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**SPECIAL ISSUE:
EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
AND POLICY**

The World Bank Report

*Education in Sub-Saharan Africa
Policies for Adjustment,
Revitalization and Expansion*

Minister Fay Chung

Minister Dzingai B Mutumbuka

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Zimbabwe Journal of Educational Research

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SPECIAL ISSUE: EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND POLICY

The World Bank Report

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**PRECURSORS TO ADJUSTMENT,
REVITALIZATION AND EXPANSION:
An under-the-carpet view of the
education crisis in sub-Saharan Africa**

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews short-comings in the research base of the World Bank Report on education in sub-Saharan Africa, and highlights their implications for the possible uptake of Bank recommendations by African governments. It argues that the Bank Report reflects significant research gaps stemming from a lack of complementarity; selective inattention to certain types of information and knowledge; sweeping diplomatically sensitive categories of knowledge under the carpet; and a historical neglect of certain areas of research. Against this background the paper analyses some issues which need to be resolved to pave the way for meaningful adoption of Bank recommendations. These precursors include dilemmas relating to national ideology, liberalization and a growing marginalization of public education, as well as responses to changing values and social ethics and the need for initiative and creativity.

INTRODUCTION

The recently released World Bank Report on education in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 1988) is intended to have an important influence on policies and strategies for educational development in Africa. As a reference document, it is replete with the global and comparative statistics which we have come to expect and value in Bank documents over the years. A relatively new feature is the extensive use of concrete exemplars, case references and illustrative narratives from specific countries. These provide a refreshing series of punctuation to the complex flow of the document, and also lend an invaluable sense of grounding and realism to the study. Hopefully, this new dimension reflects a growing awareness that issues in education cannot adequately be treated through sophisticated statistical analysis alone. If the Bank's objective is to promote constructive dialogue, generate sensible policies and facilitate their successful implementation, then this new trend towards a more grounded and illuminating data-mix should promote a more meaningful and empathetic interaction between the Bank and African countries.

Despite this progressive shift in approach, the Bank's Report reflects several short-comings in its research base which have led to:-

- controversial interpretation of available data;
- a hint of idealism and naivety in some suggestions and recommendations;
- an unwarranted fudging of issues related to the wider implications and implementation strategies of some policy suggestions;
- a rather restrictive policy framework imbued with pessimistic caution;
- insensitivity to the crisis-induced potential for initiative and creativity, which always lurks within situations of socio-economic decline.

The present paper is concerned with exploring these short-comings and addressing a range of issues which highlight more precisely their nature and practical implications. The issues addressed are regarded as important precursors to meaningful policy development and implementation within the Bank's suggested framework of adjustment, revitalization and expansion (World Bank, 1988, p. 2). In this regard, whilst this paper offers some constructive criticisms of the Bank's Report, it does not detract from the comprehensiveness of the study or its crucial importance as a policy guide, general reference, and discussion document for educational development in Africa.

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH GAP

Given the Bank's formidable record of experience with educational development problems, it would be naive to interpret talk of research short-comings as meaning simply that the Bank does not know enough. No doubt many within the Bank would readily acknowledge a need for more "insider knowledge" of what goes on in Africa's education systems. However the research gap alluded to in this paper is much more complex, and can be defined in terms of four major dimensions.

COMPLEMENTARY GAP

It could be argued that the Bank still does not know enough about education in Africa, simply because there are far too many nuances, idiosyncracies, and imponderables involved. However this needs to be balanced against the fact that an agency like the Bank could rightly claim to have far too much information on education in Africa already. The multitude of sector studies and reports on project identification, preparation, appraisal and evaluation for many countries, must represent something of an information overload for any agency. However information in itself is not necessarily knowledge, and should certainly not be confused with the knowledge-base needed for meaningful policy making and implementation. What is needed is not more of the same information and knowledge which the Bank already has,

but a willingness to tap new sources, as well as to elicit, sponsor and encourage new types of knowledge-making which would complement existing knowledge. For instance, the Bank's Report advocates cost savings through more intensive use of teachers and curtailment of the teachers' salary bill by using cheaper (minimally qualified) teachers. It rightly cites existing research knowledge to show that increased class sizes (between 25 and 50) should have little adverse effect on quality of learning; and that the necessary teaching required in primary schools can be done quite effectively by teachers who have no more than secondary level education and training. However the Bank appears not to know enough about the motivation and aspirations of teachers in Africa, or the perceptions such teachers have of their own role and status in society. Hence serious attention is not given to the likely reaction of teachers, and the range of strategies (overt and covert) they are capable of adopting in defence of their perceived interests.

EPISTEMOLOGICALLY-INDUCED GAP

The Bank's epistemological stance encourages "selective inattention" to certain types of information and knowledge, which it already has at its disposal. This epistemology seems to be conditioned by two understandable constraints. First is a concern with universal type problems which lend themselves to generalizable solutions. Given the scope of Bank operations, there is evidently a need to marshal particularities into coherent overviews of problems and possible solutions. However this often means that Bank recommendations on education policy and practice are perceived as insensitive to the peculiarities of particular national settings. This is somewhat unfortunate since the Bank does have at its disposal a valuable reservoir of information and knowledge on such peculiarities, through the extensive and rich experience of its education missions and its field staff. Instead of being harnessed, systematized and used constructively in policy recommendations, such information and knowledge seems to come into play only as part of the experiential baggage which Bank staff hopefully bring to their work. The other constraint which seems to condition Bank epistemology is an obsession with quantifica-

tion. Admittedly, when the ultimate objective involves optimal allocation of scarce resources to competing needs, quantification is of the essence. Equally so, however, an obsession with quantification often means that controversial data and relatively trivial factors play a disproportionately important role in policy studies and project design, simply because they are available and readily quantifiable. For instance, project evaluation data on the high costs and apparent "failure" of school-based vocational education, results in the Bank recommending a concentration on general mathematics and scientific skills as a foundation for a more technically oriented economy (World Bank, 1988 p. 5). This is financially expedient in the short term, and might even prove to be a sound policy in the long term. The fact, however, is that Africa's precarious technological capacity is manifested, nurtured and sustained largely by those who have "failed" in formal education (car mechanics, electricians, welders, plumbers, etc), rather than those who have been "successful" in general mathematics and scientific skills. Research suggests that (as with fertility control, agricultural productivity, etc) some amount of schooling does make a major difference in the technological capabilities of individuals. However it is not quite clear what it is that people take from school which enables them to survive and succeed in the kaleidoscopic "under world" of Africa's indigenous technological capacity. Closing this type of research gap requires sensitive participatory case studies and micro surveys to probe the occupational profiles, operating skills, coping mechanisms, and technological perceptions of those who keep Africa's technological capacity alive. There are already enlightening precedents (King, 1977) and useful current work (Adei, 1987; Smith, 1988) on how this type of research gap can be bridged. It is therefore regrettable that the Bank's ideological stance seems to encourage "selective inattention" to the type of information and knowledge emanating from such studies.

"DIPLOMATIC" EXPEDIENCY GAP

This gap reflects a tendency to sweep certain categories of information and knowledge under the carpet. Understandably, there are areas in which an agency like the Bank risks being accused

of undue interference in the internal affairs of African countries. Consequently information and knowledge regarding various forms of discrimination, political suppression, economic corruption and mismanagement, tends to be swept under the carpet. Even where there are obvious indications that repressive and corrupt internal practices are likely to prove inimical to educational development goals and policies, the Bank's policy study does not pay more than token attention to such issues. Thus the Bank mentions strategies for protecting disadvantaged groups from the worst effects of its recommended cost-sharing measures in education, but fails to address the issue of how to prevent such laudable intentions from being thwarted by the manipulations of powerful interest groups. Available evidence indicates that, in some African countries at least, structural adjustment measures recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) are having a devastating impact on already disadvantaged socio-economic groups (Longhurst, Kamara and Mensurah, 1987). Meanwhile those who hold socio-economic power are successfully circumventing such effects, often exploiting and capitalising on the commodity scarcities and price escalations resulting from these measures. The Bank can rest assured that, *ipso facto*, the worst effects of its cost-sharing measures in education will somehow be passed on to the weakest socio-economic groups, thereby reversing hard-won gains in the democratization of educational opportunities. It cannot be news to the Bank that dominant political and socio-economic groups in Africa instinctively use the most well-intentioned policies and projects for their own purpose, at best through a subtle strategy which has been described as "distortion during implementation" (Wright, 1988). One would therefore expect at least some substantial elaboration of caveats and conditionalities linking cost-sharing measures with explicit strategies for securing the welfare of the weakest socio-economic groups. Quite apart from this the Bank must also be aware that it is not necessarily the poor and the women in Africa who constitute the disadvantaged. In some countries the disadvantaged are mainly from particular ethnic groups, in yet others they may be conscientious patriots who oppose the extremes of the ruling class, or former elites who are now being persecuted by newly-emerged power groups. Apart from the issue of gender discrimination to which it gives com-

mendable attention, the Bank Report maintains an almost conspiratorial silence on other matters such as political repression, ethnic discrimination, etc.

HISTORICALLY TOLERATED GAP

Data in some important areas of the Bank Report appears to be unavailable due largely to a history of neglect regarding certain types of research. For instance, an important recommendation of the study concerns strengthening managerial capacity, especially at the local level, in conjunction with a greater degree of decentralization (World Bank, 1988). Although there is a wealth of data for North America and Europe (Sarason, 1982; Gray, 1982; Wirt, 1988) not much work has been done by the research and planning community to develop some understanding of what constitutes educational management in African countries and the ways in which headteachers, principals, education officers, etc., cope with the task of management. Perhaps we already have so much (western) literature on management theories and strategies, that it appears superfluous to make any detailed study of the needs of school administrators and education managers in Africa. Indeed it has been suggested that: "In many cases, training courses for educational administrators are designed by trainers without any prior analysis of [needs]" (Hurst and Rodwell, 1986).

Moreover, very little is known about the expectations which various client groups (pupils, parents, local community, ministry, etc.) have of school administrators in Africa, and the implications of such expectations for improved management training.

OUTLINE OF PRECURSORS

In outlining and briefly analysing precursors to the Bank's recommended policy strategy, the objective is mainly to highlight certain dilemmas, and challenges, which exist to a varied extent in the different countries of sub-Saharan Africa. These are of strategic importance in the sense that resolving them would pave

the way for a successful education policy embracing the framework of adjustment, revitalization and expansion. To the extent that these precursors have not been comprehensively treated within the Bank's policy study, it is fair to make critical comments about a research gap. However it should also be emphasized that in most cases there is not much the Bank can do in practical terms to help ameliorate these issues, since it cannot be "all things to all men" in the quest to promote educational development. What is actually being criticised is the fact that because the Bank Report is such a superb work of economic rationality and technical efficiency, it tends to distance itself from the more emotive and "messy" issues which actually constitute the stuff of social, economic and political life in Africa. It is in this regard that the Bank's Report runs the risk of being perceived as insensitive, unrealistic and impracticable.

IDEOLOGICAL DILEMMA

A country's ideological stance is critical in determining the policies it decides to pursue in education or any other area of socio-economic development (c.f. the Bank's favourite contrasting examples of Tanzania and Kenya). Moreover, ideology tends to have a built-in momentum which makes it difficult to institute short-term reversals without incurring socio-economic turbulence and political destabilization. These salient facts have profound implications for the radical ideological changes that many African countries are being urged to make by such agencies as the IMF and the World Bank. Regardless of the diversity of root-causes for the socio-economic decline in different countries, Africa as a whole is currently being bombarded with free-market solutions advocated by the so-called "counter revolution" movement in development economics (Toye, 1987). Typical of such solutions is the now familiar IMF structural adjustment package which involves currency devaluation, lifting of price controls, removal of government subsidies, increased privatization and curtailment of public sector expenditure. There are unmistakable echoes of a similar ideology in the Bank's education policy study, which advocates cost sharing, curtailment of unit costs, increased role for

private institutions, and a general free market approach to education. Despite their unpalatability, many African countries are now bravely attempting to implement a variety of free market measures, in the hope of grafting their way out of the current crisis. There are at least two common sense grounds on which such countries must be tempted to give free market solutions a fair trial. Firstly, in spite of various imperfections and the occasional threat of collapse, a free market approach has sustained and enriched the economies of advanced capitalist societies. Secondly, the current wave of liberalization in the highly centralized and controlled economies of advanced socialist countries has created uncertainties about the socialist ideals espoused by some African countries, and at the same time given new credence to a free market ideology. Increasingly therefore, it is not so much a question of outright rejection of such an ideology by African countries, but more a dilemma over how far and how fast to proceed with policies based on it. Many African countries face genuine and deep-rooted problems in their attempt to make this ideological transformation. For instance, such countries lack the institutionalized checks and balances which would curb the worst excesses of socio-economic exploitation under free-market policies. Again, there is an element of political trauma, since withdrawal of government support in such areas as education can be perceived by the population as a serious betrayal of their hopes for socio-economic mobility.

Against this background, African countries can choose either to follow a path of ideological brinkmanship, or stagnate in ideological bankruptcy. Thus some countries (e.g. Tanzania, Nigeria and Zambia) embark on self-imposed economic recovery measures, similar to those recommended by the IMF, but continue with the rhetoric of opposition to IMF/World Bank conditionalities. In another version of brinkmanship, some countries (e.g. Ghana and Mozambique) openly accept elements of the IMF's structural adjustment recommendations, but continue to pursue "revolutionary" forms of political organization and government more in line with state-dominated socialism than free market capitalism. A country might adopt this version of ideological brinkmanship simply because its economy is in such dire straits that it has little choice but to accept IMF conditionalities. On the other hand fear of

the perceived likelihood of internal disruptions and upheavals may be such that a country decides to risk temporary estrangement from international aid agencies, whilst testing how far it can proceed with its own version of recovery measures.

Ideological bankruptcy manifests itself in two main forms. Some African countries stubbornly adhere to outdated and discredited ideologies, often because the leadership is too closely associated with these ideologies to contemplate any reversal. On the other hand some countries simply wallow in ad-hoc ideologies and a hotch-potch of half measures, often because they lack decisive leadership or do not wish to offend any of the main social interest groups. Ultimately ideological bankruptcy can only deepen the economic crisis and jeopardise the chances of early recovery for most of the countries concerned.

Evidently the ideological dilemma briefly discussed here is of the utmost importance in determining a country's response to the policy recommendations and measures outlined in the Bank Report. The extent to which a government is willing to forego some of its present (often monopolistic) control and authority over education; a readiness to contemplate imposing cost-sharing measures, and deciding whether or not to temper these with protection for the weakest groups; an ability to impose controls on educational expansion, at least in the short term; the possibilities for liberalizing the role of private institutions; a willingness to curtail public expenditure in sensitive areas such as teachers' salaries; the capacity for making short-term sacrifices in the interest of long term quality improvements in education; etc. These are all intricately linked with the ideological stance of a government. The Bank therefore cannot afford to present an image of itself as apolitical or ideologically neutral, in making the kinds of policy recommendations contained in the study. What is needed is a greater understanding of the ways in which education is affected by the different versions of ideological brinkmanship/bankruptcy. Education policies ought not to be decided purely on the dictates of monetarist economic theories. They must derive mainly from the aspirations of the African peoples, with a sober assessment of the sacrifices they are willing to make and the price they are ready to pay for such aspirations. Admittedly these aspirations

are not necessarily embodied in government ideologies or priorities, but to the extent that African governments perceive the Bank's policy recommendations as inimical to the aspirations of their peoples, they are likely to be resisted, in spite of the grave crisis facing education in Africa.

MARGINALIZATION OF THE PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

Over a decade after the "diploma disease" (Dore, 1977), much continues to be made of the overwhelming importance Africans attach to formal education and certification. Moreover, it is well known that strong social demand, coupled with national manpower needs, has fuelled a remarkable expansion of public education in post-independence Africa, and made education a highly sensitive political issue for most African governments (Samoff, 1987). Importantly also, the Bank study reiterates the importance of education in Africa by citing research evidence linking education with increased earnings, controlled family size, improved productivity, and a better quality of life generally.

In spite of the foregoing, there is currently a subtle groundswell of change which is beginning to compromise the supreme centrality of public education as a key to social mobility and economic advancement. Clients are beginning to lose faith in the public education system due to the growing phenomenon of unemployment amongst school leavers and university graduates, and an unmistakable deterioration in the quality of what the system offers. Planners are exasperated by the apparent futility of efforts to reform public education in line with changing individual and social needs. Governments are worried about the relative stagnation in socio-economic development, despite substantial investments in education for manpower development. Pupils perceive a changing profile of successful role models in society, with less emphasis on traditional formal education. Various social groups are concerned about the increasing susceptibility of public education to undesirable political "fall out." Against this background

most African countries are experiencing a subtle, yet unmistakable, groundswell of change in the perceived function and significance of the public education system.

Those who desire good quality teaching, successful examination results, high standards of discipline, and sound all-round development are increasingly prepared to forsake their own public education systems and make inordinate sacrifices in pursuit of their desires. Thus an increasing number of ordinary Zambians send their children to private schools or good boarding schools in Zimbabwe; West Africans increasingly have their children educated in Europe or America, or in private institutions within their own countries; and many countries (e.g. Malawi, Kenya) attempt to establish and/or sustain a few schools unambiguously dedicated to excellence. Even where most parents cannot afford to send their children abroad or to private schools, they manifest a lack of confidence in the public education system by investing in private lessons with teaching syndicates, where they hope at least to have good quality teaching and successful examination results.

Again many African governments are having to rely increasingly on education and training programmes (operated by N.G.O.'s and parastatals) outside the public system, to provide relevant and useful training for their countries' manpower needs. Young school leavers are also finding that they have to rely on such programmes for acquiring employment-related skills. In most African countries, despite massive investments of resources and expertise, meaningful vocational orientation has still not been achieved in the public education system.

Furthermore, pupils in many African countries are beginning to show an awareness of the fact that success in the public education system does not guarantee success in real life. They are aware, for instance, that they may not even get a job after completing school. More importantly, they also perceive that many of the successful people who act as role models for them, owe their success mainly to such things as substantial political leverage and acute market place savvy, which do not seem to be on offer in the public education system. Also, alternative avenues

of socio-economic mobility are being strengthened as modernisation spreads in many African countries (Oni, 1988).

Two important points need to be made about this impending marginalization of the public education system, in relation to the World Bank Report. First, the Bank's exposition on a need for greater privatization, cost-sharing and quality improvements is not really news. Indeed it is simply a sophisticated echo of the common sense understanding that ordinary Africans are already demonstrating. What would be of more substantive value is an exercise in identifying, documenting and analysing key elements in this groundswell of change towards the public education system. This would provide a better understanding of the range of strategies already being used to prop-up or circumvent a beleaguered public education system, and the prospects for developing viable alternatives to complement it.

Secondly in the search for appropriate solutions, African governments need to strike a balance between individual freedom of choice and the duty of the state to protect disadvantaged groups from the adverse spill-over effects of such freedom. This latter aspect is not given sufficient emphasis in the Bank Report, hence the difficulties involved in governments disentangling themselves from their traditional financing role in education tend to be underestimated. Since most of their population will continue to rely on the public education system, even in the long term, it would be irresponsible for African governments to simply abandon education to free market forces. Nevertheless, the kinds of measures recommended in the Bank study are going to be essential for relieving the pressure on Africa's beleaguered education systems, and laying the foundation for fruitful developments in the future. The extent to which a country incorporates such measures into its education policy will depend largely on how far it decides (and can afford) to liberalize its education system.

DILEMMAS OF LIBERALIZATION

There are many sound reasons and profound justifications for strong government domination and control of education in Africa. We cannot afford to sweep these under the carpet in our current haste to portray "excessive" government control as a major obstacle to solving Africa's education problems. During the colonial era, the early laissez-faire approach to education in most African countries resulted in a confusing array of initiatives and provisions from competing religious bodies with diverse partisan objectives (Anderson, 1970). It was not until colonial administrations intervened (albeit in a limited way), that African countries began to evolve coherent education systems which were amenable to planning and could be linked to broader socio-economic development goals. More importantly, the remarkable educational achievements of post-independence Africa owe a considerable amount to national governments acting decisively, and with great political willpower, to meet social demands and manpower requirements for educational expansion. To this end it was thought necessary for African governments to first establish full control over education, and then make the substantial investments required to channel education into the service of individual and national development goals. The price which had to be paid for full control was that African governments also had to assume almost full responsibility for financing education. This responsibility has increasingly become untenable in a period of economic decline for most African countries. It would however be rash to suggest that government control has not generated and nurtured many worthwhile achievements in Africa's educational development. Witness the substantial progress during the 1970s towards universal primary education in several countries, in spite of the odds and against the advice of external agencies at the time; or the remarkable progress with functional literacy in Tanzania and Ethiopia (National Literacy Campaign Committee, 1986); or more recently the phenomenal expansion of educational enrolment for Africans in post-independence Zimbabwe (Mutumbuka, 1986). These and many such achievements could hardly be described as the result of free market forces.

In contemplating the future, however, most African governments will have to accept that things simply cannot go on as usual. As education increasingly comes of age in Africa it would be both unwise and impracticable to continue to pamper it with so much government support. In an environment of economic austerity, if we do not allow education to flex its muscles in the socio-economic market place, we might well be running the risk of increased atrophy in the public education system. Undoubtedly there is a strong need for some form of liberalization of the present education system in most African countries, but this is not as easy as it sounds. Indeed, governments being what they are, the natural response to the crisis in most cases is to increase control over the system. Most African governments can be justifiably proud of their track record on investment in education, but they need to be persuaded that it is now in their interest to rekindle a sense of financial partnership with parents, communities, religious bodies, and other organisations interested in educational development. To some extent this process is well under way in those countries (e.g. Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Botswana) where the sense of partnership through community financing has always been strong. Here again, instead of highlighting such examples as pointers through which African governments could be persuaded to liberalize their education systems further, the Bank study simply mentions them, and posits its recommendations mainly in terms of monetarist economic theory (World Bank, 1988; pp. 65 - 67). Evidently a major dilemma faced by governments which institute substantial liberalization is the loss of their monopolistic control on the education system. However the good thing about most of the liberalization measures recommended by the Bank is that they are likely to make education institutions much more responsive to the needs and aspirations of the parents, communities and organizations which help to finance education. To the extent then that government policies embody the needs and aspirations of the population, and in so far as government's development goals are shared by the people, there need not be great fears about the effects of a government's loss of monopoly control on education.

CHANGING VALUES AND SOCIAL ETHICS

Many education systems in Africa will need to come to terms with certain changing values, to pave the way for a free market approach to education. For instance education in many countries promotes the virtues of service to others rather than self and orients learners towards seeking employment rather than creating it. This entails values of selfless sacrifice, conformity and dependency. In contrast, a free market approach to education would seem to imply values of enlightened self-interest, freedom of choice and independent exercise of initiative.

Again, teaching in Africa has, until recently, developed into a fairly respectable profession, attracting perhaps the largest number of educated nationals. This type of professionalism carries with it ethical values of dedication, integrity and commitment. In contrast the economic decline, deteriorating public education system, and the emerging phenomenon of private teaching syndicates, has meant that teachers in some countries increasingly have to resort to "moonlighting" and are caught up in dual allegiances.

Importantly also, if education is to adequately prepare learners to cope with the changing social ethics of African countries, it will need to shed some of its current antiquated ethics and prudish values.

INITIATIVE AND CREATIVITY

Situations of extreme difficulty always seem to engender remarkable initiative and creativity in people, as they seek to overcome such difficulties. In principle there is no reason why this should not be the case with the education crisis in sub-Saharan Africa. However it would appear that in practice there are at least two major issues which need to be resolved before the potential for initiative and creativity, which undoubtedly exists in most countries, can be fully activated.

Firstly, there is a need to regain the type of inspiring vision of the future which characterized the early independence era of many countries, and can still be witnessed in recently independent countries such as Zimbabwe. This has a lot to do with national leadership. They may have adopted the wrong policies or pursued mistaken ideologies, but most of the early leadership in independent African states provided a sense of vision which inspired their people and motivated them to give of their best to national development efforts. In contrast, most of today's leadership in Africa appear to be deflated and weighed down by crisis management and a perennial concern with their own political survival. Consequently, much of Africa's highly trained manpower is constrained to operating without a coherent and inspiring sense of vision regarding educational development. In this regard, liberalization of education must also include cultivating an appropriate climate in which initiative and creativity can blossom in the service of educational development. Unfortunately the Bank study does not make much of a direct contribution to this aspect of liberalization. Indeed the general tone and thrust of the study serves to accentuate the sense of crisis management in education.

Secondly, a growing number of African countries are facing something of a crisis in nationhood, which stifles all meaningful initiative and creativity in an area such as education. Cynics within some of these countries suggest that authority figures have got to stop thieving long enough for the average citizen to believe once again that she/he belongs to an entity (nation) that is worth making sacrifices for and that deserves his/her best efforts. In less controversial terms, authorities in these countries certainly need to draw a firmer line between enlightened self interest and outright corruption. Everything possible should be done to ameliorate this malaise of a downward credibility spiral in nationhood. Otherwise, how do we stop a people from speculating against their own currency, or smuggling their own national products, or rejecting their ailing education system!

CONCLUSION

The World Bank study undoubtedly offers an invaluable guide, which most African countries can use constructively to develop and implement sensible policies for grafting their way out of the current crisis to a more promising era of educational development. There are a number of gaps in the research base of the study which make it less sensitive to the nuances and peculiarities of education in Africa than it needs to be. There is also a failure to seriously address a number of key issues which are regarded as precursors to successful policy formulation and implementation. This detracts somewhat from the perceived appropriateness and practicability of the recommendations contained in the study. If the Bank pays the necessary attention to some of these shortcomings when assisting individual countries with policy design and implementation, then there is considerable hope that sensible solutions to the current crisis can be worked out.

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