though Ghana and Guinea obtained independence in the late 1950s, it was not until the 1960s when independence became a reality for many Sub-Saharan nations. In 1960, the "Year of Africa" seventeen African nations received independence. Post-independent African leaders were determined to reform the educational system inherited from the colonial regimes. Colonial education had served the interest of Europe. The new African nations hoped to tailor the educational system to meet the needs and aspirations of the African people. Therefore, any viable system had to be cognizant of Nnandi Azikiwe's warning, who wrote that:

"The education of the African in the past and present has prepared Africans for life in a social order which is stagnant and unresponsive. It made Africans to cultivate false values... It enables the un-fits and mis-fits to thrive... It makes them to be mere imitators and prevents them from cultivating that moral courage.... It makes them to cling to artificialities and superficialities. Africans have been miseducated. They need mental emancipation so as to be re-educated to the real needs of Renascent Africa."²²

Other educational problems were evident at independence time in Africa. There was a shortage of a qualified teaching staff, buildings, equipment and textbooks. Many of the secondary school operated with neither libraries nor laboratories. In case where there was a library, it was stocked with outdated books which had little relevance to the disciplines the students were taught in school. The existing laboratories were ill-equipped and contained obsolete instruments. In short, everything was in short supply. The educational institutions available were sparse, and were located mainly in the urban centres. Colonial educational policy had neglected the rural areas.

These problems did not deter the determination of the African leaders to educate their youth. They realized that each nation had a sacred obligation to educate its people. Through individual, national and regional efforts, African nations began to resolve their educational problems. From 1961 conferences were organized to evaluate the problems of the continent's educational development. In May, the Addis Ababa Conference of African Ministers of Education was held. The participants at the

conference studied the educational needs, priorities and goals of African nations. The Addis Ababa conference was followed by several others including the Lagos conference on the Organization of Research and Training in Africa (1964) and the Nairobi conference (1968). At the Nairobi conference, representatives agreed that significant progress had been made in educational reform but underscored that the educational changes have failed to meet the needs of the African people. Other troubling issues noted included the high drop-out rate and the absence of adequate emphasis on technical education.²³

To meet the critical shortage of teachers and skilled manpower after independence, African nations turned to the Peace Corps Agency. The Peace Corps, among other things, had to assist developing nations in their process to become modernized. The first Peace Corps volunteers arrived in Ghana in 1961. Later many African nations requested the assistance of the volunteers. Peace Corps volunteers taught in teachers training colleges, secondary, vocational, and high schools. They served in community and rural development. During the first three decades of Peace Corps presence in Africa, volunteers served mostly as teachers. However, in the 1980s, volunteers' services in African nations have shifted to the field of rural development, health and agriculture extension work. Despite their inadequacies, volunteers served an important function during a critical moment in Africa's history. They served as teachers at a time when most African nations were in a desperate need of a qualified teaching staff. Because of their services, many nations opened up new secondary, vocational and high schools. However, volunteer services represented a fraction of Africa's education solutions. African leaders realized that only they could institute educational policies designed to promote national development.

In the various countries the task for initiating educational policies was handed over to the Ministry of Education. In nations such as Cameroon, the situation was more complicated because of the triple colonial heritage.

Following independence and reunification, the Cameroon government made the creation of educational institutions a top priority. Keenly aware of the difficulties ahead, the government took steps to harmonize both educational systems inherited from Britain and France. Ahmadou Ahidjo, the nation's first president, understood that Cameroon was diversified in custom and language, and the two European languages inherited from colonialism only complicated things. A shrewd politician, he turned this into an asset. Stressing that education was the pathway to the nation's freedom, growth, and stability, he called for the creation of more schools, the improvement of existing ones and appealed to Cameroonians to take the spirit of bilingualism seriously. "Adopting the path of bilingualism," he said "is in our interest... it offers us the means to develop this new culture... which could transform our

country into a catalyst of Africa unity... Our goal, however, is clear: it consists firstly, both in and out of school, of gradually creating a civilization - which, whilst being based on our African heritage, will also draw its inspiration from what is best and most valuable in the cultures imposed on us."²⁴ Educational development was a priority on Ahidjo's "must accomplish" list.

Masterminded at the Ministry of National Education, the crusade for educational reform dominated the minister's attention during the first two decades following the nation's independence. To meet the challenge, workshops and seminars were organized on the subject. The minister created research centers to work on curriculum reforms. Established in Yaonde, in 1967, the *Institute de Pedagogie Applique a Vocation Rurale* (IPAR) was assigned the task of reforming the primary school curriculum in East Cameroon. In 1973, another IPAR created in Buea was charged with the responsibility of curriculum reform in West Cameroon. Also established at this time was the *Centre National de l'Education* (CNE) with the objective of coming up with a reform package for secondary and post-secondary institutions.²⁵

Simultaneously, new schools were opened. Enrollment and expenditure rose steadily. By 1976 approximately thirteen percent of the nation's budget was spent on education. Because government-created schools were non-fee paying institutions, education became more affordable to all. The fact that the nation's development plans called for universal primary school education encouraged many to enroll in schools. Most of the schools were established in rural areas. By doing this the government took education closer to the people and also began incorporating those areas into its development policy, something which was unthinkable under the colonial administrators.

Equally, the literacy rate in the nation jumped remarkably. In 1970, the male adult literacy rate was forty-seven percent and nineteen percent for the female adult population. By 1990, the rate had increased to sixty-six percent for the male population and forty-three percent for the female.²⁶ Emphasis on both classical and vocational encouraged people to take technical education seriously, thereby reversing the colonial mentality which ridiculed and undermined that type of education.

Cameroon: Educational Growth.

Year	1975	1980	1985	1989
Primary Schools	4,506	4,971	5,856	6,549
Primary School Teachers	22,209	26,763	33,598	37,804
Primary School Profits	1,122,900	1,379,205	1,705,319	1,946,301
Secondary Schools	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Secondary School Teachers	4,805	8,926	11,096	17,667
Secondary School Pupils	143,812	234,090	343,720	457,161
Vocational Schools	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vocational School Teachers	1,364	2,764	3,084	5,652
Vocational School Pupils	36,262	62,674	83,209	89,289
Government Expenditure on Educational in (CFA Francs) & % of Budget	21,924,800 21.3%	45,099,400 20.3%	109,344,000 18.7%	112,103,000 18.7%

Source: United Nations, **Statistical Yearbook**²⁷

Like Cameroon, the Malian government took measures to reform its educational system. The educational reforms of 1962 were geared towards the rapid political, economic and social advancement of the nation. Since 1960, numerous educational conferences have taken place. Such efforts have yielded positive results. More schools and buildings have been established. The educational budget and enrollment has increased. In 1960, the enrollment rate was nine percent but by 1981 it had jumped to twenty-seven percent, and ten years later it was around thirty percent. The educational budget rose annually and peaked in the early 1970s when it made up thirty-three percent of the national budget.²⁸

In Ghana, educational development occurred rapidly following independence. Ghana obtained independence in 1957 and its first leader Kwame Nkrumah, a committed African nationalist, vowed to accelerate the development of his country. Nkrumah understood that education was significant to development. The Education Act of 1961 made the first ten years of education, basic education, free and compulsory for all children of school going age. Measures were taken to increase secondary schools. Between 1960 and 1966, both primary and secondary school enrollment went up. Within the same period primary school enrollment jumped from 586,464 to 1,404,939, while that of secondary school rose from 12,922 to 31,241. Simultaneously, enrollment

in vocational schools went up. Programs initiated by the Ministry of Education stressed the sciences, African studies, agricultural and other disciplines relevant to Africa's development and progress. By the early 1970s government expenditure on education was approximately twenty percent of its budget.²⁹

Kenya also invested on her educational system in the colonial era. Through government action and conferences, Kenyans worked hard to address some of the critical educational programs which faced the country. Between 1963 and 1991, there were increases in enrollment and expenditure in primary and secondary schools. Initiatives emanating from efforts and laws including The Kenyan Education Commission Report (1964), The Education Act (1968), and The Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond (1988), yielded positive results. The number of primary and secondary schools increased from 6,058 and 151 to 17,650 and 2,647 respectively. Emphasis was also placed on vocational education. The educational budget went up. In 1963, the nation allocated ten percent of its budget to education and in 1991, it had gone up to twenty-seven percent.³⁰

Educational changes and improvement also took place in other nations including Nigeria, Senegal, Zambia, Uganda, Gabon, Zaire and more.³¹ Following independence each nation established ambitious development plans and educational process was given a priority in these plans. In speech after speech, African leaders emphasized the need to educate the young people.

Educational Change in Selected Sub-Saharan African Nations:

Country	Year	Primary School Enrollment	Secondary School Enrollment	Vocational School Enrollment	% of Budget Spent on Education
Nigeria	1980	13760030	2345604	67943	24.7
	1985	12914870	3088711	...	8.7
	1990	13607249	2908466	113556	...
	1991	13776854	3123277
Senegal	1975	311913	...	8182	N/A
	1980	419748	95604	9932	
	1985	583890	130338	8770	
	1990	708448	181170	5658	
Sierra Leone	1975	205910	50478	799	...
	1980	315145	68199	1891	11.8
	1985	421689	94717	1208	...
	1990	367426	102474	5425	...
Congo	1975	319101	102110	7129	18.2
	1980	390676	187585	16933	28.6
	1985	475805	222633	23432	...
	1989	502918	183023	12278	...
Kenya	1975	2881155	240969	5469	19.4
	1980	3926629	428023	8575	18.1
	1985	4702414	457767	7840	...
	1990	5392319	563440	8880	...
Niger	1975	142182	14462	233	18.7
	1980	228855	38861	521	22.9
	1985	275902	...	615	...
	1990	368732	76758	843	...
Zambia	1975	872392	77672	2377	11.9
	1980	1041938	102019	2506	7.6
	1985	1348318	140743	4692	...
	1990	1461206	...	3313	...

Source: United Nations. *Statistical Yearbook*³²

Despite the rise in enrollment, expenditure, and the establishment of more schools, the colonial educational system continued to function. In fact, the bedrock foundation of colonial educational methods remained unreversed. In 1972, pupils in primary and post-primary schools were still trained based on a western-oriented curriculum. Generations of young Africans were taught in schools that explorers from Europe discovered Mount Kenya, and more specifically that Mungo Park discovered the River Niger.

Additional and typical examples include course content given, in the early 1970s, to secondary school students in the nations of Sierra Leone, Zambia, and Gambia. In those schools students memorized lectures on European history, geography and literature. Many could even quote Shakespeare. To these students not only was western civilization the only one worth studying, it was the only one emphasized. Not surprisingly, as a result, students selected most of their historic heroes from western societies. Those were the days when it was common for students to draw a map of Europe with all the climatic zones inserted properly but could not do the same for Africa. In disciplines within the humanities, students studied Europe. In the sciences, examples and illustrations came out of Europe.

Even the books used in schools as required texts, and most still in use today in many nations, were written by non-Africans. In his recently critically acclaimed film, *Afrique, Je Te Plumerai* (Africa, I'm going to Fleece You), Director Jean-Marie Teno portrays in the most vivid manner the present day European cultural domination in Cameroon, informing Cameroonians that Cameroon's cultural revival is a prerequisite for growth. Though the focus is on Cameroon, the substance and message of the film have broader implications for the whole of African. It is a warning that African nations must work toward a cultural renaissance for significant development to take place. Part documentary and part acting, the film alerts Cameroonians to examine critically the devastating impact of colonialism on the nation's culture and educational system. Teno was trained in an educational system that ridiculed African culture and values. "Black," according to such a system, "was always the colour of despair," while "the colour of success was white." As a student, Teno was informed that a school "diploma" was a symbol of success and will guarantee him "a place in the system." Repeatedly he was told, "my son, you must study hard if you want to be as a white person." In one of the scenes in the film *Marie*, Teno's friend, visited public libraries in Yaounde demanding to know on which shelves books authored by Africans were kept. Not surprisingly, few of such books were available. Later, in an interview with David Ndachi Tagne of SOPECAM, Teno was stunned to learn that Cameroon spends approximately four billion francs CFA annually on books imported from France. Why do Cameroonian firms in the country not publish most of these books, he wondered. Explaining why he made the film he stated, "I wanted to trace cause and effect between an intolerable present and the colonial violence of yesterday... to understand how a country could fail to succeed as a state which was once composed of well-structured, traditional societies."³³

Lectures on African affairs until recently were not taken seriously. Until the 1970s, courses not on Africa were still taught within the context of the dark continent. As a result African history and culture became a footnote in the students' education. The Nigerian writer Chinweizu commented aptly about education in West Africa

when he observed that in classrooms, "the pervasive mentality" was "one of Europhobia - an uncritical acceptance and high valuation of every bit of wonder out of the west."³⁴ Earlier Kwame Nkrumah, had lamented over the type of education prevalent in secondary schools within the continent. What passed for African history in classrooms was "a story of European adventures" in Africa. Nkrumah wrote.³⁵

A glaring and disturbing shortcoming of Africa's educational planners in the post-independent era was their failure to come up with a curriculum designed to decolonize the African mind. Little was done to resurrect the sense of cultural pride that existed in the pre-colonial society. In schools pupils learned values which contradicted those taught at home. There, they were introduced to western ideas of private property and individual rights as opposed to the concepts of communal ownership and group rights which are deeply ingrained in African culture. Schools dismissed African religion as primitive beliefs fit only for backward societies. This was destined to be a costly mistake, especially as African cultural beliefs and institutions are interwoven and are supposed to work toward ensuring the common good for all. For example, African religion gave "support to the laws and customs of each community, and to its accepted rules of conduct-courtesy, generosity, and identification with one's family and kindred... the morality sanctioned by religion enjoined good behaviour within the family or tribe or nation which the deities or spirits were particularly associated."³⁶ By failing to integrate the study of African culture into the school curriculum, the educational system produced graduates who rejected their cultural beliefs. Such a system uprooted the typical student from the environment and turned him into something comparable to a rudderless boat without a sense of direction and identity. Also, the educational system failed to revive the cultural consciousness which was already in existence in traditional societies since the pre-colonial era. A consequence of this shortcoming was the moral breakdown of the community, something that contributed to the development of vices such as greed, graft, theft, corruption, general malaise and loss of a sense of community responsibility. Until recently and still in some countries today, the leadership in African nations was schooled in this educational system and their level of corruption, immorality, fraud and greed is unprecedented in African societies.

An educational weakness was that teachers were still trained in the colonial tradition of "note taking and exams," and as a result failed to challenge the system of rote learning. It became common for students to inform teachers to "just give us notes to copy, please sir!" In 1965, a Peace Corps volunteer, who taught chemistry in a secondary school in West Cameroon had a first-hand experienced of the dangers of the inherited colonial educational system. During an experiment in his class, he wrote on the blackboard, "Observe and record what happens". Every student wrote down, "Observe and record what happens."³⁷ In fact, the colonial educational system was

fully alive in Cameroon. Equally, Cameroonian schools neither attempted to do away with the colonial legacy of tribalism nor prepared the graduates to deal with the most basic realities of society, such as the means to improve agriculture, health care, infrastructure and sanitation.

The examination system inherited from colonial times survived colonialism in many nations and turned out to be a monumental obstacle to the region's development. It strengthened elitism and created an "illusion" of being knowledgeable in those who received certificates.³⁸ Many of those who failed exams became discouraged and gave up their dreams to pursue advanced degrees. The system's practice created a stagnant talent pool in the various nations. Africa has continued to lag behind in highly-trained manpower. It is no surprise that most of the technicians in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1960s and 1970s came from the colonial nations, a practice which cemented the seeds of neocolonialism.

This pattern of continuity in Sub-Saharan African's educational system from the colonial era to the present has retarded the region's development. During the two decades following independence and beyond several committees were established to study the means and ways towards the improvement of education in African nations. It was a noble effort but like most bureaucratic endeavors in a centralized system, the reports submitted by these committees were half-read, shelved and forgotten. The current problems of Africa are towering and unprecedented. African nations are confronted with the most severe political, economic and social challenges: poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, weak infrastructure, stagnant economy, huge foreign debt, political instability, excessive fraud and corruption. Africa is a continent in which there exists a tremendous gap between the haves and the have-nots.

In recent times, the efforts to continue with educational development of sub-Saharan Africa have been marred by budgetary constraints. In many African nations, the educational budget peaked in the early 1970s and began either its decline or held steady from the late 1970s. With an economy based on cash crop production, African nations became more and more vulnerable to global economic changes that began in early 1980s. By the mid-1980s most African nations, in financial crises, began to scale back on everything, including the educational budget. Additionally, policies from global lending agencies such as the World Bank and the IMF have been particularly painful and devastating for Africa's national development. The IMF Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), nicknamed by some as "Starve African People" and "Sophisticated Arrangement for Poverty," have caused much unemployment of school graduates in African nations and despair among the people.

The budget cutbacks exposed some of the glaring weaknesses of the educational system in sub-Saharan African nations. In the rush to establish schools, most nations had neglected to emphasize the quality and relevance of the education program to African societies. School graduates were quick to realize that the education they received had failed to prepare them for the realities of their society. While the number of schools and enrollment rose, the quality of the education provided to the students dropped. Many of the secondary and high schools were served with inadequate school libraries and laboratories. Many books in libraries are severely out of date and the laboratory equipment remain obsolete. Few programs designed to update the knowledge and methodology of school teachers are in place. Those available are ill-equipped and ill-financed. In many of the primary schools, the school children lack basic educational tools such as pens, papers, erasers, books and so on. Increasingly more children arrive in school hungry.

For all the efforts, African leaders are still unable to extend education to a large segment of its population. More than half of the population can neither read nor write. Despite the explosion of primary and secondary schools after independence, too few people are still enrolled in those schools. The rural areas, where roughly 70% of the population resides, are still poorly served by schools.

Despite the financial burdens, Sub-Saharan African nations must move aggressively to radically reform the educational system in order to continue with its development in a very competitive global environment. Reforming the system will require boldness, commitment and initiative, more especially as it involves changing a system that has been in place for over a century. Any changes expected to be long lasting must be cognizant of African society and environment. Those charged with the responsibility for changing the system must from the onset ask the following key questions: Education for who? What type of society does Africa seek to create? What present and future challenges will the nations face? These questions and others should serve as a guide. Fundamentally, they should create an educational system that would strive towards the attainment of social justice, development of the mind, honesty and human dignity. The new system must seek to prepare students for social, civil and moral responsibilities in societies.³⁹ To attain such goals the educational planners must integrate and emphasize the study of African culture and history in the curriculum. The emphasis on African culture will assist the young people to develop a sense of community, belonging, direction, and will provide him with a basis on which to build the nation's development. Also, it will lead to the development to a national consciousness, something that will boost the student's confidence and pride. Armed with a sense of cultural pride, sense of awareness and knowledge of African cultural values, the student, following graduation, will be more prepared and determined to play an active role in the development of the nation. Embedded

with a new nationalist spirit, school graduates will devise policies that will transcend their individual and tribal interests. Rather than enriching themselves at the expense of the nation as is the current practice, they will work towards the greatness of the entire nation. In fact, as committed nationalists they will give the nation's interest top priority.

Simultaneously, the new curriculum must emphasize the sciences. In a world that is becoming more and more dominated by technology, secondary school students should be encouraged to devote more time to the sciences. To stimulate interest, a generous reward system should be put in place. The emphasis on the sciences will in the long run encourage secondary school graduates to advance into those post-secondary institutions where they will acquire technical and vocational skills required to provide urgent solutions to the problems of the day. Successful graduates should be encouraged to practice their trade rather than sit behind a desk in an office. They will serve as important role models.

Additionally, the curriculum must be inclusive. The nation must do away with a colonial legacy that undermines the significant role women have played in the nation's development. While initial steps have taken in that regard, much more needs to be done. Recognitions of the role of women is critical for future progress. Books selected for classroom use must acknowledge women's role in the development process and talented women should be at the fore front of this new battle in schools. At all levels women should be brought into the decision-making process. By serving in those capacities these women will help to break down gender barriers, act as role models and as a result will boost the morale of female students to become actively involved in nation's continuous development.

Perhaps one of the most critical components of this reform package is the role of teachers. As transmitters of knowledge teachers have always played a crucial role in the lives of students in and out of school. The curriculum of the teachers training colleges should be revised to emphasize those disciplines "designed to meet the needs of body, mind, and spirit, and the teachers must be aware of their relatedness."⁴⁰ Teachers must be well-trained in African culture and other disciplines. Those opting to pursue a teaching career must be carefully screened in order to weed out the uncommitted ones. African governments must establish and mandate guidelines for a reward system in the teaching profession in the nation. Private agencies must be committed to making salary payment on time. Incidents in nations such as Sierra Leone, Zambia, and Cameroon where teachers in private institutions go for months without pay must be stopped. Also, representatives from the teaching field must be brought into the decision making process on issues that affect their craft. New policies should strive to make teachers realize that their role is important and appreciated.

African leaders must continue to seek allies and work with organizations that assist the substantial development of the region. Meetings such as the African and African-American summits should be supported and encouraged. Participation in such summits and other efforts will eventually turn Africa into a major player in global issues.

This reform package will not be accomplished overnight, but it is important to begin the process. Africans must shape their destiny. Educational reforms will help to restore the dignity of most of the nations. Fanon once wrote, "Each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it."⁴¹ At a time when most non-African nations are aggressively preparing themselves for the twenty-first century, the present and next generation of African leadership must establish as one of its fundamental objectives the goal to revive the African spirit. A new educational system will lead to concrete political, economic and social reforms. Among other things, educational reforms will lead to the creation of a favorable climate for democracy to flourish, end of tribalism, ensure the primacy of the national interest, and more importantly, the development of an African consciousness. With these changes, Africans will learn that only they can reverse the current political and economic decay of their nations. Policy planners in those nations should devise educational policies geared towards "decolonizing the African mind." During this final decade of the twentieth century, African leaders should heed Azikiwe's advice: "Africans have been miseducated. They need mental emancipation so as to be re-educated to the real needs of Renascent Africa."⁴² Such reform will, in the long run, restore a sense of hope and confidence to the millions who have seen the future of their nations shattered.

Notes

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GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

By

T.O. Agweda and N.P.M. Imaguezegie

Introduction

Rural development is a topical subject in all nations of the world especially in Africa. With reference to Nigeria, national development planners are now taking adequate recognition of the importance of the rural sector. This is why recent National Development plans contain strategies through which the nation aims at transforming her rural communities. This realisation rests on the fact that Nigeria's rural sector occupies a strategic position in the socio-economic systems of the country.

Research indicate that there are three classes of variables that could influence rural development. These are:

- A. Variables in the rural environment:
 - (i) Over seventy-five percent (75%) of the population of this country live in rural areas, (1991 Census figures).
 - (ii) Over seventy percent (70%) of the food consumed in this country is produced by rural small-scale farmers (Okigbo, 1982).
 - (iii) Over eighty percent (80%) of the national resources on which this nation depends, is deposited in the rural areas. For instance crude oil which, at present, is responsible for over 70% of Nigeria's foreign exchange earning is deposited in the rural earth.
- B. Variables in the individuals like the Managerial ability of those charged with the implementation of rural development programmes.
- C. Variables outside the rural areas or non-rural issues that influence rural development such as Government (especially at Federal level) policies. For instance, between 1960 and 1980, government has allocated between N3.0 billion and N13.0 billion for agricultural and rural development respectively. Besides, eleven different national development programmes were established for rural transformation (The Analyst Vol. 2 May 1987). The thrust of this paper is on the third variable. We shall undertake a critical look at the effect of government on rural development in Nigeria.