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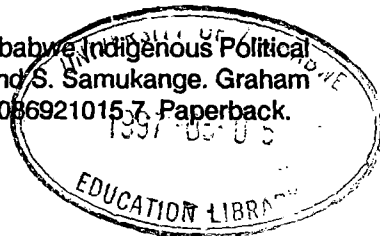
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EDUCATION FOR ALL BY THE YEAR 2000 (EFA 2000): ITS FEASIBILITY IN SOME COUNTRIES IN AFRICA: CAN TEACHER EDUCATION ENSURE QUANTITY, QUALITY, AND RELEVANCE FOR EDUCATION IN THE YEAR 2000?

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ABSTRACT

This paper assesses the feasibility of Education For All by the year 2000 in some countries in Africa. It identifies and explores three basic challenges which EFA 2000 poses to teacher education in Africa, that is: quality, quantity, and relevance. The paper briefly explores the problems faced by these countries and suggests possible ways in which teacher education could facilitate the attainment of some measure of success. Information and recommendations from a conference that the author attended and addressed on the subject are used to elucidate the arguments raised.

The paper concludes that considering the amount of ground still to be covered, and the little time remaining, it will not be possible to realise EFA 2000 in most African countries. It is conceded, however, that fairly high levels of educational provision will be attained so as to warrant active consideration of how teacher education could contribute to the improvement of the quantity, quality, and relevance of that education.

Significantly, educationists in general, and teacher educators in particular, are challenged to take the responsibility to ensure that the education, which it is the business of their profession to give, measures

up to the demands of quantity, quality, and relevance to the needs of every learner, not just to the needs of those few who will make it to university.

Preamble

At a world conference of leaders of government, international agencies, professional bodies, and nongovernmental organisations in Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990, 155 governments committed themselves to education for all children and adults by the year 2000. What did this imply? This meant a commitment on the part of these governments, to have made available to all their citizens of school going age, and those adults who had missed the opportunity during their childhood, a basic education that would enable them to cope with the literacy and numeracy demands of the modern world. The education for all that these leaders were committing themselves to was in fact basic education, not higher education. However, basic education is a prerequisite for higher education. In this paper, basic education is seen as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies that will enable the individual to accomplish those transactions in which he or she will normally wish to, need to, or have to engage. We review this commitment at a time when we are privileged to predict with a fair amount of certainty, the possibility of the nations attaining this ideal. By September 1993, three years after the 1990 conference, 200 000 children in Croatia had no access to schooling, having been displaced by civil strife. Ninety-nine percent of the boys and girls in Somalia were deprived of their education because of civil war. In Mali, 68 out of 100 men and women were illiterate (Unesco Sources, September, 1993).

African countries have not had a successful track record in meeting their targets for improving access to education. For example, after the Addis Ababa conference (1961) had set 1980 as the target for the attainment of universal education in the African states, by 1984, school attendance rates were ranging from 90% in some countries to less than 20% in others, with a regional average of 62% (WCOTP, 1984, p. 96). The diminishing foreign aid, and the rapid rate of population increase were singled out as the major factors causing the slow progress.

In Zimbabwe, on 19th August 1994, one daily newspaper reported that with a 3% population growth rate, the population, which was 10 million in 1990, would increase by 1,5 million by 1995. This meant an average of 5,3 children per family demanding a two-and-half fold increase in the number of schools in one generation (30 years) just to keep the educational provision at the present levels. Meanwhile, some schools are unfurnished and Treasury would rather start new projects than reinforce the success of the old ones (Editorial, 19 August, 1994).

Education in most other African countries (basic education for that matter) was still underfunded, ill-equipped, and remained a low priority area. Thus, the feasibility of EFA 200 was in doubt.

However, in spite of the gloomy situation above, many countries have made commendable steps towards achieving some measure of success in attaining this ideal (EFA 2000). Thus, although EFA 2000 is still out of reach, significant increases in educational provision have been realised. For example, the primary school enrolment in Zimbabwe rose from 736 500 in 1972 to 2 132 300 in 1984, reaching 2 476 600 in 1994 (Secretary for Education's Report 1984). In Malawi, the primary school enrolment rose from 460 000 in 1970/71 to 830 000 in 1980/81, reaching 1 300 000 in 1989/90. These examples show that although EFA 2000 may not be achieved in these countries, there will however be significant increases in school enrolments, making it pertinent to consider the quality and relevance of the education given.

Teacher education produces personnel that run the mainstream education system. To a large extent, these products of teacher education are the ones who, in different capacities, determine what will be taught and how it will be taught. They must, therefore, not only ensure, but continue to review and reensure the quality and relevance of the commodity that they sell.

To that end teacher education must not only respond to, but anticipate the needs and demands of the education system as it evolves, if it (teacher education) is to remain relevant.

King (1994) warned against making universal prescriptions for higher education in different countries:

It is important to recognise that the diversity of country situations and circumstances critically influence the nature of policy analysis in higher education. Caution is required in generalising about higher education systems, their problems and strategies for addressing them. (p. ix)

However, it is also true that with that caution in mind, many useful generalisations can be made at regional level in Africa as there are many similarities of circumstances e.g., poverty, manpower shortage, exotic curricula, etc.

The Problem

What strategies should teacher education put in place in anticipation of problems resulting from EFA 2000?

This paper addresses three basic questions which teacher education in Africa must answer as a matter of urgency if it is to adequately prepare for EFA 2000. These are:

Quantity

How should teacher education prepare for the demands of an increased quantity of educational provision? This question means:

- i. How could sufficient teachers be provided in the little time remaining before the year 2 000?
- ii. How could the costs of the education be reduced?

Quality:

How could quality education be ensured and maintained in the expanded education systems?

What innovative approaches are required?

Relevance

How can teacher education ensure now, that the education for all that we will offer then, will be relevant to the needs of the learners?

Literature was perused, official records scrutinised, and trends in various educational systems analysed to try and find answers to these problems. Forty educationists from Anglophone Africa: Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Ghana, Namibia, and Zimbabwe, together with those from Franchophone Africa: Togo, Benin, Mali, Cape Verde, Senegal, Gambia, and Gabon considered these problems in some detail and shared their experiences at a Unesco workshop in Lome, Togo, in September 1994. Some of their recommendations and observations are discussed in this paper.

Quantity: Increased Manpower Demands

The seriousness of the problem of teacher demands for EFA 2000 may be illustrated by the situation in Cameroon reported to the World Confederation of Organisations of the Teaching Profession Pan African Conference on Education in Yaounde in April, 1984.

In 1980, there were slightly more than 27 000 primary school teachers. On the assumption that the present ratio of one teacher to 50 pupils falls to one teacher to 40 pupils [by] the year 2000, and that...a school attendance of 100% is reached, 93 000 teachers will be needed in the year 2000 ... an annual increase of 3 566 teachers. (WCOTP, 1984, p. 82)

These figures were said to exceed the training capacity of the small nation. In fact, of the 27 000 primary school teachers reported in 1984, 59% had no training of any sort. This lack of trained manpower is equally bad and even worse in other African countries. How then can increased access to education be made possible?

EFA in countries where access to schooling has been limited to only a few will automatically mean an increase in the quantity of education to be provided, hence more classes to be taught, and, consequently, the need for more qualified teachers. Teachers colleges and other teacher training institutions are not likely to produce enough teachers. This situation is in many respects similar to what has happened in many African states where, on attaining independence, access to school was increased, resulting in increased demand for qualified teachers. The solution employed in these circumstances can be emulated in order to quickly produce enough teachers for EFA 2000.

In Zimbabwe, for example, at independence in 1980, a new mode of teacher training, the Zimbabwe Integrated Teacher Education Course (ZINTEC) was introduced to complement the traditional training system. ZINTEC gave the trainee teachers a concentrated 16-week theory course in college, sent them out into schools where they took charge of a full class for three years, being supervised by lecturers, and doing more theory by distance education. They then returned to college for a final 16 weeks before certification. This mode of training, as opposed to the traditional four-year college based training quickly equipped teachers who handled the class with some formal ideas of what to do.

Are there some inherent weaknesses associated with this apprenticeship approach to teacher training? This question is pertinent because the ZINTEC method discussed above appears to be a success story which other nations could emulate should they be faced with a similar sudden demand for qualified teachers. However, a word of caution is necessary: If the ZINTEC was indeed a success, we would have expected Zimbabwe to consolidate the project or even expand it. Indeed, ZINTEC did affect the conventional teacher education model in that it was changed from the usual three years to four years, with Teaching Practice being changed from one term (three months) to two years, giving the teacher a full load of teaching. Notwithstanding that, by 1984, four years later, some ZINTEC colleges began to be integrated into conventional teachers colleges, leaving students, who were yet to complete being accommodated by three remaining ZINTEC colleges. To date, only two ZINTEC colleges remain.

They are small in structure and can only take low enrolments. Even the status of their principals is a grade lower than the principals of conventional colleges. This suggests that the programme was not a total success. However, there is no doubt that this approach to teacher training does produce large numbers of teachers in a short space of time.

Another issue teacher educators can not continue to evade is that while their nations are crippled by high education budgets (relative to all other areas) they will have to look for alternatives to formal education for providing EFA 2000. The staggering education budgets may again be illustrated by the Zimbabwe experience where, in the 1993/94 financial year, 30.44% of the total national budget went to education. In the 1994/95 budget, 29.56% was again devoted to education. The strain will be felt and cheaper alternatives will have to be sought especially for providing EFA 2000. If these should be found, will formally trained teachers be able to cope with other modes of education than the formal school in its present form? How will they be prepared for such possibilities? Is it not time formal teacher training also addressed the informal/nonformal education methods? Should such skills as broadcasting, film/video production, and writing of distance education materials, which may be required when alternative forms of education are adopted, not be included?

If they are not, whose job is it then to provide these skills? The point being made here is that to facilitate EFA 2000, teacher education should help answer the question "How can the costs of the education be reduced?" The teachers for EFA 2000 should be trained in providing education through cheaper options like distance education, (film, video, or even correspondence). They should learn how to produce such materials. It is becoming increasingly unrealistic to expect EFA 2000 to be met through the medium of the present formal school system alone.

The discussion above shows that the provision of crash courses in Theory of Teaching which are followed by long periods of guided practical teaching for the teacher trainees could answer our basic question "How could sufficient teachers be provided?" In other words crash courses have to be employed for the training of teachers.

It needs to be pointed out here that crash courses aimed at mass-producing teachers often run the risk of compromising the quality of training and hence the quality of the education that the teachers produced by these programmes will give. This question will be considered at length.

It has also been suggested that teacher education should address the question of alternative methods of educational provision. These would go a long way in cutting the costs and enabling states to finance EFA 2000.

Quality

The discussion of the quantity of education above suggested the use of crash courses along the lines of the "social market" paradigm of teacher education as a means of quickly providing teachers with some formal training in teaching. The danger of compromising quality of education, which is inherent in this approach, was pointed out. It is this fear that has led to the reduction of the scale of the ZINTEC project in Zimbabwe to only two small colleges.

In Malawi, in September 1994, the new government of President Muluzi, in an effort to expand primary education, launched an intensive two-and-half-week training for 15 000 untrained teachers to equip them with some formal skills. This was followed by on-the-job training by distance education over a long period, and then, finally, a year in college for one to graduate as a qualified teacher. We need to follow the progress of this project in Malawi closely so that we may benefit from their experiences and use them to improve our own efforts (Chimwenje, 1994).

In Tanzania, in 1974 the government geared for education for all by the year 1987. Initially, enthusiasm was high, enrolments shot up, but these have since gone down again. By 1994, 70% of the school-going age were in school. Apart from the poor school environment, it was reported that some parents were not happy with the poorly trained teachers, and saw school as a waste of time (Malakela, 1994). These experiences should inform efforts to quickly provide teachers to cope with sudden expansions

in our education systems. The Tanzania experience is a useful warning that poorly qualified teachers can demotivate both pupils and parents and make it difficult to attain EFA 2000. Thus, while crush courses seem inevitable, all efforts have to be made to ensure the quality of the teacher produced.

With increased numbers of consumers of the commodity (education) against a background of limited human and material resources, especially in Africa's poverty-ridden circumstances, the quality of the EFA that can be offered is likely to be prejudiced. There will be too few textbooks, exercise books, classrooms, laboratories, pencils, chalksticks, etc. Already, critical shortages of resources are being experienced as evidenced in most rural secondary schools in Zimbabwe where, in some cases, eight pupils share one textbook.

An inverse proportion relationship between the quantity of education and the quality of education provided, especially in circumstances of limited resources, has always been found to exist (i.e. the higher the quantity, the lower the quality). If we take the question of educational materials for example, "It has been estimated that over 60% of educational material requirement of Africa is imported as compared to 27% in Latin America, and 25% in Asian countries and that this trend will continue to the year 2000" (Hun, 1976, p. 10).

The increasing scarcity of teaching resources will pose a big problem to the teacher. The traditionally trained teacher is trained for the ideal conditions of plenty. How then shall the teacher be prepared to cope with the new circumstances, most of which are unforeseen? How can we anticipate the problems?

If we take Zimbabwe as an example, the official teacher education curriculum addresses four areas, that is; Theory of Education, Academic Subject study, Applied Education; and Teaching Practice. Theory of Education concentrates on the philosophical, sociological, and psychological ideas the majority of which were enunciated by educationists of olden times. Curriculum Theory is also treated at a basic

and orthodox level. Ideas of specific relevance to Africa and Zimbabwe are only referred to as examples. Academic Subject studies mainly focus on furthering the student's depth of content in a specific subject to advanced or even undergraduate level. In a current study of the academic studies in the teacher education curriculum in Zimbabwe, the author found this to be true for academic studies in 50 syllabi from four secondary and eight primary teachers colleges. It was also found that the Main Subject does not concern itself with the philosophy or relevance of the subject, or improving the student's professional judgment, aspects which are necessary if the student is going to explore new frontiers of knowledge as a teacher.

Both Applied Education and Teaching Practice tend to concentrate on training the student to teach using the conventional sources, methods, and materials that exist, in the conventional classroom as it is today. Obviously, our teacher education aims to produce a teacher capable of delivering quality education today, in today's circumstances. It does not concern itself with the unforeseen or even with what we can foretell, such as larger classes and conditions of greater scarcity. It does not concern itself with necessary innovations to deal with crises the teacher may meet in future. Tertiary education in Africa has been accused of a mismatch between it and the real needs of the African societies. This is particularly true of teacher education, and it becomes more evident when we try to match our teacher education with the needs of EFA 2000.

The question of preparing a teacher for the unknown sounds like demanding the impossible. However, literature on teacher education offers some solutions.

John Elliott (1993, p. 17-18) proposes the "hermeneutic paradigm" of teacher education which emphasises situational understanding and the role of the teacher in school-focused and classroom research. Based on the premise that each teaching situation will be unique and the problems unpredictable, the hermeneutic paradigm trains the teacher to make intelligent responses in practical situations which are complex and cannot be specified in advance. This it makes the basis for the preservice teacher

education curriculum and for the continuing education of teachers.

Teachers trained along this model could be expected to survive in the unforeseen circumstances of EFA 2000. The teacher is to be prepared for reflective practice, research-based analysis of the problems that may arise in his "practice" and refining of self-initiated (not textbook-prescribed) solutions to the problems.

The argument being advanced here is that what qualifies as quality education is not static; it will change with time. It is, therefore, not possible to say with perennial validity that the teacher who can do certain specific things with his class will be giving quality education. Consequently, the teacher at any point in time will need skills to analyse the status quo and identify what is quality education at that time, and to determine how best to provide such education in the light of the prevailing circumstances. This is why it is suggested that, to enable the teachers to provide quality education, teacher education should follow the hermeneutic paradigm which trains the teacher in developing skills to analyse the existing teaching situation, determine what is the best education, and devise ways to attain it. Such a teacher may be relied upon to always provide quality education.

Relevance

The relevance of the education we provide is only relative to the demands of the situation in which it is given. While these demands cannot always be predicted, the hermeneutic paradigm above could provide the answer. The teacher has to have skills to research and identify the new needs of the pupils, hypothesise and test solutions to such needs, and implement these solutions. Rather than predict the needs of future learners now, teachers need the skills to diagnose those needs when they arise and to respond to the needs as diagnosed. That is what the teachers should learn in college.

Indeed, it is clear that our academically geared curriculum is not suitable for all the learners who will recruit in EFA 2000. Some will not go beyond

primary school level. Some youths will need survival skills in a life of unemployment. Adults will want to see the real value of the literacy classes. Some learners have asked, "Literacy for what? I am no more going to look for employment" or, "If I attend classes, are you going to recommend me for promotion?" The education we provide will need to be varied and relevant lest all we achieve is frustrating those who go through our education. Our teachers need to be prepared to provide such education.

Teacher education today should look ahead and appreciate that the products of EFA 2000 will seek jobs in conditions of stiff competition, fail to find the jobs and still have to survive. The teachers trained today should be equipped to diagnose the situation then and prescribe relevant education. The point being stressed here is that our curricula for EFA 2000 should not be reactive to the real life demands, but proactive, anticipating the demands that the future will make on the products of the school. If this is to be achieved, our teacher education curricula should then be even far more proactive and prepare the teachers now in a way that will enable them to prepare their pupils relevantly for the future.

One may ask, just how far can we see into the future and correctly anticipate its demands? Well, if we can see as far as the horizon, then we should use that limited but long enough field of vision to guide us. Our problem now is that our curricula are responding to situations as if we could only see as far as the ground we have already covered and not an inch into the future. Even if the future could not be predicted, teachers of the future, rather than being prepared for the demands of the present and the past, should be given skills to analyse the demands of any new situation and to react appropriately.

Teacher education has tended to produce implementors of already existing curricula; it may be time to consider producing producers of new curricula; teachers who have skills to improve curricula, author books, introduce new teaching materials, research and identify solutions to new problems and skills to make the content of our education more relevant.

The suggestion being made here is that far-reaching curriculum reorganisation, innovation, and overhaul will be required to be carried out on the curricula that will be in existence for the needs of EFA 2000 to be met. This process will have to be carried out "in situ" by the teachers or other education personnel. These teachers are being trained now in a system that has no full knowledge of what will be existing then. Therefore, instead of arming them with skills relevant to yesterday and today, we should give them skills to:

- (i) diagnose the curricular circumstances in which they are operating and
- (ii) formulate, test, and perfect new alternatives as solutions to the problems that will be attendant.

This means that teacher education should abandon the usual content, aims, and methodologies cited in the study referred to above, and adopt the hermeneutic paradigm which addresses action research, and development of the teacher's skills to solve problems that arise in his/her day-to-day work. These skills have timeless relevance.

The question arises; Are the teacher educators themselves ready to impart such skills? How could they be prepared for this? This question may be answered differently in different countries but generally, it calls for a purposeful inservicing and reorientation of the teacher educators to turn their focus from the Socrates, Aristotles, even the Piagets, to the demands of the future. This would enable them to train teachers who can offer relevant education to the pupils as argued above.

Post School Demands

The question of the relevance of classroom education goes beyond making the content of lessons relevant to the everyday life of the learner. Relevant education must enable the learner to pursue higher education if he can, or generate self-employment if he cannot secure a job. Statistics from Zimbabwe, give a rather gloomy picture which should make us challenge the validity of our academically oriented education. This validity will be more in the spotlight with EFA 2000.

Table 1**"O" level Examination Entries and Pass Rate in Zimbabwe**

Year	Entries	5 Passes at C or Better	
		Number	% of Entries
1991	123 320	25 816	20.9
1992	107 645	23 217	21.5
1993	101 127	23 286	23.1
Total	332 092	72 419	21.8
Average	110 697	24 139	21.8

(Source: Manpower Monitor, June 1994, p. 6)

The figures in the table show that on average, only 21.8% of our candidates pass their "O" level examinations (this is not to say they all go into further/tertiary education). Maybe another, say 8%, supplement and pass in subsequent examinations so that they continue to pursue higher education. However, for more than 70% of our "O" level students, the "O" level course will be terminal and a failure. Although they will have paid school fees and examination fees which are quite staggering to their poor families, they will walk out failures. Some might get menial jobs if they are lucky. What they learned in school, the little they will retain, will largely be irrelevant. Is it fair to make 70% of the pupils pursue an irrelevant curriculum that will not help them in life?

If this experience in Zimbabwe is anything to go by, are we going to let this continue even when we attain EFA 2000 where the proportion who find no benefit from the curriculum may even rise to 80%? Are we going to brand 80% of the future generation as failures? Certainly this is immoral. Surely, it must be the responsibility of educationists to make the education given relevant even to those who will not use it as a stepping stone to further education, but as an end in itself. Education must help them earn a living. Continuing to teach what we know to be irrelevant

material to the learner, just because that is what the few who will go to college need, raises serious doubts on our credibility as professionals.

The data in Figure 1 show that even for those who do obtain the full "O" level certificate the situation is no better as 52% of them will either go into undefined occupations or join their colleagues who failed.

Figure 1
Access to Tertiary Institutions by "O" level Graduates in Zimbabwe

(Average 1991 - 93)

Agricultural Colleges	660 (0.5%)
Nursing & related fields	500 (0.4%)
Youth Training Centres	900 (0.8%)
Apprenticeship Training	2 000 (1.8%)
Teachers Colleges	5 100 (4.6%)
Polytechnics, Technical Colleges, & Vocational Training Centres	5 000 (4.5%)
Private Colleges	30 000 (27.1%)
A Level	9 000 (8.2%)
University	2 000 (1.8%)
Unidentified	57 600 (52.1%)
Total possible absorption	= 53 100

(Source: Manpower Monitor, June 1994, p. 5)

Every student who attempts "A" level studies has his/her eyes on university education. However, this "dream" is only realised by a few (22%). The rest have to find other alternatives or finally suffer their deferred frustration.

On average 2 000 students can be absorbed into first year courses in the country's universities. This leaves out about 7 000 (78%) to:

- (a) attend universities outside Zimbabwe;
- (b) follow degree studies through distance education
- (c) ignore their "A" levels and join those courses meant for "O" level holders or below; or
- (d) join the formal or informal employment as unskilled labour force; or
- (e) stay at home.

The example from Zimbabwe, described above, which is true (though to varying extents) for other African countries, reveals two mistakes.

- (1) Our curricula are largely relevant to formal learning beyond the secondary school certificate, yet only a small fraction of our learners pursue formal academic learning to that level.
- (2) A second but related mistake is that we push/allow everyone into "O" level while we know fully well that the majority will fail and end their school career (a preparation for the full post-school life), as failures.

A possible remedy to these mistakes is to be realistic and diversify our curricula so as to offer academic options to only those who have a fair chance of passing and pursuing school beyond secondary school while offering a more world-of-work oriented curriculum to the rest. The latter curriculum needs not be watered down and inferior, but it should certainly be less theoretical and offering those academic and practical skills that are more related to the world of work. We should see EFA not as education for all to go through, but for *all* to benefit from.

Surely the problem of the stigma of being failures that we are currently giving to our school leavers, needs to be addressed. The assessment of the world-of-work oriented curriculum referred to above should not concentrate on demarcating pass/fail categories. Rather, it should concentrate on measuring the levels of mastery of the various skills. Surely people can achieve/learn something to a certain degree of mastery. This

degree of achievement should be measured without the artificial discrete categories of pass/fail having to be concocted and institutionalised. It is true that for some time people will be converting/translating the levels of attainment into the old pass/fail language, but with time, they will accept the new system.

Conclusion

It is clear that efforts to attain EFA 2000 in some African countries are belated. It will not be possible, with the little time left, to attain EFA 2000. However, to the extent that the ideal will be pursued, the problems that beset these efforts have been examined. The major problems of quantity, quality, and relevance of the education have been identified and elucidated. Crush course training programmes and inservicing of teachers have been identified as some of the contributions teacher education could make to ensure quality of the education. To attain relevance of the education that will be given in the yet uncertain circumstances, it has been suggested that the teacher education curriculum be overhauled with respect to its aims and objectives, content and approaches. Instead of preparing teachers for the orthodox classroom of today with its traditional content, the teachers should be prepared to actively diagnose the needs of the present in which they operate and to formulate, test, modify, and institute realistic alternatives that are relevant to the new needs of the learners. In this regard, John Elliott's (1993) hermeneutic paradigm of teacher education is recommended in place of the present traditional theory-based approach. It is recognised that even the teacher educators themselves need reorientation in this direction.

One point needs to be mentioned in conclusion, that there is too little debate or obvious preparation for EFA 2000. If our African nations are still serious about this ideal, then far more academic and social debate is called for in all circles.

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