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EDUCATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN
KENYA: A CRITICAL NOTE

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ABSTRACT

This paper emphasises the subordinate role that education plays in the process of employment creation and national development. Evidence to support this view is drawn from an analysis of the aims, structure and content of the education system both in colonial and independent Kenya. For example, the appearance of the unemployed school leavers in the labour market was seen as an outcome of an education system that inculcates into the minds of pupils values and attitudes which would not make them accept agricultural and other manual pursuits in the rural environment. However, there is overwhelming historical evidence to show that the educational planners have vigorously promoted an educational curriculum that is supposed to cater for the rural needs. The educational changes and programmes such as agriculture and technical education advocated in post-colonial Kenya as measures to deal with educated unemployed are not at all new, as similar programmes were initiated during the colonial period without much success. The failure of these efforts suggests that the problems of the educated unemployed and national development are rooted in the structure of the political - economy of the society and not in the education system. A list of both educational and rural programmes which should receive priority is proposed in a context that demands progressive diversion of national resources from formal education to productive economic investments.

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by

Kabiru Kinyanjui

INTRODUCTION

What was will be again; what has been done will be done again and there is nothing new under the sun. Take anything of which it may be said "Look now, this is new." Already, long before our time, it existed. Only no memory remains of earlier times, just as in times to come next year will not be remembered. Ecclesiastes, 1:9.11.

In the last 15 years, a great deal of interest has been shown by the state, state apparatuses, local voluntary agencies and, international organisations on the question of the orientation of formal education (See Kenya Education Commission, 1964; Sheffield, 1967; NCKK, 1960; World Bank, 1974, Coombs and Ahmed, 1975; and ILO, 1972). This concern stems from a widely held assumption that the colonial and post-colonial education system was too academic and did not inculcate skills and values that were and are needed in the society, in particular for rural development. The increasing unemployment among school leavers has often been attributed to the academic education and white-collar mentality that is supposed to be imparted by the Kenyan school system. The popular assumption is that the education provided in the past has been a hindrance to rural transformation and a major cause of unemployment among the educated. This position has been voiced by academics, politicians and international organisations to such an extent that it has almost become an accepted truth, which has to be quoted whenever dealing with the issues of rural development and the unemployment of school leavers.

To escape from this predicament it is usually argued that the curriculum of formal education needs to be made more practical and emphasis placed on subjects such as agriculture, technical and commercial subjects have also been emphasised as technical education assumes an increasing importance in the education system. Further, the teachers are required to inculcate into the minds of their pupils values and attitudes which would make them accept agricultural pursuits in the rural environment. Non-formal education is also promoted, to provide the skill which formal education cannot provide, and at the

1. This is a revised version of a paper which was given at the ILO-sponsored National Seminar on Employment held in Mombasa, 18 - 23 April 1977.

same time impart a positive outlook towards rural life.²

These views have influenced our thinking on education in the last 15 years, and have to a large extent guided the educational programmes initiated in postcolonial Kenya (village polytechnics, phasing out of trade schools and the development of technical secondary schools, development of industrial and business education, vocational agriculture in secondary schools and more recently the emergence of institutes of science and technology). What is needed, however, at this stage of our development is to critically evaluate these views and programmes, and perhaps come up with a clearer understanding of the dynamics which shape the development of the education system in our society and in particular the outlook of the products of the schooling system.

EDUCATION IN THE COLONIAL SITUATION

In spite of the prevailing popular view that the colonial education system was academic and oriented towards white-collar jobs, there is overwhelming historical evidence to show that this was not the case. The missionaries, the colonial state, and the settlers were keenly interested in and indeed vigorously promoted an educational curriculum which was supposed to cater for the rural needs of the African people (see Moris, 1976). The report of the Education Commission of 1919 emphasised the need for technical and rural oriented education, a position which was internationally legitimised in 1924 by the Phelps Stokes Commission report on Education in East Africa.³ This report

2. See the NCKK report, 1966, where the philosophy of the village polytechnic movement is discussed. Also see Coombs, 1973.

3. Since 1910, there have been many attempts to make education more practical, technical and rural-oriented. This position has been expressed in numerous government reports and school programmes. A few of these will illustrate the point.

1919: 'For natives education should be on technical lines as many witnesses have recommended, but there appears to be fear that if any literary education is given the child educated will be ruined and will look forward to clerkships and similar occupations rather than entry in the labour field. But technical education is impossible without some literary education,' The Education Commission of the E.A. Protectorate

1927: A committee was appointed under chairmanship of G.V. Maxwell, Chief Native Commissioner to advise on the organisation of agricultural education for Africans. One of the committee's recommendations was that the agricultural instruction for African children should commence at an early age and should form an integral and compulsory part of the curriculum in all elementary schools for Africans in rural areas.

1948: 'We further plan for the restoration of a practical bias to education appropriate to the kind of life which the great majority of the products of this expanded programme will lead; we call for the inculcation of right attitudes to rural problem and of a preparedness for active participation in the Colony's development, whether by traditional pursuits in rural areas, or by employment outside them.' Africa Education in Kenya (Beecher Report).

noted the experience gained in the process of educating black Americans in the rural southern states of America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The situation of black Americans in the US rural south was equated with that of the 'backward' peoples of Africa.⁴

In essence, the recommendations of the 1924 Commission confirmed and legitimised the views and wishes of the settlers, the missionaries and the colonial state as to what was appropriate education for Africans in their rural environment. Although there was marked enthusiasm for the recommendations of the Phelps Stokes Commission, their implementation was limited - the Jeanes School experiment (note the similarity of the ideology of this school to that of the village polytechnics) was the most noteworthy; it lasted for about 10 years (1925-1936) (King, 1971). As will be shown later, the failure of these initial attempts and those carried later on in the 1940s and 1950s cannot be attributed to the conspiracy of the settlers, or the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the missionaries and the colonial state; this failure was mainly due to the social and economic changes taking place in colonial society. These changes affected the incomes and status of jobs open to Africans in the colonial situation. The positions of teachers and clerks were not only relatively better paid, but also carried status well above that of unskilled labourers on the European farms.⁵ The Second World War increased the demand for workers with elementary education as well as the wages they received, thus further reinforcing the status of semi-skilled and skilled positions.

Without going into detailed analysis of the reasons behind the failure of the early attempts (1920s and 1930s) to give colonial education a more technical and agricultural bias, thereby promoting rural transformation and providing employment opportunities for those who could not be absorbed into the

4. Carnoy, 1974. Chapter six, entitled "Education as Internal Colonialism: The Education of Black Americans in the United States, 1865-1930", is particularly relevant for this discussion. For an account of how this experience was transplanted to East Africa, see King, 1971.

5. The colonial Director of Education noted the impact of the structure of incomes and rewards in colonial society in shaping the attitudes towards existing job opportunities when he said:-

There is no doubt that the 'Karani Complex' mentioned by several members is due to one fact, and one fact only, and that is that Government and private employers will place a premium on purely clerical work. As long as the African employee in agriculture or in teaching or in any other social service ... is going to be paid and work under conditions which are less generous than those of clerks, then so long will the African's aim and ambition be to occupy an office stool. That, I think, is the root of the matter. If we had an African Civil service with a provident fund in which there were equal opportunities for all and no special premium placed on clerical employment, then we could I think, remedy, this evil. (Kenya Colony and Protectorates 1937, pp. 501-502).

state apparatuses and private enterprises, it is necessary to list a few factors which contributed to this failure. The relevance of these factors to the post-colonial situation in Kenya will be obvious:-

1. The existence of a separate educational system for the colonial ruling class (Europeans) and the farming and commercial classes (Europeans and Asians) which was privileged in terms of provision of teachers, facilities and financial allocation was a clear demonstration of what kind of education the African needed if he wished to move to a privileged position in the colonial society. The ideology which was inculcated in the European educational system was that of leadership in the political and economic sphere, while education for Africans was intended (as they correctly interpreted it) to hold them in their subordinate positions. The Africans could not fail to differentiate the type of education the colonial ruling classes provided to their children, while the Africans were provided with a different type of education. The demonstration effect of this system was obvious.

2. The establishment of higher educational institutions (Alliance High School, 1926. Kabaa, 1930, Maseno, 1938 and Yala, 1939), which to a large extent encouraged an academic curriculum and trained cadres to occupy the relatively privileged positions (clerks, teachers, medical assistants, etc) in the colonial state apparatuses and private enterprises, destroyed the credibility of the agricultural and technical education given in the late 1920s and in the 1930's. The prestige of being educated at Alliance High School was incomparably greater than the prestige of being trained at either Jeanes School or the Native Industrial Training Depot at Kabete. It is not surprising therefore that when three more secondary schools were established and Makerere College (after 1937) became the highest educational institution to which the Africans in Kenya could aspire to, this was also the period that marked the decline of the Jeanes school experiment. In other words the eyes of the Africans were not focussed on Jeanes schools or the NITD, but on Alliance High School and later on Makerere College which eventually symbolised the type of education the Africans aspired to and struggled to obtain.

3. The privileged positions occupied by those who had acquired some elementary formal education, and later those who had secondary education, encouraged and shaped the aspirations of those who sought formal education later on. These privileged positions in the state apparatuses required more literary skills than agriculturally oriented skills. The influence of the structure of incomes in shaping career aspirations, ambitions and choices of those within the educational system is something that is often overlooked, but nevertheless had a great impact on the minds of the pupils as well as their parents.

4. Early attempts to make African education more rural oriented were made in a context where there was no serious programme pursued by the colonial state to transform the social and economic situation (and in particular agriculture) in the African reserves. In other words, the educational reforms were carried out in a context where there was no complementary agricultural changes in African areas to make them relevant. At this stage, we should note that the colonial state concentrated its resources on the development of European large-scale farms and estate agriculture (see Brett, 1973 and Leys, 1975).

The agricultural changes which occurred in the 1950s were not the result of teaching agriculture in the schools in the previous period, but resulted from the political crisis which was precipitated by the Mau Mau revolt. Thus while schools were encouraging agricultural and technical education in the 1920s and 1930s the economic policies followed by the colonial state were meant to frustrate (by prohibitions or sheer neglect) any meaningful development of African agriculture.

SCHOOLS AND SOCIETY: A THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

The tendency to view schooling as a panacea for social ills stems from a lack of clear understanding or appreciation of the dynamic and complex relationship between the educational system and the socio-economic structure of the society. An acceptance of this relationship as problematic would be at least a good starting point for any analysis of the interaction between the schooling system and the society.

Colonial and post-colonial thinking in Kenya on this particular issue has been influenced by a concoction of various elements of idealism. It is argued, for instance, that education exists in and for itself; or that education can and does transform society independently of any changes in the structure of the society. These views on the role of education in society have coloured most of the reports and programmes produced and implemented in Kenya since 1910.⁶ We would like to argue, however, that these views fail to capture the dynamic relationship between education and other social institutions. To a large extent the educational system reflects the social and economic structure of the society and thereby reproduces the existing relations of production in terms of skills and world outlook. The contradictions and class conflicts inherent in the society also find their manifestation in the education system. This should be continued to mean that the educational system does not have its own dynamics which have an impact on other social institutions, but rather that these tend to be peripheral unless they correspond with and reinforce the prevailing changes at the socio-economic level. We would further add that the process of schooling has unintended outcomes different from those envisaged by the dominant forces in the society.

6. For an example of influence of this kind at the international level see Faure, et al., 1972, and for a critique of this theoretical approach, see Carnoy and Lewin, 1976, chapters 2,3,10 and 11.

This is often dramatically manifested by conflicts between students and the ruling classes. But in the final analysis, the dominant mode of production and relations of production, to a large extent, influence the structure of the formal education system as well as the knowledge and skills imparted.

Thus there cannot be fundamental changes in education without changing the political economic structure of the society. We need to emphasise that education cannot change society, but can facilitate changes occurring in society. From this point of view, the unemployment existing among school leavers is a reflection of the contradictions and limitations existing in the economic structure of the country. Hence this is an essentially economic and political problem, which if it is to be adequately tackled, entails raising questions of restructuring the political economy of the society.

EDUCATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The critical problem of unemployment among school leavers has been one of the main factors influencing current thinking on education. Although the unemployment crisis has tended to be viewed as entirely an educational problem, in a real sense this is an economic problem which calls for solutions outside the education system. As we have pointed out, the tendency to view what is strictly an economic problem as an educational problem stems from a lack of proper perspective on the relationship between education and the society as a whole.

The unemployment among school leavers at various levels of the education system stems not so much from inappropriate education, as it is often argued, but from the expansion of educational opportunities which are not accompanied or preceded by a corresponding expansion in the number of positions in employment. In other words, the output of the education system has a faster rate of annual growth than the expansion of employment opportunities in the economy. The control of the expansion of the education system would not solve the problem of shortage of employment opportunities, it would only decrease unemployment among school leavers, while increasing unemployment among the uneducated. If the problem were one of inappropriate education and training, the task would be relatively simple, that is the training of school leavers - a task which public and private employers could tackle efficiently and effectively.

Table 1 and 2 show the relationship between the rate of expansion of positions in the public and private sectors and the rate of growth of educational enrollments for a period of over 25 years (1949-1976). An important point revealed in the tables is that the annual growth of employment in both the private and public sectors in the period between 1949 and 1976 was far lower than the annual growth rate of primary and secondary school enrollment. When we

take into consideration that it is the products of these two levels of the education system who have been competing for the positions which are available in the so-called modern sector, then it is obvious that there was bound to be a surplus of school leavers who could not be absorbed in the available jobs. And since the long-term trend has been one of jobs increasing at a slower annual rate than the output of the education system, then educated unemployment (first primary school leavers, then secondary leavers and now arts graduates) is bound to become a permanent feature of the labour market. We should hasten here to emphasise that this not only a phenomenon of post-colonial Kenya, but also a prominent problem in the colonial society, and especially in the 1920s and 1930s when rapid expansion in African education was carried out without a corresponding expansion in positions available to Africans in the colonial economy.

Table 1: Expansion of positions and education, 1949 - 1976.

	Employment		Education Enrollment	
	Public	Private	Primary	Secondary
1949	105,200	324,900	326,400	6,000
1952	115,600	360,000	363,300	8,100
1955	175,600	439,500	432,700	10,000
1958	157,700	435,500	651,800	15,100
1961	167,000	422,800	870,400	21,400
1964	182,000	393,400	1,010,900	35,900
1967	212,100	419,300	1,133,200	88,800
1970	248,000	397,300	1,427,600	126,900
1973	298,900	462,400	1,816,000	175,300
1976	356,400	501,100	2,894,600	280,400

Sources:

Kenya, Statistical Abstract, 1955 - 1976 and Kenya, Ministry of Education, Annual Report, 1948 - 75.

Table 2. Annual growth rates of employment and educational opportunities, 1949-76-
 Employment Education Economic and Educational

	Public Sector	Private Sector	Primary	Secondary	Programmes Related to Employment Generation
1949-1957	3.8%	3.6	5.9%	7.8%	1. Agricultural and technical schools started. 2. Royal Technical College started. 3. Land consolidation and growing of cash crops by Africans. 4. Crisis of standard IV leavers.
1958-1967	3.1%	0.4%	5.70%	19.6%	1. Political and economic uncertainty. 2. Land Settlement. 3. Crisis of primary school leavers. 4. Village polytechnic movement. 5. First Tripartite Agreement; 1964. 6. Ominde Education Report 1964.
1968-1976	4.9%	2.7%	9.1%	10.7%	1. Second Tripartite Agreement, 1971. 2. Technical and Agricultural education in schools. 3. Village polytechnic movement receives government and international support. 4. Crisis of unemployed secondary school leavers (Forms IV & VI). 5. Institute of science and technology. 6. ILO Report on employment, incomes and incomes and equality, 1972.
1949-1976	4.5%	1.6%	8.2%	14.7%	

Source: E.A. Statistical Department, Quarterly Economic and Statistical Bulletin, December 1954; Kenya, Statistical Abstract, 1955-1975; Kenya Ministry of Education, Annual Reports, 1948-74.

Measures to deal with the unemployment of school leavers in post-colonial Kenya have been taken at two levels: within the formal educational system and outside the schooling system. Reforms within the educational system have concentrated on curriculum changes and the expansion of institutions to provide technical and agricultural education. Changes in the curriculum have called for reforms in the content of examinations, particularly CPE (Certificate of Primary Education, given at the end of seven years of primary schooling) emphasising the need for rural-oriented items as opposed to urban-oriented items, and thereby encouraging the schools to teach material which is relevant to the rural environment. The argument supporting such changes in the examination is based on its backwash effect: by including items that are relevant to rural pupils the teaching at the primary level is influenced to cater more for their interests and needs. The beneficiaries of these reforms are supposed to be the terminal pupils who do not go on to secondary school. The second aspect of this process has been the introduction of technical, commercial and agricultural subjects in the schools. However, the results of these changes have been negligible so far in terms of orienting education towards the rural environment. The teaching of technical and agricultural subjects in schools does not appear to alter the attitudes of school leavers towards jobs, and in general it seems to be an expensive approach to training which does not produce the skilled labour that employers need.

Outside the formal educational system, measures intended to alleviate the unemployment problem have ranged from land settlement schemes to direct intervention in the labour market through tripartite agreements (1964 and 1971) and more recently through wage guidelines. The village polytechnics and institutes of science and technology, which were started by voluntary and community efforts, were also meant to deal with rapidly increasing unemployment among school leavers.

The Village Polytechnics

The village polytechnic movement has so far been the most popular programme for alleviating unemployment among school leavers, attracting both state aid and international support (Ford, 1975 and Anderson, 1970). What is usually not questioned is to what extent the village polytechnic movement has actually provided a solution to the unemployment problem. The limitations of this programme, in

terms of the number of primary school leavers absorbed into training and the extent to which the training provided opens up opportunities for self-employment, are not often critically evaluated. When it is taken into consideration that the village polytechnics provide training opportunities for less than five per cent of the total number of school leavers not admitted into secondary schools, and that the chances of self-employment for those trained in these institutions is determined by the social and economic development taking place in a particular rural environment, then we cannot place too much hope in them as a solution to the serious unemployment problem facing the country. As the village polytechnic movement expands, it is also becoming clear that these institutions do not alter the attitudes of their trainees towards moving to urban centres to look for employment, nor do they challenge the status of formal schooling in the eyes of parents and pupils (Court, 1974, pp. 219-241). Entry into a village polytechnic still remains a less desirable alternative for a pupil who has failed to obtain a place in an academic secondary school. A critical evaluation of these institutions (their training function and ability to promote self-employment) needs to be made, especially when it is realised that an increasing proportion of those competing for the existing training opportunities in the village polytechnics will be secondary school leavers. As the number of secondary school leavers increases more rapidly than the opportunities for training and employment, the village polytechnics will be expected to open their doors to this category of school leavers. It is extremely doubtful whether the village polytechnics will be able to cope with this challenge. Already only a tiny proportion of primary school leavers are being trained by these institutions, and the task of channelling them into self-employment in some parts of the country is proving to be almost impossible. Rapid transformation of the rural sector, and in particular an increase in the real incomes of the rural population, will be critical to the functioning of the village polytechnics, even at the limited level at which they are now operating.

The Institutes of Science and Technology

The role of the institutes of science and technology in providing training opportunities for school leavers and their contribution to rural transformation have yet to be demonstrated. Although all the institutes operating at present are in the rural areas, their impact on rural communities is very doubtful, as their training is geared to employment opportunities which can only be found

in the urban centres.⁸ Unlike the village polytechnics which attempt to train specifically for the rural environment where they are situated, the Institutes seem to be guided by the popular view that school leavers fail to get jobs because they have no technical training. As will become evident in the coming years, training as such cannot provide employment, and investment in education and training alone cannot alleviate the unemployment problem facing the country.

FORMAL EDUCATION OR DEVELOPMENT?

Formal education now takes up about 30 per cent of the recurrent national budget, while household expenditure on education ranges from 8 to 20 per cent of annual income. In the last 15 years, the educational budget has been increasing more rapidly than the overall national budget, which means that some of the resources which could have been invested elsewhere have been diverted to education. While at this stage it is difficult to influence household expenditure on education, it is becoming imperative that the rate of increase in the national educational budget be curtailed, so that it does not continue to take an ever increasing proportion of the national budget.

Given existing levels of unemployment among school leavers and the proportion of the national budget allocated to formal education, it is becoming necessary to question the allocation of scarce national resources. The issue is whether the country can afford to continue allocating a large proportion of its resources to educate pupils who cannot find employment at the end of their schooling? Kenya has reached a stage where educational development is no longer a national priority, but rather the creation of employment is an urgent priority. Hence continued investment in education at present levels is counter-productive. Attention should now be given to investments in economic projects which will generate productive capital and employment. In other words industrialisation and rural transformation should be given priority.

8. A recent Ministry of Education report indicates that out of the proposed 14 harambee (self-help) institutes and colleges of technology, only 8 have admitted students. Two more are likely to be opened in 1978. Out of the eight institutes which are open, only the Kiambu Institute of Science and Technology is fully operational - the others are still far from completed. (See The Standard (Nairobi), 3 February 1978).

This raises the question of the structure of the Kenyan economy, its historical conditioning and its position in the world economy. The question is, given the capitalist development pattern pursued by Kenya and its structural relationship with the developed economies, whether one can reasonably expect the Kenyan economy to shift more from a state of underdevelopment to fully-fledged industrialisation. For in the final analysis, industrialisation offers the best hope for dealing with unemployment.⁹ To evade the internal and external structural problems of the Kenyan economy is to entirely miss the real factors determining employment and income distribution in Kenya.

Having argued that education cannot change society and that the national resources should progressively be diverted from formal education to productive economic investments, it is necessary to point out the kind of educational programmes which should receive priority, given a relatively limited educational budget. Some of the rural projects will also be outlined which we think should be given priority as measures for generating productive employment in these areas.

Education

Limited resources for formal education call for a number of choices in the education sector: first, what level of education is to be given priority and second, what type and quality of education is to be given at this level. In the coming years, emphasis should be given to the following:-

1. Pre-primary education and seven years of primary education for all children in the country which is not differentiated according to the class origins of the parents as is the present system:
2. Improvement of the quality of primary education, and particularly of low-income urban and rural schools. Here emphasis should be

9. This point must be tempered by the realisation that the interest of capital is to maximise the extraction of surplus value and choices related to the utilisation of labour and technology are governed by this objective. Hence the creation of employment opportunities is peripheral and only a means to the achievement of this primary goal. As Kay has pointed out:-

Capital has no economic imperative, let alone a moral one, to create full employment... All that can be said theoretically is that the rationality of accumulation does not preclude sufficient mechanisation and the build up of large-scale unemployment - a conclusion which is perfectly consistent with the trend of actual events (1975, p. 153).

on improving the quality of primary teachers, provision of equipment in the remote schools, and by these means making sure that all the children leaving primary schools are literate;

3. The curriculum taught at the primary level should concentrate on imparting basic skills in literacy, numeracy, science and general social knowledge. Thus emphasis should be placed on teaching mathematics, languages, sciences and social studies as a basis for further education, training or involvement in productive labour. Imparting general principles of social and scientific development should be the aim of primary education throughout the country, avoiding the temptation to make primary education exclusively technical or agricultural.
4. The state should aim at distributing primary education opportunities equitably to all areas and classes in the country, giving preference to the poorer communities and regions;
5. Adult education and literacy classes should be given priority as a complement to formal education and should be geared towards productive pursuits and raising the general awareness of the population. The present programmes of adult education and literacy are far from accomplishing the declared goals;
6. The limitations of non-formal education in generating self-employment without accompanying economic and social changes in the surrounding environment should be recognised in future planning; and
7. The limits of formal education in generating employment opportunities and in bringing about changes in the society should be recognised in the process of allocating resources and in educational planning as a whole.

Development of the Countryside

The development of the countryside in Kenya in the last 25 years has expanded the economic frontier of the country, generating employment opportunities and raising rural incomes. There have been three main factors in this process of rural transformation:-

1. Land reform in the former African reserves and land settlement schemes in the former white highlands;
2. The penetration of both domestic and international capital into the small-holder commodity production which has enabled farmers to produce commodities such as coffee, tea and pyrethrum and to keep dairy cattle. The sweeping away of restrictions which prohibited Africans from participation in commodity production and the penetration of both domestic and international capital have been crucial factors in the process of increasing production and incomes in the countryside; and
3. The strengthening of technical services (extension services, credit facilities and marketing organisations) has encouraged small-holder production which has transformed some parts of the countryside and increased the incomes of some peasant households.

If we want to expand economic frontiers in the countryside and increase employment opportunities and rural incomes, then investment in agriculture is crucial. The factors which have been vital in the transformation of the countryside in the last 25 years have to play a continuing role, not only in the rural areas where changes have already occurred, but also in new areas which are still relatively undeveloped. The penetration of international and domestic capital in new areas is important for increasing productivity, expanding employment opportunities and raising the incomes of the rural population. The penetration of international and local capital in the sugar belt of western Kenya, for example, is the kind of agricultural development which is likely to transform the structure of the rural economy and provide employment and income opportunities to thousands of rural people.

We should also hasten to point out that even with increased capital investments in the countryside, there are limits to the carrying capacity

of the land and hence to the generation of employment opportunities. These limits have been reached in parts of Kenya. In other words, even with the best technical services, managerial services and capital input, there are limits to which the existing agricultural land can continue to absorb and support the increasing adult population at a reasonable economic level.

Nevertheless, capital investments and concerted efforts in the development of such inputs as rural water supply can have far-reaching results in terms of increasing rural population. An equally important aspect of water development is the opening up of new lands through irrigation schemes. The recently initiated Tana River multi-purpose project, which aims at opening up the Tana River basin for irrigation and at the same time generating hydro-electric power, has the potential for increasing the amount of arable land available and thereby increasing opportunities for productive employment.¹⁰ Obviously these projects are and will be costly, and need enormous foreign and domestic capital to succeed, but in the long run they will be worthwhile if the amount of much needed arable land can be expanded to cope up with increasing population and unemployment.

10. This project is reputed to be the largest single rural development project in Kenya since independence. It is supported by international capital from the European Economic Community, West Germany and Britain. See The Standard (Nairobi), 3 March 1978 and Weekly Review, (Nairobi), 30 January 1978.

CONCLUSION

This short paper has argued that the educational changes and programmes advocated in post-colonial Kenya as measures to deal with educated unemployment, are not at all new, as similar programmes were initiated during the colonial period without much success. The failure of the past and present programmes and policies must not be attributed to the inadequacies of the education system per se, but should be viewed in the context of the social, economic and political structure in which they have been pursued. The limits of educational reform must be recognised in a context in which there are no corresponding changes in the structure of the society.

An attempt to come to grips with the relationship between education and society is crucial if a correct assessment is to be made of the contribution of education to the process of social change.

Recognising the limits of changes in the education system for solving the problem of unemployment among school leavers, we have pointed out the need to deal with this problem at the economic and political level. In this respect, we have mentioned some past and present policies in the agricultural sector which have made substantial contributions to solving the unemployment problem. Consequently we have argued that what is needed is not only education for rural development, but also structural transformation of the countryside using the available labour and with an injection of capital from outside. Without making substantial progress in rural and industrial development, we cannot hope to do justice to the unemployment problem. The role of education in this process will be to complement the changes taking place at the economic level by providing educated labour.

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