Educational Viability and Development: A Sub-Saharan Experience

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ABSTRACT: Education within the general concept of development has become a common article of faith worldwide. While education has been seen as the most appropriate strategy for eliminating underdevelopment, social inequality, and injustice in the Third World, development is understood as personal and social growth as well as micro and macro economic advancement. Concepts of globalization and how they impact on education and its outcomes in different societies and diversified economic contexts is receiving increasing attention. This paper will explore the role of education (primary, secondary, and higher education) in enhancing processes of economic and social development in Ghana. I will also examine how theories of human capital and equity apply to Ghana the context of global economy.

RÉSUMÉ: L'enseignement, comme véhicule moteur, est devenu un sujet fréquent d'espoir dans le monde. Alors que l'enseignement est considéré comme la stratégie la plus appropriée pour combattre la misère, l'inégalité sociale et l'injustice dans les pays en voie de développement, on conçoit, non seulement, la progression comme un grandissement social et intérieur mais aussi comme une avancée de la macro et de la micro économie. On porte de plus en plus d'attention aux conséquences causées par la mondialisation sur l'enseignement et ses dérivés dans différentes sociétés et contextes économiques distincts. Au Ghana, on étudie le rôle de l'enseignement à des niveaux variés; primaire, secondaire et supérieur pour qu'il améliore l'action du développement social et économique du pays. Je cherche aussi à connaître la façon d'appliquer des théories en matière de finances et de biens personnels au Ghana considérant toujours le contexte de l'économie mondiale.

Introduction

Education (both formal and informal) within the general concept of development has become a common article of faith worldwide. While education has been seen as the most appropriate strategy for eliminating

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underdevelopment, social inequality, and injustice, development is understood as personal and social growth as well as micro and macro economic advancement. Since World War II, this assumption, born out of a construction of a positive correlation between education and economic growth, has been reinforced by human capital theory, a concept that dates to Adam Smith's *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776). According to this theory, workers' knowledge reflects their levels of formal education. Therefore, economists and policy makers rely on quantitative indices or amount of formal education in estimating individual economic returns of education. It is also assumed that this knowledge will be of a kind that can be invested in productive labor. This school of thought has led to the inevitable conclusion that more formal education, undifferentiated, would lead to higher productivity and macroeconomic growth (Becker, 1964, 1996; Simmons, 1980).

Policy makers have linked economic and social development to education. Consequently, this linkage has led to the belief that people in low-income countries without formal education are underdeveloped and deprived of the tools needed to lead a modern life. The legitimacy of such assumptions has led to an inflation of educational credential requirements for job entry (Collins, 1979, 1980). Structuralist theory has challenged human capital theory as neglecting external factors beyond the individual that impact on educational outcomes (Simmons 1980). Along similar lines scholars of political economy of education (Carnoy, 1974; Collins, 1979; Livingstone, 1999) and anti-racist educators (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, & Thomas, 1995; Dei, 2000; Dei & Calliste, 2000), have noted the shortcomings of the human capital theory. The common assumption is that the link between education and development is a complex one, conditioned by a variety of social factors beyond the individual. Furthermore, educational investments do not necessarily prevent unemployment, or guarantee employment commensurate with education, which make up important components of development (Albornoz, 1989; Lodigiani, 2001).

Nonetheless, the human capital theory has succeeded in strengthening the general faith in schooling as a producer of creativity – a causal factor for economic and social change. After decades of debate on the legitimacy of the human capital theory, today, it is generally believed that the growth of global wealth relies on the knowledge, skills, and resourcefulness of people. Human capital is now estimated to be more important than physical capital (World Bank, 2000). Employers

perceive schooling and higher education as providing skills, preparing the population for economic functions in an increasing complex technological society by socializing students to fit into new models of economic organizations, promoting both private as well as social returns of education.

Global Re-Structuring and the Effects of Brain Drain

International developments have increasingly been centered on education and have influenced domestic economic structures within countries. Cultural factors arising from multiple cultural heritages of many African countries since slavery, colonization, and globalization have placed considerable strains on the implementation of education and attainment of its objectives (Folson, 1995; Jones, 1997b). Concepts such as globalization frequently neglect to consider ways in which changes in international economy result in differential outcomes for various groups. The costs of structural adjustment policies in the South or economic restructuring in the North are devastating to people, governments, and countries. In this paper I will explore the role of education (primary, secondary, and higher education) in enhancing processes of economic and social development in Ghana. I will also examine how theories of human capital and equity apply to Ghana as well as how it is positioned in the global economy. In discussing issues relating to structural adjustment in Ghana, Dei argues,

> Since the early 1980s, the introduction of structural adjustment policies (SAPs) and the ongoing challenges of globalization have constituted two external capital interests that have had and continue to have profound effects on Ghana. For genuine social development, (there must be) a system that truly ensures that all subjects are citizens able to participate in a genuine democracy of equal and unfettered access to knowledge and power. (2004, p. 6)

Furthermore, it can be argued that SAPs damages those who are most disenfranchised, poor, women, the disabled, visible minorities, and so forth. The individuals located within rural communities who experienced SAPs, an already impoverished community (those who lack power), were further alienated and disenfranchised.

Globalization, Educational Development, and International Organizations

After World War II, educational policy makers in the newly politically independent nations and those in a process of attaining political

independence projected a mood of optimism regarding the contribution of schooling to social and economic development. In the past, national and international educational policies for the Third World[1] termed literacy as leading to logical and analytic modes of thought, to general and abstract uses of language, and to critical and rational thought (World Bank, 1995). Literate people are believed to be innovative, achievement-oriented, productive, politically and globally aware, less likely to commit crimes, and more likely to take education seriously. After independence the governments of many African countries, including Ghana, adopted universal primary education as a medium-term or even a short-term objective, with a common goal of replicating the educational histories of economically advanced capitalist countries (Folson, 1995; Jones, 1997b; Dei, 2000).

In the 1960s and 1970s, economists, acting in their own right as knowledge producers, drawing on the modernization theories of the 1950s and human capital theory, advocated strongly for increase in national investments in education in both countries of the North and those of the South (Lewis, 1959, 1960; Simmons, 1980). They were convinced that significant social gains could be realized from raising the skill and competence levels of the population. The World Bank, a prominent supporter of this idea, finances education through the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) for countries of the North, and through the International Development Association (IDA) for countries of the South. According to the World Bank, education is a basic human need, which acts as a crucial step towards meeting other basic needs such as clothing, shelter, health care, and food (The World Bank, 1995). To this end, the World Bank has loaned, in general, over two billion U.S. dollars for basic education globally since 1970 (Banya & Elu, 1997).

Other smaller national and international agencies have also been involved with development in the South. One of the most popular agencies has been the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). CIDA's activities focus on community and human resource development through both Canadian and Southern NGOs, as well as through a wide range of Canadian universities, colleges, unions, cooperatives, and professional associations. CIDA has conducted more than 200 workshops in various thematic areas in schools in the South, including basic education in health issues. CIDA projects have also promoted an entrepreneurial culture and supported micro-enterprises and macroeconomic growth (CIDA, 1997). Many governments have

implemented a variety of educational reforms deemed the right type of education capable of stimulating economic development. Thus, a worldwide re-discovery of education as a contributor to economic growth, an instrument against poverty, disease, and ignorance gave education a new dimension of importance in national and international policy making as well as in government priorities. The outward dimension of the concern for Africa was provided by the UNESCO-organized conference of African States on the Development of Education in Addis Ababa in 1961. The major recommendations arising from the conference were:

- Provision of universal, compulsory, and free education of a minimum of 6 years by 1980;
- 30% of all African children should be able to attend the secondary school level;
- University education for 2% of pupils in every age group;
- Improvement of the quality of the education system;
- A 6% increase of the budget for education (Deutsche Stiftung fuer Entwicklung, December 1976, p. 27).

A decade later it was clear that Ghana and the rest of Africa could not fulfill the goals set in Addis Ababa due to lack of resources. The head of states came to a collective agreement that, in many respects, the results of educational planning had fallen short of initial expectations. A World Bank report (1974) suggested that formal education systems had failed to meet the needs of countries in the South. Therefore, the Bank recommended the training of specialists in all aspects of rural development and self-employment and urged a program of non-formal education and vocational education to replace the academic curricula of schools as part of the structural adjustment reforms of the World Bank for Africa (World Bank, 1974).

In Ghana, national educational institutions, as well as the ministers of education were not convinced of the success of replacing formal education with an almost untried substitute. They dismissed these ideas as contextually irrelevant for Ghana. Yet, still holding onto the notion of education as a key to development, and desperate for solutions to the educational dilemma, educational planners and policy makers, strongly supported by government policy and backed with international financial assistance, concentrated their efforts on primary schools. The rationale behind this decision being that primary schools are greater in number and better distributed over the country than any other branch of the

Ghanaian education system. The primary schools were conceived as having the potential of increasing agricultural production, of controlling rural-urban migration, and of dissolving urban slum development. Successes were expected if primary schools underwent major changes in both content and application. The government and policy makers expected the evolution of other extension services, such as rural banking, local industries, efficient transportation, and good prices for agricultural products, if primary schools were re-oriented and re-organized by the Ministry of Education.

The debate on education and development in Ghana, as well as in other African countries, remains extremely controversial. It revolves, on the one hand, around the appropriate allocation of funds to the various sectors of the economy, and on the other hand, to the distribution of funds within the educational system. Some educational experts place more emphasis on the development of secondary and higher education at the expense of primary education. There is also uncertainty as to whether urban industrialization or rural agricultural expansion, or even both, serve as a future solution to development problems in Ghana. However, the main tendency is towards rural agricultural expansion, using basic primary education as a complementary factor for development, and in-training in the technical section of the economy. Critics of this solution claim that this educational path is influenced by colonial thought that seek to keep the Third World/South at the bottom of global educational development (Kwapong & Lesser, 1989). Since the 1980s, many national governments in the Third World/South and donor agencies have assigned higher education a relatively low priority (World Bank, 2000). This view has been legitimated with misleading economic analysis that asserts that public investment in higher education brings lower returns as compared to investment in primary and secondary schools (Psacharopoulos, 1994). This divide between North and South widens, as resources are shifted from higher education to primary and secondary education in the South while higher education continues to boom in the North. However, in the context of the global economy, as much as we agree that higher education is crucial in all aspects of economic and social development, proponents of higher education for Ghana and the rest of Africa need to propose solutions to dealing with the relatively high percentage of 'illiterate' population in this region.

In 1993, with support from the Friedrich Ebert-Foundation (Germany), I undertook a study with three aims: to find proof that there is a positive correlation between education and economic growth; to look

at the relationship between education and work; to examine the eligibility of basic primary education as a vehicle for development in Ghana. Employing a combination of qualitative, contextual, and policy analysis, I examined different bodies of literature and conducted interviews with representatives from various educational institutions. The central interest concentrated on the philosophical foundations of educational institutions, their goals, their curricula and instructional techniques, as well as the people associated with them as staff members and their discursive practices, scholars and students, politicians, educational experts and the impact of globalization through donor agencies. The results of the study were published in the book, *The Contribution of Formal Education to Economic Development and Economic Underdevelopment: Ghana as Paradigm* (Folson, 1995). Based on this work and also on recent studies, for example, Dei (1999, 2000) on the links between education and development in the context of global economic restructuring, I offer six critical thoughts for further discussions, centered on notions of human capital, brain drain – brain circulation, and equity analyses. The next section, however, provides a brief synthesis of the fundamental aspects of the Ghanaian education system.

Fundamental Aspects of the Ghanaian Education System

Both national and international scholars on education in Anglo-West Africa have done significant research. Part of this research has shed light on the need to problematize the assumption of a universal and direct linkage between education and development. Although research and public discussions have identified the myriad problems confronting education in these states, they have failed to make appropriate policy recommendations (see, for example, Nyalemegbe, 1997). One of the identified problem is the fact that education is one of the largest consumer-spending areas in national budgets, and yet still about two thirds of the youth in West Africa grow up without institutionalized formal education.

With a new vision for education and development in Ghana, the government launched a directive, "The New Structure and Content of Education" (NSCE) in September 1974. The goal of the directive was making education meet Ghanaian development needs. The content of the new educational structure aimed at a type of curriculum (pre-university) that would make education both continuing and terminal – terminal in

the sense that it would orient students psychologically to their immediate environment and provide them with some basic knowledge and necessary skills to earn a living in this environment. The revised content of education would provide for diversified curriculum in which the study of languages, mathematics, science, and cultural subjects was supposed to be given the greatest emphasis. At the same time, the educational reform was designed to lay the foundation for those who were considered academically, technically, and vocationally more capable of continuing to higher education. To produce teachers of appropriate orientation and qualification to cope with the different levels of the new pre-university education system, it became necessary to restructure the entire teacher-training education program. This also required additional funds, which were scarce.

Educational reforms in West Africa between 1970s and 1990s portrayed a dissonance of well-meaning theoretical intent meeting harsh reality. In the case of Ghana, practical constraints include lack of political will on the part of certain bureaucratic agencies, lack of material support to back well-intentioned state policies, and the deterioration of the Ghanaian economy around 1974. The government of Ghana projected a complete implementation of this reform to the academic year of 1980/81, and the first group of students graduated in 1987. The dismal academic performance of the first group of the NSCE set off a furious public discussion that pressured the government to re-tune the education system. In Ghana, like many other countries of the South, only half the students enrolled in the first grade remain in school to complete the cycle of five or six years. About two fifths of the Ghanaian educational budget is spent on youth who do not remain in the system long enough to become functionally literate (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 1999).

In July 1994 the Ghanaian Ministry of Education appointed an Education Reform Review Committee (ERRC) to examine the educational reform (Nyalemegbe, 1997). Based on recommendations of the ERRC, the Ministry of Education drew a program that aimed at reducing the syllabus at all levels of pre-university education. Educators, policy makers and donor agencies also agreed that higher education institutions in Ghana lack well-designed academic programs and a clearly defined mission. Meanwhile, the Ghanaian education system has missed both its objectives at the primary and tertiary levels. Crucial to turning the stated objectives to success are well paid and committed teachers at the primary level, and at the tertiary level, high-quality

faculty, committed students, remedial programs for inadequately prepared students to get the most out of the higher educational programs and sufficient resources (Nyalemegbe, 1997; World Bank, 2000).

In light of the above analysis of political lobbies and deviant policy implementations, and a partial foreign control in their international capacity as donor nations, I have formulated the following critical thoughts and questions to analyze the actual relationships between formal education, development and the competitiveness of Ghana in the emerging global economy.

Critical Thoughts and Discussion

Despite a number of reforms the Ghanaian education system has not been successful in its main objective of achieving socio-economic growth. This analysis deals with such questions as: does formal education necessarily lead to socio-economic growth? In researching it has become apparent that, policy makers and political leaders frequently fall back to educational reforms as the key to provide the solutions to economic problems. In *The Education-Work Gap,* Livingstone (1999) advocates "reversing the common optic or focus on education as the problem" (p. 3). One of Livingstone's claims concerns employers' inflation of credential requirements in the face of oversupply of educationally qualified people in the job market, and he suggests that:

> Paid workplaces in capitalist economies can and should be democratically reorganized to use much of the existing knowledge and expanding learning potential that are now wasted through widespread unemployment and underemployment. (p. 3)

One finding of my study of the Ghanaian education system, in rural context, is the inflation of credentials, as posited by Livingston in capitalist economies. Internal migration, often engineered by global economic restructuring, posed a major problem for the economy. The expansion of formal education in the post WWII period in Ghana did not create jobs, but rather it raised the qualifications of the unemployed. A combination of poor regional distribution of schools along with poor distribution of industry has been one of the significant causes for rural-urban migration in Ghana. Job openings for school leavers, particularly, primary school leavers, have been extremely poor. Primary education in the old educational system produced school leavers in the rural areas who sought employment in the urban modern sector rather than in rural agriculture. Even in those specific areas where the Ministry of Education

has implemented the new structure and contents of education, most students who completed school were likely to have acquired little technical knowledge and did not see their future in rural farming work that was not tailored to the work they were capable of doing. Rather they migrated to the urban centers to seek commensurate jobs. Unfortunately, in many cases they were not successful, but swelled the number of urban unemployed. This surplus workforce poses a challenge to the Ghanaian education as how to reform work to permit fuller use of people's current education and continuing learning capacities.

While expansion of formal education in the post WWII period in Ghana has concentrated on primary education and pre-university education in general, today, access to global markets is very competitive and requires individuals to have much higher and better education. Also economies with higher enrollment rates and higher education fare better than countries with lower rates of enrollment (World Bank, 2000). The education system has produced migration, urbanization, brain drain, and unemployment because there is a mismatch between the expansion of the educational sector and the labor market. In examining the relationship between education and work it becomes evident that basic formal education and development in rural areas shows that if the provision of education is not accompanied by other essential inputs, such as access to markets, transport facilities, favorable prices for agricultural products, extension services, employment, for example, the magic of education does not produce the promised results. Unfortunately, neither an urban social survey conducted in Ghana, nor government publications could generate precise data regarding the relationship between the level of education and occupation or work. On the other hand, empirical evidence suggests that there is a strong relationship between educational attainment and geographic mobility, for example, through its influence on higher income expectations. Caldwell (1967) and Tordaro (1989) studies on Ghana, document a positive relationship between individual educational attainment and the propensity to migrate from rural to urban areas. In addition to poor job opportunity in rural areas, another important factor in rural-urban migration is that individuals with higher levels of education have wider urban-to-rural income advantage and higher probability of obtaining modern-sector jobs.

Higher education in advanced scientific and technical occupations can lead to greater development in certain contexts. However, in other contexts this output could be substantially in excess of existing

acceptable career opportunities, causing remarkable brain drain. In the era of globalization many professionals as well as students are increasingly attracted to wealthier countries. Many talented Ghanaian scholars are working in European and North American universities and many doctors and engineers are employed outside Ghana. According to a study of the United Nations Development Project (UNDP, 1992), 60% of Ghanaian doctors practice their medicine abroad. These professionals support the growth of economies that did not contribute to their education rather than convert their educational cultural capital into national development of the investing country. It is estimated that between 1960 and 1990, the emigration of high-level professional and technical man or woman power from countries of the South to the United States of America, Canada, and the United Kingdom alone reached over one million skilled workers (Banya & Elu, 1997; Tordaro, 1994).

In countries of the North there is a phenomenon termed brain-circulation where professionals from different countries move to more attractive positions in other countries whilst other professionals move in to occupy their places. Many professionals from the South/Third World have in the past functioned in a more productive way within the professional infrastructures in the North, than within relatively inadequate structures in the South. They have actually, in certain cases, contributed to development in their countries of origin, in a way they would not have been able to do if they stayed in these countries. Southern governments have in the past utilized experts abroad to successfully address specific national concerns. However, the issue of brain drain poses a legitimate concern and the damages caused to Third World countries should not be underestimated.

The education system is not addressing the priority needs of the poor majority, but of the elite. In order to maintain political and economic power, governments follow educational policies that produce social inequality and also intensify already existing inequities. The political dimensions of Ghana's educational investment decisions have been determined more by political pressure from socially dominant groups than by economic feasibility (Folson, 1995; Wright, 1997). Since the early 1980s, government projects have aimed to improve the rural condition, with a focus on raising rural incomes while holding down urban wage increases to discourage rural-urban migration and its concomitant urban unemployment (Ministry of Education, Ghana, 1999). Evidence of the failure of this plan is visible in the huge discrepancy between rural and

urban wages as well as in high urban unemployment caused by rural-urban migration today.

Elitism in the Ghanaian educational system becomes more significant and more detrimental at higher education level, where access becomes increasingly competitive. This phenomenon is most damaging in two aspects of the educational system. First, malfunctioning of markets leads to a permanent poor allocation of resources. Access to good secondary schools and higher education is limited by income, excluding potentially able students. Secondly, Ghana, like many Third World countries has, since decades, been under pressure to meet increased demand for higher education. The Ghanaian government is unable to keep up with these demands. Therefore, the government is becoming increasingly reliant on fee-based education and private, for-profit providers. In the era of globalization this market is opened to national elite entrepreneurs and international institutions. The impact of globalization on higher education has had both beneficial as well as damaging consequences for Ghana and the rest of Africa. According to a World Bank Report (2000), inadequate market information has in the past led to "dilution of the competition," making it possible for weak, exploitative institutions to survive, minimizing the chances of progressive new entrants. It has also lead to unregulated higher education, with marketing of fraudulent degrees and credentials.

In further research, it becomes apparent that programs to expand basic primary education to achieve more equity have been implemented without plans to evaluate their effectiveness. Unequal regional distribution of schools in Ghana is a historical problem. The main goal for provision of schools during the colonial period was economic. Schools were provided in regions where the British colonial government expected the highest direct and indirect economic returns. The source of direct economic returns was agricultural goods and precious minerals while that of indirect returns was the primary education of Africans for services as cheap labor for the colonial administration. After independence, although governments concentrated on a policy of providing formal education in the least developed regions, the actual provision of schools tended to be determined by political pressures from socially dominant groups. Subsequently, inequality in the regional distribution of schools prevailed. Although some Ghanaian educators emphasize that secondary and higher education should be developed at the expense of expansion of rural primary education, there was no certainty about whether urban industrialization or rural agricultural

expansion, or even both served as a future solution to development problems in Ghana.

In my study I did not encounter any substantive change in the structures, processes, and contexts of educational delivery or any plans to evaluate already implemented projects towards this end (Folson, 1995). However, lately there is a growing literature addressing the reliability of thriving industrialization or rural agricultural expansion on research in higher education (Betts, 1998; Dei, 1999; World Bank 2000). Furthermore, the driving force behind the global economy is dependent on educated workers who obtain crucial and significant new ideas from research situated in higher education. Also negotiating bi- and multilateral agreements necessitates a competence that goes beyond primary education. To some minimal extent education (primary and secondary in this case) has led to the creation of socio-political consciousness among people in rural and poor urban areas. They are able to articulate their interests in an oppositional way to that of the elite, and organize themselves to seek social justice.

Many scholars, including Foster (1965) and Durkheim (1984) have proposed that education is inherently contradictory. Foster (1965) using a colonial framework in his approach, assert that without western education, no political independence movement would have evolved in Third World countries. This sweeping assertion would be correct, if one were to assume the fact of highly western-educated constituent membership of 20th century independence movements as a determinant factor. This assumption is contradicted by members of the 19th century Gold Coast pressure group who were without Western education (Buah, 1980). Determinacy aside, Western education, in fact, formed an important aspect of independence movements in its various forms of contribution, and one of the central rallying points was universal free education, contrary to the subjugational assistance tool the colonizers saw in it (Gold Coast, 1951).

The relationship between colonial Western education and the independence struggle is paradoxical in the sense that one of the major intentions of colonial education was to prevent the formation of national consciousness among Africans. Yet formal education actually generated a substantial part of the independence movements across Africa and other colonized regions of the globe. This paradoxical phenomenon is understandable when perceived in the light of Durkheim's (1984) concept of the contradictory character of education. According to Durkheim, education is a process that eventually becomes self-recursive and thus

autonomous when the process of education subjects its own function to critical evaluation. This transmission of educational context includes an explanatory aspect that has both functional and dysfunctional aspects.

School leavers in rural and poor urban Ghana question their education and, in certain cases, refuse functions of mechanistic obeisance expected of them. Actually what might be seen as a contradictory aspect of education could be seen in another light as a positive development aspect of education. The information transported through education has opened new possibilities and potential life chances to these students. Exploration of these venues could be instrumental for promoting economic and social development. Since the Ghanaian education system did not achieve its stated objectives, questions of unproductive educational investment arise. As a result, economic returns of education are difficult to measure, especially when outcomes are seen strictly in economic terms, and direct and immediate linkage between education and development is assumed and expected. According to Psacharopoulos (1994), estimation and analysis of rate of return on investments in different levels of education was greater in primary and secondary education than in higher education, and therefore that government expenditure was more justified at the primary and secondary level of education. He asserts that the standard rate-of-return analysis needed to move beyond this point, in order to reflect the benefits of higher education, which extend beyond the incremental earnings that embody the individual returns.

Furthermore, the rationale for literacy provision may address direct economic justification, while others may have an ethical basis or be grounded in equity considerations. Economic and equity justifications very often overlap, making it difficult to measure educational outcomes in strict economic terms (Jones, 1997b). Jones argues that:

> Providing literacy, numeracy, and useful knowledge to mothers in rural areas can have a profound effect on birth rates, the health of their families, the learning potential of their children, and the cultural cohesiveness of their communities. Such outcomes are less easy to quantify when compared with the productivity of salaried workers. (p. 369)

The use of equity and human rights arguments to promote the provision of basic primary education for adults and youth has in the past given rise to concerns that such a rationale lacked economic justification. Today, policy makers world wide have come to accept that it is difficult to base the returns of education exclusively on economic factors, since

economic and equity justifications overlap. Although the percentage of formally uneducated groups of the population in Africa (in the South in general) is still very high – in some countries it is as high as one third of the population – many education experts are convinced that global achievement of universal literacy and basic education is within reach (World Bank, 1995). Educators have stressed, for example, the need to adapt education to the regional environment if development is to be achieved. This step has steered the evolution of other extension services, such as rural banking, local industries, and efficient transportation of, and good prices for, agricultural products (Jones, 1997b). However, a compelling question for the proponents of universal basic education will be, Are universal literacy and basic education key to development in the era of globalization? In the context of a global economy, as mentioned earlier, although higher education is crucial in all aspects of economic and social development, proponents of higher education need to consider universal basic education in dealing with the relatively high percentage of illiterate population in this region. Jones argues:

> When the rationale is fundamentally an economic one, in which the learning program is directed at increasing worker productivity, it is difficult to find a more dynamic area of educational investment. It produces all the benefits of primary schooling, with the key additional advantage of immediate motivation, relevance and application. (1997b, p. 369)

When worker productivity is raised directly through literacy, numeracy instruction and remedial programs, higher economic returns may be expected by society in general than when society relies on basic primary education alone (Jones, 1997b, p. 369). However, recent World Bank (2000) research into education and development argues as follows:

> The information revolution that is driving the new economy is dependent on educated and literate workers; and more than ever, the new ideas fueling this expansion have come from people with tertiary degrees. (World Bank, 2000, p. 93)

Conclusion

There are a number of writings on the process of educational transformation meant to induce development within African countries at times of national formation from a participatory research perspective (Glewwe & Jacoby, 1992; Nyerere, 1968). This process of restructuring the nation and its educational system is documented in action as policy makers, educators, and communities reflect and act on the challenges of

establishing an anti-colonial national education system for development (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

The arguments put forward in this article lead to conclusions and recommendations that fall into three main categories: undifferentiated increase in educational expenditure, brain drain, and revival of higher education as crucial to national development in the era of globalization and orchestrating its productive operation. Educators, policy makers, parents, and students must question the widely accepted claim that increasing educational expenditure in itself increases social welfare, thus resulting in development. There are different factors, some of them regionally specific, which affect the ratio between educational expenditure and increase in social welfare. Some of these factors include poorly managed civil service systems. While higher education output in advanced scientific and technical occupations may lead to development in some specific contexts, this output could, in other contexts, be substantially in excess of existing acceptable career opportunities, causing significant brain drain. Brain drain is a phenomenon that seriously challenges the assumption that education inevitably makes a positive contribution to national development. Many talented Ghanaian scholars are working at European and North American universities, whilst many doctors and engineers are also working outside the country. Many countries of the South and Eastern Europe share this problem of losing a skilled and highly educated workforce to support the growth of economies that did not contribute to their education. About one third of the medical doctors working in the United States of America are foreign trained and about one quarter of the engineers is foreign-born (Banya & Elu, 1997). It is estimated that between 1960 and 1990, the emigration of high-level professional and technical man or womanpower from countries of the South to the United States of America, Canada, and the United Kingdom. alone reached over one million skilled workers (Tordaro, 1994; Banya & Elu, 1997). Many migrants moved on a permanent basis, causing a loss of valuable human resources, as well as serious restraint on the future economic progress of the countries that invested in their education. According to a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report, Africa lost nearly one third of its skilled workers – about 60,000 middle and high-level managers – to Europe, Canada, and the United States. between 1985 and 1990. Sudan lost 17% of its doctors and dentists, 20% of university professors, 30% of its engineers, and 45% of its surveyors, while the Philippines lost 12% of its professional workers to the United States. Sixty percent of Ghanaian

doctors work abroad (UNDP, 1992). The phenomenon of brain drain does not contribute to a positive correlation between education and development in countries that have invested a great portion of their national budget in the education, only to loose their excellent workforce to other economies. Ghana cannot afford to underestimate the impact of brain drain on national development.

In certain contexts the challenge may not be to facilitate more learning but to establish incentive structures. Many studies suggest that educational investments have a long gestation period (Foster, 1965, 1968; Banya & Elu, 1997; Jones, 1997a; World Bank, 2000). However, policy makers face a major challenge, namely to find an acceptable fit between education and commensurate jobs, to sustain a general faith in a positive correlation between education and development.

Currently, in Ghana much like most Third World countries, there is a consensus among policy makers and educational donor agencies that basic education and the humanities are essential for national development, however, the potential of higher education to promote development is being realized only marginally. Policy makers in Ghana and the rest of Africa need to improve human capital, otherwise these countries will increasingly fall behind global development and end up in economic marginalization and isolation.

NOTES

1. Through out the article I will use the term "South" to represent a rather controversial terminology "Third World," and then use the term "North" to represent technologically advantaged countries.

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