

Deconstructing Theoretical Perspectives and Practice in Education Sector Intervention in Africa

Edith Mukudi Omwami

University of California, Los Angeles, C. A., USA

This work examines the congruence and incongruence in policy and practice in education sector development effort for Africa. The focus is on the role of human agency in defining policy and practice. The UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) put the theoretical orientations that have been used to explain the status of development over time is analyzed with a view to exposing the nuances in the policy agenda that ultimately influence practice. It is posited that irrespective of the theoretical or ideological position that informs education sector reform, the segmentation that yields a dichotomy in the economic and socio-political dimensions means that the goal of realizing an efficient education sector and one that promotes a positive social gain is not met. The author proposes the adoption of the relative change theory as the most viable explanation to the status of the humanitarian intervention in education sector in Africa.

Keywords: education sector intervention, Africa, development theory, African education, political ideology, economic ideology, structural adjustment programs

Introduction and Background

The education sector in most of the countries in the sub-Saharan region is in deplorable condition. Universal access at the primary education tier is yet to be realized. Access to secondary education is limited and higher education participation remains below 5% across the region. The exception of South Africa, whose measure of access to higher education is over 15% and with more female enrolled compared to their male counterparts (World Bank, 2009), is attributable to their relatively better economic situation. The rate of exclusion at the primary level ranges from about two percent in the politically stable Republic of Tanzania to a high 60% in Liberia (UNESCO, 2008), a nation that has had its share of civil strife. The persistence in exclusion is in spite of the significant gains recorded in which the region “raised its average net enrolment ratio from 54% to 70% between 1999 and 2006” (UNESCO, 2009, p. 1). Many of the countries went ahead to offer free primary education after the 2000 Dakar Conference on Education for All. In many of the countries implementing free-education policy, the elimination of the prohibitive fees was made possible by infusion funding intervention from donors (UNESCO, 2009). In the case of sub-Sahara Africa, Tomaševski (2006, p. 239) observed that,

Public funding which is needed to offset these charges is proverbially the key bottleneck and most countries have moved gradually, often by investing a part of debt relief into making education freer. Such public funds have routinely

Edith Mukudi Omwami, associate professor, the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, University of California.

exceeded all previous estimates because huge numbers of children have shown up at school once an announcement was made that education would be free.

Even where access to primary education has significantly expanded, secondary education remains out of reach for many. While efforts have been made to eliminate users' fees in the primary education tier in Africa, fees continue to be charged at the secondary and tertiary levels. The fees charged are a reflection of the limited fiscal capacity for governments to publicly fund secondary education. As the economic conditions have worsened globally, previously capable governments have been forced to reintroduce fees. Such was the case for Botswana where "user fees were re-introduced at the secondary level in 2006" (Republic of Botswana/European Community, 2006). A limited infrastructure capacity that would expand opportunities at secondary education level does not help the situation either—again, lack of funding has hindered infrastructure development even at this level.

The tertiary education tier in the sub-Saharan region faces more constraints to her viability. Even though access has expanded in the last ten years compared to the period covering the 1960s through the 1980s, the average enrolment for the region only stands at 5%. The best performers in the region are at South Africa and Mauritius with 15% and 18% gross enrolment ratio representation amongst the eligible population (UNESCO, 2008). Overall, access to higher education remains largely elusive for a majority of people in the region.

The status of the higher education infrastructure evidences the problem of limited capacity to offer quality education. Even though the per-student expenditure as a percentage of GDP (gross domestic product) per capita is significantly higher compared to the per-student expenditure as a percent of GDP per capita at primary education tier, the real term value of this unit cost is not significant enough to support access to a quality education for those enrolled. More important, the dollar equivalent funding level is significantly lower than the unit cost for developed countries (UNESCO, 2008). While it is recognized that economic decline and fiscal austerity measures contributed to the decline in quality of education, it is also a known fact that political interference—by those seeking to control higher education institutions—has also undermined the quality of education (Materu, 2007). Overall, therefore, sub-Sahara Africa education systems struggle with problems of limited access for many and limited budgetary capacity by governments seeking to expand opportunities and guarantee a quality education.

Theoretical and Ideological Perspectives

An examination of the education sector policy and practice in Africa reveals that theoretical perspectives that help explain context hints to a position of either indifference to conditions of Africans or marginalization of the nation states even where alleviation of the suffering of the peoples is the focus of the interventions. Governments in the region lack capacity to fully fund their education sector at levels that would both expand access and guarantee quality. The external agents who have participated in her education sector development have consistently failed to offer the level of support needed for effective program implementation. The ideological positions that have informed policy and practice over the years have, in effect, resulted in limited performance of the education sector in the region.

The outcome in both quality and organization of school systems does not advantage any particular ideological position. Irrespective of the ideological position espoused by agencies in education sector development, the outcome of their interventions has not significantly differed. The pattern noted is that reforms have often been externally driven and yet the resource base necessary for the success of the interventions has

not been given serious consideration. From a theoretical perspective analysis, it can be assumed that even if the region is a priority development constituency for humanitarian agents and agencies, the conflict between an economic and a socio-political interest of the agencies results in limited impact of the interventions. Even though there may be an interest in advancing social and political empowerment for the local beneficiaries, the relative economic interest of the change agency often leads to fiscal policy that works to limit the degree of impact of intervention in the social and political arena. Further, the priorities of the African governments are not always in congruence with those of the development agencies. Because the interventionist come from a proclaimed interest in humanitarian agency, an assumption is made that the change obtained in the social and political dimensions of the lives of the people will be limited by economic considerations of the change agents. In a departure from the more commonly adopted theory, this analysis suggests that the relative-change theory has been and continues to inform the extent of support to the sector development.

Several theoretical orientations have been used to explain the status of development in sub-Sahara Africa over time. Dependency theory focuses on the limitations to development occasioned by a western control of the economic structures that perpetuates marginalization (McGowan & Smith, 1978, pp. 179-180). It is an analysis that seeks to explain the reason why no significant development has been realized in spite of infusion of development support by the developed nations (Kapoor, 2002). The world-system perspective, on the other hand, assumes that the possibility for development exists within nations, with the limitations to the extent of development being imposed by the core-nations that seek to retain the upper hand in terms of power relations (McGowan & Smith, 1978, p. 180; Portes & Kincaid, 1989, p. 482). An explanation was offered in this analysis that presupposes that in the context of humanitarian efforts in Africa, much of the interventions from within and without have been regulated by how the parties participating in the design of the interventions perceive themselves relative to the beneficiaries of agency. The challenge lies in the dichotomy created between the economic and socio-political dimensions of the lives of those absorbed to be participants in the global capitalist economy. Agency in humanitarianism has mostly focused on social and political empowerment, articulating intervention in education sector as an input into the realization of gains in the two areas. However, it is the economic considerations from the standpoint of change agencies that ultimately shape the extent and nature of intervention, often leading to limited outcome. As such, any development in the education sector in Africa has to be examined by taking into account the incongruence in the mix of economic and socio-political agency of countries that participate in her construction and reconstruction.

An examination of the education sector development in the poor regions of the world offers an opportunity to see how economic theory and sociological theories apply to explaining the outcome of the development efforts. As African nations emerged from colonialism in the 1960s, human capital theory formed the basis for education sector planning (Lewin, 2008, p. 5). Human capital theory is rooted in the functionalist perspective that espouses a technicist approach in which nation states are conceptualized as a system. It is expected that components of the same must function efficiently in order for development or maintenance of status quo to be realized. In his analysis of the thinking behind the functionalist approach, Welch (1985, p. 6) identified Talcott Parsons as one of the most ardent proponents of the concept of a unitary biological system with differentiated roles for each organ. He noted that,

Parsons' organicism, expressed in the notion that (an understanding of) the anatomy of the whole must be prior to the interpretation of any element, and his view that each element only gains significance in terms of what it contributes to other parts and therefore the whole are sensible in the organic traditions of Comte and St Simon, and crucially, Durkheim.

So indeed is Parsons' taxonomic fervor.

In this context, education must be seen as that which enables individuals to contribute to the wellbeing of a nation (system) and that the grounding of human capital accumulation process in the functionalist tradition is not a coincidence. Quoting Parsons (1949, p. 21) and Welch (1985, p. 6) noted that "a process or set of conditions either 'contributes' to the maintenance (or development) of the system, or it is 'dysfunctional' in that it detracts from the integration and effectiveness of the system". Failure of national school systems to serve the economic and social development interests of African states can, therefore, be inferred as a dysfunction in the nation state system.

Failures of development in Africa can be attributed to the human capital accumulation process being inefficient in generating the desired mix of amount and elements that would contribute to development. In Africa and elsewhere around the world, functionalist perspective is foundational to both education sector planning and reform. It is important to note here that functionalism legitimizes social hierarchies and is silent on issues of inequalities derived from what may be inherently unfair mechanisms of status assignment. This is particularly the case when human capital theory is integrated into the analysis of the role of education in perpetuation of social inequality (Paulston, 1977, pp. 376-382; Jacob, 1981, pp. 75-76).

The functionalist and human capital accumulation position in support of development was well articulated at the first—under the auspices of the UNECA (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa)—Sponsored Conference of African Ministers of Education held in Addis Ababa in 1961 to deliberate and set priorities for the education sector development. The ministers (UNECA-UNESCO, 1961, p. 10) expressively noted that,

Economic development is highly dependent on skills of the sort which are taught in institutions to students of 15 years of age and upwards. It is of the highest priority to ensure that an adequate proportion of the population receives secondary, postsecondary and university education; this should be put before the goal of universal primary education if for financial reasons these two are not yet compatible. Plans for economic and social development depend upon an adequate supply of teachers, technicians, agricultural assistants, nurses, book-keepers...

By emphasizing the supply of the different professional cadre, the human capital accumulation approach falls back to functionalism while advancing the essential modern state. Underpinning human capital theory was an allegiance to modernization theory. Human capital theory in this context offers the functionalist perspective in education sector planning the bridge towards the interpretation of modernization theory. For human resource, capacity building was intended to contribute towards modernization of African states.

The general belief in modernization was that there is a single growth and development trajectory that all nations could follow, allowing them to emerge from the rudimentary traditional form to the more technologically advanced and modern state. The benefits of modernization included the realization of "mass education, urbanization, industrialization, bureaucratization and rapid communication and transportation" (Inkeles & Smith, 1976). Education was one of the inputs that would contribute to the realization of this goal by enabling the accumulating a critical mass of high level human capital stock including the technocratic class deemed necessary for development.

Not surprising, the agenda for education sector development in support of modernization was on the plate of all the world-power broker nations irrespective of whether they subscribed to the capitalist or the socialist ideology (Baker, Köhler, & Stock, 2007). Altbach (1991, p. 500) commenting on the important role of the thinking behind both (structural) functionalism and human capital theory noted that "educational institutions,

with special stress on postsecondary education, provided the human capital that would form the basis for development'. He went on to note that both development agencies and policy makers in the developing world believed in the concept of human capital formation. Commenting on the motto of guiding policy makers in their quest for exponential investment in education for accumulation of human resource capital in the 25 years of educational policy planning following the end of the WWII (Second World War), Gillette (1979, p. 142) noted that,

"More is better" at the risk of retrospective oversimplification, one can suggest that this could well have been the motto of educational policymakers and practitioners 25 years ago. In a Euro-centric world just emerging from post-war reconstruction, their central concern was to provide more people with more of the already existing kinds of education. In terms of aspiration an intention, change meant linear growth.

In deed, when both the western allied nations and the communist allied nations came to the aid of African nations, it is the ideological grounding and not the questioning of the functionalist approach in policy and practice that separated their mission. The human capital accumulation agenda contributed to the massive expansion in enrolment that would be seen around the world in the 1960s (Zadja, 2002, p. 76). The challenge for sub-Sahara Africa was how such an endeavor could have been funded given their precarious economic situation. Human capital theory and the belief in the redeeming power of education continue to drive international development agenda today.

The agenda of advancing human capital stock formation as an investment in development was supported by empirical research in the run up to independence and the immediate post-independence period, spearheaded by Theodore Schultz (1961), Edward Dennison (1965) and Friedrich Edding (1961) amongst others (as cited in Husen, 1979, p. 208). The perception of the development gains inherent in the power of an enhanced human capital capacity has not been diminished in any way. In examining the work of the United Kingdom's DfID (Department for International Development), Harber (2002, p. 267) observed that the agenda of the department is rooted in human capital theory and the general belief that education can reduce poverty and contribute to economic growth.

As it shall be seen, fiscal capacity for public education supply was lacking from the very beginning. At the first meeting of the conference of African ministers of education, the goal of universal primary education was set at 1980. The disparity in education system planning objectives was necessitated by emerging governments' obvious acknowledgement of the lack of capacity to fund education at an optimal level. The region as a whole presented a five-year and beyond budgetary plan that showed budget deficit in every successive year. It was, therefore, inevitable that external agencies would be called upon to intervene in the education sector development. Indeed, this first meeting also saw commitment by donors to support the budget deficit in the sector even at the modest target sets for expansion. Table 1 shows the budget projection and the deficit that would need to be covered from external resources.

The seeds of inequality in access to and participation in the education system were sowed from the initial planning of the sector as the African nations emerged from colonialism. The poor resource base of the independent governments served as ground for legitimization of limiting education supply. This position ran counter to the agenda of the nationalist movement where redressing the race-based education inequalities that had been put in place by the colonialist (Davies, 1986, p. 196) was stated to be a priority issue. Not only was primary education limited by their decisions to postpone universal access in the first six years of education

planning, but access to secondary and tertiary education was even further limited. Table 2 offered a look at the projected enrolment status between school years of 1960-1961 and 1965-1966.

Table 1

Estimated Education Budget Matched With Available Resources (in Millions of Dollars)

Year	Total cost	Estimated local resources	Deficit
1961	590	450	140
1962	650	500	150
1963	820	560	260
1964	940	630	310
1965	1,150	700	450
1970	1,790	870	920
1980	2,600	2,200	400

Note. Source: UNESCO/ECA (1961, p. 14).

Table 2

Short-Term Enrolment Projection (1961-1966) in Thousands

Education tier	1960-1961	1961-1962	1962-1963	1963-1964	1964-1965	1965-1966
Primary	11,187.0	11,586.0	12,203.0	13,028.0	14,050.0	15,279.0
Secondary	816.6	903.7	1,025.0	1,224.7	1,475.2	1,833.5
Higher	25.0	25.5	26.2	27.2	28.5	30.3

Note. Source: UNESCO/ECA (1961, p. 13).

During the 1960s through the mid-1980s, sub-Saharan Africa nations benefitted from support to higher level manpower development in which the donor nations sought to extend their ideological position and maintain alliances in the region. We are familiar with the airlifts of Kenyan students to the Soviet Union and the USA that were brokered by emerging leaders of the time—in the case of Kenya, the Tom Mboya airlifts that began in 1958, bringing Kenyan students to study in the USA (KNHCR (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights), 2006). Both the Western nations and the Soviet Union supported infrastructure development in different nations in the region. Much of the support went towards the development of middle level manpower needs and education infrastructure that was allied to the agricultural sector.

Arguably, economic independence would have made it possible for countries in the sub-Saharan region to adequately fund their education sector development initiatives. After all, both Western nations and the well performing economies of East Asia have been able to universalize basic education—most offering at least nine years of compulsory schooling—and have significantly expand access at the tertiary tier. The lack of fiscal capacity in the region can be explained by both the dependency and the world-systems theoretical perspectives. The dependency theory contends that the failed economic development in sub-Saharan Africa is a product of a deliberate, necessary and “continuing aspect of global division of labor and wealth accumulation” in developed countries (Blaney, 1996, p. 460). The sub-Saharan region is assigned the role of supply of raw materials whose economic valuation is not within their powers. The relative importance of this assertion is in the observation that much of the post-secondary education support to education sector development in the region has tended to go towards the agriculture and related programs—mostly supporting enhancement in raw material production without an opportunity to own the value added capacity of the production process.

The world-system perspective assumes that individual initiative could contribute to economic development and empowerment of those previously marginalized. There is, however, an assumed eminent authority of the capitalist world-economy which defines the economic relationships in the world-system (Wallerstein, 1974). Although the world-system perspective signals a departure from the static dependency theory, it fails to account for the hierarchical organization and functioning of the system (Portes & Kincaid 1989). Arnove (1980) clarified that an analysis of the education sector in third world economies must take into account the relative position of the country in the international system. Arnove (1980, p. 50) contended that a part of the failure of education interventions in third world nations is attributable to the weaker position in the pecking order of nation states, stating that the order helps explain what skills are developed in whom and who benefits from highly skilled talent. This position reinforces the reality in the observed incongruence between the donors and the recipients in the prioritization of intervention sectors and that which defines what aspects of any tier of the education system would be supported. It reinforces the previously observed propensity for the western nations to focus on developing mid-level human resource, whenever they supported higher education in Africa.

Neoclassical economics informed by the neoliberal ideological perspective of the late 1980s and the 1990s has also helped shape the nature and outcome of humanitarian intervention in sub-Saharan Africa. Since this theory subscribes to the free market principle, it is assumed that the market should determine both demand and supply of education. Besides, education is justified in terms of technical skills that match labor market demand. Governments that were already facing budgetary constraints are mandated to further cut their education budgets (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2006) in order to minimize public expenditure. In the late 1980 and into the 1990s, the multilateral financial institutions required that sub-Saharan Africa countries cut their education budgets and introduce cost-sharing measures (cost recovery) at post-secondary tiers as a precondition for aid. Being dependent on the humanitarian intervention of the Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank and the IMF (International Monetary Fund)) for fiscal support, sub-Saharan Africa had no choice but to adopt policies that emphasized government divestiture from public service provision. What emerges is a conflict of interest in which the humanitarian agency would be perceived to be interfering with market forces, and yet, little development would be realized without the mediation of human welfare agency.

Beginning from the mid-1980s, a neoliberal ideological agenda that was being promoted by the Western economies, particularly the US and Britain, filtered through the multilateral financial institutions to the third world economies. It marked a shift in the view of education as a tool for developing national human capital accumulation to one of perceiving higher education as a marketable commodity. Introduction of fees at higher education further magnified income-based inequalities. Commenting on the Kenyan experience with cost recovery at public universities, Klopp and Orina (2002, pp. 55-66) observed that,

Students were required to pay fees, as well as pay for meals, accommodations, and other expenses. Part of the justification for this cost sharing, according to both the World Bank and the Moi (then president) government, was that university students, as members of an "elite", should contribute their share toward structural adjustment. However, many students in fact came from poor and increasingly impoverished families, and university education was one of the few modes of social mobility. ... "Cost-sharing", in direct contradiction to its proposed rationale, selectively punished poorer students at a time when one corruption scandal after another demonstrated vividly how public money was being misspent.

It is also important to note that while the Western donor nations and the multilateral funding agencies emphasized investment in primary education in the 1990s, the recipient nations were themselves lobbying to

guarantee the integrity of post-primary tiers of the school system that would facilitate development (Banya & Elu, 2001). This dimension of the humanitarian agency-country relationship signifies an acknowledgement of the incongruence in the development priority of the two partners. Not only were conditions in the Western nations being factored into the equation of aid relationship, but the development capacity of the post-colonial states was limited with the effective marginalization of the role of human resource capacity.

While the cost-recovery measure at higher education level may have contribute to entrenching social reproduction by limiting access for poor students, the measure may have had some unintended positive effect as infrastructure that had been in decline has been revamped at some of the institutions that moved to experiment with semi-privatization, as privately funded students enroll as well. Commenting on the situation at Makerere University in Uganda following the adoption of cost-sharing at higher education, David Courts (1999, p. i) noted that "It has more than doubled student enrolment, instigated improvements in the physical and academic infrastructure and drastically reduced its traditional financial dependence upon the state". While student enrolment has also increased, there was growing evidence of exclusion based on social class. A look into the differential access and participation at public higher education institutions in Tanzania evidenced limited access by the poor (Ishengoma, 2004).

At the basic education level, funding constraint continues to plague efforts towards the realization of universal access. Humanitarian intervention, on the other hand, has failed to adequately resource intervention efforts that have been agreed upon. It is noted that "commitments to basic education are stagnating. In 2006, for developing countries, they amounted to US\$ 5.1 billion, a little below the level of 2004. Half of all commitments to basic education came from just a handful of donors" (UNESCO, 2009, p. 3).

Relative-change theory orientation acknowledges the intent of the humanitarian agency to bring about positive change in the life experience of the beneficiary of interventions. The magnitude of the intervention is, however, considered relative to the personal experience of the change agent. Separating the relative change theory explanation from the other theories herein explored is the focus on the willingness of those in advantaged positions to accommodate change in the position of the marginalized groups and populations. Relative-change theory is informed by "prospects theory" (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, p. 263), under which individual choices are made after an examination of alternatives and in which both options are perceived to be risky options (choice under risk) and where benefits accrue directly to the individual. The final decision is weighted on assignment of value "to gains and losses rather than to final assets and in which probabilities are replaced by decision weights" and choice option is preferred when the integration of the "prospect with one's assets exceeds the utility of those assets alone" (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, p. 264). Relative-change theory on the other hand results in the empowerment of a third party for whom the intervention is directly planned and executed.

Relative-change theory finds application in the humanitarian agency efforts in education sector development in Africa. The limitations of humanitarian interventionism is rooted in the observation that external agents pursue change in the experience of the marginalized groups to the extent that such results will not undermine their empowered position. Thus, the limited impact of the efforts to develop education sector in Africa can be explained by the self-imposed constraint by the change agents. These include international development partners and local potential change agents in as far as they perceive their privileged positions to be under threat. It explains the reason why universal primary education goals remain elusive, why post-primary education opportunities remain limited and why education sector funding capacity and infrastructure development remain compromised.

Way Forward

In spite of the challenges and limitations posed by the nature of interaction between the donors and recipient of aid to education sector development, the role humanitarianism has played in the development of the sector infrastructure as well as the accumulation of human capital stock can not be discounted. A number of institutions in the regions, many of which have more recently upgraded to full-fledged university status, were built with development aid. Although the intent was not to develop university level training, the support received laid the foundation for infrastructure development for training at this level. Nevertheless, expansion at university level still leaves Africa far behind the level of access to higher education that one sees in other developing regions. As most of the non-university infrastructure has been lost to university expansion, support should be considered for specialized non-university institutions that would respond to the labor market's demands of the rapidly changing global economy.

The recent implementation of free education policy by many countries in Africa was and remains largely donor driven. It is important to note that African countries have intermittently experimented with the idea of a free primary education over the last three decades. Failure to sustain the gains made with every attempt at implementing the free-education policy is attributable to the fiscal austerity. In the case of Kenya, enrolment surges always follow the proclamations to offer free education. These gains are often lost, once fees are reintroduced (Sifuna, 2005, 2007; Mukudi, 2004; Amutabi, 2003; Eisemon & Schwille, 1991). The limitation to the realization of a sustainable free education is evident in the comments of Ridell (2003, p. 8) when he said,

External agencies have covered over 50% of the education sector budget, in grants, loans and technical assistance, including significant levels of general and sectoral budget support, virtually all of which has been closely tied to—if not explicitly conditional on—investment in UPE.

There has to be a rethinking in the way education is financed in order to offer sustainable interventions and democratize education. We recognize that the current government-to-government aid support arrangement is not sustainable, as the commitment tends to shift with changes in government in donor countries. The lack of long-term commitment to specific intervention projects and programs is a common characteristic of donor nations whose political institutions subscribe to the liberal welfare states model. Van Der Veen and Groot (2006, p. 593) observed that, "A liberal welfare state desires economic efficiency, designing its social programs as residual provisions so as to avoid labor market disincentive and welfare dependency". Besides, the rhythmic election related changes in government in such democracies often means that foreign policy priorities are subject to overhaul in principal. The result is that both priority area of support and the level of funding will reflect the specific political platform of the government in power.

The subject of level of support for humanitarian agencies is particularly critical to the realization of development objectives. Evidence support the observation that the level of support that has been offered for the implementation of free primary education has always been too low to allow for a focus on universal and compulsory education. Even when Kenya begun to offer free primary education in 2003 (Mukudi, 2004), the net enrollment ratio for the same year showed that some children were still out of school (Republic of Kenya, 2008, p. 26). More current statistics from the UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) revealed that even more children have been kept of school, as a result of the 2007 post-election violence (UNICEF, 2008).

There has never been a single coordinated effort by African governments to uniformly implement universal access to primary education in the region. This is in spite of the fact that most efforts to universalize education access are donor coordinated at the global level under the auspices of UNESCO. Countries tend to implement free education policies depending on whether or not they have financial backers at the time. The nature of policies put in place also varies depending on how much aid support they expect to receive. Uganda, for example, implemented free access to primary education for four children per household starting from 1997. Malawi on the other hand went all the way in offering free education to all her primary education age student population beginning 1994. However, secondary education remains out of reach for many in all countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It is only when access to the foundation levels of education become more accessible and sustainable that we will expect Africa to raise the quality of her human resource capacity through expansion at the tertiary level.

Conclusions

Unless the African economies become independent, the goal of universal access to basic education and investment at the postsecondary level will not be realized. This position is supported by the observation that South Africa and Seychelles, the two countries with relatively better performing economies in the region also register better on the measure of access and participation at the tertiary level. This is an imperative requisite as the priority of humanitarian agencies may not always converge with those of the developing countries. After all, much of the world is now moving towards adoption of liberal welfare values that built within their social policy the need to regulate access to public services—the wave of socio-political democratization that moved around the globe following the collapse of the Soviet Union also tagged along marketization of most services. For a country that is economically empowered can define her development priorities with marginal restrictions on where to invest.

Much of the link between the developed world and Africa has been examined through a dependency and world-system lens. These perspectives presuppose intent to marginalize. The relative-change perspective allows for consideration to positively influence change by those in advantaged positions. Humanitarian agents and agency in intervening in education sector development are characterized as initiating change that leads to empowerment. Unlike prospect theory in which individuals hedge their risk by making alternative choices—often dictated by perceived contributory gains or loss in the utility of current assets they possess (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979, p. 263), the intervention in humanitarian effort is on the behalf of a third party. However, the outcome of the interest in the social and political dimensions for the target population is often limited by economic considerations. This can be inferred to have been the undoing of the project to develop education sector in Africa.

References

- Altbach, P. G. (1991). Trends in comparative education. *Comparative Education Review*, 35(3), 491-507.
- Amutabi, M. N. (2003). Political interference in the running of education in post-independence Kenya: A critical retrospection. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 23, 127-44.
- Arnove, R. F. (1980). Comparative education and world-systems analysis. *Comparative Education Review*, 24(1), 48-62.
- Baker, D. Helmut, K., & Manfred, S. (2007). Socialist ideology and the contraction of higher education: Institutional consequences of state manpower and education planning in the former east Germany. *Comparative Education Review*, 51(3), 353-377.

- Banya, K., & Juliet, E. (2001). The World Bank and financing higher education in sub-Saharan Africa. *Higher Education*, 42(1), 1-34.
- Blaney, D. L. (1996). Reconceptualizing autonomy: The difference dependency theory makes. *Review of International Political Economy*, 3(3), 459-497.
- Court, D. (1999). *Financing higher education in Africa: Makerere, the quiet revolution*. Washington, D. C.: The World Bank and Rockefeller Foundation.
- Davies, L. (1986). Policies on inequality in the third world: Dependency or autonomy? *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 7(2), 191-204.
- Denison, E. F. (1965). Measuring the contribution of evaluation (and the residual) to economic growth. In J. E. Vaizey (Ed), *The residual factor and economic growth*. Paris: OECD.
- Edding, F. (1961). *Internationale tendenzen in der entwicklung der ausgaben für schulen und hochschulen, kieler studien* (No. 47). Kiel: Institut für Weltwirtschaft.
- Eisemon, T. O., & John, S. (1991). Primary schooling in Burundi and Kenya: Preparation for secondary education or for self-employment? *The Elementary School Journal*, 92, 23-39.
- Gillette, A. (1979) Structural changes in education since 1954: A slow-motion explosion. *International Review of Education*, 25(2-3), 141-170.
- Harber, C. (2002). Education, democracy and poverty reduction in Africa. *Comparative Education*, 38(3), 267-276.
- Husen, T. (1979). General theories in education: A twenty-five year perspective. *International Review of Education*, 25(2/3), 325-345.
- Hyslop-Margison, E. J., & Alan, M. S. (2006). Neo-liberalism, ideology and education (Chap. 1). In *Neo-liberalism, globalization and human capital learning reclaiming education for democratic citizenship* (pp. 1-24). Netherlands: Springer.
- Inkeles, A., & Smith, D. H. (1976). *Becoming modern: Individual change in six developing countries*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Ishengoma, J. M. (2004). Cost sharing and participation in higher education in sub Saharan Africa: The case of Tanzania. Paper presented at *the UNESCO Forum on Higher Education, Research and Knowledge*. Paris, December 1-3, 2004.
- Jacob, J. (1981). Theories of social and educational inequality: From dichotomy to typology. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 2(1), 71-89.
- Kahneman, D., & Amos, T. (1979). Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk. *Econometrica*, 47(2), 263-92.
- Kapoor, I. (2002). Capitalism, culture, agency: Dependency versus postcolonial theory. *Third World Quarterly*, 23(4), 647-664.
- Klopp, J. M., & Janai, R. O. (2002). University crisis, student activism, and the contemporary struggle for democracy in Kenya. *African Studies Review*, 45(1), 43-76.
- KNCHR (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights). (2006). *An evening with Tom Mboya*. Nairobi: Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. Retrieved from http://www.knchr.org/dmdocuments/evnin_with_tom_mboya.pdf
- Lewin, K. M. (2008). Four decades of educational planning: Retrospect and prospect. *Directions in Educational Planning*. Retrieved from http://www.create-rpc.org/pdf_documents/Four_Decades_of_Educational_Planning.pdf
- Materu, P. (2007). *Higher education quality assurance in sub-Saharan Africa: Status, challenges, opportunities, and promising practices*. Washington, D. C.: World Bank.
- McGowan, P. J., & Smith, D. L. (1978). Economic dependency in Black Africa: An analysis of competing theories. *International Organization*, 32(1), 179-235.
- Mukudi, E. (2004). The effects of user-fee policy on attendance rate among Kenyan elementary schoolchildren. *International Review of Education*, 50(5-6), 447-461.
- Parsons, T. (1949). *Essays in sociological theory*. Glencoe: The Free Press.
- Paulston, R. G. (1977). Social and educational change: Conceptual frameworks. *Comparative Education Review*, 21(2/3), 370-395.
- Portes, A., & Kincaid, A. D. (1989). Sociology and development in the 1990s: Critical challenges and empirical trends. *Sociological Forum*, 4(4), 479-503.
- Republic of Botswana/European Community. (2006). *The Republic of Botswana: 2007 Annual Operational Review*. Belgium: European Commission.
- Riddell, A. (2003). *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4, The Leap to Equality: The Introduction of Free Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Paris: UNESCO Publication 2004/ED/EFA/MRT/PI/62. Retrieved from <http://www.unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001469/146914e.pdf>
- Schultz, T. W. (1961). Investment in human capital. *American Economic Review*, 51(1), 1- 17.

- Sifuna, D. N. (2005). The Illusion of universal free primary education in Kenya. *Wajibu: A Journal of Social and Religious Concern* 20. Retrieved December 31, 2008, from http://www.africa.peacelink.org/wajibu/articles/art_6901.html
- Sifuna, D. N. (2007). The challenge of increasing access and improving quality: An analysis of universal primary education intervention in Kenya and Tanzania since 1970s. *International Review of Education*, 53, 687-99.
- Tomaševski, K. (2006). *The state of the right to education worldwide free or fee*. Copenhagen: UN.
- UNECA-UNESCO. (1961). *Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa (ED/181)*. Addis Ababa: UNESCO Publishing.
- UNESCO. (2008). *Global Education Digest 2008*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing. Retrieved from http://www.stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/ReportFolders/ReportFolders.aspx?IF_ActivePath=P,50&IF_Language=eng
- UNESCO. (2009). *Education for all: Overcoming inequality—Why governance matters*. Paris: UNESCO Publishing.
- Vaizey, J. E. (Ed). (1965). *The residual factor and economic growth*. Paris: OECD.
- Van Der, V. R., & Loek, G. (2006). Post-productivism and welfare states: A comparative analysis. *British Journal of Political Science*, 36, 593-618.
- Wallerstein, I. (1974). The rise and future demise of the world capitalist system: Concepts for comparative analysis. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 16(4), 387-415.
- Welch, A. R. (1985). The functionalist tradition and comparative education. *Comparative Education*, 21(1), 5-19.
- World Bank. (2009). *World development indicators*. Washington, D. C.: World Bank.
- Zajda, J. (2002). Education and policy: Changing paradigms and issues. *International Review of Education*, 48(1/2), 67-91.