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**NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

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I.	CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK . . . . .	1
II.	THE CHANGING ROLE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT . . . . .	7
	A. DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION . . . . .	10
	B. ROLE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT . . . . .	12
	(a) Providing the Population with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet basic needs . . .	12
	(b) Structural Change and Trans- formation . . . . .	15
	(c) Linking Non-Formal Education with National Development goals . . . .	18
	(i) Literacy and Economic Activities . .	20
	(ii) Popular Participation in Development . . . . .	22
	(iii) Women in Development . . . . .	25
	(iv) Education for All and its Implications for Development . . . .	27
III.	NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1990S . . . . .	29
	(1) Investing in Human Capital . . . . .	30
	(2) Transforming Traditional Agriculture . . . . .	32
	(3) Training in New Skills and Knowledge . . . . .	34
IV	CONCLUSION: THE WAY FORWARD . . . . .	37
	REFERENCE . . . . .	41

## I.CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

The concept of " development" like that of "freedom" is shrouded with difficulties and complexities. To some, development is not easily defined because of what it connotes in as far as it is dependent upon the particular setting, environment or context in which it occurs or is defined. To others, development implies change, and this is one sense in which the term development is used i.e. to describe the process of economic and social transformation within countries. Such a process often follows a well-ordered sequence of events and exhibits what may be called common characteristics across countries. And to those who consider development as an objective of policy, the central question

asked is: "Development for what?" Let us examine this a little further.

A few years ago, the concept of development defined in the sense of an objective or the desired state of affairs, was considered appropriate in terms of growth rates(social or economic) and took little account of the beneficiaries of growth or of the composition of output. In this regard, it has to be emphasized that societies are not indifferent to the distributional consequences of economic policy; nor to the type of output which is produced; or to the economic environment in which it is produced. For societies then, development may simply mean the widening of an effective area of choice open to individuals as to how they spend their daily lives; how they pursue their objectives and promote their various types of culture and activities. This, however, may not

be an adequate definition of development. Therefore a more acceptable definition of development is required to embrace all the major economic, social and political objectives and values that societies strive for; a task which has proved elusive over the years.

The best attempt at such a comprehensive definition, appears to have been provided by Goulet who distinguished three basic components or core values of development viz: "life sustenance; self esteem; and freedom"<sup>1/</sup>

Goulet pointed out that life sustenance is concerned with the provision of basic needs in as far as a country cannot be said to be fully developed if it cannot provide all its people with such basic needs as housing , clothing, food, water and minimal education. In this regard, a major development objective is often expressed as the need to raise the lives of people out of primary poverty and at the same time provide for basic needs.

Secondly, self esteem is concerned with the feeling of self-respect and independence because a country which is exploited by others and does not have the power and influence to conduct relations on equal terms cannot be fully developed. Therefore developing countries seek development for self-esteem so as to eradicate the feeling of dominance and dependence which is often associated with inferior economic status. It is hard to hold self-esteem in the midst of poverty.

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<sup>1/</sup> D. Goulet: The cruel Choice: A New Concept on the Theory of Development, Athenaeum, New York, 1971.

Thirdly, freedom refers to freedom from the evils of "want, hunger, disease and ignorance" so that people are able to determine their own destiny. A person is not free if he/she cannot choose; and if he/she is imprisoned by living on the margin of subsistence and poverty with no education and no skills for productive use. It is therefore to be emphasized that the advantage of material development is that it tends to expand the range of human choice open to individuals and societies at large.

If this definition of development by Goulet is accepted, we can then address the question asked earlier: "Development for What?". A possible answer would be that "development has occurred when there has been an improvement in basic needs; when economic progress has contributed to a greater sense of self-esteem for the country and the individual within it; and when material choice has expanded the range of choice for individuals. The fact that many of these ingredients of development are not measurable does not detract from their importance: the condition of being developed is as much a state of mind as a physical condition measurable by economic indices".<sup>2/</sup>

This concept of development, i.e. concern for the welfare of people, as has been argued by the ECA is not simply rooted in "the humanistic and altruistic aspects of development. It is predicted above all on the rational proposition that development has to be engineered and sustained by the people themselves through their full and active participation. Development should

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<sup>2/</sup> A.P. Thirlwall- Growth and Development with Special Reference to Developing Economies, Macmillan Education, Ltd, London, 1987. p.9.

not be undertaken on behalf of a people; rather it should be the organic outcome of a society's value system, its perceptive, its concerns and its endeavours. As such, to achieve and sustain development, it is necessary to ensure the education and training, health, well-being and vitality of the people so that they can participate fully and effectively in the development process.<sup>3/</sup>

In emphasizing the necessity of education and training to achieve and sustain development, the indelible link between education and development is brought into focus, even for those people who argue that such a link is neither immediately apparent nor is it self-evident. The fact that the problems of social, economic and political development have not been solved by the magic of education should not deter us from examining the link between education and development with the African context. Rather we should not be carried away by our unrealistic expectations of what education can accomplish on its own, or because of our failures to re-orient education and its curricula to the changing needs of societies and national development. In essence however, human learning is the focal point of all development. And as was pointed out by the World Bank:

"At bottom what is meant by development is a process of enabling people accomplish things that they could not do before; that is, to learn to apply information, attitudes, values and skills previously unavailable to them. Learning is not usually enough by itself.

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<sup>3/</sup> ECA - African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) ECA, Addis Ababa, E/ECA/CM.15/6/Rev.3 p.11

Most aspects of development require investment and technical processes. But capital and technology are inert without human knowledge and effort. In this sense, human learning is central to development"4/

This quotation helps to underscore the point that education is a major input in national development i.e. the skills, attitudes, knowledge and values are major resource inputs in development. Such human resource inputs are the products of formal and non-formal education. Our concern here is with the latter i.e. non-formal education. However, one weakness of non-formal education is that it is not easily defined vis-a-vis formal education or adult education. To those who question the functional value of formal education systems, the attractions of non-formal education are self-evident; and to those steeped in the methods of formal education, non-formal education appears inchoate and unimportant. Be it as it may, it is important at this juncture to draw a distinction between non-formal education and informal education.

According to Coombs and others, non-formal education may be defined as " any or organized educational activity outside the established, formal system - whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives".5/ And

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4/ The World Bank - Report of the External Advisory Panel on Education to the World Bank, Washington DC, 31 October, 1978 p.4

5/ P.H. Coombs et al, New Paths to Learning for Rural Children and Youth , International Council for Education Development, New York, 1972 pp 10-11.

according to Lowe, informal education means the truly lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his/her environment from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the market-place, the library and the mass media etc".6/

Given the definition of non-formal education above, it is to be observed that non-formal education has acquired focus due to vocational considerations. In this regard, it has become "roughly synonymous with the more easily used term of out-of-school education so that its use is closer to the concept of training (e.g. for employment) than the concept of education (which often includes broader aspects of personal development "7/ Indeed the need for vocational considerations and the closeness of non-formal education to training for employment or productive life make it imperative for us to examine in greater detail, the link between development and non- formal education.

The analysis therefore will focus on: the changing role of non-formal education in national development; the role of no -formal education in the training of youth, illiterates, school leavers and drop-outs women and adults in training for small enterprises, entrepreneurship, community, social work and rural

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6/ John Lowe - The Education of Adults: A World perspective, UNESCO, OISE Press, Paris 1982 p.24.

7/ J.R. Sheffield & V.P. Diejomoch - Non-Formal Education in African Development, New York, 1972 p.11



development; and how formal schooling can be combined with the practical experience of non-formal education.

## II. THE CHANGING ROLE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Since development is concerned with people, the role of non-formal education is constantly changing because what appears to be appropriate and beautiful sooner or later becomes inappropriate and out of tune with the changing times and changing concept of development. In both industrialized and developing countries, non-formal education has been charged with three main tasks.

First, it has been responsible for preparing the pre-school children through nursery and kindergarten schools, day-care centres and children's television programmes for formal education. Secondly, it has been used for providing a diversified role of following up the unfinished business of the school or providing continuing or further education. Thirdly, it has been used as a complement to formal schooling in providing extra-curricular learning experiences for those in schools through various sports, cultural and other activities.<sup>8/</sup>

These are the traditional roles of non-formal education which appear inappropriate in contending with the changing forces of our time; and as postman nicely put it:

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<sup>8/</sup> P.H. Coombs et al - New Paths to Learning for Rural children and Youth op. cited pp 25-26.

"The plain fact is that too much change, too fast, for too long has the effect of making social institutions useless and individuals perpetually unfit to live among conditions of their own culture".<sup>9/</sup>

In this regard the many and fast changes taking place in Africa (economic, social, cultural, political and technological) have made non-formal education as a social institution less effective rather than useless because it has not been fast enough in adapting to the changes going on. Much as one may talk about the changing role of non-formal education in African countries, the aims of non-formal education remain very much unchanged viz:

- to provide training needs in literacy, numeracy, skills and attitudes which will enhance self-reliance, self-development and self fulfilment;
- to provide instruction and for equipping the clientele with the right knowledge, skills and attitudes for productive activities and income generation and to improve the technical, vocational and ministrative and managerial performance of those in salaried or self employment;
- to encourage and promote programmes which enhance the development of national, cultural

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<sup>9/</sup> N. Postman - Teaching as a conservative Activity, Dell Publishing Co, New York, 1979.

and social activities so as to reinforce and enrich socio-economic life; and

- to foster a linkage between formal and non-formal education so that the two systems complement and supplement each other in the development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes.

In pursuance of these aims, the changing role of non-formal education should be examined with regard to its effectiveness as:

- (i) a means of training and equipping individuals especially the school learners, dropout, out of-school youth , adults, women, illiterates etc with knowledge, skills and attitudes for a productive life;
- (ii) a means of gaining, improving and upgrading the knowledge and skills of those out-school youths, women, adults etc who are working or self employed and need to improve their knowledge or skills;
- (iii) an extension of formal education for those who lack the opportunity to acquire further knowledge or need some kind of formal education qualifications; and
- (iv) as a means of providing development education to ensure the existence of the necessary mental climate to content with the ultra-rapid changes taking place in Africa. This is

probably the most important function of non-formal education to-day. We will examine this role in some detail as all other seem to follow from this one;

#### A. DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

Development education refers first and foremost to knowledge, skills and attitudes, all of which have to be taught. Development education is basically a learning process on how to live a productive life in a rapidly shrinking world with instant global communications; rising population densities, rising material expectations, powerful technological changes, rising ecological degradation, deteriorating socio-economic conditions; frequent disasters of famine, hunger, disease, floods, earthquakes; and political strife, civil wars and coup d'états. All of these require that people should be subjected to development education i.e. helping the whole population to understand the process of change; the implications of change; and the individual's responsibilities in national and self development. A person must understand why he/she should learn new knowledge or skill and for what purpose. Unless a person is aware of the necessity and need to acquire new knowledge and skills for a specific purpose, the motivation to learn will not be there. Therefore development education should be made the focal point of all non-formal education.

Development education means helping people understand the linkage between all things, " a pedagogy of popular participation in change, a change that will promote a more creative type of society, the key words of

which are growing autonomy and solidarity".<sup>10/</sup> Indeed many people feel pessimistic about Africa's future because they are not developmentally educated. There are all sorts of factors: rapid changes, information under/over-dose, pessimism, economic crises, civil strife, breakdown of authority and the democratization process; all of which have led to the most critical, crisis of all:"the crisis in man's interpretation and understanding of what is happening in the world"<sup>11/</sup>

One solution to this crisis of man's interpretation and understanding of what is happening, is the effective use of non- formal education to ensure that the entire population is not reduced to the state of powerlessness, and hopelessness just because they are not well informed about the necessity for change and their participatory role in national development. We talk a great deal about self-development; about the acquisition of knowledge and skills; about the up-grading of skills; about the provision of second chance education; about functional literacy; and about vocational training for the out-of-school youth and drop-outs. But how much do people know about these opportunities and what is required of them to do? If there is anything more important for non-formal education to do, it is this aspect of development education which permeates in all other functions and roles of non-formal education in the mobilization of human resources.

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<sup>10/</sup> Roger M./ Garrett - edited Education and Development Croom Helm, St. Mauritius Press, London, p.17.

<sup>11/</sup> Roger M. Garrett(ed) Education and Development opt. cited p. 18.

B. ROLE OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN HUMAN RESOURCES  
DEVELOPMENT

In asserting the role of popular participation, the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development , emphasizes the point that "at the heart of Africa's development objectives must lie the ultimate and overriding goal of human-centred development that ensures the overall well-being of the people through sustained improvement in their living standards".<sup>12/</sup> In this regard, it is important at both the level of the people and their organizations to , "promote education, literacy skill training and human resources development as a means of enhancing popular participation", <sup>13/</sup>all of which fall squarely within the role of non- formal education.

Thus the focus in the development of human resources should be primarily concerned with:

(a)Providing the Population with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet basic needs.

While emphasizing the point that the problems relating to human resources are only partially educational, the process of mobilizing human resources should set the parameters within which the educational variables function, taking into account the country's economic situation; the development strategies,

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<sup>12/</sup> ECA - African Charter for Popular Participation in Development, - Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, 12-16 February, 19909 p.18.

<sup>13/</sup> ECA - African Charter for Popular Participation opt.cited p.24

priorities and objectives as well as societal norms and the country's political situation.

Within this context, the main human resource concern would be to ensure that the whole youth population; out-of-school youth, school leavers and dropouts, women and adults as well as illiterates, are provided with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed for the pursuit of productive activities for a meaningful life.

Obviously, a country cannot be expected to develop fully when the majority of its population is illiterate, and the rate of illiteracy continues to increase every year; when the rate of school age children is growing faster than economic growth of the country; and when the majority of the population is trapped in a vicious circle of poverty, disease hunger, under-employment, low productivity, low income, and lack of access to formal schooling.

Formal education systems cannot provide the answers to these mammoth problems. They can only provide a partial response to these problems. Neither can non-formal education with its many programmes provide the needed solutions. But within the context of development education, we are all in the same boat, together. We make it, break it, or fall into the water, together. There are no private parks, homes, paradises and facades in a world where people are deprived of their very existence. In the mist of socio-economic crises, the joy of living in one's own paradise, impervious to the suffering of others, is very much short-lived.

While emphasizing the need to improve the effectiveness of non-formal education in preparing the population(youths, women,adults,out-of-school youth etc) for a productive life, it is also important to point out that the pressure on educational resources and the ever-increasing unsatisfied demand for education have made it imperative to seek new educational approaches to satisfying development needs. While non-formal education is being considered and utilized as one such approach, there are serious short-comings on the part of non-formal education as a means of providing the population with the necessary knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for income generation, self-fulfilment and productive activities. Somehow, the content of non-formal education, its organization, methodology used; practices; the resources attached to it, the policies and the low priority accorded to it cannot realistically help to equip the client population with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes required for employment, household management, family responsibilities, community work and other productive activities in a rapidly changing world threatened by technology, deteriorating social conditions and economic crisis.

Non-formal education, should be accorded due recognition as one of the major instruments for providing the population with knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet basic needs. To this effect, countries should ensure that adequate financial provision is made for the implementation of non-formal education programmes.



(b) Structural Change and Transformation

In proposing a strategic agenda for sustainable growth in Africa in the 1990's, the World Bank emphasized, among other things, that such a strategy should be people-centred and that human resources development and meeting basic needs should constitute top priority.<sup>14/</sup> However, it is being argued that unless there is massive structural transformation in development education and the reward system that accompanies the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes, non-formal education will never be fully accepted by the general populace and will therefore remain no more than a peripheral activity in the field of education.

As the case usually is, people often know when they are better off and when they are worse off, and that whenever they see the opportunity to improve, they will act rationally to improve on their conditions. It is therefore, safe to assume that they will act rationally and want to participate in non-formal education programmes. Experience has shown however that financial benefits and rewards are greater for those with formal education than for individuals with non-formal education qualifications. If this trend is to change, then there is urgent need for structural change of the reward system of many African countries.

Indeed, education in Africa tends to perpetuate the dual income system in as far as those individuals with

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<sup>14/</sup> The World Bank - Sub-saharan Africa - From Crisis to Sustainable Growth, The World Bank, Washington D.C. 1989 pp 14-15.

formal education go for the modern sector of "high income earnings" while those with non-formal education go for the "low income earning sector" as exemplified by participants in agriculture and the informal sectors. Therefore any attempt in substituting formal education with non-formal education runs the risk of fobbing the masses and rural population off non-formal education, instead of increasing their hopes for economic improvement by joining the "high wage" modern sector consequent upon their having obtained good formal education.

The choice therefore is not one of expanding non-formal to make it better; nor is it one of choosing between formal and non-formal education; it is simply one of no choice at all, because some people in Africa have no access to education at all. Many are illiterate, some are denied access to education; and there are those whose educational opportunities and facilities are next to nothing; Much as non-formal education may be the only glimmer of hope for many rural societies, its expansion in the present context of African countries is not likely to be accepted by many rural dwellers as an alternative to formal education; nor is it going to diminish the demand for the latter, so long as the reward systems remain what they are.

The reward system has a major influence on the people's job aspirations of the existence of those occupations with high incomes, and as noted by Alfred Marshall in the 1920's:

"the attractiveness of these jobs increases out of proportions to their aggregate values, and for many job aspirants the prospects of

success becomes greater than the deterrent of failure. The end result is that a large number of those people want to enter those occupations".<sup>15/</sup>

For non-formal education to succeed, its primary objective therefore should not be to lower the occupational aspirations of rural societies wherein the education qualifications obtained pushes their children to earn their living in the low-wage traditional, informal or agricultural sector. Non-formal education will be accepted by rural societies if it is offered concurrently with formal education and leads to some or similar remunerations commensurate with the individual's qualifications, whether obtained through formal or non-formal education.

Non-formal education will become an appropriate instrument for development if its rewards and benefits become as attractive as those of formal education to those who obtain qualifications through it. To do this requires moral commitment and political will on the part of decision makers, leaders, politicians and administrators in whose hands the education of the population falls. There is need for change in the financing of non-formal education, its development and reward system, otherwise it will never become an appropriate instrument for development in Africa.

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<sup>15/</sup> Alfred Marshall - The Wealth of nations quoted explanation in the Commonwealth Secretariat - participation, Learning and change: Commonwealth Approaches to Non-Formal Education, London 1980.

(c) Linking Non-Formal Education with National Development goals

The link between education and development is neither apparent nor is it self-evident, but somehow, the two are intricately intertwined. The intricate relationship ensures that each of them enjoys relative autonomy while bearing in mind that a considerably greater part of development can be attributed to a very wide range of other factors such as education training, health, the environment and rational attitudes to life and work. This realization has made planners and policy makers to shift the models of their planning from concentration upon physical or material investment to what has come to be called the "human-centred development".<sup>16/</sup> With this shift, the human factor consideration have assumed greater importance thereby pushing aside the old economic theories. What can non-formal education do in assisting Africa solve its multi-dimensional socio-economic crisis? Are some of the prescriptions amenable to non-formal education solution ? According to AAF-SAP, some of the major causes of the African socio-economic crisis are :

- (i) very low level of productivity in almost all sectors of the African economy;
- (ii) the social crisis which threatens a systematic collapse of the social fabric especially with respect to education, health, shelter, employment etc;

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<sup>16/</sup> ECA - AAF - SAP opt.cited p.11

- (iii) the crisis caused by unfavourable external economic environment;
- (iv) the crisis of governance and democracy which has marginalized the people and has led to the crisis of confidence between the government and the governed;
- (v) the crisis of economic management;
- (vi) the crisis of effective political unity.

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In analyzing the causes of the African crisis, AAF-SAP points out that the structure of the African economy is the primary underlying cause of its persistent crisis. It is a structure of dependency rather than self-reliance; a structure more import-export oriented rather than production oriented; a structure with a predominance of subsistence activities; a structure with weak institutional capabilities; a large informal sector etc.18/ AAF-SAP endorses the central principle and objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action i.e. the alleviation of poverty and general improvement in the living standards of the people; increased production through expanded and diversified productive capacities; and self-reliance, both national and collective.19/

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17/ ECA - AAF-SAP - a Popular Version opt.cit pp 2-3

18/ ECA - AAF-SAP - a Popular Version opt. cit.

19/ ECA AAF-SAP - a popular version opt, cited p.7

How much can non-formal education help in solving these problems of the African continent when its own institutions are very weak? Whether we like it or not, non-formal education, particularly literacy and adult education, helps societies adjust to the interaction of social and technological changes. Change in Africa is too rapid, complex and irreversible, and no society, no matter how rural it is, can escape the consequences of technological development. Since societies cannot stand still nor can they afford to change abruptly, they have to find a way of dealing with constant changes and emergencies. They must develop the kind of men who can stand on their own feet in time of crisis; men who can weave their way through new environments; men who can face new challenges with determination; and indeed men who have the future in their blood and bones and not in their flesh sitting on their pants. Non-formal education can play a major role in producing men of this type. We will thus examine the linkage of non-formal education to national development goals as regards:

- literacy and economic activities;
- women in development;
- development education in respect of technology and democracy

(i) Literacy and Economic Activities

Much has been written about the contribution of education to economic growth which has been reported to be quite significant in developing countries. It is emphasized that countries with the fastest rate of economic growth have higher rates of literacy than other

countries at the same income level.<sup>20/</sup> There is no doubt that it is worth-while investing in human beings because non- formal education can prove very useful for:

- planning and preparatory stages of development activities;

- operational and managerial requirements; and

- planning and operational stages of developmental activities.

At the planning and preparatory stages, economic planners and decision makers need to utilize the wisdom of the villager, men or women. But the African villager in many cases is illiterate. Much as the villager can communicate verbally, tapping on the wisdom of the villager requires personal contact and where this is not possible, there is the need for the written word. Villagers may be illiterate, but not unintelligent, because they have good knowledge about local ecological condition, crops, soils, climatic conditions, social institutions etc. Of course not all villagers are wise, but literacy tends to raise the confidence of villagers in development activities, particularly at planning stages.

As regards the operational and managerial requirements, programmes and projects will always need the services of para-professionals in rural areas. In many cases, rural leaders and all those who exhibit

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<sup>20/</sup> G. Psacharopoulos & M. Woodhall - Education for Development - an Analysis of Investment Choices - Oxford University Press , Published for the World Bank, Washington DC 1985.

leadership qualities may be illiterate. Villagers like to listen to their fellow men who have been trained from their ranks. It is therefore important to use facilitators who are literate and can communicate directly with rural societies. In this regard literacy is very important.

At the operational stages of development activities, whereas literacy may not be a pre-requisite for productive activities, eg. producing food, it is quite useful for opening new vision of the mind, fostering human dignity, lessening dependence and for communicating with those who are far. With the vast expansion of knowledge and technology, one can not depend solely on the verbal word. Effective communication can be given through the written word, and for this matter literacy is most useful especially for adults, youths and women who are decision makers.

(ii) Popular Participation in Development

In asserting the role of, and promoting popular participation in development, the African Charter for Popular Participation<sup>21</sup>/proposes a number of basic strategies, modalities and actions for effective participation in development. Among the many proposals is the need for implementing endogenous and people-centred development strategies and an enabling environment created to facilitate broad-based participation in the development process. Such actions call for:

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<sup>21</sup>/ ECA - African Charter for Popular Participation i n Development, Opt.cited pp 22-31



- the promotion of education, mass literacy as well as literacy skills training and human resource development as a means of enhancing popular participation;
- developing people's capacities to participate effectively on debates on social and economic policies, and development and political issues particularly the democratization process taking place in many African countries;
- increasing employment opportunities and promoting indigenous entrepreneurship for the majority of the population, particularly the rural and urban poor, so that through their actions they can contribute to national development process; and
- reducing and where necessary shaking off lethargy and traditional beliefs which are impediments to development; particularly those customs and cultural practices which undermine the status of women in society.

There are many more strategies proposed by the Charter, but the foregoing fall squarely within the ambit of non-formal education. First, the shaking off of lethargy, customs and traditional beliefs as well as some of the cultural practices cannot be done without education as an instrument of that shake off. Children at school are taught the advantages and disadvantages of traditional beliefs, and this can also be effectively done through informal and non-formal education. If women are to play a role in national development, they need to

shake off some of those cultural practices which subject them to secondary roles in policy and decision making issues. There is need for partnership in development activities between men and women and this partnership calls for a lot of education on both sides to eliminate and/or reduce fear, inferiority complex, arrogance, and the feeling of helplessness through the use of non-formal education.

Secondly, increasing employment opportunities and promoting indigenous entrepreneurship entails skills training, knowledge acquisition and the development of proper attitudes for productive activities. For many out-of-school youths, school learners and adults with aspirations for salaried or self employment, skills training and knowledge acquisition are central and this can be done through various non-formal education training approaches such as on-the-job training; action training and the more appropriately labelled non-formal training approaches which often include; support groups, professional associations, study circles, youth clubs, brigades, pioneer movements; national movements, village co-operatives and clubs; correspondence and distance teaching programmes.

Thirdly, developing the people's and the public's capacities to participate effectively in the democratization process, in debates on social and economic policies and programmes, and other development issues, requires development education. People need to know what they are required to do. If they have to take part in the political change process, they need political education on how democracy works and what roles individuals and groups place in the democratization

process. To engage people in policy formulation, decision making, planning, implementing programmes as well as their evaluation, there is need for educating people in what to do. Most of the people engaged in these activities will be adults who cannot go back to school, and even if they had that opportunity, they may be illiterate to be unable to follow written instructions. In this regard, non-formal training approaches may prove extremely useful for imparting knowledge and skills to youths and adults for effective use in the decision making process, leadership activities, and other social and economic activities.

Fourthly, whatever the case may be, literacy skills as well as the acquisition of human resources at various level of social strata are crucial to the promotion of popular participation in development. People with little or no education at all tend to take very little part in decision making and programme planning. Certainly illiteracy in Africa has proved to be one of the major handicaps to national development. People need to know about change plan for change and survive the effects and impact of change. Here again non-formal education plays a crucial role in preparing the population for change and being part of the national development process; for without such education there is only chaos and lack of effective participation.

(iii) Women in Development

No longer does Africa see the woman's place as being in the home and kitchen. Women are at the fore-front of food production, farming(both subsistence and commercial); marketing, transportation, community and

social work. Yet the majority of African women as compared to men are illiterate;<sup>22</sup> and many have just had the first level of education only. Since literacy, as the Charter points but, is an index of the capacity for mass participation in public debate, decision-making and general development process, it behoves to argue that priority should be given to literacy programmes for women as well as youths so that they can fully participate in debates on social, economic and political issues.

To ensure that the burden carried by women is reduced i.e. as mothers, active community mobilizers, social workers, custodians of culture and producers of food, there is need for bringing to the attention of society at large; including local and central government, the importance of task sharing in the home and community so that women, in general, are free to participate in development activities, not necessarily agricultural or food producing activities.

All this, is the task of development education which refers first and foremost to skills training, skills development and skills acquisition. Such skills have to be taught, to be learned, and to be used. These are the skills of fending for oneself; skills of taking care of oneself and ones family; learning to produce ones's own food; skills of adjusting to change and being part of the changing process. Indeed, in a world of constant changes, human beings must work together as partners

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<sup>22</sup>/ Illiteracy rates vary considerably by continent. The highest are in Africa(54%) followed by Asia (36%) and Latin America and the Caribbean (17%). Of the 54% in Africa 64.5% are female illiterates and 43.3 males, giving a difference in percentage points of 21.2% between males and females in Africa. (source: UNESCO - compendium of statistics on Illiteracy, UNESCO, Paris 1988).

whose responsibilities must be shared amongst men and women so that the role of the latter can become more pronounced in the recovery and transformation of Africa.

Perhaps more than anything else, non-formal education can be effectively used for importing knowledge and skills for use in the changing responsibilities of women. Family planning, reduction of traditional beliefs and taboos, reduction of illiteracy, and participation in social economic and political activities, are all amenable to non-formal education. And therefore, so vital is non-formal education in pushing forward the role of women in national development.

(iv) Education for All and its Implications for Development

A lot has been written about the beneficial effects of investing in education as regards the extent to which education provides the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes for the smooth running of the economy; and the extent to which the products of the school system use their knowledge and skills for productive activities. In spite of these writings, there are some common grounds of conclusions one might want to generalize.

First, the social returns to investment in education are still substantial particularly in developing countries with a low stock of human resources. Secondly, since the private returns of education are considerably higher than the social returns, education is still highly profitable for families and for individual students and therefore the question is one of how educational

investment should be financed.<sup>23/</sup> The general conclusions are valid in as far as account is taken of the fact that the rapid expansion of education investment, particularly with regard to education for all, has tended to benefit higher-income families and urban dwellers rather than the majority of rural communities, and thus may have widened rather than reduced income disparities.

The problem therefore is that education for all cannot, by itself, equalize incomes and employment opportunities. Rather, it goes a long way to help to raise the incomes of the poor for equipping them with knowledge and skills for productive activities. Thus every effort should be made to provide education to all members of society, particularly to the poor, to rural communities and to females, all of whom are currently under-represented in education and are always disadvantaged.

What is important in providing education for all is that investment in education, generally leads to improvements in health and nutrition and a reduction in fertility; and an improvement in life expectancy. It also helps to reduce child malnutrition and mortality. Beyond these benefits, it is important to emphasize that education for all satisfies a basic human need for knowledge, and provides a means of helping to meet other basic needs, and thus helps to sustain and accelerate overall development. In the final analysis, education for all helps to create a base for the development of

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<sup>23/</sup> G. Psachrapoulos & M. Woodhall - Education for Development; A World Bank Publication, Washington DC, 1985. pp 3123-321

skilled manpower for both the formal and informal sectors and acts as a catalyst in encouraging right attitudes, values and aspirations for participation in national development activities. In general, it also helps to enlighten the population in matters of health, nutrition as well as adjust to the changing environment. Simply put, for the diverse benefits of education, it is absolutely important for all citizens to have education in whatever measure they may have.

### III. NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1990S

In a nine point programme of action for the socio-economic transformation of Africa in the 1990s, the U.N. Under-Secretary General and the ECA Executive Secretary emphasized the need for putting in place a holistic human resources development policy and strategy for the region. He argued that:

"at the centre of the African socio-economic drama lies the human factor which is the ultimate dialectics whereby peoples are necessarily and immutably the mentors of the processes of change and transformation and the beneficiaries of the results of such processes. Our failure to pursue long-term development goals has probably had the most devastating negative impact on the human factor - whether in the fields of education and health or in the fields of employment the empowerment of the people and income distribution with the illiterate population growing more rapidly in Africa than its

overall population growth rate, with persistent inadequate scientific and technical know-how and with severe under-utilization of human resources, how can we hope to cope with the challenges that lie ahead? Africa must deal squarely with the all-too-important question of human resources development in a holistic manner - that is, the creation of human resources, their rational and optimal utilization and the development of an enabling environment that will bring about a high degree of involvement and commitment by the entire population. What we need is a new approach that will put at the forefront of our development effort the human factor, an approach that will redress the lack of viable entities and encourage a democratic culture and take root on the continent".24/

This approach calls for the use of a variety of institutions at man's disposal. Perhaps more so now than ever before, is there need to review the place of education, and that of non-formal education in particular in response to Africa's development in the 1990's.

(1) Investing in Human Capital

Perhaps the biggest challenge in the 1990s is a restatement of the relation between technological

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24/ Adebayo Adedeji - Laying the Foundation for the Socio-Economic Transformation of Africa in the 1990s: The Development Policy Agenda - Statement at the formal opening of the 26th Session of the commission/17th Meeting of the Conference of Ministers, Africa Hall, Addis Ababa, 9 May 1991.



progress and improvements in the health, education and skills of the labour force which will be instrumental to the development of African economies. Investing in human capital takes many different forms, such as expenditure on health; education, both formal and non-formal; on the job and institutional training and retraining, study programmes, and adult education programmes.

A major argument for restating the need for investing in human capital is that such investment would overcome in the 1990s many of the characteristics of the labour force in Africa which act as barriers to greater productivity. These characteristics are poor health, malnutrition, ignorance, disease, illiteracy, unreceptiveness to new knowledge, fear of change, lack of incentives and immobility.

There is evidence to show that improvements in education, health, nutrition, and knowledge and skills of the labour force, in whatever economic activity the labour force may be engaged in, can increase considerably the productivity and earnings of labour and may be preconditions for the introduction of more sophisticated advanced technology applied to productive activities. It can also be shown that the capacity to absorb physical capital may be limited, among other things, by investment in human capital. It is in this respect that there is likely to be a close inter-relationship between the mainsprings of technological progress and human centred development. This inter-relationship can be fostered very effectively through education, both formal and non-formal education. But as has been pointed out many times, formal education has proved inadequate in coping with the social demand for education; let alone in

tackling illiteracy. It is therefore to be emphasized that one of the major challenges of 1990's is a restatement of the role of non-formal education and the magnitude with which African countries are prepared to invest in non-formal education programmes covering a whole lot of activities in literacy, adult education, on-the-job training; skills development and up-grading; second chance education; general public and civil education and change education. Priority should be given to investing in education at all levels of the education system, and at all levels of society; if people are to be part of the development process; if they are to cope with change and be part of that change, and if they are to contribute to national development.

There is much to be gained by investing resources in literacy and adult education programmes, in health and nutrition programmes; in public and civil education as well as development education for the benefit of popular participation in development; for the democratization process; and for civil responsibilities. All these call for massive investment in human resources, and this also calls for political will and commitment on the part of decision makers and African leaders.

## (2) Transforming Traditional Agriculture

Perhaps more often than before, Africa is in a sorrowful state of constantly begging for food, for shelter, for clothing and for its many refugees, displaced persons, returnees and victims of natural disasters and civil wars. Yet the continent has plenty of arable and fertile land; it is full of rivers and lakes and only occasionally does it lack rain (taking the

continent as a whole). Africa's task in the 1990's is that of transforming traditional agriculture which holds the key to self-sufficiency in food.

The task is not simply a question of land reform or price policy, nor one of increasing productivity. Transformation of traditional agriculture is also dependent on new inputs such as human resources, because it is now a known fact that low productivity of farm labour is due more to an absence of specific factor inputs such as research, education, knowledge, skills and attitudes, than to a shortage of reproducible capital. What is needed in transforming traditional agriculture is improvements in the quality of inputs, and the application of advances in knowledge, skills and technology on a broad front.

Therefore the way to transform traditional agriculture into a source of growth for African countries is by investing in human capital so as to produce a supply of new agricultural inputs which would be profitable to rural communities. Agricultural research and investment in man to improve human capabilities in agriculture, food preservation and processing, poultry and animal farming have not been accorded the priority they deserve. Perhaps a major point often forgotten is that the rapid rise in agricultural productivity in Japan in the late nineteenth century, and in Taiwan in the early twentieth century was due to technical/technological progress as inputs to agriculture, such as the application of fertilizers and the selection and cultivation of high-yield crops. Technical/technological progress goes hand in hand with

the development of knowledge, skills and right attitudes, and here again education comes into play.

Subsistence farmers, peasants and agricultural producers and labourers are generally adults who for one reason or another, are unable to participate in formal education programmes. They are therefore the primary clients of non-formal education. In this regard, priority and great importance should be attached to the transformation of traditional agriculture through research and farm training and improved agricultural methods. More important still, is the provision of education to rural communities, peasants and subsistence farmers which dispel of factors that breed conservatism and makes change more difficult to deal with. Africa cannot expect to achieve food self-sufficiency without a major transformation in traditional agriculture and in this regard non-formal education should become a major instrument in producing new inputs into agriculture in the form of knowledge, skills and research inputs.

### (3) Training in New Skills and Knowledge

Many new occupations will appear at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and many others now available will have changed greatly in character. Formal education will not be in a position to prepare those at school or in the system for these new occupations; nor will those who will be working in the 1990's have had sufficient training or any formal training for effective operations in the new occupations. That task of training in new knowledge and skills must be left to non-formal education and its many variants. These new occupations will be in

the industrial and modern sector, in the traditional and informal sectors.

Take, for instance the ever increasing rural-urban migration with its attendant urban unemployment. This unprecedented rural-urban migration has triggered and transferred unemployment from rural to urban areas and created an informal sector in the urban areas harbouring the bulk of the labour in transition from the rural sector into industrial employment. This informal sector in urban areas has occupations not commonly known before, and whether African Governments like it or not people will need to have training in these new occupations. Admittedly, the informal sector has spread to the rural areas as well, and there the training in the new skills will be needed.

At a time when the world is experimenting on the possibilities of flying pigs which would be sent on important errands or missions, it would not be out of place to speculate on the possibility of training shepherds as pig flying pilots; and indeed in maintenance of such living aircrafts! This speculation shows the magnitude of the problem as regards new occupations which will appear by the beginning of the next century for which training will be required. Indeed this task belongs to both formal and non-formal education. However, non-formal education will rise up to this challenge only if it is accorded the status it deserves as one of the major sources of skills development and adequate financial resources are allocated for programme implementation.

Rural areas have so far been associated with farming and agricultural activities. To-day, there is a sharp rise in the composition of rural non-farm activities all of which need training in new skills and knowledge. Foremost amongst these skills and knowledge should be in:

- Commercial and services activities particularly in various trades and transportation of goods to and from rural areas;
- Activities associated with infrastructural development such as building and road construction, irrigation and water supply works, land scapping, afforestation and environmental works.
- Small-scale industries covering a range of activities from cottage industries such as blacksmithing, weaving, pottery, handicrafts etc to such industries as food processing, beer and wine making, grain milling, oil extraction, fish processing, fruit-juice making, and bakery of bread and cakes.
- Artisanal activities such as masonry, tiles and brick making, engraving, art works, tie and dye, cloth printing, tailoring, carpentry, cart and wagon making, black-smithing, simple machine and tool, radio/televisions repair services, bicycle motor, tractor, plough and wagon mechanics.

- Professional, technical, technological, administration, civil and political duties, all of which are becoming increasingly prevalent in rural areas.

These require training in knowledge and skills, hitherto uncommon in rural areas. They are all amenable to non-formal education programmes; but little can be done unless there is commitment and willingness on the part of governments to make use of non-formal education in preparing individuals for these non-farm activities in 1990's and beyond.

#### IV CONCLUSION: THE WAY FORWARD

Central to non-formal education and development is the need for a complete re-conceptualization of the place of non-formal education in national development planning and in the development of human resources. Little can be expected to come out of non-formal education unless there is a comprehensive review of its role in preparing human resources. The review should critically examine the present status of non-formal education so as to formulate new proposals for making it more effective as an instrument for skills development.

More important is the need to train educational specialist in non-formal education who can plan, develop and implement non-formal education programmes. At present, there are too many hands in this field all claiming to be experts one way or the other. It is argued that non-formal education planners should develop meaningful dialogue between formal and non-formal education, and between planners and decision makers to

ensure that due priority is given to the development of non-formal education. Indeed many educational planners are concerned with planning for formal education with occasional glimpses at non-formal education. But for practical purposes, the links between formal and non-formal education should be forged to ensure the complementarity of the two systems of education.

The two systems cannot be effectively linked unless there is an improved communication between educational planners and decision makers so that the information collected by the former is used by the latter for decisions making about the two systems. However for educational planners to assist decision makers, they should have an understanding of the decision-makers world and to this end they should undertake training in policy development and analysis. Such training should focus, among other things, on the issues, pressures, constraints and evidence taken into consideration by decision makers leading up to, during and after making an important decision aimed at improving the quality of education. Indeed much of what goes on in non-formal education is not based on informed commentaries, relevant research data and evidence, reactions by experts, post-mortem investigations, evaluation, and follow-up evaluation activities.

Much has been said in the preceding pages about development being human centred. Such a human centred approach to development calls for the important links between education and other sectors such as agriculture, health industry and other forms of human resource development. What needs to be emphasized is that "human development encompasses education and training, better



health and nutrition, and the reduction of fertility each of which makes its own important contribution to human development".<sup>25/</sup> In the 1990's the relationships of these sectors should be forged and enhanced because evidence shows that improvements in education help to alleviate poverty and ignorance, and directly, or indirectly increase peoples's incomes. Also improvement in education tends to improve health and nutrition and to reduce family size. Well-fed, nourished and healthy children learn better than the hungry and sick children. Investing in education therefore should constitute a major priority because of the inter-sectoral linkage of education with other sectors and the attendant benefits, both direct and indirect benefits. Indeed, the importance of education and training, both formal and non-formal cannot be over emphasized.

Two other points need to be emphasized in these concluding remarks. The first is that as we close the twentieth century and move into the twenty-first, many new occupations unknown in this decade will be on the market and requiring attention. Neither the products of formal or non-formal education will have been prepared for these new occupations. The training and retraining of individuals for these new occupations will be in most cases the responsibility of non-formal education. It is important therefore that proper planning of non-formal education should be made in anticipation of these new occupations. Indeed beyond religion nothing can be said to be good for all times. In this regard, to-day's education and training cannot prepare individuals for all

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<sup>25/</sup> G. Psacharopoulos & M. Woodhall Education for Development - opt cited p.287.

times. There is need for continual training and updating, more so for the new professions to come.

A second important point to highlight relates to development education. At the beginning of the 1990's Africa has plunged itself on the road to democracy. The pace and the process will depend to a large extent on how much information is given to the people about democracy, the freedom of speech, and the rights and duties of citizens. All this is subject to people getting some kind of education. They need to know what democracy is and is about; and what their several responsibilities are. Much of this education falls within what was described as development education - that kind education which prepares people for change and makes them conscious of developing themselves. This should become one of the primary, if not the primary, function of non- formal education.

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