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EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA:
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by

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The curriculum has two widely accepted types of definitions: it can be seen as a package (i.e. content of education) or/and as a process (i.e. the dynamics of giving flesh to organisational, teaching and learning principles in education). Whatever the definition adopted, the important point is that the desirable changes envisaged by an educational policy are given concrete manifestations only through the curriculum process. In other words, the curriculum deals with the real acts of ensuring that learning and teaching yield the desired benefits through:

- the translation of educational goals into school and classroom attainable objectives, based on a clear situational analysis of the immediate educational context (the community, the learner, the educational facilities available, etc.);
- the derivation (from the objectives so derived) of appropriate content, learning opportunities, teaching strategies, and teaching-learning materials;
- building into the entire process appropriate strategies for systematically determining the extent to which curriculum-related activities are yielding the expected results.

Curriculum reform, a radical re-thinking and re-modelling of the entire curriculum process (or aspects of the process), is usually an integral part of overall educational reform. On the attainment of independence, virtually every country in Africa tried to address the issue of the educational policy and practices most suited to its nation-building needs. Attempts to address this issue gave rise to national educational policy documents. Tanzania's *Education for Self-Reliance*, in the Congo's *L'Education du peuple*, are generally considered the most clearly articulated of such educational reform documents.

Whatever the degree of articulation of the educational reforms in post-independence Africa, the ultimate issues have been: (a) What exactly should schools, classes, teachers, learners, parents, and communities actually do to ensure that the changes desired by the reform really takes place, in terms of improved learning? (b) How exactly should teaching and learning be promoted to ensure that the desired improved learning takes place? (c) What should be the most appropriate materials for promoting the desired types of teaching and learning? and (d) what exactly should constitute the body of knowledge, the values, attitudes, and societally desirable behaviour patterns to be inculcated in learners?

In other words, while educational reform documents would give a great deal of attention to educational financing, educational infrastructure and the like, their implementation has to go a step further and attempt to
answer the basic curriculum questions. These questions are important because they deal with the specifics of ensuring that the overall goals of educational reform are attained.

UNESCO's role in curriculum reform in Africa should be seen within this general framework; that of taking the curriculum process along with overall educational development. However, in order to have a clearer perception of UNESCO's role, it is important to outline the ways of intervention of the Organisation. It is generally said that UNESCO, though an intellectual organisation, is neither a University nor a research institution. UNESCO therefore does not necessarily generate new knowledge, but it promotes its generation and its sharing within the international intellectual community. UNESCO also promotes the translation of basic knowledge into techniques and promotes international cooperation in the use of such techniques (i.e., the applied form of basic knowledge) by policy makers and practitioners for tackling problems of human development in its areas of competence: education, science, culture and communication.

UNESCO also does not usually act alone. It mobilises the intellectual and technical resources of specialized bodies, along with the financial resources of funding agencies, and political will of Member States in an effort to give an all-front attack on development issues.

This paper discusses UNESCO's role in curriculum reform in Africa within the above framework. A selection of UNESCO’s activities is presented, showing the Organisation's direct and indirect roles. An attempt has also been made to show UNESCO involvement in different aspects of the curriculum process.

UNESCO's CONTRIBUTION TO CURRICULUM THOUGHT IN AFRICA

All discussions on educational development implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) include curriculum issues. UNESCO has over the years contributed to educational thinking in Africa through its series of conferences, the most famous of which is the MINEDAF series. The analysis that follows shows the extent to which curriculum issues featured in these conferences.

The Addis Ababa Conference

The Addis Ababa Conference of 1961 was intended to:

"...provide a forum for African States to decide on their priority educational needs and to promote economic and social development in Africa, to establish a first tentative short-term and long-term plan for educational development in the continent."
For this reason, commentators on the conference have often stressed its emphasis on quantitative targets. What has not been stressed is that there was also a lot that was curriculum-related in the work and conclusions of that pace-setting conference.

Of the four commissions of the conference, one dealt with "the content and method of school education and the training of teachers" while another dealt with "prerequisites in general education for specialized, technical and vocational training".

In assessing Africa's needs, there was some emphasis on school equipment and textbooks. The latter was expected to be "adapted to new curricula requirements and African countries", while the need was stressed for the "training of textbook writers with the needed skills and knowledge to make possible the necessary information of textbooks to meet the new conditions".

While emphasizing the manpower approach to educational planning, the report of the conference still called for "new curriculum directions" to meet the demands of changing patterns of African social and economic life. Of the three priority areas suggested to African States for the period 1962-1966, "Curriculum Reform" occupied a prominent place. The others were secondary education and teacher training. Curriculum reform was expected in all cases, to be carried on "according to African social and cultural conditions".

Finally, an entire section of the recommendations of the conference (there were 7 sections a-g) was devoted to the reform of the content of education. It was felt that content (in 1961) was "not in line with either existing African conditions, the postulates of political independence, the dominant features of an essentially technological age, or the imperatives of balanced economic development. The same recommendation called for (a) the teaching of scientific and technical subjects "to ensure the training of highly qualified... research workers, engineers, science teachers, economists...", (b) allotting less time to classes and "ending the preferential treatment given to the teaching of non-African history", (c) a synthesis, in the school curriculum, of African and universal values.

Thus, while the Addis Ababa (1961) conference was mainly 'economic', in that it set targets to be achieved in educational enrolments in the ensuing years, and dwelt largely on educational planning and the mobilisation of resources to promote universal primary education, it also gave considerable thought to the basic curricular prerequisites to educational reform.

The Abidjan Conference

The Abidjan Conference of 1964 came in the wake of a series of meetings organized by UNESCO to assess the implementation within Member States of the Addis Ababa plan of action of 1961. Deliberations on curriculum issues were summarized in paragraph 18 of the final report of the conference. This took the form of exchange of experiences on efforts
made since independence to rethink the objectives, the structures, the content of education. A number of countries had by this time changed their examination systems. Technical education had been introduced in countries like Guinea and Burkina Faso, as a means of diversifying curriculum content.

The Abidjan conference also dwelt at length on the adaptation of content of secondary education, to ensure "the production of balanced human beings". It further recommended the creation of curriculum development centres in African Member States, to which should be associated Universities and research centres.

Participants agreed to expand the scope of school curriculum to include languages and the natural sciences. The UNESCO Educational Documentation Office in Accra (the fore-runner of BREDI) was requested to conduct studies on (i) the transfer from mother tongue to official languages as means of instruction, and (ii) science teaching and learning at the secondary level. The results of these studies were to be used as working document at a meeting of African curriculum experts to be convened later in the year (1964).

Between 1961 and 1964, efforts had been made in a number of African countries to adapt school textbooks to new curriculum demands. Ethiopia was reported to be particularly active in this regard. During the same period, UNESCO helped to create a didactic material centre in Yaoundé.

Thus, by 1964, UNESCO's contribution to curriculum reform in Africa had moved from recommendations to concrete action. Curriculum adaptation activities had begun in the region in keeping with the recommendations of the Addis Ababa (1961) conference. What is more, African member states were urged to go a step further, by setting up national curriculum development centres.

The Nairobi Conference

The Nairobi Conference of 1958 again reviewed progress since Addis Ababa and dwelt on why planned targets were not achieved. There was a lengthy deliberation of curriculum issues, under the overall umbrella of "improving the quality of education in Africa". The discussions spelt out objectives and content/method orientations for primary and secondary levels of education. There was some stress on the non-cognitive objectives of education, as the conference declared.

"Education should be seen not only as a means of transmitting knowledge but also as preparation for adult life, and for the responsibilities which everyone has to undertake as a citizen and as a productive member of society".

For primary education, it was recommended that it should be given "a rural orientation", as a way of adapting it to its immediate environment. Without turning the primary school into a purely agricultural or technical institution, learners should be imbued with respect for manual work.
Allied to the question of re-orientation of primary education was that of choice of language of education, as the conference felt that the use of foreign languages in schools (like the teaching of foreign-oriented content) "contributes to the psychological alienation of the child", makes learning more difficult, and reduces the quality of learning outcomes. Each country was requested to examine its peculiar linguistic configuration and design appropriate policies for the use of languages in primary education.

In addition to the language question, it was recommended that science be intensively taught at the primary level. The primary school leaver should "acquire basic scientific and mathematical knowledge to enable him/her understand a world that is becoming increasingly science-dominated, so as to be able to adapt to such a world".

Secondary education was conceived in two phases, the first cycle of which should emphasize scientific knowledge, the development of the skills of observation and deduction, a sensitivity to environmental issues, and rudiments of the everyday applications of science and technology;

The upper secondary school should emphasize the application of scientific knowledge and should expose learners to the practical life and work situations. It was also recommended that curricula at this level should aim at inculcating "an agreed set of moral and cultural, social, and aesthetic values". History and geography programmes should be revised to "improve learners' understanding of history, culture, economics and the social problems of Africa".

Thus, the Nairobi conference represents a further advance in the 'curriculum push' on African Member States by UNESCO. General guidelines were given on re-structuring primary and secondary education, while specific attention was paid to mathematics, science and technology. At the same time, attention was drawn to the need for a balanced curriculum content, bringing together the scientific, the cultural, the social and the aesthetic disciplines.

The Lagos Conference

The Lagos conference of 1976 deliberated on two main issues: (i) innovations and planning of educational reforms in Africa, and (ii) basic and mass education in the service of development. Like the conferences before it, the Lagos MINEDAF began by reviewing the progress of education in Africa in the intervening period (i.e. since the Nairobi conference of 1968), paying particular attention to curriculum issues.

It was observed that African countries gave increasing prominence to science and mathematics in the school curriculum, while a good number of them had introduced technical and vocational subjects. "Productive work" had been introduced in a few countries "not merely for the development of certain skills for employment", but also for its "pedagogical and ethical merits", and because productive work "abolishes the dividing line which artificially separates study from manual work". Most curriculum reform efforts attempted to seek relevance to the cultural environment of the
learner, and the increasing use of African languages was seen as a right step in this direction.

After reviewing the above advances in curriculum reform, the Lagos conference concluded that African education (the nature of institutions and the curriculum) was still suffering from serious shortcomings inherited from the colonial period. The school was still cut off from its social milieu. Africa was therefore urged to "rethink its educational system in order to re-adapt it fundamentally to the new demands of its economic and social development". It was accordingly recommended to African Member States that they undertake a decolonisation of school curricula, to "gear them... to the political, economic, social, scientific, and cultural preoccupations" of the people. UNESCO was urged to study the possibility to develop facilities in Africa for the production of textbooks in African languages and also to help in equipping schools for technical and vocational education.

A very important recommendation of the Lagos conference (part of its recommendation 15) was the one recommending the creation of an African Curriculum Organisation, "for greater regional cooperation in curriculum reform and renovation of school curricula". This organisation (ACO) was later to play a major role in building up African capacity in the field of systematic curriculum development.

Thus, with the Lagos conference, UNESCO once again pursued its "curriculum push" to African Member States. There was more of going into specifics, with some emphasis on the promotion of inter-African cooperation in matters of curriculum renewal.

The Harare Conference

The Harare conference of 1982 was convened by UNESCO to discuss problems of education in Africa, with special reference to the economic and social development of the region. Curriculum, as an integral part of overall educational development, also featured in the deliberations of the conference. There was again a stress on the promotion of education in national languages as well as on the generalized teaching of science and technology. It was reported that "many countries had embarked on programmes of integrated science at the primary level and that there had been attempts to relate science curricula to the environment and to emphasize pre-vocational skills.

There was also evidence that, by 1982, large-scale curriculum renewal had become an important undertaking in the region, as

"The renewal schemes had involved most of the countries in a re-examination of educational curricula at all level. Many had established curriculum development centres as well as centres for the design of materials. Some countries had also set up educational materials resource centres" (para.57 of the Harare Report).
The concern of the Harare conference for curriculum renewal at all levels of education is best illustrated by the concern of delegates with issues relating to science and technology education. Here, the overall curriculum goals were seen as the mastery and use of science and technology for the attainment of endogenous economic, social and cultural development. It was recommended that African Member States promote a policy of national mobilization for science and technology involving:

* **at the basic education level:** (a) integrated science and technology on a wide scale, (b) creating a favourable environment for curriculum development, and (c) training teachers to cope with science at the basic education level.

* **in non-formal education:** "the establishment of community centres for the dissemination of scientific and technological knowledge";

* **in upper secondary education:** a diversified curricula, emphasizing (a) technical-vocational subjects "in accordance with national development needs", (b) "creative activities geared to production";

* **in higher education:** inter-disciplinary approaches to science and technology teaching and learning.

The Harare Declaration adopted at the end of the conference also gave some prominence to the "renewal of educational content on a wide scale". This should involve:

* **promoting a "more thorough knowledge of social and humanitarian realities through a wide-range of curricular activities";**

* **according appropriate status (in the curriculum) to "the African cultural heritage and traditional values that hold potential for the future and for progress"**

* **development of African languages for use in education and the production of appropriate materials for that purpose;**

* **making education more relevant to life and the world of work;**

* **speeding up the expansion of technical, vocational and agricultural education.**

One inference that can be drawn from the report of the Harare conference is that the participants re-affirmed the commitments and reiterated the recommendations of the four preceding conferences. Everywhere (including the area of curriculum), there was an insistence that the problems identified at the Addis Ababa conference of 1961 still remained largely unsolved (by 1982) and therefore required more intensive action.

**The Dakar Conference**

The latest in series of MINEDAF Conferences was held in Dakar in 1991. Coming closely after the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All, the conference appropriately devoted its attention to the "promotion of literacy and basic education: strategies for the 1980s". Within the context
of this overall theme, the Dakar conference gave due prominence to curriculum issues.

Thus, experience was exchanged during the deliberations on the promotion of African languages (as a means of making the curriculum more relevant to the cultural environment), the promotion of science and technology as "an absolute necessity at all levels" (of education). Curriculum issues were also dealt with when the conference discussed the quality dimensions of basic education as "universalisation of education and successful learning outcomes were considered as twin issues". It was accordingly recommended that African States should improve teaching and learning conditions ..., methods, content and teaching aids...".

The Dakar conference again saw African languages as a useful curriculum tool which "should no longer be confined to the first two years of primary school but should be extended without limit right up to the highest level and make its impact felt in all spheres of everyday public and political life".

In suggesting education strategies for the 1990s, the Dakar conference recommended "improvement of the quality of basic education, with special emphasis on improving teacher training and learning outcomes. It also recommended "greater interaction of learners with their environment and more effective participation in development through the acquisition of knowledge and the development of appropriate skills and attitudes.

The conference went on further to suggest (in the context of a long-term regional plan of action for basic education for all), the promotion of regional cooperation in the following curriculum related areas:
- the strengthening of capabilities for evaluating the quality of education
- enhancing capacities for the production of and increasing the availability of teaching and learning materials for basic education, particularly in the African languages
- the training and further training of teachers to enable them to provide high quality teaching suited to the needs of different types of learners (Recommendation N_2 of MINEDAF VI).

It can be seen therefore that in the process of UNESCO's action over the years (through six ministerial conferences on education) aimed at promoting regional cooperation for the reform of education in Africa, due attention was paid to curriculum issues. In the process, deliberations focussed on curriculum objectives (as part of overall, new educational objectives), curriculum content (particularly its adaptation to changing needs), teachers and teaching methods, curriculum materials, and diversification of curricula to offer opportunities for science, technology and technical/vocational skills. Attention was also focused on capacity and institutional building in the area of curriculum development, and more particularly (and with a great deal of insistence) the use of African languages as a curriculum tool.

Educational and curriculum thought have certainly evolved in Africa since the 1960s and UNESCO has been in the forefront of mobilising this
through for educational (and particularly) curriculum reform in the region. In addition to promoting thinking (i.e. exchange of information, views and experiences), UNESCO has also been involved in curriculum-related action in the areas identified by the MINEDAF conferences. The contribution forms the subject of the subsequent sections of this paper.

UNESCO'S ROLE IN CAPACITY AND INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING FOR CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

One important feature of UNESCO's mode of intervention is that it can act directly or indirectly in promoting development and international cooperation in its area of competence. When intervening directly, UNESCO usually finances or supervises the development of ideas and their execution. When acting indirectly, the Organisation would provide intellectual support through its staff, its documentary and information resources, its contact with donor agencies and scientific/intellectual institutions to the conceptualisation and the execution of a developmental project. In the area of concern to this section, UNESCO has also acted both ways in Africa.

Capacity Building

The development and work of the African Curriculum Organisation is the major case of UNESCO intervening indirectly. As was seen in the previous section, the Nairobi conference of 1964 urged African countries to set up national curriculum centres, the Abidjan conference of 1968 urged African countries to evolve a regional mechanism for cooperation in curriculum development, while the Lagos conference of 1986, gave its blessing to the creation of an African Curriculum Organisation.

Activities leading to the creation of the ACO really began at a conference organized in Granna (Sweden) in 1971, by the International Curriculum Organisation (ICO). There, it was decided that similar conference be held in every region of the world. The African regional conference (organized by UNESCO, the German Foundation (DSE) and other international bodies) was held at the Ghana Institute of Public Administration (GIMPA) in 1976. At the end of the conference, participants resolved to form an African Curriculum Organisation.

At a workshop sponsored by DSE (and with the technical cooperation of UNESCO) in Ibadan (Nigeria) in 1976, the ACO was formally inaugurated, with its secretariat at the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan. ACO was a grouping of national curriculum centres. It began with 13 member institutions in 1976, and by 1983 had involved 22 African countries in its activities.

The major objectives of the ACO were (a) capacity building within African countries in systematic curriculum development, (b) promotion of inter-African and international cooperation in curriculum development. The emphasis on systematic curriculum development here is important.
Most of the work labelled "curriculum renewal" in the years immediately following the attainment of independence involved revisions of the syllabuses of school subjects, each taken in isolation. By the time national curriculum development centres were created in the 1970s, however, they were expected to translate the general goals of educational reform into tangible and desirable changes in curriculum (i.e. deriving operational objectives of the end-results of school teaching and learning, developing content, materials, and methods to achieve such objectives). Thus, curriculum renewal was expected to be both systematic (done on a step-by-step basis), holistic (covering the entire teaching-learning environment) and also systemic (each activity closely related to, dependent upon, and leading to the other). African countries needed the manpower to handle these tasks and ACO was intended to help in training the key personnel and associates of national curriculum centres, which in turn were expected to train nationals.

ACO's capacity-building initiative took the form of short and long-term practice-oriented courses relating first to general and later to specific issues on curriculum development. From 1976 to 1984, it ran the following short-term courses, each of three weeks duration:

i. Techniques of data collection and analysis of curriculum development (Ibadan, Nigeria, 1976)

ii. Techniques of curriculum development (Dar es Salam, Tanzania, 1977)


v. Curriculum for Early Childhood Education (Nairobi, Kenya 1979)


vii. Curriculum for primary science (Maseru, Lesotho, 1991)

viii. Curriculum Material Production (Ibadan, Nigeria, 1983 and Domasi, Malawi, 1984)

The topic for each course was chosen after a training needs survey of member curriculum centres. A relatively broad training needs survey (carried on in 1977/78) helped in the development of the ACO/DSE Training Programme in Curriculum Development based in Nairobi-Kenya. The course was in three phases (preparatory - residential - practical work/dissertation) and was based in the Kenya Institute of Education (an active curriculum centre at the time) and certified by Kenyatta University in Nairobi. After a decade of its existence, the course gave rise to the Centre for Curriculum Studies in Africa, now an integral part of Kenyatta University.

Capacity-building "à l'ACO" took a variety of forms. Since the formal training courses were practice oriented, it was possible for trainees to apply new knowledge directly in their work situations. Secondly, the participants included not only employees but also associates of curriculum centres (i.e. members of subject panels, usually teachers and other education sector personnel). Therefore, it was possible for the participating countries to build up pools of expertise in various aspects of curriculum development. Third, the practical aspects of the training programmes were preceded by
state-of-the-art exchanges among participating countries, as well as exhibitions of curriculum guidelines, national workshop reports, and curriculum materials.

Every training activity of ACO was in itself a process of learning by doing. With the Nairobi-based three-phase course in particular, ACO leaders themselves went through the processes of systematic curriculum development. After a needs analysis survey, they sat down with international experts to design the training programme. A writing workshop was then organised to develop materials for the teaching of the course. The course was run for three years and evaluated by a team of outside experts. It was then revised and has since then evolved to respond in different ways to the changing needs of Member States.

ACO from 1976, became part of the 12-month Master of Education (M. Ed) programme in Educational Evaluation of the University of Ibadan. For the next ten years, African curriculum centre personnel were sponsored to this course by DSE.

The purpose of this section has not been to assess the impact of the ACO, but to identify the role of UNESCO in its creation and development. UNESCO was a co-sponsor of the GIMP A workshop which gave rise to the creation of ACO. At the workshop UNESCO personnel from IIEP, the Education Sector in Paris and BREDA in Dakar were present as resource persons, to lead activities and to make information on other experiences available to Africans. UNESCO continued in this way in subsequent training activities of ACO. The staff of the Organisation did whatever they could to place the training workshops of ACO in the wider perspective of overall educational reform in Africa. This was done through constant reference to the major conclusions of the 1961 conference of Addis-Ababa and how these have re-echoed in subsequent ministerial conferences.

UNESCO also recognised the ACO early in its existence as an NGO Category C (mutual exchange of information). Information from UNESCO sources did help to enrich the work of ACO by exposing the Organisation to other (i.e. non-African) sources. ACO started as a mainly anglophone organisation, but UNESCO helped in linking it with the francophone world in a number of ways, and by 1980 Congo and Guinea Bissau had become full members of the Organisation while Senegal, Burkina-Faso, Rwanda, Burundi and Mali had participated in some of its training activities.

In 1978, UNESCO associated ACO with its first training programme in systematic curriculum development for francophones and lusophones, held in its Regional Office in Dakar, Senegal. In addition to being a co-financier, the mobiliser of resources and the major channel of inter-regional cooperation for the workshop, UNESCO personnel contributed to giving the desired orientation to the activities of the workshop.

Thus, the opening presentation by Aimée Mambou GNALI (then a staff member of BREDA) stressed the need for African countries the structures needed for curriculum reform. Existing structures varied in nature and level of autonomy from one country to another. These structures were also at varying levels of involvement in curriculum development work: merely sketching out new curriculum plans (São Tomé and Principe), trying out
new curricula (Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina-Faso) generalisation of new ideas (Bénin).

In terms of technical competences the existing structures were staffed largely by teachers and other educators. That is the main reason the countries concerned (as revealed in a UNESCO survey of 1977) asked for the need to train, as a matter of urgency, a corps of persons with the skills necessary to "initiate, promote and see through innovations in matters related to curriculum development".7

The three-week intensive workshop dwelt on situational analysis, the formulations of curriculum objectives, evaluation, and linking the school with its immediate environment. UNESCO-BREDA felt that a more practice-oriented training programme was needed and this was organised in Dakar in 1982.

The 1982 workshop relied mainly on anglo-saxon literature on curriculum development and strove to draw examples from on-going work by ACO. Orhtodox curriculum themes were treated: situational analysis, formulation of objectives at different levels, selection and organisation of content, approaches to curriculum organisation (single discipline, integration approach, etc), selection of methods, selection/development/adaptation of materials, curriculum implementation, evaluation etc. Participants were "enthused", according to the BREDA annual report of 1982 and the training activity was expected to continue at the national level. For a variety of reasons (frequent changes in structures and personnel, financial difficulties, etc) national workshops of this nature have not been generalised. UNESCO has however built in curriculum-related training activities in other forms, as can be seen in the sections that follow.

**Institutional Building.**

For systematic curriculum development to take place, both competent persons and functional institutional frameworks are needed. UNESCO has contributed to developing capacity (in terms of both personnel and institutions) for curriculum reform in Africa. Institutional building has involved (a) the development of national curriculum development centres, and (b) the development of teacher training institutions.

In the first category, there is the example of the Curriculum Development Centre in The Gambia. The Centre was set up with the direct assistance of UNESCO in 1974 and was run by a Chief Technical Adviser (a former Director of Curriculum Development in Zambia) for five years. UNESCO's mandate included the training of a national corps of curriculum specialists, and the development of materials for a new primary curriculum.

Four national counterparts accordingly received on-the-job training in the first phase of the project. This included study tours within and outside Africa, participation in training programmes organised by ACO, and practical work with national curriculum panels. A huge mobilisation exercise, involving teachers, inspectors and teacher trainers took place and
offered learning-on-the-job experience on curriculum development. In addition, Sierra Leonian teachers and curriculum developers shared experience with their Gambian colleagues, in the course of annual summer courses at which materials earlier developed in Sierra Leone served as useful illustrative examples.

The Gambian project resulted in the development of a national primary curriculum guideline and the production of curriculum materials for the early stages of primary education in English, social studies, mathematics and science. What is more important, UNESCO experts were able to hand over the direction of curriculum development of national experts at the end of the project period.

In the francophone countries, UNESCO also helped in building up a good number of IPNs (Instituts Pédagogiques Nationaux), whose functions were similar to the CDCs (Curriculum Development Centres) in the anglophone countries. The leaders of these institutions were the major beneficiaries of the two curriculum workshops organised in Breda (Dakar) in 1978 and 1982. For a wide variety of in-country, sub-regional and regional seminars on curriculum, UNESCO uses the facilities of the IPNs. This has been another means of reinforcing their structures, personnel and facilities.

In addition, UNESCO has directly or indirectly contributed to the development of a good number of IPNs and related institutions, especially as these were also designated as the major support instrument for educational reform. In fact all the IPNs have divisions dealing with curriculum development. In their mandate, they all have to deal with those curriculum issues discussed in successive MINEDAF conferences; the development of African languages, improving learning outcomes, local production of textbooks, etc. INDE (Institute of Educational Development) in Guinea Bissau, for example, was designed (i.e. curriculum, buildings, staffing profiles, etc) with the assistance of UNESCO. With the IPN in Conakry UNESCO’s technical assistance was mainly on strengthening institutional capacity for curriculum material development. The same sort of assistance was given to the INDRAP of Niger, the IPN of Porto-Novo. There is in fact not a single IPN-type institution in Africa which has not received UNESCO’s assistance in one form or the other.

**Teacher Training**

Teachers are crucial as enablers in matters relating to educational development and curricula renewal. This enabling role is not limited to what they are expected to do in the classroom. As the key education personnel in close touch with learners and the immediate community served by the school, teachers can feed in useful information into the decision-making process. As persons ultimately responsible for promoting learning in schools, teachers can contribute in translating curriculum ideas into practicalities. Moreover, in the school and the classroom, teachers are expected to select the right combination of activities, analyse curriculum content and decide on the feasible order and method of its presentations.
and initiate a series of enabling behaviours to ensure that the objectives of a curriculum are achieved. There is therefore no way in which any serious work on curriculum development can exclude the teacher.

For this reason, UNESCO has (in its efforts to support the actions of Member States in curriculum renewal) given considerable assistance to teacher education. At independence, UNESCO (in collaboration with French, Belgian and Canadian bilateral assistance) established Ecoles Normales Supérieures (ENS) in Dakar, Bamako, Conakry, Abidjan, Ouagadougou, Porto-Nov, Niamey, Atakpamé, Yaoundé, Bujumbura, Libreville, Kigali, Antananarivo, N'Djamena, etc. UNESCO's assistance to these institutions has been in the form of (a) fellowships for further training of teacher educators, (b) provision of international experts in different subject disciplines, and in pedagogy, and (c) the supply of laboratory equipment, textbooks and reference materials.

These institutions have since evolved in different ways. Some are still training teachers on a regular basis, while some now train on an ad-hoc basis.

Thirty years after the establishment of the "Ecoles Normales Supérieures", UNESCO has embarked on the evaluation of their impact, with a view to helping Member States to chart new paths of action for them. At a symposium held in Dakar in June, 1993, (under the auspices of UNESCO and bringing together this type of institutions in 14 African countries) it was concluded that the ENS had achieved the quantitative and qualitative targets set for them in the 1960s. It was however felt that a lot more can still be done to (a) ensure greater articulation between theory and practice, and (b) to increase the participation of women in high quality teacher training. It was also recommended that educational research capacity be reinforced in the ENS.

In the anglophone countries of Africa, UNESCO has also been active in creating and nurturing what has become known as colleges of Education. In the early cases (as in the Nigerian institutions in Zaria, Lagos, Abraka and Owerri) the objective was the training of a sufficient number and quality of teachers for the lower secondary school, the development of material resource centres, and the strengthening of capacity for in-service teacher education. UNESCO's support came in the form of the provision of experts, fellowships, equipment and textbooks, as was the case with the francophone ENS. In the case of Abraka, a science curriculum development centre was created with UNESCO support. At a later stage, in the 1970s and 1980s, UNESCO's support to teacher education was closely linked to overall educational and curriculum reform. Thus, the Colleges of Education in Port-Harcourt and Uyo (in Nigeria) the teacher education programmes were in support of the qualitative improvement of the entire primary education sector. Port-Harcourt infact became the focal point for the Rivers State Curriculum Material project. Between 1972 and 1980 the project produced materials in science, social studies, language arts, and mathematics for a 6-year primary education cycle.

UNESCO has also assisted in the strengthening of teacher education at the University level. A good and early example of this was the development of the Faculty of Education of the University of Nairobi which ran from 1968
to 1976. By this date at which an evaluation report of the project had shown the following:

i. quantative targets (aimed at meeting the rapid expansion in Kenya's educational system) was "well on the way to being achieved" as 1069 graduates from the project were already working in schools;

ii. intake was "particularly low" in Mathematics and Science;

iii. a full fledged faculty of education had been created in the University of Nairobi;

iv. 14 of the 32 "highly qualified" nationals on the staff of the faculty had benefitted from UNESCO's fellowships for further training.

A combination of inputs from UNESCO, other international agencies, and particularly the Kenyan government had (by 1976) made the Faculty of "comparable standard with similar institutions elsewhere".8

UNESCO's support to teacher education in Africa also covers in-service education. It is within this context that UNESCO was instrumental in establishing the National Teachers' Institute (NTI), in Kaduna, Nigeria. The Institute was intended to up-grade serving primary school teachers, through distance-learning methods. UNESCO experts carried out surveys of the training needs of underqualified teachers, developed training modules, and trained Nigerian counterparts between 1971 and 1976, when the Institute was fully absorbed into the national teacher education system.

Togo's DIFOP (Direction de la Formation Permanente et de l'Action et Recherche Pédagogique) was established to "raise the level of general education of serving teachers". UNESCO assisted the institution from 1984 to 1990, providing international experts for the development of its programmes and offering fellowships for the further training of personnel. DIFOP also became (under UNESCO sponsorship) the theatre for extending UNESCO's earlier (1978, 1982) francophone regional workshops on systematic curriculum development. The present writer conducted two of such workshops (one for primary school inspectors and another for secondary level inspectors), as a UNESCO consultant, in 1987. A follow-up workshop was held before the end of UNESCO's formal support in 1990.

In Namibia, UNESCO has been the executing agency for a UNDP financed project NAM/92/005 "Curriculum Development and Training for In-Service Teacher Education". Launched in December, 1992, the project had (by August, 1993) reported to be "contributing significantly to institutional capacity building and human resource development in the teacher education sub-sector".

"Some 348 Namibians have so far been trained: 32 to implement in-service teacher education policy, 30 teachers to use English for classroom communication, 26 teachers and college lecturers in curriculum development skills for teacher education and 240 teacher educators and in-service teachers in micro-teaching techniques."
UNESCO's ROLE IN CURRICULUM ENRICHMENT

By "curriculum enrichment" is meant any action designed to improve the quality of any given aspect of the total curriculum spectrum: objectives, content, methods, material. Enrichment can be a modification of what used to happen, an addition of new dimensions to existing practices and packages, or the use of a different set of tools to achieve the objectives of a new curriculum. In the context of UNESCO's curriculum-promotion work in the African region curriculum enrichment is manifest in the following:

i. changing the profile of the teacher;
ii. renewal of science and technology education;
iii. the use of African languages in education; and
iv. the promotion of functional literacy.

Changing the Profile of the Teacher

In a couple of cases (Uganda and Sierra Leone) UNESCO executed projects aimed at influencing curriculum renewal by training teachers to become polyvalent development agents. In both cases the intention was to link the school closer to its community. This entails first of all ensuring closer articulation between the school and other sectors like health, agriculture, public works, and the major productive activities of the community. The teacher was then expected to be someone who can teach in the classroom, mobilise community skills and resources to enrich school learning, and work in concert with development agents in sectors other than Education.

The Ugandan experiment (The Namutamba Project) which ran throughout the 1970s, attempted to use the school curriculum as the focal point for the promotion of rural development. Much of the formal studies was done outside the school and the community, among whom the child learnt was expected to consider the school as a resource centre. Normal schooling operated a single morning session of five hours while the afternoon was spent on a variety of projects: brick-making, home gardening, apprenticeships in various forms, and also written assignments, athletics, and cultural activities. School buildings were used for a variety of adult education and community development programmes, and teachers were themselves active participants in communal projects.

In the Sierra Leone case, the Bunumbu project began in 1978 and ran through to the 1990s going through various phases over the period. Its aim was to develop a rural-based primary school curriculum. Work-oriented, modular instructional materials were developed to facilitate learning. International curriculum experts (provided by UNESCO) were responsible for the initial training of Sierra Leonian teacher trainers and curriculum developers. New syllabus were developed to take account of the curricular vision expounded by Bunumbu. A 1982 comprehensive
evaluation of the project showed a "positive trend in the appropriateness of the instructional units for pupils and teachers".

Village/community school interaction was the core of the Bunumbu project and the teacher education programme in Bunumbu teachers' college had to take this into account. Thus, the college worked in close collaboration with surrounding community education centres, craftsmen and women, farmers, heads of households and entire village communities. Children and teachers in the pilot schools also worked with village communities on a variety of productive activities. Local resources, in terms of craftsmanship and farming skills, were also fed into school activities, to create an interactive and mutually supporting resource chain.

The chain was intended as a response to government desire for an "integrated approach to social development... involving the rural population in a total transformation of the (Bunumbu) College into a community college". For this reason, Bunumbu created community development councils, whose functions have been to (a) identify community problems, and (b) mobilize the citizens for participation in community development programmes.

One important point about both Bunumbu and Namutamba is that the process of teacher training was used at the same time as a process of curriculum development. In developing programmes to give the teacher a new profile, the new projects involved practising teachers, local people, and various categories of development agents in deciding on the content and orientation of school programmes. Both projects were based in existing teacher training institutions which then worked with a cluster of pilot schools. In the case of Bunumbu, later phases of the project involved dissemination to other primary teachers' institutions. Bunumbu curriculum materials in fact became a model which was later disseminated (in terms of its processes and its products) nation-wide.

Renewal of Science and Technology Education

It will be recalled that successive MINEDAF conferences made recommendations on the improvement of science and technology in the African school curriculum. The improvement was expected in the directions of (a) making science and technology accessible to learners in all levels of education, (b) making science and technology teaching and learning relevant to the needs of Member States, (c) training teachers appropriately for inculcating scientific and technological knowledge and related behaviour, and (d) improving African capacity for the development of materials for the promotion of science and technology.

The Harare conference of 1982 specifically recommended the creation by UNESCO of a regional consultative committee on the renovation of science and technology education in Africa. This was created in 1984 and its membership, drawn from all the sub-regions of sub-saharan Africa, is composed of research scientists, engineers, and technologists, science educators, teacher trainers and inspectors. This is considered as acrop of
persons who have the relevant experience in the promotion of science and technology education and who are in a position to influence curriculum development policy and practices in African Member States.

In the six sessions of the Committee, held between 1984 and 1993, intensive work was done on the following:

i. integrated science teaching and learning
ii. indigenous technology in the school curriculum
iii. informatics as an integral part of science and technology education
iv. environmental education
v. the place of research in science and technology education
vi. science and technology as an integral part of basic education for all.

Individual members of the Committee have undertaken national surveys in these areas.

After a review of its own work (at the end of its 6th session in May 1993), the Committee decided on the following as its future lines of action:

i. giving a push to the teaching and learning of integrated science and particularly promoting anglo-francoophone exchanges of experience in this area;
ii. undertaking a state-of-the-art study of environmental education in Africa;
iii. publication of an annotated bibliography of materials, books, journal articles, etc., on the teaching and learning of science and technology;
iv. participation in country and sub-regional activities organized by UNESCO
v. promote a general science and technology culture in Africa within the framework of the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All and UNESCO's science 2000+ programme.

A very important aspect of the work of the Committee is the way its recommendations have over the years influenced the activities of UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in Africa (BRED). Thus, BRED activities from 1985 to 1992 have dwelt on such topics as (a) the popularisation of science, (b) material development for science and technology education, (c) integrated science, (d) mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, and informatics in the secondary school curriculum, (e) teaching of agricultural science, (f) environmental education, (g) laboratory equipment maintenance, (h) promoting the access of women and girls to science and technology education, through science clinics for girls. These activities involved an average of 138 participants per year, and were intended for persons likely to exert some influence on the evolution of science and technology curriculum at the national level.11

The influence of the Committee on the work of UNESCO in the field was acknowledged in an external evaluation report of 1991, which stated:
"...The Committee has evolved productive links with BREDA. We were impressed by the promptitude with which the Committee embarked on its task, by the frequency of its meetings, and particularly by the articulation between its deliberations and the resultant follow-up activities.

"It is clear that the Committee set itself precise objectives... Looking at BREDA's activities in this area (science and technology education), one is struck by the fact that these have been influenced by the recommendations of the Committee. Regional, sub-regional and national workshops are all related to the areas of concern to the Committee".12

It can therefore be rightly claimed that curriculum enrichment in Africa (through the renovation of science and technology teaching and learning) has been influenced to a great extent by UNESCO action. In following through, the recommendations of successive ministerial conferences on the subject, and in carrying out the activities recommended by the Consultative Committee, UNESCO has been able to influence persons capable of initiating and sustaining change at the national level.

UNESCO was also a large contributor to Zimbabwe's famous ZIM-SCI project. This was intended for "non-conventional laboratories". The programme is child-centred, encourages low-cost science equipment and can be managed by untrained and inexperienced teachers. Kits were produced for both teachers and learners and there was a close link between science, the environment, health and agriculture.13 The success of ZIM-SCI encouraged UNESCO to organize workshops designed to disseminate its methods in Eastern, Southern, and Western Africa.

To encourage teachers to produce low-cost science teaching materials, UNESCO helped in creating the National Science Equipment Centre in Lagos, Nigeria. In sub-regional workshops in Nairobi (1987) and Lagos (1989), UNESCO in what was known as EXPO-DIALOGUES, got makers of low-cost science equipment to take science educators through their design and production processes. A similar approach, known as Teachers Teaching Teachers, was used in BREDA's project RAF/87/169 (financed by UNDP) which encouraged inventors of science teaching materials to let other teachers into their methods.

African Languages in Education

This is again a recurring theme in the deliberations and recommendations of successive MINEDAF conferences. The arguments in favour of the use of African languages in education are (a) cultural (the languages are the main vehicles of the culture of the people); (b) psycho-pedagogical (the learner is likely to achieve better results if teaching and learning are carried out in the language the learners knows best, the language of his/her immediate environment; (c) linguistic (the likelihood of promoting the maintenance of African languages and ensuring their
evolution/adaptation to meet the needs of modern socio-economic and scientific/technical discourse).

In keeping with the evolution of curriculum reform activities in Africa, UNESCO's work in promoting the use of African languages has passed through five phases, as follows:

(a) sensitization (in the early years of independence, promoting exchanges on the desirability of using African languages in education and studies of existing experiences, like the use of Kiswahili for basic education in Tanzania);

(b) initial development work (assistance in the development of national policies, development of orthographies, and training of teachers);

(c) material development (assistance to national authorities in training for textbooks and supplementary material development in national languages - materials for literacy and formal basic education);

(d) intensified sensitization (promotion of information exchange on experiences in African countries, intensified training programmes, especially under the auspices of NEIDA - Network of Educational Innovations for Development in Africa);

(e) reinforcement (promotion of instruments designed to reinforce national efforts to promote the development of African languages for use in education: metalanguage, harmonisation of orthographies of transborder languages, and cross translation of creative work in African languages.

The result of these efforts, as shown by a UNESCO survey of 1981-1983 is that 36 (out of 45) African States were using the languages as medium of instruction throughout the primary level, while 19 States were using these languages in secondary education (the languages were even compulsory at this level in 12 States. Some 24 States were teaching their African languages at the University level. Table I summarises the returns from 45 African countries and it is reproduced from a UNESCO 1983 publication on the survey.14

The situation has evolved in different ways since UNESCO's 1981-1983 survey. Some countries have made great strides in the development of their languages and in the promotion of their use in education. Some countries have had to stop their initial bold steps in this regard, and have since had to thread softly. There are still even cases in which teaching and learning in national languages has remained perpetually as experimental projects. Whatever the situation has been, African States seem resolved, as was stated in MINEDAF VI (Dakar 1991) that: "the use of African languages should no longer be confined to the first years of primary school but should be extended without limit right up to the highest level and make its impact felt in all spheres of everyday public and political life".
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Notes: The numbers in the table indicate the number of languages used. Pr, Sec, Univ = primary, secondary and university levels of teaching. M = medium of instruction; S = subject taught; C = compulsory; O = optional; G = Government sponsored.
* Essentially, preliminary research and actions relating to policy. But in the Ivory Coast, also preparation of curricula and materials.
Promotion of Literacy

The elimination of illiteracy has always been a major concern of UNESCO and this has been reflected in its programme-budget and in its activities over the years. In the 1970s, there was the world-wide literacy campaign and in 1984, UNESCO launched in Africa the regional programme on the eradication of illiteracy: This was in keeping with recommendation 2 of the Harare Conference of 1982, which called for the elimination of illiteracy (as the No.1 objective of education in the region) by the year 2000. The regional programme was to promote the joint strategy of universal primary education plus massive promotion of literacy and post-literacy in youths and adults. In doing this, every step was to be taken to link education with other sectors (health, agriculture, rural and urban development), through integrated national action plans.15

The programme involved region-wide intensive activities, emphasizing (a) action research, (b) training of personnel, (c) production and dissemination of didactic materials, and (d) exchange of information. All these have curriculum elements in them, but the only curriculum area of literacy education in which UNESCO has been really active, and influential, in the region, is that of training in didactic material production for literacy, post-literacy and continuing education.

UNESCO mounted 54 intensive training programmes for some 256 national leaders in this specific field between 1984 and 1993. Thirty-four of these were national workshops, 15 were sub-regional and 5 were regional in nature. These workshops were based on the integrated approach emphasized by the regional programme. Thus, all the training workshops involved field visits and participatory research which sought to study the learning needs of rural adult populations in areas ensuring the inter-linkage of education, health, community development, nutrition, etc., paying particular attention to the needs of women.

In addition to the production of basic materials for reading and arithmetic, these training workshops dwelt on materials for the reinforcement of literacy skills (i.e. post-literacy) and the development of skills for continuous self-improvement (i.e. continuing education). Integrated into the reading materials were development-related issues, like civic education, health, agriculture, population, and the environment. In all cases, 'women in development' has also been a major concern.

Each workshop produced prototypes of print materials, during small group working sessions. Considerable work has also been done in the area of the rural press and on non-print materials, especially popular theatre. What is more, the emphasis in all these training workshops has been on the production of materials in African languages.

The important point here is that UNESCO has helped in building up national capacity for material production for the promotion of literacy and post-literacy. This is seen in the sheer number of persons trained and the variety of materials produced within the region. An on-going project of UNESCO "Improvement of Basic Education in francophone countries of the
Sahel" has within the past two years (1991-1993) produced a wide variety of materials, as follows:

(i) **Burkina Faso:** Moore language vocabulary book (75,000 copies)
    Arithmetic booklet (150,000 copies)

(ii) **Mali:**
    New edition of reader in two languages (6000 copies)
    Arithmetic booklet in two languages (6,000 copies)
    Journal for neo-literates (2000 copies)
    New edition of post-literacy reading materials (13,000 copies)

(iii) **Mauritania:**
    Writing and reading booklet (15,000 copies)
    Arithmetic (6,000 copies)
    Civic education (11,700 copies)
    Literacy teachers' guide (3,000 copies)

(iv) **Niger:**
    Reading and writing booklet (40,000 copies)
    Arithmetic (40,000 copies)
    Instructors' guide (12,000 copies)
    Post-literacy reader (54,500 copies)

(v) **Senegal**
    Instructors' Guide (1,000 copies)
    Arithmetic (1000 copies)
    Vocabulary book in different languages (24,000 copies)

(vi) **Tchad**
    Reading material in French (10,000 copies)
    Reading material in Arabic (10,000 copies)
    Material on the Environment (20,000 copies) and Health (20,000 copies)

**CONCLUSIONS**

This paper is not intended as an exhaustive listing of UNESCO's activities in promoting curriculum renewal in the Africa region. The emphasis has been rather on the guiding principles of UNESCO's action in this domain and on the extent of the influence of the push given by the Organisation. Curriculum renewal has been considered as an integral part of overall educational reform, which in its turn is seen as an integral part of the nation-building activities of African Member States since the attainment of independence in the 1950s.

Within the context of its mandate, and within the limit of its resources, UNESCO has been able to influence curriculum renewal in Africa through its periodic ministerial conferences on African education (1961, 1964, 1968, 1976, 1982, and 1991).

UNESCO has also, in collaboration with its partners, helped in building national capacity (in terms of institutions and personnel) in various areas related to curriculum development: the nurturing of national curriculum centres, support to inter-African specialised organisations and institutions, giving impetus to curriculum enrichment (improved science and technology teaching, promotion of African languages, teacher education, etc.)
The Africa region is today replete with national curriculum development centres and "Instituts Pedagogiques Nationaux", staffed by African nationals, developing national curricula and developing nation-specific curriculum materials. The teacher training institutions, created and nurtured by UNESCO, have also played their role in training the enablers of curriculum change. What is more, UNESCO (as it has done in other fields) been a vehicle for inter-African and inter-regional cooperation for the exchange of knowledge, skills, and experience in matters relating to curriculum renewal. Africa still has a lot of problems to tackle in the field of education, and a major aspect of these problems is the curriculum. At the same time, some progress has been made since the 1960s. This paper has been an attempt to present UNESCO's contribution to that progress.
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