

# **Integral Education for Social-Economic Development in Africa**

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### **1.0 Introduction**

This paper explores the broad theme of the role of education in bringing socio-economic and intellectual transformation in the society. The first part of the paper briefly describes the two concepts: progressive movement of mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Lonnegan's Intellectual conversion upon which Nyerere (most probably) drew his inspiration about the role of education in development. The paper builds up to suggest possible curriculum interventions that can stir Africa to a greater social empowerment, economic prosperity, intellectual conversion and self development.

### **2.0 The concept of progressive movement of mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

The Progressive Movement was an effort to cure many of the ills of American society that had developed during the great spurt of industrial growth in the last quarter of the 19th century. The frontier had been tamed, great cities and businesses developed, and an overseas empire established, but not all citizens shared in the new wealth, prestige, and optimism.

The specific goals of progressivism included:

- a) The desire to remove corruption and undue influence from government through the taming of bosses and political machines
- b) The effort to include more people more directly in the political process
- c) The conviction that government must play a role to solve social problems and establish fairness in economic matters.

These ills continue to face our society today. In Tanzanian case, Nyerere, the son of the land had lessons to draw from progressivism for his land.

### **3.0 Lonergan's Intellectual conversion**

Lonergan writes that we all live in our world since man's life is being in the world, but it is far from true that we all live the world as it really is. Lonergan refers to Cardinal Newman and his distinction between notional assent and real assent. Notional assent allows one to give the right answers and pass one's exams. Real assent changes the world you live in (Lonergan, 2010). Nyerere perhaps borrowed heavily from this version, the world of making things real, the world of actualization. As such, education should make things happen, curriculum should be actualized through embracing skill based education relevant to the changing times.

### **4.0 An Overview of Nyerere's Philosophy of Education**

According to Nyerere, the purpose of education in general as well as to the purpose of development lies in the following excerpt:

*[...] is the liberation of Man from the restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency. Education has to increase men's physical and mental freedom—to increase their control over themselves, their own lives, and the environment in which they live. The ideas imparted by education, or released in the mind through education, should therefore be liberating ideas; the skills acquired by education should be liberating skills (Nyerere, 1978, p. 27-28).*

Education has also to help people towards achieving self development in cooperation with others. The following depicts this aspect of education:

*[...] it has to help men decide for themselves, in co-operation - what development is. It must help men to think clearly; it must enable them to examine the possible alternative courses of action; to make a choice between those alternatives in keeping with their own purposes; and it must equip them with the ability to translate their decisions into reality (Nyerere, 1978, p. 28).*

Nyerere's views, are applicable in bringing about socio-economic empowerment through community participatory approach.

### **5.0 Kenya's Interventions through 8-4-4 System**

The 8-4-4 system of education was introduced in January 1985, following the Mackay report of 1982. King and McGrath (2002) observe that the 8-4-4 policy arose out of the concerns that a basic academic education might lack the necessary content to promote widespread sustainable (self) employment. Therefore the 8-4-4 policy emanated from the assumption that it would equip pupils with employable skills thereby enabling school dropouts at all levels to be either self-employed or secure employment in the informal sector. Amutabi (2003) observes that the new policy would orient youths towards self-employment. The system strongly emphasized attitudinal and skills preparations for the world of work and especially self-employment.

The 8-4-4 system has been the subject of national debate since its inception. It has been criticized for being broad, expensive and burdensome to pupils and parents. The new education policy has also been implicated in the worst strikes that engulfed a number of schools in Kenya during the year 2001 and the general poor quality of education (Amutabi, 2003). Despite its noble provisions, the system failed to provide real answers to the real problems that face society today. Thus, we pose a question: what interventions should be taken to bring about real change in real time

### **6.0 Possible Curriculum Interventions for Development in Africa**

The education systems inherited from the colonial powers were designed for the formal sector and public administration. In developing countries, however, many people work in the informal sector, so vocational qualifications in trades or retail marketing, for example, are often acquired in informal settings. The awareness is growing of how little formal schooling contributes to

making a living in the informal sector (already realized with introduction of 8-4-4 system in countries like Kenya but implementation process faulted).

Thus the following interventions should be considered:

### **6.1 Modification of Curricula**

Curricula should be modified to provide learners in all levels of education with better skills for self-employment or starting a business. However, there is certainly still a need for greater recognition of the qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning. Proper implementation of such changes should be ensured through constant monitoring and evaluation.

### **6.2 Skill based Education and Training**

Curriculum should be practical oriented to equip learners with life skills.

Productive work should become an integral part of the school curriculum and provide meaningful learning experience through the integration of theory and practice.

### **6.3 Designing and implementing an integral curriculum**

An integral curriculum that considers all aspects of integral formation of a learner, that which equips the learner with basic skills for life, that which is complete in itself.

For instance, primary school curriculum should be designed in such a manner that it is complete in itself rather than being “transitional curriculum”; it should not serve merely as a means to higher education but an end in itself.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

Bringing about socio-economic and intellectual conversion through curriculum intervention is a process that calls for not only resources but possession of certain charisma that drove our fore fathers and builders of nations like Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Kwame Nkuma of Ghana, Nelson Mandela of South Africa, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya among other African statesmen.

Perhaps, Nyerere's spirit of education for self-reliance should obsess our policy makers and all stakeholders in all sectors of development to bring about real education change that answers the needs of 'Wanjikus', (rural folks).

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